

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.718
ANSWERED ON 02.12.2024

GROUNDWATER IN TANJAVUR, TAMIL NADU

718. SHRI S. KALYANASUNDARAM

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

- (a) the status of groundwater contamination in Thanjavur District of Tamil Nadu;
- (b) the steps enforced to combat the same;
- (c) whether Government has constituted any Committee to study the effects of single use and non biodegradable plastics on groundwater and the details thereof; and
- (d) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY)

(a) Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) generates ground water quality data for the entire country including Tamil Nadu as part of its ground water quality monitoring program and also during various scientific studies.

From the groundwater samples collected and analyzed from Thanjavur district, Tamil Nadu during 2023-24, it is observed that except for nitrate (exceeding permissible limits in two out of thirteen samples), all other parameters like Electrical Conductivity, Total Hardness Nitrate, Fluoride, Uranium etc. were within the permissible limits specified in the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) 10500:2012 for drinking water quality.

(b) Water being a State subject, initiatives on groundwater management, including its quality, is primarily States' responsibility; however, various steps have been taken by the Central Government for preventing groundwater contamination in the country and providing water of safe quality to the citizens, like:

- i. Government of India is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, since August, 2019, in partnership with States, to make provision of potable tap water supply in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis to every rural household by 2024. Under JJM, while allocating the funds to States/ UTs, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants.
- ii. Since, planning, implementation and commissioning of piped water supply scheme 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) especially in arsenic and fluoride

affected 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.

- iii. Data on ground water quality available with CGWB are made available in public domain through reports as well as through the web site (<http://www.cgwb.gov.in>) for use by various stakeholders. The data is also shared with concerned State Governments for taking necessary remedial measures.
- iv. 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.

(c) & (d) As known, single use and non-biodegradable plastics can leach into ground water and can potentially cause several adverse effects like releasing toxic materials into soil, reaching human and other life forms as micro-plastic particles and causing health hazards etc. However, further studies are required to fully understand its implications on ground water and ecosystem. Several important measures have been taken up by the Central and state governments to combat the adverse effects caused by single use and non-biodegradable plastic, some of which are mentioned below:-

- i. Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) 2.0 lays special emphasis on reduction of plastic waste generation and compliance of Plastic Waste Management (PWM) Rules. Key priority areas under SBM-U 2.0 include source segregation of waste; segregated collection and transportation; processing of segregated waste; setting up of Material Recovery Facility (MRF) in all ULBs; continuous awareness generation for reducing Single Use Plastic (SUP) and use of substitute products.
- ii. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified the Plastic Waste Management Amendment Rules, 2021, on 12th August 2021, prohibiting manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of the identified Single Use Plastic (SUP) items, which have low utility and high littering potential with effect from the 1st July, 2022.
- iii. All thirty-six States/UTs have constituted the Special Task Force under the chairpersonship of the Chief Secretary / Administrator for elimination of identified single use plastic items and effective plastic waste management. A National Level Taskforce has also been constituted by the M/o EF & CC.
- iv. Directions have been issued under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to E-commerce companies, leading single use plastic sellers/users, and plastic raw material manufacturers with respect to phasing out of identified single use plastic items.
