

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:650

ANSWERED ON:15.03.2012

CHEMICALS IN DRINKING WATER

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

- (a) whether excessive quantity of arsenic/other chemicals have been found in drinking water in various parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise;
- (c) whether some cases of adverse effects on health due to presence of such chemicals in drinking water have also been reported in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (e) the steps taken by the Government to check such health hazards and to provide safe drinking water in the country?

Answer

MINISTER OF DRINKING WATER AND SANITATION (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a)&(b): As reported by the State Government Departments dealing with rural drinking water supply into the online Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the Ministry, there are about 1.21 lakh rural habitations suffering from excess arsenic, fluoride, iron, salinity or nitrate in some drinking water sources that remain to be provided with safe drinking water, as on 1/4/2011. State-wise list of number of such habitations, chemical contaminant-wise is at Annexure.

(c)&(d): Prolonged consumption of drinking water with arsenic in excess of permissible limits could lead to arsenicosis (keratosis and/or melanosis) disease. During various review meetings and Workshops, this was reported in the States of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka & Assam. Prolonged consumption of drinking water with fluoride in excess of permissible limits could lead to dental, skeletal and non-skeletal fluorosis disease. This was reported in the States like Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra. Excess iron and/or salinity in drinking water is unacceptable to people because of aesthetics and taste and/or odour. Excess nitrate in drinking water could lead to methemoglobinemia (blue baby syndrome) especially in infants.

(e): Rural drinking water supply is a State subject. Government of India supplements the efforts of the State Governments technically and financially through the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) in providing safe drinking water to the rural population in the country. Up to 62% of funds provided under NRDWP could be utilized for coverage/ tackling water quality problems. As an immediate measure, States have been advised to make 'clear demarcation' of such contaminated sources by colouring them and to create awareness amongst the local people to use water from these sources for purposes other than drinking and cooking purposes. Many State Governments have taken up implementation of in situ treatment plants for removal of excess chemical contamination in drinking water sources, as a short term measure. In the medium and long term measures, State Governments are advised to provide safe drinking water through piped water supply from safe water bodies.