

**BEFORE THE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL
PRINCIPAL BENCH, NEW DELHI**

Original Application No. 607/2022

(With report dated 13.12.2022)

In re : News item published in NDTV dated 06.08.2022 titled **“High volume of Uranium in Groundwater in Bihar Leaves Authorities Worried: Report”**

Date of hearing: 20.12.2022

**CORAM: HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE ADARSH KUMAR GOEL, CHAIRPERSON
HON’BLE MR. JUSTICE SUDHIR AGARWAL, JUDICIAL MEMBER
HON’BLE PROF. A. SENTHIL VEL, EXPERT MEMBER**

ORDER

1. The matter has been taken up in light of the media report to the effect that Uranium is found in the drinking water in certain Districts of Bihar i.e. Nalanda, Nawada, Katihar, Madhepura, Vaishali, Supaul, Aurangabad, Gaya, Saran, Jehanabad, Bhabhua, Khagaria, Sheikhpura, Purnea, Kishanganj and Begusarai, which seriously affects kidneys and bones of consumers of such water.

2. Vide order dated 23.08.2022, the Tribunal constituted a five member joint Committee of CPCB, State PCB, CGWA, Secretaries, Water Resources, Bihar and Secretary, Health, Bihar to ascertain factual position.

3. In pursuance of above, the joint Committee has given its report dated 13.12.2022 finding that uranium concentration range found in ground water sources in Bihar is within the normal natural variation.

4. Relevant extracts from the report are:-

*“5. That on 20.09.2022 the representative of CGWB, Bihar informed that in May, 2019, CGWB carried out uranium sampling in the State of Bihar and collected 608 ground water samples covering all districts of Bihar after following accepted protocols. The collected samples were analyzed using ICP-MS at CGWB, Lucknow Chemical Lab. As per the reports **uranium concentration more than permissible limit of 30 ppb were found in 11 samples out of 608 samples.***

*Also, Mahavir Cancer Sansthan (MCS) Patna, conducted a study on uranium concentration in groundwater resources of Bihar and collected 237 ground water samples covering all districts of Bihar. According, to this study, **12 districts where Uranium exceeded BIS guidelines in at least one sample were Bhagalpur, Gopalganj, Katihar, Munger, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda, Nawada, Patna, Saran, Siwan, Supaul and Vaishali,** Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), Govt. of Bihar, has taken initiative on the outcome of study conducted by MCS, Patna and collected 272 ground water samples from the surrounding villages/panchayat of the Uranium hotspot marked by the MCS, Patna. These ground water samples were analyzed by CGWA, Patna, using ICP-MS. The concentration of Uranium greater than 30 ppb was found in 19 samples/locations falling in 11 blocks.*

All the aforesaid study clubbed together following observations can be made:

- (i) Uranium more than permissible limit is sporadic in occurrence and localized in nature;*
- (ii) Out of 30 locations, 17 locations are having uranium concentration between 30 to 35 ppb;*
- (iii) 5 locations have uranium concentration between 35 to 40 ppb;*
- (iv) 8 location have uranium > 40 ppb, these locations are in alluvial areas;*
- (v) 3 location have uranium > 70 ppb.***

6. That on the day of meeting (20.09.2022) the representative of BARC informed that BARC has also earlier carried studies in 16 Districts of Bihar and only in Gaya and Nawada few collected samples showed marginally higher values of uranium as compared to the AERB limit of 60 ppb for drinking water.

7. That from the above stated facts it is humbly submitted that in holistic Terms the uranium concentration range found in ground water sources in Bihar are within the normal natural variation.”

5. In view of above, no further order appears to be necessary except that PHED needs to keep vigil on the locations where 11 samples exceed permissible limit of 30 ppb and monitor health of residents and also ensure safe drinking water supply to the inhabitants.

The application is disposed of.

A copy of this order be forwarded by email to the Chief Secretary, Bihar for compliance.

Adarsh Kumar Goel, CP

Sudhir Agarwal, JM

Prof. A. Senthil Vel, EM

December 20, 2022
Original Application No. 607/2022
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