

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. *155
ANSWERED ON 29.07.2021

POLLUTION IN SATLUJ AND BEAS RIVERS

*155. SHRI BHAGWANT MANN
SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the fact that the waste water effluents and pollutants are being released into Satluj and Beas rivers and their tributaries thereby increasing pollution therein;
- (b) if so, the specific action taken by the Government in this regard during the last three years;
- (c) whether the Government is aware that people in many districts of Rajasthan and Punjab use this water for drinking and if so, the details of diseases caused by polluted drinking water in these areas;
- (d) whether the Government is contemplating to formulate a concrete scheme to check the same and take action against the industrial units and urban authorities responsible for discharging waste water effluents into the rivers and canals; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof along with the time line fixed to stop this water pollution?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTs (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.*155 TO BE ANSWERED ON THURSDAY, THE 29TH JULY, 2021 ON 'POLLUTION IN SATLUJ AND BEAS RIVERS' RAISED BY SHRI BHAGWANT MANN & SHRI HANUMAN BENIWAL.

(a) to (e) The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in association with Pollution Control Boards/Committees in different States/Union Territories (UTs), has been monitoring water quality of rivers and other water bodies in the country through a network of monitoring stations under the National Water Quality Monitoring Programme. Based on water quality monitoring results, pollution assessment of rivers has been carried out by CPCB from time to time. As per the latest report published by CPCB in September 2018, 351 polluted stretches were identified on 323 rivers based on monitoring results in terms of Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand, an indicator of organic pollution. These included one stretch each on Satluj and Beas rivers and Kaliben (tributary of river Beas) which confluence upstream of Harike Barrage from where Rajasthan Feeder/Indira Gandhi Canal and Ferozpur Feeder originate.

Rivers in the country, including identified stretches of rivers Satluj and Beas in Punjab, are polluted mainly due to discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents in their respective catchments, problems in operation and maintenance of sewage/effluent treatment plants, lack of dilution and other non-point sources of pollution. Rapid urbanization and industrialization have compounded the problems.

Cleaning of rivers is an ongoing process. It is the responsibility of the States/UTs and local bodies to ensure required treatment of sewage and industrial effluents to the prescribed norms before discharging into water bodies or land to prevent and control of pollution therein. For conservation of rivers excluding Ganga and its tributaries, the Central Government has been supplementing efforts of the States/UTs by providing financial and technical assistance for abatement of pollution in identified stretches of rivers/tributaries in the country through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). Under NRCP, pollution abatement projects for conservation of Satluj and Beas rivers have been implemented in 14 towns of Punjab, namely, Banga, Bholath, Dasuya, Hoshiarpur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Ludhiana, Moga, Mukerian, Nawanshehar, Phagwara, Phillaur, Sultanpur Lodhi and Tanda at a total cost of Rs.717.32 crore with sewage treatment capacity of 648.20 million litres per day (MLD) created in these towns.

Buddha nallah, carrying untreated sewage, industrial effluents and other wastes from Ludhiana town, remains the major source of pollution in Satluj river. To address the issue of pollution, Buddha Nallah Rejuvenation Project has been launched in December, 2020 at a total estimated cost of Rs. 840 crore with implementation period of 2 years. The project envisages construction of 2 new sewage treatment plants (STPs) at Jamalpur (225 MLD) and at Balloke (60 MLD), refurbishment of 4 existing STPs of 418 MLD total capacity, Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) of capacity 40 MLD, 50 MLD and 15 MLD for cluster of small/medium scale dyeing industries, two Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) for 6 MLD waste from two dairy complexes, etc. To address the gap between sewage generation and treatment for remaining catchment areas of rivers Sutlej and Beas, more STPs have been proposed.

Discharge of industrial effluents is monitored by CPCB and the respective State Pollution Control Boards/Committees through the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. The Central Government has notified general discharge standards and also industry specific effluent discharge standards under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 which are required to be complied by the industrial units, STPs and/or the CETPs for prevention and control of pollution in water bodies. In case of non compliance with the prescribed norms, punitive actions are taken by the regulatory bodies under the relevant statutory provisions.

CPCB has issued directions from time to time to Punjab Pollution Control Board, Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board and the urban local bodies to ensure required treatment of municipal and industrial waste waters before discharging to rivers Satluj, Beas and their tributaries to prevent contamination of canals emanating from Harike Barrage.

Based on inspections carried out by CPCB in June, 2021, actions have been initiated as per the statutory provisions against the STPs, CETPs and the ETPs of grossly water polluting units found non-compliant.

In compliance of the orders of National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Original Application No.673/2018 regarding polluted river stretches in the country, States/UTs are required to implement approved action plans for restoration of the said stretches in their jurisdiction within the stipulated timelines. As per the orders of NGT, regular review on implementation of action plans is undertaken in the States/UTs and also at Central level.

The water released in Ferozpur Feeder Canal is utilized for drinking and irrigation purposes in Malwa region of Punjab and some part of Rajasthan through Gang Canal. Indira Gandhi Feeder/Canal passes through the States of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan. In Rajasthan, Indira Gandhi Canal traverses through western part covering districts of Barmer, Bikaner, Churu, Hanumangarh, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Sriganganagar and Nagaur to provide water for drinking and irrigation in these areas. Canal waters as reported by the Punjab Pollution Control Board and Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board, require conventional treatment and disinfection to make it suitable for drinking purposes, and not having adverse effects on human beings/beneficiaries.
