

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5970

ANSWERED ON:08.09.2011

DRINKING WATER STANDARD

Adhalrao Patil Shri Shivaji; Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba; Dharmshi Shri Babar Gajanan; Yadav Shri Dharmendra

Will the Minister of DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the current legal environment for enforcing and regulating drinking water standards is weak in the country;
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) whether the Union Government has decided to put in place an appropriate legal and institutional mechanism to define quality standards; build operator capacity; provide financial support and ensure compliance to ensure safety of potable water across the country;
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government in this regard;
- (e) whether there is proposal to have a national regulatory agency ; and
- (f) if so, the time by when the final decision is likely to be taken by the Union Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) & (b): Drinking water supply is a State subject. At present, the Drinking water specification laid down by Bureau of Indian Standards in its IS-10500 standard is a voluntary standard and is not mandatory.

(c)&(d): The Government of India assists the State Governments financially and technically in providing safe drinking water to the rural population of the country through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). Upto 65% of funds under NRDWP released to States could be utilized for implementing schemes for coverage and addressing water quality problems so as to provide safe drinking water in the rural areas of the country. In urban areas, technical and financial support is provided to the State Governments for providing safe drinking water through the centrally sponsored schemes of Urban Infrastructure Development for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM). In addition, Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) programme provides financial support to North-East States, both for urban and rural water supply schemes. The Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organization under the Ministry of Urban Development has developed and published its Manual which include guidelines for providing safe drinking water. NRDWP guidelines indicate that water is safe for drinking purposes if the bacteriological and chemical parameters are within the prescribed limits of Bureau of Indian Standards IS-10500. Upto 5% of NRDWP funds released to the States can be utilized to build capacities of State officials including water operators, establish/ upgrade district and sub-district water quality testing laboratories, provide refills/ field test kits to Gram Panchayats for testing quality of drinking water in their jurisdictional areas.

(e)&(f): The Ministry of Environment & Forests vide its Order dated 29th May 2001 has constituted the 'Water Quality Assessment Authority' (WQAA) which can direct agencies (government/local bodies/non-governmental) to standardize method(s) for water quality monitoring and to review the status of quality of national water resources and identify 'hotspots' for taking necessary actions for improvement in water quality. The WQAA can also give directions to constitute/set-up State-level Water Quality Review Committees (WQRC).