Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha Questions

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES

LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO 6745

ANSWERED ON 17.05.2012

MAINTENANCE OF RIVERS

6745. Smt. BHAVANA PUNDLIKRAO GAWALI PATIL

K. SUGUMAR

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:-

(a) whether it is true that as per a report by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), the ground water level in many urban cities has been depleting fast;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether poor planning and carelessness have been blamed in the upkeep of the rivers in this report and if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether it is also true that the CSE reports sewage crisis in making in many urban cities; and

(e) if so, the action taken by the Government thereon?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND WATER RESOURCES (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL)

(a) A report brought out recently by Centre for Science &Environment titled "Excreta matters" is based on survey of 71 cities in the country. The report indicates that out of 71 cities, 11 cities (15%) depend almost completely on ground water for public water supply. In some of the cities, ground water has been so heavily pumped up, but not recharged, that the sources are beginning to dry up.

(b) The report indicates that on an average, across the 40 cities the CGWB has monitored, there is a decline of 0.6 metres per year, roughly 2 feet a year. Rates of decline in water levels during the period 1996-2006 in nine cities have been reported as follows :

Sr. No. Name of City Rate of decline in water level (m/year)

1	South Delhi	3
2	Jaipur	1.4
3	Jabalpur	1.9

4	Dewas	4.4
5	Gwalior	1.8
6	Gurgaon	2.6
7	Faridabad	1.5
8	Dharwad	1
9	Alwar	1 to 1.5

(c) The report states: "Rivers are no longer rivers, but modern extensions to the drains and sewers that run over and under the cities and industrial belts". The report mentions that "2007 data shows that of the total river length of 45,043 km in India, about 33 per cent is unfit for bathing or drinking. Of this, 14 per cent is severely polluted and 19 per cent moderately so." It further adds: "It is the lack of water in ecosystems that is making the task of pollution control even more difficult and expensive. Current Indian standards for sewage or waste discharge into water bodies assume the river will have water to assimilate waste. But with rivers losing water to dams and hydroelectric projects in its upper reaches and then to agriculture, industry and cities downstream, there is little ability left in ecosystems to assimilate, let alone clean".

(d) The report mentions: "The key problem is Indian cities do not have drainage to convey excreta to the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs). It is expensive to build sewage drainage but even more expensive to maintain it. And city Governments will keep behind all plans to build more. Cities also find they can never repair enough. The end result is that where there is an STP, there is no waste to treat. All cities forget that the majority lives unconnected to underground drainage or lives in what is officially called unauthorized and illegal colonies. In this way the city forgets these areas generate sewage, which flows into open drains that crisscross the cityscape. But these are the very drains, flowing past legal colonies, in which the STP disposes off its expensively treated effluents. "

(e) The Central Government is supplementing the efforts of State Governments / Urban Local Bodies for creation of civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal through central schemes such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSSMT).