

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1909
ANSWERED ON:23.08.2012
ABSTRACTION OF GROUNDWATER
Jindal Shri Naveen

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether according to a recent report by United Nations World Water Development published in March, 2012, India is the top groundwater abstracting country in the world and its annual abstraction is more than double of the second country in that list;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the Government's reaction thereto;
- (c) whether the agriculture sector accounts for more than 80 per cent of our total ground water extraction whereas water for agricultural usage remains highly subsidized which leads to its misuse;
- (d) if so, the details thereof;
- (e) whether the Government has taken any steps/proposes to take any steps by partnering with the State Governments, to achieve rationalised usage of ground water including in the agriculture sector; and
- (f) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES & MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

(a) & (b) Yes, Madam. According to the United Nations World Water Development Report 4 published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2012, India is the topmost groundwater abstracting country in the world as of 2010 with abstraction rate of 251 km³/year, which is more than double the second country in the list i.e. China with an abstraction rate of 112 km³/year.

As per latest assessment of ground water resources carried out jointly by Central Ground Water Board and State Ground Water Organizations, as of 2009, annual ground water withdrawal has been estimated as 243 billion cubic metres (km³/year). Over-exploitation of ground water in certain areas in the country has led to decline in ground water levels. Central Ground Water Board/ Ministry of Water Resources is undertaking various measures for regulated development of ground water resources, augmentation through rain water harvesting and artificial recharge, water conservation etc.

(c) As per the assessment, annual ground water withdrawal for agriculture sector in the country is 221 bcm, which is ~ 91% of total annual ground water withdrawal. As per the Planning Commission's report on 'Groundwater Management & Ownership' (2007), the problem of over-exploitation of ground water has been compounded by the availability of cheap/ subsidized or even free power in many states, since power is a main component of the cost of ground water. In many States, electricity for agricultural pumpsets is provided either free or at subsidized rates, which may lead to misuse of groundwater. Moreover, electric supply is not metered and a flat tariff is charged depending on the horsepower of the pump.

(d) Central Ground Water Board does not maintain information on subsidy provided in various States. However, details of subsidy for agriculture (as on 2001-02) as per the Planning Commission's report on 'Groundwater Management & Ownership' are furnished in Annexure I.

(e) & (f) 'Water' being a State subject, necessary measures for promoting rationalized use of ground water are undertaken by the respective State agencies. There is no proposal in Central Ground Water Board to achieve rationalized usage of ground water in partnership with the States. However, Central Ground Water Board undertakes IEC activities to promote water conservation, rain water harvesting and artificial recharge measures.