

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3885**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.04.2018

**Pollution control in nullahs / small rivers**

3885. DR. VINAY P. SAHASRABUDDHE:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether small rivers are polluting the major rivers and whether many small rivers have been termed as nullahs in official documents resulting in non-planning of their cleanliness;
- (b) by when the Government will accord the status of river to such small rivers;
- (c) whether Government has any data on the small rivers which are treated as nullah; and
- (d) the manner in which Government will eliminate the pollution from small rivers?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) to (c) Major and small rivers, including streams/channels and tributaries of main rivers, are part of natural water drainage systems, which are used for various consumptive and non-consumptive purposes. Water extracted from rivers for consumptive uses like drinking water and industrial processes invariably generate wastewater, which pollute the major and small rivers. In the absence of proper sewerage systems in towns and cities, the municipal sewage & industrial effluent is discharged into drainage channels/drains commonly called as nullahs, which ultimately join the streams, small and big rivers. As per the report published by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in February, 2015, 302 polluted river stretches have been identified on 275 rivers based on Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels, a key indicator of organic pollution. Further, the discharge standards for sewage and industrial effluent is not dependent on size of river/nullah, and is required to be met irrespective of their size.

(d) This Ministry has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in abatement of pollution in identified stretches of various rivers under National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). NRCP (excluding Ganga and its tributaries which is handled by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation from 01/08/2014 onwards) has covered polluted stretches of 32 rivers in 76 towns spread over 14 States at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 4579.56 crore. So far, Central share of Rs. 2236.98 crore has been released to the State Governments for implementation of various pollution abatement schemes and sewage treatment capacity of 2466.43 million litres per day (mld) has been created under the NRCP programme.

In addition, State Governments, apart from their own budgetary allocation, are also accessing financial assistance for creation of sewerage infrastructure, including STPs, in various cities/towns under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Smart Cities Mission of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs as well as Namami Gange programme of Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

To ensure proper treatment of municipal wastewater before discharge into the rivers, CPCB has issued directions under Section 18 1(b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 in April, 2015 to all the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) in the country for setting up of STPs in their respective States. CPCB also issued directions in October, 2015 to municipal authorities of 184 towns (66 metropolitan cities and State capitals + towns along river Ganga) under Section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 to ensure proper treatment and disposal of sewage generated for abatement of pollution of rivers.

Further to control discharge of industrial effluents, the CPCB and respective SPCBs monitor industries with respect to effluent discharge standards and take action for non-compliance under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. Compliance with discharge standards with respect to sewage and industrial effluent addresses pollution of both small and large rivers.

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