

GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION IN EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH

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As per the dynamic ground water resource assessment report, 2025 of the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), both Mau and Balia districts are in safe category in terms of their Stage of ground water Extraction (SoE) and no district of the region is in over-exploited or critical category. Further, although Arsenic contamination has been reported in isolated pockets of the region, overall, the ground water remains largely potable.

In this regard, it is also to mention that 'Water' being a State subject, sustainable development and management of water and groundwater resources along with mitigation of quality issues, is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments. However, the Central Government facilitates the efforts of the State Governments by way of technical and financial assistance through its various schemes and projects.

The major steps taken in this direction, including the latest initiatives are provided below:

- i. MoJS is implementing Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in the country since 2019 which is a time bound and mission mode programme wherein all the efforts and funds under various schemes and projects are converged to deliver water harvesting and artificial recharge works on the ground. Currently, JSA 2025 is underway in the country with special focus on over-exploited and critical districts.
- ii. To further strengthen the momentum of Jal Shakti Abhiyan, Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidari: A Community-Driven Path to Water Sustainability in India has been launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister with a vision to make rain water harvesting a mass movement in the country. By promoting community ownership and responsibility, the initiative seeks to develop cost-effective, local solutions tailored to specific water challenges across different regions.
- iii. The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is implementing 'Ground Water Management & Regulation Scheme'(GWM &R), of which regular monitoring of ground water levels and quality throughout the country and judicious ground water regulation are important pillars. Further, after the successful completion of NAQUIM 1.0 (National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme), which mapped country's aquifers and provided a macro-level understanding of our nation's groundwater resources, CGWB has now embarked upon NAQUIM 2.0, focusing on water stressed and quality affected pockets.
- iv. Mission Amrit Sarovar was launched by the Government of India which aimed at developing and rejuvenating at least 75 water bodies in each district of the country. As an outcome nearly 69,000 Amrit Sarovars have been constructed/rejuvenated in the country leading to enhanced water storage and ground water recharge.
- v. The ground water quality data generated by CGWB including that for Arsenic contamination, is regularly disseminated through Annual Reports, Half-yearly Bulletins and Fortnightly Alerts for quick action by the stakeholders.

As noted above, most of the schemes and programmes for ground water management and improvement are taken up through convergence with ongoing state and central schemes MGNREGS, PMKSY etc. and no separate budgetary allocation is made for the states. Under MGNREGS, as per scheme guidelines at least 60% expenditure is to be incurred on public works relating to Natural Resource Management (NRM) under which construction of water conservation and water harvesting structures is a major thrust area.

Further, the government's efforts towards mitigating the drinking water quality issues and providing safe drinking water to all rural households of the country are mainly channelled through the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) scheme. As per available information from JJM dashboard, an amount of Rs. 60,816 crores have been allocated to the State of Uttar Pradesh as central share under JJM from 2019 to date. States can utilize up to 2% of the total allocated amount for Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance. Further, it is for the state governments to devise and execute suitable projects from the allocated amount based on local requirements.

This Ministry, in partnership with states, is implementing Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) – Har Ghar Jal, which marks an important milestone for providing contamination free potable tap water to every rural household of the country in adequate quantity, of prescribed quality and on regular & long-term basis.

Following measures have been taken under JJM for ensuring the quality of water delivered to habitations:

- Under the JJM, Bureau of Indian Standards' BIS:10500 standards have been adopted as prescribed norms for quality of tap water service delivery.
- While allocating the funds to States/ UTs, 10% weightage is given to the population residing in habitations affected by chemical contaminants.
- The "Drinking Water Quality Monitoring & Surveillance Framework" was devised and disseminated to states in October 2021.
- To facilitate implementation of the above said Framework, around 2180 water quality testing laboratories have been set up in the country. Besides this, five persons, preferably women are identified and trained from every village for testing the water samples through Field Test Kits (FTKs).
- States/ UTs have also been advised to install community water purification plants (CWPPs) as an interim measure, especially in quality affected habitations, to provide potable drinking water to every household.

Further, CGWB has also developed an innovative cement sealing technology for tapping deeper Arsenic free aquifers in the Arsenic affected areas and has so far successfully constructed 525 Arsenic safe exploratory wells, including 294 wells in Uttar Pradesh, with 3 wells in Mau and 53 in Balia district. CGWB is also providing technical assistance to state departments for taking up similar constructions. As informed by the State government, the Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam, the department responsible for drinking water supply in the state, is extensively using cement Sealing Technique and so far, 204 arsenic safe wells have been constructed in 9 Districts benefiting 5 lakh inhabitants.

The information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI **SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY** in a written reply to a question in Lok Sabha today.

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(Lok Sabha US Q830)

