

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

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UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 582

ANSWERED ON 12.12.2022

ILLEGAL ENCROACHMENTS OF WATER BODIES, AND RIVER BEDS

582 SHRI SANJAY RAUT

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) the existing schemes which regulate preservation and conservation of water bodies including river beds, lakes etc., and to check illegal encroachments;
- (b) reasons for Government failing to check encroachment of water bodies;
- (c) whether the number of water bodies in many States has decreased due to encroachments, unplanned urbanisation, industrialisation, lack of proper management and if so, the details thereof and the corrective measures taken in this regard; and
- (d) whether Government proposes to establish a national authority or tribunal with judicial powers to look into the issues involving encroachments of water bodies, river beds etc., and if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI
(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) & (b) Regulating, preservation and conservation of water bodies including river beds, lakes, etc., and to check illegal encroachments, are under the purview of the State Government concerned. However, in order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, some of the initiatives taken by Government of India in this regard are as below:

1. Government of India is providing financial assistance to the identified schemes under Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies (RRR of WBs) component of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY)-Har Khet Ko Pani (HKKP).
2. Rejuvenation of water bodies is also a component under Water Supply sector of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme under Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. Further, AMRUT 2.0 launched in October, 2021, includes rejuvenation of water bodies and water conservation.

3. In 2019, Jal Shakti Abhiyan was launched by the Government. This is being continued as an annual “Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch The Rain” (JSA:CTR) campaigns, covering all districts (rural as well as urban) of the country. Focused interventions under these campaigns taken up by the Government of India and the State Governments, inter-alia, include renovation of traditional and other water bodies/ tanks, enumeration, geo-tagging and making inventory of all water bodies, and removal of encroachments of tanks/ lakes, and de-silting of tanks, and protection of water catchment area.
4. To commemorate Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM), marking 75 years of independence from British rule, Government of India has also launched a campaign to take up creation/ rejuvenation of 75 water bodies, to be called Amrit Sarovars, in every district of the country, including Tamil Nadu. The campaign is scheduled till August, 2023.
5. Government of India has launched the first census of water bodies in convergence with the sixth round of Minor Irrigation Census (reference year 2017-18), under the centrally sponsored scheme- “Irrigation Census”. The objective of the exercise is to develop a national database of all water bodies in the country. The work is now in its last leg, with provisional information having been compiled.
6. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) has provisions for public works relating to natural resource management, water conservation and water harvesting structures to augment and improve ground water like underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, check dams and roof top rain water harvesting structures in public buildings.

(c) As per the 1st Census of water bodies in convergence with the sixth minor irrigation census (reference year 2017-18), under the centrally sponsored scheme – “Irrigation Census” conducted by this Ministry, 36,717 number of water bodies are reported to be encroached.

It is for the State Government to take corrective actions in this regard. However, the initiatives taken by Government of India to augment the efforts of the State Governments, are enumerated above.

(d) No such proposal is presently under consideration of Government of India.
