

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 179
TO BE ANSWERED ON 02.02.2018

Drying up of Rivers

179. DR. K. GOPAL:

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

- (a) whether experts have predicted the drying up of many rivers in the country soon;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the reason for the predicted drying up of rivers was because of criminal negligence towards environment and river conservation; and
- (d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken up by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

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

(a) to (c) There are two types of rivers in the country – perennial rivers, in which water remains available throughout the year and non-perennial rivers, which are rain-fed rivers and in which water flows only during the rainfall period. The flow in the river is a dynamic parameter and depends on many sub-parameters such as rainfall, its distribution and intensity in the catchment, health of catchment area, vegetation and withdrawals/utilization of water.

While reports by some experts have expressed concern about reduction in water flow in rivers, the annual average flow data maintained by Central Water Commission (CWC) for last 20 years for major/important rivers in the country does not indicate any significant reduction in water availability. However, as per CWC, the per capita annual water availability in the country has progressively reduced due to increase in population, urbanization, improved life style of people, etc.

(d) Water being a State subject, steps for augmentation, conservation and efficient management to ensure sustainability of water resources are undertaken by the respective State Governments. In order to supplement the efforts of State Governments, Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR, RD&GR) provides technical and financial assistance to State Governments to encourage sustainable development and efficient management of water resources through various schemes. The National Water Policy-2012 has been formulated by MoWR, RD&GR with the objective of preparing a framework for creation of laws, institutions and plan of action for water resources development and management taking into account the existing situation. A National Perspective Plan for Water Resources Development has also been formulated by MoWR, RD&GR for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficient basins.

Discharge of untreated and partially treated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents constitute a major source of pollution in rivers. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in abatement of pollution in identified stretches of various rivers under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). The NRCP has so far covered polluted stretches of 31 rivers (excluding Ganga and its tributaries) in 75 towns spread over 14 States at a sanctioned cost of Rs. 4517.82 crore. So far, Central share of Rs. 2197.97 crore has been released to the State Governments for implementation of various pollution abatement schemes and sewage treatment plant (STP) capacity of 2455.43 mld (million litres per day) has been created under the NRCP.

State Governments, apart from their own budgetary allocation, are also accessing financial assistance for creation of sewerage infrastructure, including sewage treatment plants, in various cities/towns under Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) & Smart Cities Mission programmes of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs and the 'Namami Gange' programme of MoWR, RD&GR.

To control discharge of industrial effluents, the Central Pollution Control Board and respective State Pollution Control Boards/Pollution Control Committees monitor industries with respect to effluents discharge standards and take action for non-compliance under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
