Nine districts in Delhi had contaminated groundwater in 2019, according to data presented in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

In the National Capital Region, which includes parts of Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh apart from Delhi, at least 30 districts had some form of pollutants in their groundwater, including arsenic, iron, heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and chromium, fluoride, nitrate and salinity, the data showed.

The data was presented by Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat in a written response to a starred question asked by D.P. Vats, a BJP MP and retired Lt. General.

He had asked whether the government was aware of “increasing groundwater pollution” in Delhi-NCR and that what action is being taken to prevent over-exploitation of groundwater in these areas.

In response, the Jal Shakti Minister said that the Central Pollution Control Board’s National Water Quality Monitoring Programme did not show any increasing or decreasing trends in Delhi’s groundwater pollution levels in 2018 and 2019.

However, the Central Ground Water Board’s quality monitoring data for 2019 showed that most districts in the Capital were partially affected by groundwater contaminants present at higher levels than declared permissible by the Bureau of Indian Standards, Mr. Shekhawat’s response showed.

Salinity issues
In Delhi, most districts had salinity issues, with electrical conductivity levels above the prescribed limit of 3,000 micro mhos/cm, as well as fluoride and nitrate levels above the limits of 1.5 and 45 mg/litre respectively.

Arsenic above the safe level of 0.01 mg/litre was found in the groundwater of east and northeast Delhi. Iron was not a contaminant in Delhi, but lead was found along the Najafgarh drain in the North, West and South-West districts. Cadmium was found in South-West, while chromium was found in the North-West, South, East and New Delhi districts.

Taking into account the data for all of NCR, 30 districts had high nitrate levels, while 25 districts had high fluoride levels.