

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:117

ANSWERED ON:03.03.2015

POLLUTION DUE TO INDISCRIMINATE SAND MINING

Reddy Shri Ponguleti Srinivasa

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether indiscriminate sand mining across the country is causing pollution of underground water and depleting the water table/level and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether as per the Report of the Central Underground Water Board, the underground water is contaminated with fluoride, iron and arsenic causing several diseases and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check indiscriminate sand mining;
- (d) whether the Government is planning to conduct 'Sand Audit'; and
- (e) if so, the details and objectives thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (e): A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 117 FOR ANSWER ON 03.03.2015 REGARDING "POLLUTION DUE TO INDISCRIMINATE SAND MINING".

(a): No such report is available with the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to establish that indiscriminate sand mining across the country is causing pollution of underground water and depleting the water table/level.

(b): As per information provided by the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), the analysis of ground water samples carried out in shallow aquifers in some parts of the country, showed higher concentration of Arsenic, Nitrate, Fluoride and Heavy Metals beyond the norms prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards. They have also informed that they have not carried out any study on adverse effect of ground water contamination on human health.

(c): Sand mining is regulated in terms of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 and the Mineral Concession Rules framed by the State Governments. Further, the projects of sand mining require prior environmental clearance as per the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006, as amended from time to time framed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The enforcement of various legal provisions with a view to containing the menace of illegal mining of minor minerals including sand mining is largely in the domain of the State Governments.

Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) had earlier constituted a Group in 2009 to look into the environmental aspects associated with mining of minor minerals. The recommendations were sent to all States for implementing with request for incorporating in the Mineral Concessions Rules for mining of minor minerals u/s 15 of the MMDR Act, 1957. Besides this the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order dated 27.02.2012 in SLP(C) Nos.19628-19629 of 2009 titled Deepak Kumar etc. Vs. State of Haryana & Ors., inter-alia directed the State Governments to take immediate steps to frame necessary rules u/s 15 of the MMDR Act taking into consideration the recommendations of aforesaid report of MoEF&CC and model guidelines framed by Ministry of Mines, Government of India. The MoEF&CC while according environmental clearance for sand mining projects, the Expert Appraisal Committee insists on sand replenishment study to ensure that sand extraction is not allowed beyond replenishment potential of the River.

(d): As per the information provided by the Ministry of Mines no such sand audit is planned.

(e): Does not arise in view of reply given to (d) above.