

**Government of India**  
**Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation**  
LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2773  
TO BE ANSWERED ON **04-01-2018**

**ODF Areas**

**2773. DR. SHASHI THAROOR:**

Will the Minister of **DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government propose to investigate the areas mentioned in the Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, dated November 10, 2017 which stated that claims have been wrongly certified as 'open defecation free';
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) whether the Government proposes to improve its methods of evaluation both prior to and post granting this certification, if it so transpires that the investigated areas are not *de facto* open defecation free and if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

**MINISTER OF STATE FOR MINISTRY OF DRINKING WATER & SANITATION  
(SHRI RAMESH CHANDAPPA JIGAJINAGI)**

(a) to (b) A United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights for safe drinking water and sanitation visited India from 27 October to 10 November, 2017. At the end of the visit, he made some inaccurate generalizations about the human rights aspects of India's water and sanitation programmes based on anecdotal evidence and incomplete information. The Government of India rebutted his inaccuracies and stressed that India's sanitation programmes are fully compliant with human rights principles. Feedback from all quarters is used to improve the programme. Any instance of lapses brought to the attention of the Ministry are intimated to the States for appropriate action as sanitation is a State subject.

(c) Does not arise

(d) As per the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin guidelines issued by the Ministry, a village self-declares itself Open Defecation Free (ODF) through a transparent process at an **Aam Sabha meeting**, where citizens of the village come together and affirm that the village has become ODF, and that all households use toilets. The process of verification of this ODF declaration is the next step and happens within 90 days of the declaration. The Ministry has issued Guidelines for Open Defecation Free (ODF) verification dated 3rd September, 2015. The SBM (G) guidelines prescribe that verification be carried out within three months of the declaration. State Governments are conducting ODF verification using different processes, but all verifications are through a third party - inter-block teams, district teams, inter-departmental teams, hired third party agencies etc. The Ministry also carries out 3<sup>rd</sup> Party verification for ODF villages.