

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
WATER RESOURCES  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3627

ANSWERED ON:26.04.2012

AVAILABILITY OF WATER

Baitha Shri Kameshwar ;Hazari Shri Maheshwar ;Saroj Smt. Sushila;Upadhyay Seema;Verma Smt. Usha

**Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:**

- (a) the details of per capita availability of water in the country;
- (b) whether per capita availability of water is decreasing in the country and the details thereof;
- (c) whether India is one of the countries facing acute shortage of water and where people toil hard to get safe drinking water and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether water of most of the rivers in the country is polluted and cannot be directly used for drinking; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Union Government thereon?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES & MINORITY AFFAIRS (SHRI VINCENT H. PALA)

- (a) The per capita availability of water in the country is 1545 cubic meters as per the 2011 census.
- (b) Yes, Madam. The per capita water availability in the country is reducing progressively due to increase in population. The average annual per capita availability of water in the country, taking into consideration the population of the country as per the 2001 census, was 1816 cubic meters which reduced to 1545 cubic meters as per the 2011 census.
- (c) Yes, Madam. Due to limited availability of water, but growing demand of water due to increasing population, urbanisation and industrialization, India is facing water stress. In addition due to contamination of water sources and poor water treatment facility it is often difficult to get safe drinking water.
- (d) & (e) Water Quality data of various river stretches has revealed that organic pollution particularly Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) has exceeded the desired water quality criteria in 150 river stretches covering 121 rivers. The major cause of rising organic pollution, particularly BOD in these rivers, is due to discharge of untreated and partially treated domestic effluents by various municipalities across the country.

Pollution abatement in rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India is supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in pollution abatement in various rivers through the centrally sponsored National River Conservation Plan (NRCP), which presently covers 40 rivers in 190 towns spread over 20 States. Pollution abatement schemes implemented under the Plan include interception, diversion and treatment of sewage; low cost sanitation works on river banks; electric/improved wood crematoria, etc. Sewage treatment capacity of 4574 million litres per day has been created so far under the Plan. The water quality, in terms of Bio-chemical 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. However, the levels of bacterial contamination in terms of fecal coliform are reported to be exceeding the maximum permissible limit at a number of locations along various rivers.