

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

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1881

ANSWERED ON 14.12.2023

POLLUTION IN PERIYAR RIVER

1881. DR. SHASHI THAROOR

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that about 300 chemical companies belch out poisonous fumes and various organic fertilizers, metallic components, toxic metals like cadmium, copper, zinc and all the heavy metals which can be detected in river Periyar;
- (b) whether the Government has any schemes/policies to mitigate this;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has conducted any research on the harmful side effects of this phenomena in the areas near river Periyar; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

(a) to (e) Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), in collaboration with the Kerala State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), is regularly monitoring the Water Quality of river Periyar through a network of 12 monitoring stations under National Water Quality Monitoring Programme (NWMP).

As reported, KSPCB has set up 24 hour surveillance office at Eloor that continuously monitor the industries in the State, including industries situated in Periyar Basin. The Board had also installed surveillance cameras at the bank of River Periyar to detect any discharge into the river. Further, heavy metals and pesticide pollution monitoring in river Periyar water is being carried out once in six months by KSPCB. As per the latest report of April 2023, heavy metals namely cadmium, arsenic, copper, lead, nickel, chromium (total) and manganese have not been reported in the river except for traces of iron and zinc.

As per the provisions of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution), Act 1974, industrial units are required to install effluent treatment plants (ETPs) and treat their effluents to comply with stipulated environmental standards before discharging into river and water bodies. Accordingly, CPCB and KSPCB monitor industries with respect to effluent discharge standards and take punitive action for non-compliance under provisions of these Acts.

Besides, in compliance with the orders of National Green Tribunal (NGT) in its Original Application No. 673/2018, regarding rejuvenation of polluted river stretches in the country, States/UTs are required to implement approved action plans for restoration of the polluted stretches in their jurisdiction as identified by CPCB and published in their report of 2018, within the stipulated timelines. Action plan was prepared and implemented by the coordinated efforts of District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) and is being reviewed regularly by Chief Secretary at the State level, and by the Secretary, Department of Water resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation at the Central level.

As reported, CPCB has not conducted any specific study on harmful side effects of this phenomenon in area near river Periyar. However, since 2019, the National River Conservation Directorate under this Ministry initiated efforts towards monitoring and conserving the ecological integrity of six Indian rivers, including Periyar river. The project titled 'Assessment of the Ecological Status of select Indian rivers for Conservation Planning' in collaboration with WildLife Institute of India, Dehradun aims to comprehensively evaluate the ecological status including assessment of the impact of toxic pollutants in aquatic biodiversity.
