

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. †547
ANSWERED ON 22.07.2021

REVIVAL OF WATER BODIES

†547. SHRI RAHUL KASWAN

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the problem of underground water level has turned into a very serious problem in the country due to encroachment on the land of lakes, ponds, wells, reservoirs, small ponds (johad) and other water bodies and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the measures being taken to improve the underground water level along with the efforts made for the revival of said water bodies;
- (c) whether anti social elements have encroached upon such water bodies in different parts of the country and if so, the details thereof particularly in Rajasthan; and
- (d) the measures taken by the Government so far to revive such water bodies and to free them from encroachment?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT)

(a) & (b) Ground water levels in various parts of the country are declining because of continuous withdrawal necessitated by increased demand of fresh water for various uses, vagaries of rainfall, increased population, industrialization and urbanization etc.

Water being a State subject, initiatives on water management including conservation & water harvesting and revival/rejuvenation of water bodies in the Country is primarily States' responsibility. However, the important measures taken by the Central Government for conservation, management of ground water and effective implementation of rain water harvesting in the country are available at the following URL:

http://jalshakti-dowr.gov.in/sites/default/files/Steps_to_control_water_depletion_Feb2021.pdf.

In addition, a number of States have done notable work in the field of water conservation/harvesting. Of these, mention can be made of 'Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan' in Rajasthan, 'Jalyukt Shibir' in Maharashtra, 'Sujalam Sufalam Abhiyan' in Gujarat, 'Mission Kakatiya' in Telangana, Neeru Chettu' in Andhra Pradesh, Jal Jeevan Hariyali in Bihar, 'Jal Hi Jeevan' in Haryana among others.

Government of India launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in 2019, a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach intended to improve water availability including ground water conditions in the water stressed blocks of 256 districts in India. In this regard, teams of officers from Central Government along-with technical officers from Ministry of Jal Shakti were deputed to visit water stressed districts and to work in close collaboration with district level officials to undertake suitable interventions. In addition 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan – Catch the Rain' campaign has been launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India on 22 March 2021.

Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is implementing National Aquifer Mapping and Management program (NAQUIM), which envisages mapping of aquifers (water bearing formations), their characterization and development of Aquifer Management Plans to facilitate sustainable management of Ground Water Resources. The State-wise information is shared with States/Uts for implementation.

Ministry of Jal shakti, Department of Water Resources, RD & GR (DoWR, RD & GR) is implementing Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal), a Rs.6,000.00 crore Central Sector Scheme, for sustainable management of ground water resources with community participation. Atal Jal is being implemented in 81 water stressed districts and 8774 Gram Panchayats of seven States viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

DoWR, RD & GR is implementing Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) of Water Bodies under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) with main objectives as comprehensive improvement and restoration of water bodies thereby increasing tank storage capacity, improvement of catchment areas of tank command etc.

The ongoing 6th minor irrigation census is, for the first time, collecting details of all water bodies (both in rural and urban areas) irrespective of their use, and this will form the basis of monitoring the health and spread of water bodies.

(c) No specific information about encroachment of water bodies by anti-social elements is available.

(d) Water is a State subject and therefore, making the water bodies free from encroachment falls under their mandate. Further, as per the Guidelines of RRR scheme States are to take necessary steps for declaring the water body boundary through a Government order and ensure removal of encroachments in the water body spread area/water body boundary before submitting a proposal for release of second installment of Central Assistance.