

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES,
RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. †*325
ANSWERED ON 09.08.2018

ENCROACHMENT OF WATER BODIES

†*325. SHRI RAJESH RANJAN

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the problem of fall in ground water level has assumed critical proportions due to illegal destruction of lakes, ponds, wells, stepwells and other water bodies in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the ongoing measures to improve the ground water level along with the efforts made for the revival of such water bodies in the country, State-wise;
- (c) whether such water bodies have been occupied illegally by anti-social elements in various parts of the country and if so, the details thereof, State-wise; and
- (d) the initiatives/measures taken by the Government so far to revive/restore such water bodies and free them from encroachment/illegal occupation?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION, ROAD TRANSPORT & HIGHWAYS AND SHIPPING

(SHRI NITIN JAIRAM GADKARI)

- (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the house.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. †*325 TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 09.08.2018 REGARDING “ENCROACHMENT OF WATER BODIES” ASKED BY SHRI RAJESH RANJAN, HON’BLE MP

(a) Fall in ground water levels is attributed to various reasons resulting in withdrawal of ground water in excess of annual recharge from various sources. Destruction of natural water bodies such as lakes and ponds is one of the reasons for reduction in natural recharge of ground water. In order to assess the decline in water level on a long-term basis, Pre-monsoon water level data collected by CGWB during Pre-monsoon 2018 has been compared with the decadal average (2008-2017). As per analysis, about 52% of the wells monitored have registered decline in ground water levels, mostly in the range of 0 – 2 m. The States in which the problem is more acute are - Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

(b) Government is taking several measures to address the issue of fall in water levels in the country, mainly through efforts for regulation of ground water use and promotion of water conservation, rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge to ground water in the States. These include:

- The National Water Policy (2012) formulated by Ministry of Water Resources, RD & GR, inter-alia, advocates conservation, promotion and protection of water and highlights the need for augmenting the availability of water through rain water harvesting, direct use of rainfall and other management measures. The National Water Policy (2012) has been forwarded to all State Governments/UTs and concerned Ministries/Departments of Central Government for adoption.
- Water being State Subject, Ministry has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for its regulation and development which includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far, 15 States/UTs have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation on the lines of Model Bill.
- Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has prepared a conceptual document titled “Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water – 2013” which provides information about area specific artificial recharge techniques to augment the ground water resources based on the availability of source water and capability of subsurface formations to accommodate it. The Master Plan is available in public domain and has also been circulated to the State Governments.
- Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted under “The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986” for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water development and management in the Country. So far, CGWA has notified 162 areas in the Country for the purpose of regulation of ground water.
- Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is carrying out training programs and IEC activities for capacity building and awareness creation among stakeholders on the importance of water conservation and rainwater harvesting in augmenting the ground water resources.
- CGWB has taken up Aquifer Mapping and Management programme (NAQUIM) during XII Plan, under the scheme of Ground Water Management and Regulation. The Aquifer Mapping is aimed to delineate aquifer disposition and their characterization for preparation of aquifer/area specific ground water management plans.
- The scheme on ‘Ground Water Management & Regulation’ of CGWB has a component on Interventions for Aquifer Rejuvenation wherein Artificial Recharge and Rainwater harvesting projects are taken up in coordination with State Governments/ Institutions/ Identified PSUs.

- The Ministry of Rural Development in consultation and agreement with the Ministry of Water Resources, RD & GR and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has developed an actionable framework for Natural Resources Management (NRM), titled "Mission Water Conservation" to ensure gainful utilization of funds. The Framework strives to ensure synergieis in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) and Command Area Development & Water Management (CAD&WM), given their common objectives. Types of common works undertaken under these programmes/ schemes are water conservation and management, water harvesting, soil and moisture conservation, groundwater recharge, flood protection, land development, Command Area Development & Watershed Management.

(c) to (d) Works related to water resources development & management are planned, funded, executed and maintained by the State Governments themselves as per their own resources and priorities. Matter related to encroachment of water bodies comes under purview of the concerned State Governments.

However, considering the importance of water bodies for socio economic development, Secretary (MoWR, RD & GR) vide letter dated 26.02.2016 requested State Governments to take necessary steps for keeping all the water bodies encroachment free. Further, Secretary (WR, RD & GR) vide letter dated 07.11.2016 requested the State Governments to take appropriate action in respect of inclusion of water bodies in land records, inclusion of water bodies as integral part of town planning process, strict action for the encroachers, etc.

'Draft guidelines for Conservation and Protection of Water Bodies' have also been circulated to the Central Ministries and State/UTs.

Further, in order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Government of India provides technical and financial assistance to State Governments to encourage sustainable development and efficient management of water resources through various schemes and programmes such as Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) and scheme for Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of water bodies etc. under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

Water bodies are included under RRR of water bodies schemes which are encroachment free as certified by the concerned State Governments.

From XIIth Plan onwards, 1876 water bodies costing Rs.1529.79 crore in the country have been included under this scheme and central assistance of Rs.344.315 crore has been released. Out of these 1876 water bodies, works in 580 water bodies have been reported to be completed.
