

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
RURAL DEVELOPMENT  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1326

ANSWERED ON:02.08.2010

SAFE DRINKING WATER

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**Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether number of villages are suffering either due to lack of access to safe/clean drinking water or contaminated water in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if so, whether the Government has conducted any survey in this regard;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (e) the names of the States worst affected with contaminated water due to harmful chemicals; and
- (f) the steps taken by the Government to ensure safe and clean drinking water to rural people in the most affected areas in the country?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT(MS. AGATHA SANGMA)

(a)to(d): State Government Departments/Boards dealing with rural water supply regularly conduct water quality tests of samples from drinking water sources in the rural habitations and update the data online. State Governments also update the coverage status of habitations into the online Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) developed by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India periodically. As per the online IMIS, as on 27/7/2010, State Governments have reported that in 11.44 lakh habitations the population is fully covered with safe drinking water in adequate quantity out of a total of 16.61 lakh rural habitations in the country. They have also reported that 70,912 habitations are having 0% population coverage. State/ UT-wise status of coverage of habitations is at Annex-1. There are altogether 1.44 lakh rural habitations with ground water based drinking water sources affected by chemical contaminations like excess arsenic, fluoride, salinity, iron and nitrate that are remaining to be covered with safe drinking water. State/UT wise distribution of the remaining water quality affected habitations are at Annex-2.

(e) Out of the chemical contaminations reported, consumption of drinking water with excess arsenic and fluoride over a prolonged period could result in various diseases. As on 27/7/2010, the states worst affected with arsenic include West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Assam, while the states worst affected with fluoride include Rajasthan, Bihar, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

(f) Rural drinking water supply is a State subject. Government of India assists the State Governments technically and financially through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). NRDWP funds are allocated to the States as per approved criteria. States have been vested with the powers to plan, approve and implement water supply schemes under NRDWP. State Governments can utilize upto 65% of the funds allocated to them for coverage of habitations and for tackling water quality problems. In order to ensure sustainability of drinking water sources and to reduce contamination levels of fluoride, iron and salinity in drinking water sources, artificial recharge of groundwater aquifers can also be taken up. For this purpose, 20% of NRDWP funds are earmarked as the Sustainability component for which 100% central assistance is provided.