

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †809**  
ANSWERED ON 21.11.2019

**DEPLETION OF WATER LEVEL NEAR RIVERS AND RESERVOIRS**

†809. SHRI MAHABALI SINGH

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the water level is depleting faster near rivers and reservoirs in the country particularly in Bihar due to unabated mining and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has formulated any plan to check illegal mining;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether water level of around 1000 villages has further depleted due to illegal mining in Son river of Bihar as a result of which people are facing crisis during summer;
- (e) if so, whether the Government proposes to take any concrete steps to save such reservoirs and rivers from illegal mining activities; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT  
(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)

(a) to (f) Ground water levels in various parts of the Country are declining because of continuous withdrawal due to reasons such as increased demand of fresh water for various uses, vagaries of rainfall, increased population, industrialization & urbanization etc. Central Ground Water Board has not carried out any specific study on depletion of water level near rivers and reservoirs due to unabated mining in the Country.

Under Section 23C of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957 (MMDR Act 1957), the State Governments have been empowered to frame rules to prevent illegal mining. The State Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, frame such rules for preventing illegal mining, transportation and storage of minerals and for the purposes connected therewith in the state. 21 State Governments, including Bihar, have so far framed the rules under section 23C of MMDR Act, 1957 to curb illegal mining.

CGWB is periodically monitoring the ground water levels throughout the Country on a regional scale, through a network of monitoring wells. During pre-monsoon period of 2019, the water level in the mentioned area in the State of Bihar ranged between less than 5 meters below ground level (m bgl) and less than 15 m bgl. Further, in about 67% of the area, the water level has been observed above 10 m bgl.

The Dynamic Ground Water Resources of the country are being periodically assessed jointly by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and State Governments. As per the latest assessment, all the assessment units in the mentioned area in the State of Bihar has been categorised as “Safe” except Koilwar Block, which has been categorised as “Critical”. Comparison of assessment units of the mentioned area between 2013 and 2017 assessments reveals that there is no change in “Safe” category in respect of all the assessment units except Koilwar Block.

Water being a State subject, efforts to initiate suitable interventions including conservation and management of water resources is primarily States’ responsibility. However, steps taken by the Central Government in this regard are at the following URL:

[http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps\\_to\\_control\\_water\\_depletion\\_Jun2019.pdf](http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Jun2019.pdf).