GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 830
ANSWERED ON 06.02.2020

CONTAMINATION OF GROUND WATER

830. SHRI UTTAM KUMAR REDDY NALAMADA

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the high uranium concentration in the ground water of Nalgonda, Telangana and Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh and if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether any investigation has been conducted for such contamination of ground water in these two districts and if so, the details thereof;
(c) the steps being taken to rectify it and prevent any further uranium contamination of ground water; and
(d) whether the Government has conducted any study to identify the effects of this ground water contamination on agriculture, people and the environment in these areas and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

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

(SHRI RATTAN LAL KATARIA)

(a) to (d) Atomic Minerals Directorate for Exploration and Research (AMD) under Department of Atomic Energy collects environmental baseline data including ground water samples around the Uranium deposits, before mining is taken up.

AMD has collected ground water samples from 25 private tube wells / hand pumps, during November, 2018 to July, 2019 around the Lambapur – Peddagattu region in Nalgonda district, Telangana as part of environmental baseline data collection and it has been found that Uranium values in the sample locations vary from 1 to 2,618 parts per billion (ppb). Thirteen out of the twenty-five samples have Uranium content less than 60 ppb, which is the prescribed safety limit by Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).

Similarly, AMD has collected 31 samples in Kadapa district, Andhra Pradesh. Uranium values in the sample locations found to vary from 1 to 516 ppb. Twenty eight out of the thirty one samples have Uranium content less than 60 ppb.

Contd…P/2

Uranium content in groundwater is a natural occurrence and is controlled by several factors such as geo-chemistry of the aquifer rock and its Uranium content, recharge/discharge condition of aquifers, fluctuation in ground water levels with respect to the Uranium ore body, residence time of the ground water in the aquifers, climatic conditions, movement of ground water along fractures connecting the ore body, anthropogenic activities etc. Further, high Uranium content in the ground water from granitic country rock is a common occurrence in such type of terrains.

AMD invariably shares the analytical data of groundwater samples during various State Geological Programming Board meetings conducted by State Governments and in AMD's Apex Exploration and Research Advisory Council meetings. Further, AMD has communicated analytical data of ground water of entire Telangana State to the Government of Telangana.

Drinking water is a State subject and Government of India supplements the efforts of State Government by providing financial and technical assistance to provide potable water to rural population through the centrally sponsored scheme Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

Further, water being a State subject, efforts to initiate suitable interventions including conservation /management/remediation of contaminants in water resources is primarily States' responsibility. However, steps taken by the Central Government in this regard are at the following URL: http://mowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Jun2019.pdf.

*****