

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 702
TO BE ANSWERED ON 17.12.2018

Impact assessment study of NRCP

702. DR. VINAY P. SAHASRABUDDHE:

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

- (a) whether there has been an impact assessment study of National River Conservation Programme (NRCP) since its inception;
- (b) if so, the results thereof; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) The Ministry has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in abatement of pollution in identified stretches of various rivers under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) on cost sharing basis between the Central & State Governments for taking up various pollution abatement works relating to interception & diversion of raw sewage, construction of sewerage systems, setting up of sewage treatment plants, low cost sanitation, river front/bathing ghat development, etc. Implementation of NRCP works has led to reduction in pollution load draining into rivers as well as improving the environmental & sanitation conditions in the towns in which the programme have been implemented.

Independent evaluation of NRCP was carried out by M/s SMEC (India) Pvt. Ltd. and M/s Wilbur Smith and submitted report in 2014. The major recommendations of the independent evaluation, inter-alia, include :

- Adequate funding needs to be provided for NRCP to undertake the mammoth task of cleaning polluted rivers. Dovetailing with other programmes also needs to be done.
- Comprehensive sewerage system should be laid for the entire town, instead of implementing Interception & Diversion works only.

- Training and capacity building programmes need to be carried out, especially for the ULBs (Urban Local Bodies) and maintaining agencies to ensure proper operation & maintenance (O&M) of the assets created under the programme.
- ULBs need to ensure proper revenue generation to meet the O&M costs of assets created under the programme.
- Encourage recycle and re-use of treated wastewater and resource recovery from Sewage Treatment Plants.
- Project proposals received from State Governments should be appraised by independent institutions/experts.
- During construction phase, Third Party Inspection may be adopted to ensure proper implementation of projects.
- Sewage treatment is the most essential component of the programme. Appropriate technologies for sewage treatment may be adopted, which suit local site conditions and have low O&M cost.
- Build, Operate & Transfer (BOT) model may be followed to ensure efficient O&M of river conservation schemes. Alternatively, O&M cost for first 5 years be inbuilt into the project cost.
- Introducing more private sector participation and Public Private Partnership (PPP) models to lessen the financial burden on the Central Government.
- Procurement processes need to be streamlined at the State agency level.
- New initiatives to create public awareness about conservation of rivers needs to be undertaken to build a sense of communal ownership.
- Strict and timely enforcement of environmental laws by State Pollution Control Boards is necessary to strengthen the NRCP programme.
