

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:6678  
ANSWERED ON:07.05.2015  
WATER SUPPLY  
Chowdhury Shri Adhir Ranjan

**Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether World Bank has observed that the situation of drinking water supply in Sunderbans is very poor and requires immediate attention;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the action taken thereon;
- (c) whether large number of diarrhea oases were reported from Sunderbans in the past; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and concrete steps taken by the Government to tackle the problem?

**Answer**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION  
(PROF.SANWAR LAL JAT)

(a)&(b) Yes, Madam. The World Bank in its recent report - Building Resilience for Sustainable Development of the Sunderbans has pointed out poor situation of drinking water supply in Sudarbans. The report highlights scarcity of sweet water due to saline intrusion, limited availability of sweet water aquifers and submergence of water sources during floods and irregular supply of good quality bleaching powder for disinfection. Govt of West Bengal has commissioned Rural Water Supply Schemes in 372 villages covering 12.60 lakh populations in North 24 Parganas and South Parganas Districts. Government of West Bengal is implementing a programme to raise the height of tube-wells to avoid their submergence. Some pilot projects have successfully recharged aquifers with rainwater to reduce the salinity.

(c)&(d) As per the report of World Bank, there were an estimated 1925 deaths and over 1.5 million cases of diarrhoea in the Sunderbans in 2008. Under West Bengal Action Plan on Climate Change, Sunderbans has been identified for improving the condition of drinking water supply also. Sunderbans Development Board is taking effective steps to develop water related infrastructure in the region. Rs.100 crore each has been earmarked under HSc 13th Plan for surface water treatment plants in Saline Coastal Zones. Some solar pumps have also been installed and a desalination plant with RO has been commissioned for providing saline-free water. Further, in arsenic-prone zones, Public Health Engineering Department of West Bengal is providing safe water through an arsenic mitigation plant.