

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4305
ANSWERED ON:16.04.2001
SCARCITY OF WATER
CHELLAMELLA SUGUNA KUMARI

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) whether India would be among the countries worst hit by water scarcity in the new millennium; and
- (b) if so, the steps proposed to ensure that the country would not face steep cut-backs in the supply of water for irrigation purposes?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI)

(a) India receive an average annual precipitation of about 4000 Billion Cubic Metre (BCM). Out of this about 1869 BCM appears as runoff in the various rivers of the country. On an average water availability in the country remains more or less fixed according to the natural hydrologic cycle. According to an international criteria, any situation of yearly water availability of less than 1000 cubic metre (cu.m.) per capita is considered as scarcity condition. It is estimated that due to increasing population, the average annual per capita water availability may come down from about 1869 cu.m. at present to about 1350 cu.m. by 2025 A.D. at the national level. Due to the spatial variability of rain in the country and also because of variation in population density, per capita average annual availability of water in different basins also varies from 14,057 cu.m. in Brahmaputra-Barak basin to 307 cu.m. in Sabarmati basin. Further, the temporal variability in the rainfall creates scarcity of water in certain years.

(b) Water resources development including construction of storages for utilization of water is taken up by the State Government as per their own priorities. A live storage capacity of 177 BCM has been created by construction of large dams upto 1995.

Projects to add an additional storage capacity of about 75 BCM are under construction and 132 CBM are under planning. The replenishable ground water is of the order of 432 BCM, out of which about 154 BCM has been developed for use. With the help of these storages and other minor irrigation schemes an irrigation potential of 90 Mha has been created upto the end of the Eighth Plan against the ultimate irrigation potential of 139.9 Mha in the country.

As a long term measure National Water Development Agency of Government of India have formulated National Perspective Plan for water resources development which envisages interlinking between various peninsular rivers and Himalayan rivers for transfer of water from surplus basins to water deficit basins. Government of India is also promoting rain water harvesting through Watershed Management Programme, artificial recharge of ground water and roof-top rain water harvesting under the sector reform project of Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme under the Ministry of Rural Development, for which technical and financial assistance is provided to the state Government and other implementing agencies. Central Ground Water Board has also taken up pilot studies for artificial ground water recharge. Assistance is also extended to State Governments under Command Area Development Programme for bridging the gap between potential created and utilized. For early completion of ongoing irrigation projects Government of India is extending assistance to state Governments under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme.