

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3659

ANSWERED ON:13.02.2014

WATER AS A HUMAN RIGHT

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

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government has prioritized water security in its common minimum programme and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the extent to which the water security has been achieved;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps to declare water as a basic human right;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

THE HON'BLE MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE AND WATER RESOURCES (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD)

(a) Augmenting the availability of water for utilization to meet the increasing demands on water through various measures viz creation of storages, increasing water use efficiency and arresting declining ground water levels in over-exploited areas; providing drinking water to all sections in urban and rural areas, augmenting the availability of drinking water sources are some of the priority issues in the water sector.

(b) The average annual water availability for the country has been assessed as 1869 billion cubic meters (BCM). Due to topographic, hydrological and other constraints, the utilizable water has been estimated to be about 1121 BCM, comprising of 690 BCM surface water and 431 BCM of replenishable ground water. The National Commission for Integrated Water Resources Development (NCIWRD), in its report in 1999, assessed that the annual water requirement by the year 2025 and 2050 will be about 843 BCM and 1180 BCM respectively.

Several steps for augmentation, conservation and efficient management to ensure sustainability of water resources are undertaken by the respective State Governments. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Government of India provides technical and financial assistance to State Governments through various schemes and programmes. As a result of the efforts of the Central and State Governments, the total live storage capacity of about 253.388 Billion Cubic Meters has been created in the country.

(c) to (e) The National Water Policy, 2012 has inter-alia made the following recommendations relating to water security and treating water as a basic amenity:-

Water needs to be managed as a common pool community resource held, by the state, under public trust doctrine to achieve food security, support livelihood, and ensure equitable and sustainable development for all.

Safe Water for drinking and sanitation should be considered as pre-emptive needs, followed by high priority allocation for other basic domestic needs (including needs of animals), achieving food security, supporting sustenance agriculture and minimum ecosystem needs. Available water, after meeting the above needs, should be allocated in a manner to promote its conservation and efficient use etc.