

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1072
ANSWERED ON:03.03.2010
NATIONAL RIVER CONSERVATION PROGRAMME
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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the National River Conservation Programme (NRCP), launched by the Government, was successful in the abatement of water pollution in major rivers of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor including the factors which were responsible for the failure of NRCP;
- (c) the details of funds allocated and utilized for the purpose during the last three years and the current year, year-wise; and
- (d) the corrective steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH)

(a) to (d) The efforts towards conservation of rivers started with the launching of the Ganga Action Plan (GAP) Phase-I in the year 1985. Subsequently, GAP Phase-II was initiated which included the tributaries of the river Ganga, namely, Yamuna, Gomti and Damodar. The Plan was expanded to cover other rivers under National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) in the year 1995. The Plan presently covers 38 rivers in 167 towns spread over 20 states. Pollution abatement schemes undertaken include interception, diversion and treatment of sewage; low cost sanitation works on river banks; electric/improved wood crematoria etc. An expenditure of Rs.3955 crore has been incurred and Sewage treatment capacity of nearly 4000 million litres per day (mld) has been created so far. The schemes are implemented on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and State Governments through implementing agencies of the States.

The pollution load on rivers has increased over the years due to rapid urbanisation and industrialization. Abstraction of water for irrigation, drinking, industrial use, power etc. compounds the challenge. Based on independent monitoring undertaken by reputed institutions on some of the major rivers under NRCP, the water quality in terms of BOD (Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand) values has improved at most locations as compared to water quality before taking up of pollution abatement schemes.

The details of fund allocation and actual expenditure by Govt. of India under the Plan during the last three years and the current year, year-wise are as follows:

Financial Year	Fund Allocation	Actual Expenditure
(Rs. In crore)	(Rs. In crore)	

2006-07	283.20	281.10
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2007-08	267.70	252.99
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2008-09	276.00	276.00
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2009-10 (Till date)	376.00	337.82
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Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in river conservation through the central plans. River conservation activities such as creation of

civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal are also being implemented under other central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as under state schemes.

The Government has initiated an exercise for revamping the river conservation strategy to promote a holistic and integrated river basin approach. The Central Government has set up the 'National Ganga River Basin Authority' (NGRBA) on 20.2.2009 as an empowered planning, financing, monitoring and coordinating authority to ensure effective abatement of pollution and conservation of the river Ganga by adopting a holistic approach with the river basin as the unit of planning.