

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2968
ANSWERED ON 05.12.2019

SCARCITY OF WATER IN HIMALAYAN REGION

2968. SHRI JAMYANG TSERING NAMGYAL

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that crop fields in the Himalayan region are glacier fed and that the receding snow fall and glaciers causes scarcity of water in such areas especially in Ladakh and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government is taking any steps to tackle the scarcity of water including ground water in Ladakh; and
- (c) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT

(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)

(a) Areas falling in the Himalayan region comprising the UTs of Jammu Kashmir, Leh-Ladakh and the States of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh do have crop fields which are fed by the snow and glaciers besides the monsoon rains. Snow and glacier are perennial source of water for rivers originating from the Himalayas. Glaciers receive and accumulate snow in winter and release melt water in summer through surface flow, ground water seepage, etc. Melting of snow & glacier is a natural process, although the amount of melting varies with time and prevailing weather condition of the area. Presently, due to global warming, the glaciers are melting faster than accumulation. Since, melting glaciers are not the primary source for the river discharge; there is no cause of concern for water scarcity in mountainous rivers in the immediate future.

(b) & (c) Water being a State subject, steps for augmentation, conservation and efficient management of water resources are primarily undertaken by the respective State Governments. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Central Government provides technical and financial assistance to them through various schemes and programmes.

Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) - a campaign for water conservation and water security in 256 water stressed districts of the country. During the campaign, officers, groundwater experts and scientists from the Government of India will work together with State and district officials in India's most water-stressed districts for water conservation and water resource management. In Ladakh, Jal Shakti Abhiyan was taken up in Kargil district.

Central Ground Water Board is implementing a nationwide programme of "National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM)" for mapping of aquifers (Water bearing formations), their characterization and development of aquifer management plans to facilitate sustainable development of ground water resources. Aquifer maps and management plans have been shared with the respective State Government agencies. In Ladakh, NAQUIM programme was taken up in Leh and Kargil districts.

Some initiatives/measures taken by Central Government to control water depletion and promote rain water harvesting / conservation are available at the URL:

http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Jun2019.pdf
