

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:538

ANSWERED ON:14.08.2014

PRESERVATION OF NATURAL WATER BODIES

Patel Smt. Anupriya Singh

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANAGA REJUVENATION be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Union Government is aware that some unscrupulous elements have reportedly filled the natural water bodies with sand etc. and have sold such reclaimed land and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Union Government has issued or proposes to issue any guidelines to the State Governments for preventing/prohibiting filling up of water bodies and if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether there is any law which prevents filling of the natural water bodies and if so, the details thereof along with the number of persons apprehended under this law during the last three years and the current year, State-wise; and
- (d) the steps taken by the Government to ensure that no water body is filled up, degraded, drained, converted or subjected to any activity that is incompatible with the ecological integrity of the wetland?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION (SUSHRI UMA BHARATI)

(a)to(d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. 538 DUE FOR REPLY ON 14.08.2014 RAISED BY SHRIMATI ANUPRIYA PATEL, MP (LOK SABHA) REGARDING "PRESERVATION OF NATURAL WATER BODIES".

(a)to(d) As per the Constitution, water including water bodies, is a State subject and any corrective measures for removal of encroachment is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. As per the information collected in the 4th Minor Irrigation Census, the total number of water bodies used for irrigation in the country was 5,23,816. Out of this, 80,128 water bodies were not in use. Many of the water bodies have gone into disuse because of development of ground water irrigation system, inadequate maintenance, encroachments and diversion of land for other purposes.

Ministry of Urban Development has published an Advisory on "conservation and restoration of water bodies in urban areas" in August, 2013 in which, various steps have been suggested for conservation of water bodies and their restoration. The States are advised to set up "a State Level Advisory Committee" for conservation and preservation of lakes/water bodies. The States have also been advised to designate water bodies as a separate land use classification that is legally tenable, in parallel with the protected areas as defined under the Environment Protection Act and the forest Protection Act to prevent their encroachment and destruction.

A sum of Rs.6235 crores has been provided, by this Ministry, for restoration of 10,000 water bodies, to restore an irrigation potential of 6.235 lakh hectares, during the 12th Plan. The central assistance is provided in the form of grant, which is 90% of the project cost in special category States (NE States, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Uttarakhand and undivided KBK districts of Odisha), projects lying in drought & desert prone areas;, tribal, and left wing extremism affected areas and 25% of the project cost in the case of non-special category States/areas.