

PERSISTENT DRINKING WATER DISTRESS AND FAILURE OF GROUNDWATER RECHARGE IN ODISHA

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Since August 2019, Government of India is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), in partnership with States/UTs including Odisha, to make provision of tap water supply to every rural household of the country. 'Drinking Water' is a state subject, and hence, the responsibility of planning, approval, implementation, operation and maintenance of drinking water supply schemes, including those under the JJM, lies with State/UT Governments. The Government of India supports the states by providing technical and financial assistance.

As informed by state government of Odisha, drinking water supply situation is monitored continuously across the state. Based on the field assessments and records, certain blocks in Odisha have been identified as facing chronic drinking water shortages due to groundwater depletion and contaminated water sources, including iron, fluoride, salinity, and bacteriological impurities. To address these challenges and ensure safe and adequate drinking water to all affected habitations, the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department (PR&DW), Government of Odisha, has taken up multiple initiatives such as surface water based mega piped water supply schemes, single-village and multi-village piped water supply projects, Solar-based Piped Water Supply projects and installation of Solar Dual Pump, Iron Removal Plants (IRPs) and De-fluoridation plant in different districts of Odisha. Furthermore, source sustainability measures such as construction of recharge structures, restoration of water bodies and rain water harvesting are also undertaken in collaboration with other departments to ensure adequate and safe drinking water availability during the summer period.

As informed by State Government of Odisha, a total of 705 multi-village piped water supply schemes in Odisha has been delayed due to several factors such as land acquisition issues, contractor non-performance, delay in ROW clearances from various departments such as NH, NHAI, R&B, RD, Forest, Railways. The state government has taken several corrective measures. These include the creation of appropriate institutional mechanisms, such as a committee headed by the Development Commissioner-cum-Additional Chief Secretary with Secretaries of stakeholder Departments as members, and another Committee headed by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, PR & DW Department with the Engineers-in-Chief of all Infrastructure Departments as members. In addition, district-level coordination meetings are being conducted on a monthly basis under the Chairmanship of the District Collector to resolve pending approvals and issues expeditiously. The State Government has also initiated the imposition of penalties on defaulting agencies and strengthening monitoring mechanisms to expedite progress.

As informed by state government of Odisha, drinking water quality issues relating to fluoride, iron, salinity and bacteriological contamination have been observed in certain habitations of districts including Naupada, Bargarh, Mayurbhanj and parts of Gajapati. The State Government has taken several corrective and preventive measures to address these issues such as:

- i. Installation of iron removal plants (IRPs), de-fluoridation plants and regular disinfection of water sources.
- ii. Surface water based mega piped water supply schemes, single-village and multi-village piped water supply projects, Solar-based Piped Water Supply projects and Solar Dual Pump projects are being implemented under various ongoing programmes to ensure long-term sustainable and safe drinking water supply, especially in areas with critically contaminated groundwater sources.
- iii. Regularly organizing community awareness programmes on safe water handling practices, and strengthening Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) to support water quality surveillance through the use of Field Test Kits (FTKs).

The special measures have been planned by state government to address recurring water scarcity in vulnerable regions. These include prioritized completion of ongoing surface water-based mega piped water supply schemes/single/multi village piped water supply schemes and provision of temporary arrangements such as repair of defunct tube wells/ non-functional piped water supply projects and installation of new tube well against defunct tube well.

The information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI **SHRI V. SOMANNA** in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

AMK/ND

(Rajya Sabha US Q95)

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