

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 48
ANSWERED ON 29/01/2026

DRINKING WATER ISSUES IN KERALA

48. DR. SHASHI THAROOR:

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) the current status of rural piped drinking water coverage under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Kerala and the reasons for delays in achieving full coverage compared to national targets;
- (b) whether instances of Hepatitis-A and other waterborne diseases reported recently in Kerala have been linked to contamination of drinking water supplies and if so, the details and the findings thereof;
- (c) the measures being taken to ensure water quality in affected areas including super-chlorination and repair of leakages in water distribution systems; and
- (d) the steps proposed to be taken to prevent recurrence of such outbreaks in Kerala and across the country due to water contamination?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI V. SOMANNA)

- (a) Since August 2019, Government of India is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, in partnership with States/ UTs including Kerala, to make provision of safe and adequate tap water connection to every rural household of the country.

As reported by the state of Kerala on JJM-IMIS, at the start of JJM on 15.08.2019, only 16.64 lakh (23.51%) rural households had tap water connections. Since then, around 22.17 lakh additional rural households have been provided with tap water connections. Thus, as on 27.01.2026, out of 70.77 lakh rural households in state, the provision of tap water connections is available to 38.81 lakh (54.85%) rural households.

As informed by the State government of Kerala, the delays in implementation of JJM are due to factors such as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, floods, heavy rains, shortage in funds, delays in obtaining hindrance-free land, issues related to permissions for road cutting and seasonal bans, delays in obtaining clearances from other agencies etc.

- (b) As informed by State government of Kerala, no recent instances of Hepatitis A or other waterborne diseases in Kerala have been conclusively linked to contamination of drinking water supplied by the Kerala Water Authority. However, an incident was reported from the Vengoor area of Ernakulam district in April 2024, where cases of Hepatitis A were reported. Water samples were collected from pipelines and tested and found to be within

permissible quality standards and free from contamination. During this period, the area was facing acute water scarcity due to drought, and residents were dependent on alternate water sources, which may have contributed to the occurrence of the disease.

(c) As informed by state government of Kerala, stringent measures have been taken to ensure the safety and quality of drinking water supplied to safeguard public health which includes:

- i.) Ensuring residual chlorine levels of not less than 0.2 ppm at end points.
- ii.) Regular inspection and prompt repair of leakages in transmission and distribution pipelines are undertaken to prevent contamination.
- iii.) Periodic cleaning and chlorination of storage tanks, reservoirs and treatment plants are carried out as per prescribed intervals.
- iv.) Multi-stage water quality testing is conducted at the source, treatment plant and distribution levels through the in-house quality wing of Kerala Water Authority.

(d) Under JJM, water quality monitoring and surveillance (WQM&S) has been given utmost priority. Through various communications, review meetings, workshops and conferences, this department has advised States/ UTs to review the status of disinfection being done in piped water supply schemes. An advisory has also been issued highlighting the following actions to be taken by States/ UTs for protecting everyone's health from waterborne diseases:

- i.) Intensify WQM&S by doing regular testing pipe water supply at various testing points as recommended in "Concise Handbook for Monitoring Water Quality of Piped Water Supply to Rural Households", released by Department in December 2024;
- ii.) Undertake prompt appropriate remedial measures for all water samples reported contaminated to ensure that quality of water being supplied through household tap water connections in all habitations, is of prescribed quality; and
- iii.) Review status of disinfection being done in piped drinking water supply schemes in State for protection against bacteriological contamination and to prevent re-growth of pathogens in distribution system till point of delivery for consumption.

Furthermore, state government of Kerala is also taking following measures to prevent recurrence of water borne disease outbreaks such as Hepatitis A, amoebic infections and similar illnesses:

- i.) Encouraging the use of treated drinking water and discouraging unsafe alternate sources.
- ii.) Prompt identification and rectification of leaks and other potential risks of contamination to ensure uninterrupted safe water supply.
- iii.) Ensure water quality surveillance in all schemes and taking corrective action.
- iv.) Creating public awareness on safe storage and use of drinking water, particularly during periods of water scarcity.
- v.) Coordination with Health Department and Local Self-Government Institutions for early detection and rapid response to disease outbreaks.
- vi.) Capacity building and regular training of operational staff on water safety and emergency response.
