

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2857

ANSWERED ON:17.12.2004

CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER

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Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that millions of people living in around 2 lakh habitations all over the country are facing health hazards as they are compelled to consume water with high fluoride content, iron, nitrate, arsenic and salinity in various parts of India;
- (b) if so, the number of habitations drinking contaminated water beyond permissible limits in various States;
- (c) whether the Government has formulated any policy to ensure that safe drinking water is available to habitations throughout the country;
- (d) if so, the details in this regard;
- (e) whether the Government has received any request from States regarding solution to this problem; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof, State-wise along with the action taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI A. NARENDRA)

(a) & (b) As per water quality survey ordered in March 2000, State Governments reported 2,16,968 rural habitations with drinking water quality problems. Out of these, 31306 habitations are affected with excess fluoride, 23,495 with excess salinity, 1,18,088 with excess iron, 5,029 with excess arsenic, 13,958 with excess nitrate and 25,092 habitations having multiple water quality problems. In the quality-affected habitations, State Governments make alternative arrangements either through domestic and community based treatment units or through water drawn from contamination free aquifers or surface water bodies.

(c) & (d) Rural drinking water is a State subject. Government of India provides financial and technical assistance to States to accelerate coverage of rural habitations through a centrally sponsored scheme, namely Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). Helping State Governments in tackling water-quality problems in the rural areas is one of the objectives of Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM), Department of Drinking Water Supply. Sub-Mission programmes were introduced in 1992-93 to tackle water quality and sustainability problems. Till 31/3/1998, 120 projects at an outlay of Rs 1342 crore under Sub-mission programme were sanctioned to tackle water quality problems on the funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State. These were implemented by the State Government. With effect from 1/4/1998, however, the power to sanction projects under Sub-mission programme were delegated to the State Governments. There is no change in funding pattern of 75:25 between Centre and State for tackling water quality problems. 15% of ARWSP funds released to States are earmarked for tackling water quality problems. Fully covered States can spend higher proportion of funds on projects for tackling water-quality problems, with prior approval of the Central Government.

(e) & (f) Proposals from Andhra Pradesh for coverage of 2682 fluoride affected habitations at an estimated outlay of Rs 675 crore, 6 schemes for providing arsenic free water from West Bengal at a cost of Rs 1166 crore, 12 projects for 41072 water quality affected habitations at a total cost of Rs. 6660 crore from Rajasthan were received. As State Governments are fully empowered to sanction projects for tackling water quality problems, they need not approach the Central Government for the same.