

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 193.**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.07.2022

**Norms for Effluent Discharge in Waterbodies**

193. MS. RAMYAHARIDAS:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether National Green Tribunal (NGT) had found faults with the Ministry's 2017 Notification by which new norms for effluent discharge in waterbodies by Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) were laid down?
- (b) if so, the details thereof and the steps being taken to tackle this problem?
- (c) the details of damage that has already been done to the waterbodies?
- (d) whether it is a fact that some of the recent amendments by the Ministry in the environmental norms have been criticised by environmentalists while some of them have been challenged in the court? and
- (e) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

**ANSWER**

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

- (a) and (b): Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has notified Standards for Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) on 13.10.2017 vide G.S.R. 1265(E). There was no STP discharge standards prior to 13.10.2017. General Discharge standard as per schedule-VI of Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 was applicable. However, State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) prescribes site specific stringent norms and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has also given direction to SPCBs under Water Act for enforcing stringent norms than the general standard.

The notification was challenged before the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (NGT), Principal Bench, New Delhi. The NGT in the matter of OA no. 1069 of 2018 vide order dated 21.12.2018 stayed notified standards and mentioned that pre-revised standards shall prevail and constituted Expert Committee for its review. Subsequently NGT vide its order dated 30.04.2019 accepted the report of the Expert Committee with the modification that the standards recommended for Mega and Metropolitan Cities will also apply to rest of the country and the standards will apply not only for new STPs but also for existing/under construction STPs without any

delay. Ministry has filed an appeal before the Hon'ble Supreme Court against the final judgment order dated 30.4.2019 of Hon'ble NGT in the matter of OA no. 1069 of 2018.

The Sewage Treatment Plants are monitored for their compliance on regular basis by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/ Pollution Control Committees (PCCs). More than 900 monitoring's were done in last 3 years and appropriate action within the provisions of applicable rules has been taken.

- (c): Water quality of water bodies is impacted due to various reasons including discharge from sewage treatment plants. The water quality of water bodies is monitored at 4294 locations by CPCB, SPCBs and PCCs. 351 polluted river stretches were identified in 2018 in reference to bathing water criteria ([https://cpcb.nic.in/wqm/Primary\\_Water\\_Quality\\_Criteria.pdf](https://cpcb.nic.in/wqm/Primary_Water_Quality_Criteria.pdf)). Action plan for 176 priority stretches has been prepared by respective States and UTs (26 States & 3 UTs) and is under implementation. The implementation progress is monitored by a Committee chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti. Various steps taken to tackle problems are annexed as Annexure I.
- (d) and (e): Setting of emission and discharge standards of environmental pollutants is a continuous process and need amendment from time to time to address emerging environmental issues and better alignment with the polices. The stakeholder consultations are done for taking into account different views before finalizing the norms. All the proposals of the setting up of new norms and revision of the existing norms are assessed based on techno-economic feasibility, availability of technology and risk acceptability. However, sometimes stakeholders approach various forums including court for voicing their concerns/opinions which is sign of healthy democracy.

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**Steps taken for control of pollution in Water Bodies: -**

- (i) The Central & State Pollution Control Board is implementing the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to restore water quality of water bodies.
- (ii) Regulation of industrial Pollution is implemented through various provisions of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 under consent mechanism by the respective State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) and Pollution Control Committee (PCC).
- (iii) CPCB has made a comprehensive program on water pollution for controlling point sources by developing industry specific standards and General standards for discharge of Environmental pollutants – Effluents (Part A) and waste water generation standards (Part B) under schedule-VI of Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986 so that all the industrial effluents are treated before discharging.
- (iv) In October, 2015, CPCB issued Directions under Section 5 of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 regarding ‘Treatment and Utilization of Sewage for Restoration of Water Quality of River’ to Municipal Corporations of 46 Metropolitan cities and 20 State Capitals.
- (v) In April, 2015, CPCB issued Directions under Section 18 (1) (b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to SPCBs/PCCs regarding treatment & utilization of sewage.
- (vi) CPCB issued Directions under Section 18 (1) (b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 on 13.8.2019 regarding non-compliance status of Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) to SPCBs/PCCs.
- (vii) On 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2020 CPCB has issued directions under Section 18 (1) (b) of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 to SPCBs/PCCs for installation of Online Continuous Monitoring System (OCEMS) for self-surveillance of Sewage Treatment plants.
- (viii) Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS) are installed by the industrial units in the country through directives issued by CPCB for getting real time information on the effluent quality and non-complying unit were identified for follow-up inspections and actions.
- (ix) Indicative Guidelines for restoration of water bodies including rivers were issued by CPCB as a guidance to the Stakeholders for ensuring restoration/ rejuvenation of water bodies.
- (x) Guidelines for immersion of Idols in Water Bodies formulated during 2010 has been revised and the “*Revised Guidelines on Idol Immersion in Water Bodies* “are being implemented in the country with effect from January 01<sup>st</sup>, 2021.
- (xi) CPCB organized a workshop on 30.01.2020 on Restoration of Polluted Water Bodies involving all the stakeholders.
- (xii) CPCB has also filed reports to Hon’ble NGTs, High Courts and Supreme Courts in the matters pertaining to Surface water pollution as and when required.
- (xiii) Under AMRUT and Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR) schemes, Govt. of India is supporting States on cost sharing basis for development of infrastructure for sewage management and rejuvenating polluted rivers.

- (xiv) Various programmes like NLCP, NRCP (later on merged into an integrated scheme of National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Eco-systems (NPCA) have been launched by Government of India for restoration of water bodies.
- (xv) Namame Ganga (National Mission for Clean Ganga) project has strengthened the infrastructure and other measures for rejuvenation of River Ganga Basin and improvement of sewage treatment infrastructures for cities in Ganga Basin.

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