

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1588
ANSWERED ON:29.11.2000
CONTAMINATED GROUND WATER
N.N. KRISHNADAS;S.P. LEPCHA

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Union Government are aware that three lakhs people are affected by arsenic poisoning of ground water in nine districts of West Bengal and about four crore people are at risk;

(b) if so, the facts thereof; and

(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to control the situation?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

(SMT. BJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per information received from the Public Health Engineering Department of Government of West Bengal, 57.81 lakh people are at risk zone in 67 blocks of 8 arsenic affected districts of the State. Data regarding population affected by arsenic poisoning is not available with the State Government.

(c) Action taken to contain the problem of arsenic contamination include the following:

(1) The State Government of West Bengal in collaboration with and financial support from the Government of India has sanctioned the following schemes:

(i) A First Phase Action Plan at a cost of Rs. 858.33 lakh under which replacement of arsenic affected spot sources and big diameter tubewells have been completed and four water supply schemes commissioned.

(ii) A surface water based piped water supply scheme has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 8848 lakh for Malda district.

(iii) A surface water based piped water supply scheme for arsenic affected areas of South 24 Parganas district has been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 232.84 crore.

(iv) Preparation of a perspective plan at a total cost of Rs.750.00 crore including long term and short term measures to tackle arsenic contamination. Some of the salient features of the plan are-replacement of tubewells by deeper ones, construction of new piped water supply schemes, sanitary protected rig wells and rain water harvesting structures for immediate relief, establishment of surface water based piped water supply schemes and establishing new spot sources.

(2) The All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health under the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has undertaken epidemiological study in arsenic affected areas.

(3) Several Research and Development projects have been sanctioned under the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission of the Ministry of Rural Development as indicated below:

(i) Sub-Mission Project on arsenic pollution in ground water in West Bengal at a project cost of Rs.10.82 lakh by the School of Tropical Medicines and All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health.

(ii) Study of arsenic contamination in six districts of West Bengal at a project cost of Rs. 4.13 lakh.

(iii) R&D project on epidemiological study for assessing toxicity in chronic arsenic affected areas at a project cost of Rs.4.93 lakh. The study has been carried out by the Institute of Post Graduate Medical Education and Research, Calcutta.

(iv) R&D projects on control of arsenic and other chemical pollutants approved at a project cost of Rs.74.00 lakh. The study has been entrusted to the Presidency College, Calcutta.

(v) Development of low cost filtering medium for removal of arsenic from ground water approved by the Government of India at a project cost of Rs. 3.30 lakh. The study has been entrusted to the National Metallurgical Laboratory, Jamshedpur.

(vi) Study of geology and geo-chemistry of arsenic occurrences in ground water of six districts in West Bengal approved by the Government of India at the project cost of Rs. 4.78 lakh. The study has been entrusted to the Centre for Study of Man and Environment, Calcutta for arsenic related diseases.