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Title : Need to provide central assistance to the state government of Tamil Nadu for providing potable water in the region affected by high fluoride contents in ground water.

SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN (DHARMAPURI): Madam, I would like to draw the attention of the Government, through you, to the most important issue concerning our health.

Madam, I come from the most backward district of Dharmapuri of Tamil Nadu, which is my constituency also. In my district, there is a high concentration of endemic fluoride in drinking water sources and it ranks the highest in the State of Tamil Nadu. Around 40 per cent of the water sources in Dharmapuri and adjoining Krishnagiri districts were found fluoride-contaminated compared with the State average of 6.9 per cent. According to health officials, dental fluorosis occurs mainly due to heavy ingestion of fluoride from the foetal stage up to 12 years. When pregnant women drink fluoride infected water, the foetus also gets affected. Hence, mother and inborn child both are badly affected. Skeletal and non-skeletal fluorosis is characterised by pain in bones and joints, stiff back, burning sensation, muscle weakness, chronic fatigue, gastrointestinal disorders and loss of appetite.

Madam, the Government of Tamil Nadu -- to address this burning issue -- has initiated the Hogenakkal Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme, which is in its preliminary stage. In the meanwhile, as an urgent interim arrangement, it is necessary to chalk out an alternative water supply scheme, through the Central Government, for the welfare of the district of Dharmapuri that is not only suffering from shortage of potable water, but its groundwater level has also depleted. Further, the existing water level was also contaminated with a high content of fluoride, which is causing various diseases. Therefore, there is an urgent need to address this endemic problem.

MADAM SPEAKER: Please conclude.

SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN : The supply of protected drinking water to all villages was incorporated in the Tenth Five-Year Plan, but people in many parts of Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri still depend upon the groundwater, which has high content of fluoride.

MADAM SPEAKER: Hon. Member, just mention what you want from the Central Government and conclude.

SHRI R. THAMARAISELVAN : In these circumstances, I would urge upon the Government of India to extend a helping hand to the State Government of Tamil Nadu, which is doing its best to provide potable water to all the villages in entire Tamil Nadu so that together we can give relief to the people of Tamil Nadu -- including the people of Dharmapuri and Krishnagiri -- as far as their drinking water problem is concerned. Thank you.