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Title: Need to allocate adequate funds for cleaning the Thamirabarani River in Tamil Nadu.

SHRI S.S. RAMASUBBU (TIRUNELVELI): Thamirabarani is one of the perennial rivers in Tamil Nadu which originates from Pothigai hills on the Eastern slopes of the Western Ghats. It passes about 124 kms. through Tirunelveli and Tuticorin Districts and drains its water into the Bay of Bengal at Punnakayal of Gulf of Mannar. Its water is used for drinking, irrigation, fishing and electricity generation. This river is having a number of canals, dams and reservoirs. Besides fulfilling the drinking water requirements of three districts of southern Tamil Nadu, this river facilitates 82,000 acres of land of irrigation.

Of late, Thamirabarani River is greatly polluted due to rapid industrialization on its banks including pulp, paper, textile, various workshops, photographic industries, various small scale industries leading to the discharge untreated effluents as also human and animal wastes, etc. The waste consists of dye stuff, sulphates, sulphide, copper, zinc, lead, phenolics, chlorides, lingo cellulosic wastes, mercaptans, mercury, etc. The survey conducted at various canals of Thamirabarani river reveals that the arsenic, chemical and pollution levels are extremely high than the permissible limits. Further the presence of amala plants in the canal greatly absorbs the oxygen level leading to the death of living things. Besides, the increased presence of microbes spreads foul smell in the canals. There are shocking reports that one litre of river water contains more than 1,300 microbes. The presence of high-level of toxic substances in the river water and its consumption causes irritation and other skin related diseases. There is huge apprehension among the scientists and farmers that if the present situation is allowed to continue, the crops will be greatly affected.

I shall, therefore, urge upon the Union Government to allocate adequate funds for cleaning the Thamirabarani River on war-footing and direct the State Government to enforce the pollution norms strictly.