

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2798
ANSWERED ON 05.08.2021

STRESS ON HIMALAYAN RIVER SYSTEMS

2798. SHRI KHAGEN MURMU

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is true that the Himalayan river systems are under stress and it is time to devise a new development pathway and decentralise water governance in the region; and
- (b) if so, the steps taken by the Government keeping in view the fact that the Himalayas-Hindu Kush region is home to the major river systems and more than half of India's water resources are supplied by the tributaries of these river systems?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI & FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES
(SHRI PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL)

(a) & (b) Snow and glacier are perennial source of water for rivers originating from the Himalayas. Glaciers receive and accumulate snow in winter and release melt water in summer through surface flow, ground water seepage, etc. Studies have revealed that the Himalayan glaciers are retreating in general but not at a rapid pace. The rate of melting/recession varies from glaciers to glaciers depending on its topography and climatic variability of the region. Studies have shown that glaciers with an area of more than 10 square km are unlikely to get affected appreciably in the coming years. However, smaller glaciers of less than 2 square Km area are likely to show rapid changes.

Water being a State subject, steps for augmentation, conservation and efficient management in order to ensure sustainability of water resources are primarily undertaken by the respective State Governments which include creation of storages, restoration of water bodies, rain water harvesting, artificial recharge to ground water, integrated water shed development, adopting of better irrigation practices, etc. In order to supplement the efforts of the State Governments, Central Government provides technical and financial assistance to them through various schemes and programmes. The National Water Policy-2012 also emphasizes conservation & 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. National Water Mission (NWM) of Ministry of Jal Shakti has initiated "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain" campaign in order to promote creation of Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) suitable to the climatic conditions and sub-soil strata to store rain water. Central Ground Water Board is implementing a nationwide programme of "National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM)" for mapping of aquifers (Water bearing formations), their characterization and development of aquifer management plans to facilitate sustainable development of ground water resources. Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY), a scheme for sustainable management of ground water with community participation is being taken up in the identified over-exploited and water stressed areas in seven States.
