

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ATOMIC ENERGY  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4077

ANSWERED ON:18.08.2010

URANIUM CONTAMINATION

Badal Harsimrat Kaur;Bapurao Shri Khatgaonkar Patil Bhaskarrao;Gaikwad Shri Eknath Mahadeo;Tewari Shri Manish;Yaskhi Shri Madhu Goud

**Will the Minister of ATOMIC ENERGY be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether high levels of Uranium contamination has taken place in the Malwa region of Punjab;
- (b) if so, the extent of damage caused to this region;
- (c) whether a German company called Micro-Trace Minerals Limited has conducted a study that has revealed that hair samples of 80% of 149 neurologically disabled children contain very high levels of Uranium as reported in the media;
- (d) if so, whether the Government has conducted any study to validate the source of Uranium contamination;
- (e) if so, the outcome thereof;
- (f) whether it is relatable to depleted Uranium used in military arsenal in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- (g) if so, the details thereof;
- (h) whether it is also a fact that very high levels of dangerous heavy metals in the water bodies of Malwa region has also been discerned; and
- (i) if so, the action plan of the Government to clean up this mess in Punjab which may become another Bhopal?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AND EARTH SCIENCES (INDEPENDENT CHARGE), PMO, PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN):

- (a) Yes, Sir. The high levels of Uranium content in drinking water in some of the locations in Malwa region of Punjab have been observed.
- (b) Gurunanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar has been conducting extensive sampling of water from Malwa region of Punjab. Once detailed analysis is carried out of these samples, the impact can be assessed.
- (c) Yes, Sir, the Government has seen media reports that a resounding document from Germany's Microtrace Mineral Lab has revealed that hair samples of 80% of 149 neurologically disabled children mainly from southern Malwa region have high levels of Uranium.
- (d) & (e) Gurunanak Dev University (GNDU) is conducting a study under the Board of Research in Nuclear Science (BRNS) project of the Department of Atomic Energy.
- (f) & (g) Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) analysed a few samples for Uranium isotopic contents. The study shows that the Uranium present in the water samples is natural Uranium and not depleted Uranium.
- (h) & (i) The study carried out by GNDU, Amritsar and Central Soil Salinity Research Institute, Karnal, Haryana shows that the ground water is contaminated with heavy metals like As, Pb, Cd and Ni in Malwa region. The levels of these heavy metals are higher than the levels prescribed by WHO in drinking water.

Department of Atomic Energy awarded a BRNS project to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar for a comprehensive study for Uranium content in various environmental matrices including ground and surface water.