

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI,  
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA  
REJUVENATION  
**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4605**  
ANSWERED ON 31.03.2022

**DRYING UP OF RIVERS**

†4605. SHRI RAMCHARAN BOHRA

Will the Minister of JAL SHAKTI be pleased to state:

- (a) whether experts have forecasted the drying up of several rivers in the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether criminal negligence towards the conservation of environment and river in the country has been indicated as reason for the drying up of rivers;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) the corrective measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

**ANSWER**

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI BISHWESWAR TUDU)

**(a) to (e)** There are two types of rivers in the country; i.e perennial rivers and non-perennial rivers. In perennial rivers, water remains available throughout the year, while non-perennial rivers are rain fed rivers in which water flows only during the rainfall period. Flow in the rivers is a dynamic parameter and depends on many sub-parameters such as rainfall, its distribution pattern, duration and intensity in the catchment, health of catchment area, vegetation and withdrawals/utilization of water. The annual average flow data maintained by Central Water Commission (CWC) for last 20 years for major/important rivers in the country does not indicate any significant decline in water availability. However, as per CWC, the per capita annual water availability in the country has progressively reduced due to increase in population, urbanization, improved lifestyle of people, etc.

Government of India, vide Notification dated 9th October, 2018 has notified minimum environmental flows to be maintained in river Ganga from its origin to Unnao in Uttar Pradesh. The notified environmental flow regime is monitored and supervised by Central Water Commission.

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in the Standard Terms of Reference (ToR) for conducting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies for any proposed River Valley and Hydroelectric Project have mentioned the norms for release of environmental flows, which is 30% in monsoon, 20% in lean season and 25% in non-monsoon & non-lean season to be followed corresponding to flow of 90% dependable year. These norms along with the site specific requirements for environment flow releases as per the studies are then stipulated in the Environment Clearance (EC) letter for compliance.

With regards to the monitoring of the environmental flow releases, the Regional offices of MoEF&CC and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) along with the State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) concerned have been mandated for monitoring of all the environmental aspects of the Hydro Power Projects.

Cleaning and rejuvenation of rivers is a continuous process. Rivers and other water bodies 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), Local Bodies and Industrial Units to ensure required treatment of sewage and industrial effluents to the prescribed norms before discharging into rivers and other water bodies, coastal waters or land to prevent and control of pollution therein. For conservation of rivers, this Ministry has been supplementing the efforts of the States/UTs by providing financial and technical assistance for abatement of pollution in identified stretches of rivers in the country through the Central Sector Scheme of Namami Gange for rivers in Ganga basin, and Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) for other rivers.

NRCP has so far covered polluted stretches on 34 rivers in 77 towns spread over 16 States in the country with the project sanctioned cost of Rs. 6050.18 crore, and *inter-alia*, a sewage treatment capacity of 2677 million litres per day (mld) has been created. Under the Namami Gange programme, a total of 364 projects, including 160 projects for sewage treatment of 5024 mld and a sewer network of 5227 kms, have been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 30853 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. Further, priority for effective rejuvenation of small rivers has been accorded under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

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, State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) and Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) monitor industries with respect to effluent discharge standards and take action for non-compliance under provisions of these Acts.

Besides, in compliance of the orders of National Green Tribunal (NGT) in 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. As per the orders of NGT, regular review on implementation of action plans is undertaken in the States/UTs and also at Central level.

\*\*\*\*\*