

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

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4232

ANSWERED ON:29.08.2011

NATIONAL RIVER POLICY

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**Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether there is an urgent need for national policy for sustainable use of river water;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if so, whether the present programmes such as the National River Conservation Plan and the Ganga Action Plan are short-sighted and inadequate; and
- (d) if so, the steps taken by the Union Government to formulate national river policy on the basis of the common and equal right to river water principle?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN)

(a) to (d) Due to rapid growth in population and urbanization, the demand for water in the country has increased significantly. Government of India has, therefore, undertaken review of the National Water Policy, 2002 to ensure sustainable and equitable development. A drafting committee has been set up by the Ministry of Water Resources to draft a new National Water Policy taking into account the feedback received during consultation meetings held with the Members of Parliament, Academia, Experts & Professionals, Non-Governmental Organization, Corporate Leaders and representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. The Central Government initiated the Ganga Action Plan (GAP) in the year 1985, which was later expanded to the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). The Plan presently covers 39 rivers in 185 towns spread over 20 states. Creation of infrastructure for sewage management and disposal is also being undertaken through other central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as under state schemes.

With the pollution abatement works completed so far under GAP and NRCP, despite significant increase in urbanization, industrialization and growth in population in cities along the banks of river, the water quality, in terms of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) values for major rivers, is reported to have improved as compared to the water quality before taking up pollution abatement works under NRCP, based on independent monitoring undertaken by reputed institutions.