GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION

LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. 249

ANSWERED ON 12/12/2024

GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION IN PUNJAB

†***249.** SHRI SUKHJINDER SINGH RANDHAWA

SHRI SHER SINGH GHUBAYA:

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

(a) whether the groundwater in Punjab is not safe for drinking and its consumption is causing serious diseases;

(b) if so, whether the Government has a plan to test the quality of groundwater, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken/ proposed to be taken by the Government to prevent the groundwater from getting polluted;

(d) whether the Government has noted that some heavy industries are discharging their effluents into the ground through boring and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the action taken/ likely to be taken by the Government against such industries?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF JAL SHAKTI
(SHRI C R PATIL)

(a) to (e) A Statement of reply is laid on the Table of the House.

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Statement referred to in the reply to Lok Sabha Starred Question No. 249 answered on 12.12.2024

(a) & (b) Government of India, in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since August 2019 to provide potable tap water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household in the country. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, as per existing guidelines, Bureau of Indian Standards' BIS:10500 standards are adopted as benchmarks for quality of water being supplied through the piped water supply schemes.

Under JJM, while planning water supply schemes to provide tap water supply to households, priority is given to habitations affected by chemical contaminants. Under JJM, while allocating the funds to States / UTs, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants. States / UTs have been advised to plan and implement piped water supply schemes based on alternative safe water sources for the villages with water quality issues.

Water being a state subject, the responsibility of planning, approval, implementation, operation, and maintenance of drinking water supply schemes, including those under the Jal Jeevan Mission, lies with State/Union Territory (UT) Governments. The Government of India supports the States including Punjab by providing technical and financial assistance. As reported by the Government of Punjab, it has provided tap water supply to all the rural households in Punjab

Various steps have been taken by the Central Government for testing of drinking water quality in the country as under: -

i) 'Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework' has been released on 13.03.2021 for guidance to States / UT's officials and local village level functionaries to expand the water quality testing and reporting, surveillance of drinking water sources, sanitary surveys, setting up of laboratories, etc.

ii) Under JJM, upto 2% of the allocation to States/ UTs may be utilized for Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance (WQM&S) activities inter alia which includes activities like setting up and strengthening of water quality testing laboratories, procurement of equipment, instruments, chemicals, glassware, consumables, hiring of skilled manpower, surveillance by community using Field Test Kits(FTKs), awareness generation, educational programmes on water quality, NABL accreditation / recognition of laboratories, etc.

iii) Under JJM, States / UTs have been advised to carry out testing of drinking water sources once in year for chemical and physical parameters and twice in a year for bacteriological parameters. To enable States/ UTs to test water samples for water quality, and for sample collection, reporting, monitoring and surveillance of drinking water sources, an online JJM–Water Quality Management Information System (WQMIS) portal has been developed. The State–wise details of water quality test reported on WQMIS is in public domain on JJM Dashboard and can also be accessed at:

https://ejalshakti.gov.in/WQMIS/

iv) States / UTs have been advised to identify and train 5 persons preferably women in each village from local community viz. ASHA workers, health workers, Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC) members, teachers, etc. to conduct water quality tests using FTKs/ bacteriological vials at village level and report the same on the portal. More than 24.77 lakh women have been trained to do FTK tests for water quality and more than 73.92 lakh tests have been conducted in FY 2024-25.

v) More than 2160 water quality testing laboratories have been set up in States / UTs and more than 53 lakh samples have been tested under JJM.

vi) A Handbook on Drinking Water Treatment Technologies was released in March 2023 to disseminate information regarding new technologies available amongst all stakeholders to improve the performance and implementation drinking water treatment plants using technologies that address local issues and challenges faced in water-quality affected villages. The States may take up appropriate water treatment system depending upon techno-economic feasibility.

Government of Punjab has reported that it conducts regular testing of its own water supply sources i.e. once for chemical parameters and twice for bacteriological parameters (pre-& post monsoon). During 2023-24, as reported by Punjab on JJM-WQMIS portal, 33,107 water samples have been tested in water testing laboratories and 1,46,504 water samples using Field Testing Kits. As on 09.12.2024, 46,397 samples in labs and 1,01,793 samples using FTKs have been tested so far during 2024-25 in the State.

(c) The Central Ground water Board has taken following steps for facilitating ground water quality improvement/ remediation of contamination in the country, as given below:

i) Data on ground water quality available with CGWB are made available in public domain through reports as well as through the web site (http://www.cgwb.gov.in) for use by various stakeholders. The data is also shared with concerned State Governments for taking necessary remedial measures.

ii) National Aquifer Mapping Studies have been carried out in State of Punjab for an area of 50369 Sq km. Based on NAQUIM studies, groundwater management plans have been prepared and reports have been shared with State and District Authorities for implementation.

iii) Under the National Aquifer Mapping Programme (NAQUIM) of CGWB, special attention is being given to the aspect of ground water quality including contamination by toxic substances such as Arsenic in ground water. CGWB is successfully constructing Arsenic free wells in arsenic affected areas using the cement sealing technology for tapping contamination free aquifers and also providing technical assistance to state departments in Fluoride mitigation.

iv) Awareness generation programs / workshops on various aspects of ground water including preventing ground water pollution and safe use of contaminated water are being conducted by CGWB periodically.

The State Government of Punjab has also set-up a dedicated Directorate of Ground Water Management, with the prime objective of conserving and managing water resources.

(d) & (e): As reported by Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB), all the industries including water polluting industries are being regularly monitored and physically checked by Punjab Pollution Control Board as per the mandate schedule. None of the industries are discharging their effluents into the ground through boring as per the record of PPCB.

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