GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

RAJYA SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 95

ANSWERED ON 04.12.2023

REDUCING THE LEVEL OF ARSENIC IN GROUNDWATER

95. SHRI P. WILSON

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

(a) the response on the steps taken by Government to reduce the level of arsenic in groundwater which has cancer causing substances, across the country including Tamil Nadu;

(b) the steps that Government has taken to rejuvenate and clean the arsenic affected ponds and rivers along with natural habitat surroundings in Tamil Nadu;

(c) whether Government has resolved to take up construction of treatment plants near water bodies and stop open drainage; and

(d) if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU**)**

(a) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) generates ground water quality data of the country including Tamil Nadu on a regional scale as part of its ground water quality monitoring program and various scientific studies. These studies indicate the occurrence of Arsenic in ground water beyond permissible limits (as per BIS) for human consumption in isolated pockets in various States / UTs including Tamil Nadu. Arsenic has been reported in parts of 230 districts in 25 States.In Tamil Nadu, out of 1208 ground water samples, only 16 samples (1.3%) werefound to have Arsenic above the BIS limit. Further, Arsenic contamination is understood to be of geogenic origin, resulting from release of Arsenic from soil/aquifer matter under conducive conditions. Since, arsenic contamination in ground water is geogenic in origin, reducing the level of arsenic in ground water not feasible on large scale.

(b) to (d) Water being a state subject, the responsibility of ground water management, including taking initiatives for improving ground water quality and mitigate the contamination issue, lies primarily with the state governments. However, several steps have also been taken by the Central Government in this regard. Some of them are given at succeeding paras.

(i) CGWB is successfully constructing Arsenic free wells in arsenic affected areas using the cement sealing technology for tapping contamination free aquifers.

(ii) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees (SPCBs/PCCs) is implementing the provisions of the Water (Prevention & Control) Act, 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to prevent and control pollution in water.

(iii) Government of India, in partnership with States, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) since August, 2019 to provide potable tap water supply of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household in the country. Under JJM, while planning water supply schemes to provide tap water supply to house-holds, priority is given to quality-affected habitations. While allocating the funds to States/ UTs in a particular financial year, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants. Since, planning, implementation and commissioning of piped water supply schemes based on a safe water source may take time, purely as an interim measure, States/ UTs have been advised to install community water purification plants (CWPPs) in such habitations, to provide potable water to every household at the rate of 8–10 litre per capita per day (lpcd) to meet their drinking and cooking requirements.

(iv) Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation had launched a National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM) on 22nd March, 2017 as a part of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), which has now been subsumed under JJM, to provide safe drinking water to 27,544 arsenic/fluoride affected rural habitations in the country.

(v) Similarly,Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme is being implemented since June 25, 2015, in selected 500 cities and towns across the country which focuses on development of basic urban infrastructure in the AMRUT cities, such as water supply, sewerage & septage management, storm water drainage, green spaces & parks, and non-motorized urban transport. Further, AMRUT- 2.0 has been launched on 01st October 2021 for the period of 05 years (FY 2021-22 to 2025-26), with the objective of providing universal coverage of water supply through functional household tap connection in all statutory towns in the country.

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