GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT & GANGA REJUVENATION

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2930

ANSWERED ON 12.12.2024

REHABILITATION OF PEOPLE DISPLACED BY EROSION OF RIVERS

†2930. SHRI RAMASHANKAR RAJBHAR

Will the Minister of **JAL SHAKTI** be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government proposes to rehabilitate the people displaced by the erosion of rivers and if so, the details thereof along with the measures taken/being taken to protect land and villages from the erosion of rivers;

(b) whether the Government has a plan to remove silt from the rivers and if so, the details thereof;

(c) the main conclusions of the expert group of the Planning Commission to study groundwater level scenario in the country so far; and

(d) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to check the rapid depleting level of groundwater in the country?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI

(SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY**)**

(a) Government of India has formulated the Policy on Resettlement of People Affected by Erosion under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF). The State Government undertakes assessment of damages caused due to 12 notified natural calamities including rain and floods and provide relief assistance from State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) already placed at their disposal as per Government of India's approved norms. Additional financial assistance is provided from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF), as per laid down procedure in case of disaster of 'severe nature' which includes an assessment based on the visit of an Inter-Ministerial Central Team (IMCT).

Flood management and anti-erosion schemes are formulated and implemented by concerned State Governments as per their priority. Government of India promotes and provides technical assistance, as well as promotional financial assistance for critical areas. To strengthen the structural measures of flood management and anti-erosion, Union Government had implemented Flood Management Programme (FMP) during XI & XII Plans for providing central assistance to States for works related to flood control, anti-erosion, drainage development, anti-sea erosion, etc. which subsequently continued as a component of "Flood Management and Border Areas Programme" (FMBAP) for the period from 2017-18 to 2020-21 and was further extended up to 2026. A total of 529

FMP schemes have been approved and total Central Assistance amounting to Rs 7136.00 Cr. has been released under FMP component to various States/UTs since its inception. Out of these, 427 completed schemes have given protection to an area of around 5.04 Mha and protected a population of about 53.69 million

(b) Erosion, movement and deposition of sediment in a river are natural regulating functions of a river. Rivers tend to maintain a balance between the silt load carried and silt load deposited, maintaining a river regime. Dredging/desilting of rivers is not considered techno-economically feasible, as it can provide benefits marginally and is effective only for a short period. Selective dredging in specific reaches such as tidal rivers, confluence points with narrow constrictions, etc., sometimes may have to be undertaken based upon local site conditions. However, the same should be backed by proper scientific model study. The desilting measures including dredging in specific reaches of rivers for removal of drainage congestion, channel capacity improvement and navigation purpose are formulated and implemented by concerned States/ agencies as per requirement.

For the comprehensive and holistic management of sediments, the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, in extensive consultations with Central Government Ministries/ Departments/ State Governments/ UTs have prepared the "National Framework for Sediment Management" (NFSM). Its emphasis is on reducing silt generation rather than silt removal and promote technological innovations & best practices. The framework lays emphasis on sediment management through integrated river basin management plan giving due consideration to environment and ecology.

(c) The Expert Group of the Planning Commission has recognized that India's groundwater resources face severe threats due to over exploitation in certain areas, causing significant declines in water tables with adverse effects on small farmers and the environment. The Expert Group has emphasized the need for promoting artificial recharge methods and sustainable extraction practices. It highlighted the importance of community-based groundwater management, supported by robust legal reforms. Further, the Expert Group has advocated adopting a sustainable yield approach, balancing groundwater usage with recharge rates. It assigned the responsibility of scientific monitoring of groundwater levels and estimation of sustainable usage to the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and State Ground Water Boards (SGWB). If groundwater levels fall below replenishable thresholds, the Central Government may intervene by declaring affected areas as "environmentally threatened," under the Environment Act.

(d) The aspects related to water resources including its conservation are planned, funded and executed by the State Governments as per their resources and priorities. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Government and provides requisite technical and financial support

in terms with the existing schemes being implemented by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

The initiatives taken by the Government to address the issue of declining water levels across the country are outlined as under:

- Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has completed the National Aquifer Mapping (NAQUIM) Project in the entire mappable area of about 25 Lakh sq. km. The Aquifer maps and management plans have been prepared and shared with the respective State agencies for implementation.

- CGWB has prepared, a Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Groundwater- 2020 in consultation with States/UTs indicating various structures for the different terrain conditions of the country. The Master Plan has been circulated to all the States/UTs and envisages construction of about 1.42 crore rain water harvesting and artificial recharge structures in the country to harness 185 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM) of monsoon rainfall. The Master Plan is being implemented in one district in each State through convergence with State schemes.

- National Water Policy (2012), formulated by Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, inter-alia advocates rainwater harvesting and conservation of water and highlights the need for augmenting the availability of water through direct use of rainfall. It also inter-alia, advocates conservation of river, river bodies and infrastructure should be undertaken in a scientifically planned manner through community participation.

- Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) has been constituted under section 3(3) of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the purpose of regulation and control of ground water development and management in the country.

- The Government has circulated a Model Bill to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact suitable ground water legislation for regulation of its development, which also includes provision of rain water harvesting. So far, 21 States/UTs have adopted and implemented the ground water legislation.

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