

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1384

ANSWERED ON:18.07.2014

HEALTH PROBLEMS DUE TO CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER

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Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a number of health problems and deaths on account of consumption of contaminated water, particularly arsenic contaminated water have been reported from various parts of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof during each of the last three years and the current year, State/UT-wise;
- (c) whether the Government has conducted any survey/study in this regard and if so, the details and the outcome thereof;
- (d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government for the healthcare and treatment of people affected by contaminated water in the country; and
- (e) whether the Government has undertaken/proposes to undertake any medical survey of the population living in the vicinity of industrial plant sites to ascertain adverse effect of water contamination on their health and if so, the details and the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. HARSH VARDHAN)

(a) & (b): Consumption of contaminated drinking water can cause diseases such as Acute Diarrhoeal Diseases, Enteric Fever (Typhoid), Viral Hepatitis, Cholera and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES). State/UT-wise number of cases and deaths due to these diseases, as reported by State/UT Governments, during the years 2011-2014 are given in Annexures – I to V.

Prolonged drinking of arsenic contaminated water may lead to adverse health impacts, data for which is not collected routinely.

(c) to (e): All India Institute of Hygiene & Public Health (AIIPH), Kolkata undertook a survey under the Indo-Canada Environment Facility (ICEF) projects (1999-2007) in six Districts of West Bengal namely South 24 Parganas, North 24 Parganas, Bardwan, Nadia, Murshidabad and Malda covering about 400 villages. 957 cases of Arsenicosis were detected (2003-05) out of which 12 deaths were reported. In addition 40 villages of Sahebganj district of Jharkhand were also covered in which 32 cases were detected. In this project 14 different NGOs were involved and more than 100 Arsenic removal plants were installed and awareness programmes were organized in the selected districts.

Provision of safe drinking water is the main strategy to control diseases caused by drinking of contaminated water. Rural water supply is a State subject. Government of India supplements efforts of the States by providing technical and financial assistance under the centrally sponsored National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) for providing safe and adequate drinking water supply facilities in rural areas of the country. Further, 5% of NRDWP funds are earmarked and allocated to those States facing problems of chemical contamination in drinking water and with Japanese Encephalitis and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome affected high priority districts. Upto 67% of the NRDWP funds allocated to States can be utilized for tackling water quality problems in rural areas. In addition, Government of India provides 3% NRDWP funds on 100% central assistance basis to States for water quality monitoring and surveillance, which inter alia include taking up works relating to setting up of new or up-gradation of district/sub-district water quality testing laboratories, providing chemicals and consumables to laboratories, providing field test kits/refills to Gram Panchayats etc.

Further, National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Delhi provides technical assistance to State/UT Governments on prevention and control of water-borne diseases in carrying out investigation of outbreaks of such diseases under Integrated Disease Surveillance Project (IDSP). At the national level, NCDC also coordinates laboratory support for outbreak investigations, besides conducting regular training courses for development of trained manpower.