

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 731
ANSWERED ON 17.09.2020
WATER SCARCITY IN KERALA

731. DR. SHASHI THAROOR

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is aware of the severe water scarcity in the State of Kerala during February - mid-May every year despite receiving an average annual rainfall of 3000 mm and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Union Government plans to urge State Government to take measures to encourage domestic households for rain water harvesting and well recharging;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Union Government to save the open wells from damage and contamination in the wake of heavy rain and floods?

ANSWER

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

- (a) Despite adequate rainfall, Kerala generally faces water scarcity from February to May in some parts of the mid land and high land areas where the terrain is highly undulating. The groundwater stored during monsoon season is generally lost as base flow at a faster rate in high gradient areas. Further, because of high gradient and low thickness of aquifers, there is limited scope of artificial recharge/rainwater harvesting in these areas.
- (b) to (d) Water being a State subject, initiatives on water management including rainwater harvesting in the Country is primarily States' responsibility. Further, Kerala has taken up 'Ente Kulam', a water conservation initiative that includes revival of water bodies.

In addition, domestic well recharge through rooftop rainwater recharge is being promoted under the "Haritha Keral Mission" by involving the gram panchayats. In addition, 12 million rainfall conservation/recharge structures were constructed under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

As per information received from Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, the Model Building Bye Laws, 2016, has been issued for guidance of the States/UTs which has a chapter on 'Rainwater Harvesting'. 33 States/UTs including Kerala have incorporated the rainwater harvesting provisions. Provision of rainwater harvesting is applicable to all residential plots above 200 sqm and all residential buildings above 100 sqm.

Water being a State subject, efforts to initiate suitable demand side and supply side interventions including preserving the open wells and its water quality is primarily States' responsibility. However, steps taken by the Central Government for sustainable water management are at the following URL:

http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Jun2019.pdf.
