

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †2763**  
ANSWERED ON 05.08.2021

**IMPROVEMENT IN QUALITY OF WATER**

†2763. SHRI MITESH RAMESHBHAI PATEL (BAKABHAI)  
SHRIMATI SHARDABEN ANILBHAI PATEL

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that there has been extreme improvement in the quality of water in almost all parts of the country due to lockdown in the month of May and June, 2020;
- (b) if so, the details thereof; and
- (c) the steps being taken to ensure maintaining the improvement in the quality of water in future also?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES

(SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL)

(a) to (c) As informed by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), water quality monitoring of rivers was conducted by the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) during March & April, 2020 to assess the impact of lockdown due to Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The exercise was undertaken on 19 major rivers namely Beas, Brahmaputra, Baitarni, Brahmani, Cauvery, Chambal, Ganga, Ghaggar, Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi, Mahi, Narmada, Pennar, Sabarmati, Satluj, Swarnrekha, Tapi and Yamuna. The assessment was based on monitoring of parameters namely pH, Dissolved Oxygen (DO), Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) and Fecal Coliform, as stipulated in Primary Water Quality Criteria for outdoor bathing notified by the Central Government under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.

Based on monitoring results, some of the rivers (Brahmani, Brahmaputra, Cauvery, Godavari, Krishna, Tapi and Yamuna) showed improvement in water quality which could be attributed to minimal industrial effluent discharge, no human and/or anthropogenic activities, cattle movement, etc. No perceptible improvement was observed in case of Beas, Chambal, Satluj and Swarnrekha rivers. Along various stretches of Ganga and its tributaries, varying degrees of improvement in a few water quality parameters was observed, which may be attributed to increased availability of fresh water due to rainfall in the catchment area and reduction in human and/or anthropogenic activities. In case of Sabarmati and Mahi rivers, water quality remained unchanged. As such, no definite trend was observed to substantiate the impact of lockdown.

CPCB in association with the SPCBs/PCCs is regularly 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. As the CPCB report of September, 2018, 351 polluted river stretches were identified on 323 rivers based on monitoring results in terms of BOD, an indicator of organic pollution.

Rivers in the country are polluted mainly due to discharge of untreated or partially treated sewage from cities/towns and industrial effluents in their respective catchments. It is the responsibility of the States/Union Territories (UTs) and local bodies to ensure treatment of sewage and industrial effluents to the prescribed norms before discharging into rivers, water bodies or land to prevent and control of pollution therein.

Based on the assessment of water quality, various measures are being taken both by the Central and the State Governments to prevent pollution of rivers. River cleaning is a continuous process and the Central Government assists the State Governments and urban local bodies through the schemes of 'Namami Gange' and National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) of Ministry of Jal Shakti. NRCP has so far covered polluted stretches on 34 rivers in 77 towns spread over 16 States in the country with the sanctioned cost of projects as Rs.5965.90 crore, and sewage treatment capacity of 2522.03 MLD created. Under Namami Gange programme, a total of 346 projects, including 158 projects for sewage treatment of 4948 MLD and sewer network of 5213 kms., have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs.30235 crore. In addition, sewerage infrastructure is created under programs like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Smart Cities Mission of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Discharge of industrial effluents is monitored by CPCB and the respective SPCBs/PCCs through the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Besides, in compliance of the orders of National Green Tribunal (NGT) in Original Application (OA) No.673/2018 regarding polluted river stretches in the country, States/UTs are required to implement action plans for restoration of the said stretches in their jurisdiction within the stipulated timelines. As per the orders of NGT, regular review is undertaken in the States/UTs and also at Central level.

In addition, CPCB has devised the Guidelines for Handling, Treatment and Disposal of Waste Generated during Treatment/Diagnosis/ Quarantine of COVID-19 Patients issued in July, 2020 does not permit disposal of bio-medical waste including used masks and gloves into the water bodies.

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