

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1555

ANSWERED ON:08.12.2015

Hydro-Power Projects

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

- (a) whether the Union Government has studied the long-term environmental impact of the hydro-power projects;
- (b) if so, the details and outcome thereof;
- (c) whether hydroelectric projects are causing pollution in water bodies in the downstream and if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government has issued direction to control pollution caused by hydroelectric projects in the downstream;
- (e) if so, the response of the State Governments thereon, State-wise; and
- (f) the action taken by the Union Government to control pollution caused by hydroelectric projects in the rivers?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

(SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) & (b) The Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006 provides detailed procedure of appraising various developmental projects including Hydropower projects proposals for granting environment clearance. EIA notification mandates conducting of detailed environmental impact assessment study to assess and predict impacts of a project on environment. Accordingly, environment management plan (EMP) is prepared and evaluated to mitigate the environmental impacts. As far as hydropower projects are concerned, they are broadly categorised as under:

â€¢ Category A – Hydropower projects having capacity more than 50 MW, considered at Central Level.

â€¢ Category B - Hydropower projects having capacity more than 25 MW and less than 50 MW, considered at the State Level.

â€¢ Hydropower projects with proximity to National Park/Sanctuary, Biosphere Reserve and/or projects situated within 10 km of inter-state/international boundaries also require similar environment clearance from the Union Government.

â€¢ The Government has also undertaken a separate study to assess impacts caused by existing and under construction hydropower projects in the upper reaches of Ganga in Uttarakhand. Besides, the Ministry has now begun undertaking carrying capacity and cumulative impact assessment study of river/river basin to optimally determine hydropower projects with their location and size keeping in view the environmental carrying capacity of a river /river basin.

As per the outcome of the appraisal and recommendations of the EAC, these proposals are processed for granting environment clearance as per the provisions stipulated under the Environment Impact Assessment Notification, 2006 and it's amendment from time to time.

(c) to (f)Hydroelectric power projects may cause adverse environmental impact and to mitigate such impact on riverine biodiversity, terrestrial biodiversity and water quality of river; necessary measures are prescribed as per EIA study. Accordingly, an appropriate EMP is prepared which is evaluated by a designated Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) for River Valley & Hydroelectric Projects. The EAC recommends environmental safeguard measures to mitigate the adverse impacts. These measures are stipulated in the environmental clearance for compliance by the project proponents. Compliance of environmental safeguard conditions is monitored regularly through the Regional Offices of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and State Pollution Control Boards. Government issues directions and take penal actions by exercising power under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 in case of violation of the prescribed conditions by the project proponents
