

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2814
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2013
ECOLOGICAL NEEDS OF RIVERS
Chaudhary Shri Jayant

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether a scientific study has been undertaken to determine the ecological needs of rivers in the country and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) if not, whether the Government proposes to undertake such a study;
- (c) whether the Government has initiated a plan for the restoration of fresh water in rivers or provided Central assistance to States for the same and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether there are regulations on the maximum water diversion that construction projects are required to conform to and if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the manner in which the current framework is successfully regulating the amount of water that is being diverted from rivers due to construction of canals, dams and barrages ensuring that rivers get their ecological needs?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a) & (b) A Working Group was constituted by Water Quality Assessment Authority (WQAA) to advise on the minimum flows in the rivers to conserve the ecosystem. The Working Group submitted its recommendations on minimum flows in the rivers. Subsequently, a Sub-committee on minimum environmental/ ecological flows was constituted by WQAA to review the above report of the Working Group on minimum flows. The Sub-committee submitted its report along with recommendations to WQAA stating that the recommendations formulated in this report does not include biota data for determining ecological flows because of its non-availability.

(c) Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. Ministry of Environment & Forests administers a Centrally sponsored scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) for assisting State Governments for various pollution abatement schemes. NRCP presently covers polluted stretches of 41 rivers in 191 towns spread over 20 States.

Ministry of Urban Development also supplements the efforts of the State Governments / Urban Local Bodies through Centrally Sponsored Schemes, namely, Jawahar Lal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns. Besides, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation administers the Total Sanitation Campaign in rural areas with Solid and Liquid Waste Management as an integral component.

(d) & (e) Ministry of Environment & Forests Notification Number S.O. 1533 dated 14th September, 2006 under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 stipulates Environment Impact Assessment and appraisal by Central /State/ Union Territory Expert Appraisal Committee, which inter-alia include assessment and ensuring ecological needs before according environmental clearance for large construction projects including construction of dams, canals and barrages.