

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:204

ANSWERED ON:10.03.2011

DIVERSION OF RIVER WATER

Adsul Shri Anandrao Vithoba;Lagadapati Shri Rajagopal

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has taken note of the reported diversion of water of the river Brahmaputra by a neighbouring country;
- (b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;
- (c) whether the Government has assessed its impact on the overall hydrology, including flood- management, hydel power etc. before it subsumed in the Indian territory; and
- (d) if so, the findings thereof and the action taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI SALMAN KHURSHID)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO.204 TO BE ANSWERED ON 10.03.2011 IN LOK SABHA REGARDING DIVERSION OF RIVER WATER.

(a) & (b) At present, no water diversion project has been noticed on the Brahmaputra River. However, Government is aware of the construction activity at Zangmu, on the main Yarlung Zangbo(Brahmaputra) River in the Tibet Autonomous Region of China.

The issue of Chinese activities on river Tsangpo (Brahmaputra in India) impacting the flow of water in the downstream areas in India has been taken up with the Chinese authorities at the highest level. The Chinese side has categorically denied that it is constructing a dam on the Brahmaputra River for the purposes of water diversion. During the visit of Hon'ble External Affairs Minister to Beijing in April, 2010, the Chinese Foreign Minister shared information about construction activity at the Zangmu hydropower station which was widely reported in the Indian media. He stated that Zangmu was a small project with its main function being generation of power and not water supply. He also stated that the power station would not store and regulate the volume of water and this would not have an adverse impact on the downstream areas.

Government has taken up this matter with the Chinese side, including during the recent visit to India by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in December 2010. The Chinese Premier said that China's development of upstream areas will be on the basis of scientific planning and study and will never harm downstream interests. The Chinese side has also conveyed that the construction at Zangmu is that of a small power project, which will not store water or regulate the volume of water, and therefore, will not have an adverse impact on the downstream areas.

(c) & (d) At present, the development undertaken by China on River Brahmaputra are mainly Run of the river projects catering to the local irrigation and electricity requirements in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). If the water from the water resources projects in Tibet is diverted into some other basin in China then it may affect the quantity of flow of water in downstream areas in India during the lean season. However, if the water is released back into the same river after generation of electricity, the effect on flows of water downstream in India may not be significant.

Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's national interest and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it.