

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
SHIPPING  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4094  
ANSWERED ON:30.04.2012  
PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL WATERWAYS  
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**Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:**

- (a) whether only a very small part of the total available waterways in the country is being utilised for transportation;
- (b) if so, the total stretch of international waterways in the country alongwith the waterways through which big ships can be run;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to promote the use of waterways in the country; and
- (d) the extent to which traffic burden is likely to be reduced on the railways and roadways with the proper utilisation of all the waterways in the country?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF SHIPPING (SHRI G.K. VASAN)

(a) to (c): According to the report of the National Transport Policy Committee (1980) there are about 14500 km of waterways which are navigable by country boats, out of which about 5685 km of waterways are navigable by mechanized vessels. The following waterways, totaling to 4382 km, have been declared as National Waterways (NWs):

- (i) Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system (Allahabad-Haldia-1620 km) NW-1, declared in 1986.
  - (ii) River Brahmaputra (Dhubri-Sadiya – 891 km) – NW-2, declared in 1988.
  - (iii) West Coast Canal (Kottapuram-Kollam) along with Udyogmandal and Champakara Canals – (205 km) – NW-3, declared in 1993.
  - (iv) Kakinada-Puducherry canals along with Godavari and Krishna rivers (1078 km) – NW-4, declared in 2008.
  - (v) East Coast Canal integrated with Brahmani river and Mahanadi delta rivers (588 km) – NW-5, declared in 2008.
- Of these, on the NW-1, 2 & 3, substantial inland water transport infrastructure has been developed due to which they are being already utilized for transportation and navigation. The developmental works include providing a navigational channel with targeted depth and width for most part of the year, aids for day and night navigation fixed/floating terminals at selected locations for berthing and loading/unloading of vessels and intermodal connectivity at a few selected locations.
- While there is no international inland waterway in the country there is an Inland Water Transit & Trade Protocol between India and Bangladesh under which inland vessels of one country can ply on designated waterway routes of the other country for transit and trade of cargo. Under this arrangement Inland vessels of both India and Bangladesh can ply between Kolkata/Haldia and identified ports of call on Brahmaputra river and Barak river in Assam and on rivers of Bangladesh.

(d) Inland waterways in India if developed with adequate infrastructure and provided with necessary policy support can reduce the burden of transportation by roads and railways in the corridors where the potential waterways exist. However, no specific study has so far been carried out to quantify this aspect for the entire country.