

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1929

ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA IN PUNJAB

1929. SHRI SUSHIL KUMAR RINKU

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) the features of the Atal Bhujal Yojana;
- (b) the details of the funds sanctioned, allocated and utilised under this yojana in Punjab during the last three years and the current year;
- (c) the details of the target fixed under this yojana along with the achievements made so far in Punjab;
- (d) whether any specific measures are being taken under Atal Bhujal Yojana to improve the efficiency of ground water use in agriculture and if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether any steps have been taken to improve and/or report prepared for examining the deteriorated ground water quality across the country, including Punjab; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) Atal Bhujal Yojana is a unique scheme which marks a paradigm shift from groundwater development to groundwater management. Salient features of the scheme include community based monitoring and sharing of groundwater data, planning, capacity building & focused Information, Education & Communication (IEC) activities. This is the first scheme to focus on demand side interventions such as micro-irrigation, crop diversification, use of pipelines etc. for conservation of groundwater. Gram Panchayat (GP) wise Water Security Plans (WSPs) having details about water budget and proposed demand side interventions such as micro-irrigation, crop diversification, use of pipelines etc, and supply side interventions such as check dams, farm ponds, recharge shafts and other artificial recharge / water conservation structures are prepared and executed through convergence of ongoing schemes.

(b) & (c) Atal Bhujal Yojana is not being implemented in Punjab.

(d) The scheme focuses on community led sustainable management of ground water. Through sustained information, education, communication (IEC) and awareness activities, it targets the behaviour of the community to orient it towards sustainable management of ground water, including improving water use efficiency through various activities. Measures taken to increase efficiency of groundwater use in agriculture include incentivizing water efficient agricultural practices like micro-irrigation, crop diversification to lesser water intensive crops, shifting over to Directly Seeded Rice (DSR), use of pipelines etc. through convergenc.

(e) & (f) Water being a State Subject, initiatives on its quality is primarily States' responsibility. However, the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under this Ministry generates ground water quality data on a regional scale, including State of Punjab, during various scientific studies and periodical ground water quality monitoring throughout the country. The various reports on ground water quality in the country, including the State of Punjab are hosted on CGWB website for further use by concerned agencies.

Apart from this, some of the important steps have been taken by the Central Government for facilitating ground water quality improvement in the country are given below:

1. Data on ground water quality available with CGWB are being shared with concerned State Governments for taking necessary remedial measures.
2. Under the National Aquifer Mapping Programme (NAQUIM) being conducted by the Ministry, special attention is being given to the aspect of ground water quality including contamination by toxic substances such as Arsenic in ground water. CGWB has successfully demonstrated the construction of arsenic safe wells in several arsenic affected areas and is actively sharing the know-how of such technology with state governments.
3. Awareness generation programs/ workshop on various aspects of ground water including preventing ground water pollution and safe use of contaminated water are being conducted periodically.
4. The measures taken for arresting the decline of water table like artificial recharge to ground water, conservation/rejuvenation of water bodies etc. effectively addresses the problem of contamination as well. In this direction, CGWB has prepared Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 and shared with States/UTs providing a broad outline of the project and expected investments. The Master Plan envisages construction of about 1.42 crore Rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the Country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of water. In Punjab, Master plan envisages about 11 Lakh Rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures to harness about 1200 Million Cubic Meter (MCM) of rain-water.
5. Government of India launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in 2019, a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach intended to improve water availability including ground water conditions in the water stressed blocks of 256 districts in India (including 20 districts in Punjab). JSA is continuing in 2023-24 also.
6. Hon'ble Prime Minister has launched Amrit Sarovar Mission on 24th April 2022. The Mission is aimed at developing and rejuvenating 75 water bodies in each district of the country as a part of celebration of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav.
7. Government of India is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, since August, 2019, in partnership with States, to make provision of potable tap water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household by 2024. Under JJM, while allocating the funds to States/ UTs, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants.
8. In addition and to complement the above efforts of the Government of India, The state government of Punjab too has taken various steps for improvement of ground water availability and quality like passing of Punjab Water Resources (Management and Regulation) Act, 2020 and constitution of The Punjab Water Regulation and Development Authority; passing of The Punjab Preservation of Sub-Soil Water Ordinance, 2008; Diversification from Paddy to Maize under National Adaptation for climate change for 2019-20; Construction of low dams to provide irrigation facilities under Bharat Nirman Program which facilitate in augmenting the Ground Water Resources of the State & in arresting the declining ground water table; Introduction of “Paani Bachao, Paisa Kamao” Scheme to check depletion of underground water by offering monetary benefits to the farmers for every unit of power they save.
