

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1619
ANSWERED ON:30.11.2009
SAFE DRINKING WATER IN RURAL AREAS
Jagannath Dr. M.

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether per capita availability of renewable fresh water has fallen drastically over the last 20 years;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the details of constraints of access to safe drinking water in rural areas of the country; and
- (d) the measures taken/to be taken by the Government to enhance the access to safe drinking water in the country?

Answer

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

(a)&(b): Yes, Sir. The increase in population results in decline in per capita water availability. The Ministry of Water Resources has assessed that the per capita water availability as per the 1951 Census was 5177 cubic meter and that as per 2001 Census has been worked out as 1820 cubic meter.

(c)&(d): The constraints to access to safe drinking water in rural areas are, inter alia, sources going dry, lowering of the ground water table, systems outliving their lives, increase in population resulting in lower per capita availability, ground water becomes chemically contaminated, etc. The entire strategy and focus of the Department and its current programme in the field is towards ensuring sustainability in all drinking water schemes, so that access to drinking water is improved. The steps taken to expedite access to drinking water in rural areas are, inter-alia:

Increased budgetary support during the Bharat Nirman period. The central allocation increased from Rs. 2900 crore in 2004-05 to Rs. 4050 crore in 2005-06, Rs. 5200 crore in 2006-07, Rs. 6500 crore in 2007-08, Rs. 7300 crore in 2008-09 and Rs. 8000 crore in 2009-10.

Promoting conjunctive use of surface water, groundwater and rainwater.

Encouraging sustainability of drinking water sources by providing enhanced Central assistance.

Encouraging convergence with existing government programmes like NREGS and other Soil and Water Conservation Programmes to augment availability of water.

For economically weaker states of North-East and Jammu & Kashmir, the fund sharing pattern has been liberalized from the previous 50:50 (Centre: State) to 90:10 (Centre: State) to ensure that they have sufficient funds to implement drinking water schemes.