

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

STARRED QUESTION NO:92

ANSWERED ON:25.11.2009

POLLUTION IN RIVERS

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

- (a) whether the level of pollution has increased in various rivers of the country over the years;
- (b) if so, the details of these polluted rivers, State-wise and the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the schemes launched earlier for cleaning these rivers have not achieved the desired results;
- (d) if so, the reasons therefor including the agencies which were assigned the responsibility for cleaning these rivers, State-wise;
- (e) whether the Prime Minister has also directed States to implement schemes for protection of rivers and water bodies in the recently held State Forest Ministers Conference;
- (f) if so, the details thereof; and
- (g) the effective steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to make all these rivers pollution free?

Answer

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

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

Statement referred to in reply to parts (a) to (g) of Lok Sabha Starred Question No.92 to be answered on Wednesday, the 25th November, 2009 on 'Pollution in Rivers'

(a) to (g) Based on water quality monitoring, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has identified 150 polluted river stretches in the country. The details are indicated in Annexure-I. 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 and other purposes compounds the challenge.

The Central Government supplements the efforts of the State Governments in river conservation through the centrally sponsored National River Conservation Plan (NRCP). This Plan presently covers 38 rivers in 167 towns spread over 20 states. Pollution abatement schemes under NRCP include interception, diversion and treatment of sewage; low cost sanitation works on river banks; electric and/or improved wood crematoria etc. Sewage treatment capacity of nearly 4000 million litres per day (mld) has been created so far under NRCP. The schemes are implemented on a cost sharing basis between the Centre and State Governments through implementing agencies of the States. The state wise details of rivers covered under NRCP and the implementing agencies are given in Annexure-II.

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 Prime Minister, in his address at the National Conference of Ministers of Environment & Forests on 18.8.2009, called upon the States to;

- i) set up institutional structures for synergizing the river conservation efforts at the national and state levels;
- ii) effectively enforce legal provisions through State Pollution Control Boards to curtail the discharge of untreated industrial effluents reaching the rivers and;
- iii) explore mobilizing additional resources for river cleaning through innovative models like Special Purpose Vehicles.

Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. 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.