

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †4991
ANSWERED ON 25.03.2021

ARSENIC AND HEAVY METALS IN GROUND WATER

†4991. SHRI PANKAJ CHAUDHARY

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken cognizance of the presence of harmful bacteria along with Arsenic and heavy metals in ground water;
- (b) whether poisonous food chain is posing health hazards to the common man due to supply of contaminated drinking water and use of such water for irrigation purpose;
- (c) whether the Government is taking any step to provide safe and contamination free drinking water to the common citizens of the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)

- (a) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) generates ground water quality data of the country on a regional scale as part of its ground water quality monitoring activity. The monitoring indicates the occurrence of contaminants such as Flouride, Arsenic, Nitrate, Iron and Heavy Metals beyond permissible limits (as per BIS) for human consumption in isolated pockets in various States / UTs.
- (b) No specific information on the matter is available. However, it is stated that consuming water with contaminants beyond BIS limits may have some adverse health effects.
- (c) & (d) Water being State subject, initiatives on water management including taking corrective action related to ground water quality in the country is primarily States' responsibility. However, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/PCCs) is implementing the provisions of The Water (Prevention & Control) Act, 1974 & The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to prevent and control pollution.

Government of India in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since August, 2019 to provide potable tap water supply of prescribed quality to every rural household in the country by 2024. Under JJM, while planning water supply schemes to provide tap water supply to households, priority is given to quality-affected habitations. While allocating the funds to States/ UTs in a particular financial year, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants including Arsenic and Fluoride, as on 31st March of the preceding Financial Year.

Since, planning, implementation and commissioning of piped water supply schemes based on a safe water source likely to take time, States/ UTs have been advised to install community water purification plants (CWPPs) in such habitations, purely as an interim measure, to provide potable water to every household at the rate of 8–10 litre per capita per day to meet their drinking and cooking requirements.

Under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) launched on 25th June, 2015 in selected 500 cities with focus on development of urban infrastructure in various sectors including water supply, States/UTs have the option to take projects on special water supply arrangements for difficult areas, hill and coastal cities, including those having water quality problems with Arsenic, Fluoride etc.

CGWB has constructed several exploratory and observation wells in the Country tapping the Arsenic safe deeper aquifer zones delineated through exploration aided detailed aquifer mapping under National Aquifer Mapping programme. Successful wells have been handed over to the State Governments for their purposeful utilization. Further, CGWB is providing technical assistance to the States by sharing the cement sealing technology for tapping contamination free aquifers in Gangetic flood plains.
