

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTIONNO. 3192
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2023

Wetlands in Kashmir

3192. SHRI HASNAIN MASOODI:

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

- (a) whether the Government is cognizant of the diminishing area under the wetlands in Kashmir due to urbanisation, siltation and increasing pollution in the catchment area;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government has taken any steps for the restoration of several such wetlands, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;
- (d) whether the Government is planning to set up a management plan for the conservation of Hokersar wetland in Srinagar; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) & (b) While the Central and State Governments take all possible steps for the restoration, conservation and preservation of wetlands, developmental activities and anthropogenic pressures do affect water bodies. As per the information received from Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir, wetlands in Kashmir region are impacted due to siltation in catchment area and urbanization in the fringe areas of wetlands. Flood embankments in most of these wetlands act as boundary demarcation saving them from encroachments in the shape of settlements. The details of urbanisation, siltation and increasing pollution in the catchment area of 8 Nos. Wetland Conservation Reserves under Wildlife Protection Department in Kashmir Region has been studied, analysed and remedial measures prescribed under “Integrated Management Action Plan (2022-27)”
- (c) The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as regulatory framework for conservation and management of wetlands across country to conserve, manage and maintain the ecological character of the wetlands without restricting the wise use.

Further, MoEF&CC is currently implementing a centrally sponsored scheme namely, National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA) for conservation and management of identified wetlands (includes lakes) in the country on cost sharing basis

between Central Government and respective State Governments. The scheme covers various activities such as interception, diversion and treatment of wastewater, shoreline protection, lake front development, in-situ cleaning i.e., desilting & de-weeding, storm water management, bioremediation, catchment area treatment, lake beautification, survey & demarcation, bio-fencing, fisheries development, weed control, biodiversity conservation, education and awareness creation, community participation, etc.

The Ministry had undertaken 'Wetlands Rejuvenation' programme within the framework of 169 transformative ideas of Government of India i.e. "Start work on Restoration & Rejuvenation of at least 100 major wetlands across the country". In the first cycle of the programme, 130 wetlands were selected in consultation with State Governments for which collection of baseline information and rapid assessment of wetlands condition was done during the 100 days implementation period. Based on the above list, 32 wetlands were identified and concerned States/UTs advised to take necessary action for their rejuvenation and restoration.

Ministry has launched Mission Sahbhagita, on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, which is an important step towards participatory conservation and wise use of wetlands to enable a society ownership approach with communities leading at the forefront. The Ministry has also launched 'Save Wetlands Campaign' as part of this Mission on 04.02.2023 at Goa on the occasion of World Wetlands Day 2023.

- (d) & (e) As per information received from Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir, Integrated Management Plan (2022-27), prepared and approved for implementation for 8 Nos. Wetland Conservation Reserves, also includes the plan for Hokersar wetland. The plan envisages focus on survey, demarcation, water quality management, bio-diversity conservation, education awareness and eco-tourism, sustainable resource development and institutional development at an estimated cost of Rs.16.13 Crore for a period of 5 years.
