

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA**

STARRED QUESTION NO:310
ANSWERED ON:11.08.2003
NATIONAL WATER POLICY
ANANTRAO GUDHE

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

- (a) the salient features and the main objectives of National Water Policy;
- (b) whether the aforesaid objectives have been achieved;
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor; and
- (d) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure equitable distribution of water amongst the States through a process of conciliation and consensus?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRIMATI BJOYA CHAKRAVARTY)

(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.310 TO BE ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 11.8.2003 REGARDING NATIONAL WATER POLICY.

(a) to (c) The salient features of the National Water Policy, 2002 are given at Annex. The objective of the National Water Policy is to ensure optimum utilization of the water resources through sustainable development by adopting an integrated & comprehensive approach for planning, development and management guided by a national perspective with co-operation and active involvement of all stakeholders.

In order to achieve the objectives, the National Water Policy which was adopted by the National Water Resources Council on 1st April, 2002, has been sent to all the State Governments and Union Territories and all other concerned for its implementation. Further, an action plan for its implementation has been prepared after detailed deliberations with all concerned including water users and Non-Governmental Organisations through a series of Workshops on Policy Action Dialogue.

(d) Inter-State water issues including equitable distribution of water amongst States are resolved by facilitating bilateral/ multilateral negotiations among the basin States and reaching inter-state agreements. In the event, no agreement is reached, the dispute is then referred to a Tribunal on a request from one of the party states under the "Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 as amended upto 2002".

ANNEX

SALIENT FEATURES OF NATIONAL WATER POLICY -2002

The salient features of the National Water Policy -2002 are as under :

- Water is a precious national resource and its planning, development and management should be governed by national perspectives.
- A well developed information system for water related data at national/state level should be established with a net-work of data banks and data bases integrating and strengthening the existing central and state level agencies.
- Water resources development and management will have to be planned for a hydrological unit. Appropriate river basin organisations should be established for the planned development and management of the river basins.
- Water should be made available to water short areas by transfer from other areas including transfer from one river basin to another, after taking into account the requirements of the areas/basins.
- Planning of water resources development projects should, as far as possible, be for multi-purpose with an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach having regard to human and ecological aspects including those of disadvantaged sections of the society.
- In the allocation of water, first priority should be given for drinking water, followed by irrigation, hydro-power, ecology, agro-industries and non-agricultural industries, navigation and other uses, in that order.

- The exploitation of groundwater should be regulated with reference to recharge possibilities and consideration of social equity. The detrimental environmental consequences of over-exploitation of ground water need to be effectively prevented.
- Careful planning is necessary to ensure that construction and rehabilitation activities proceed simultaneously. A skeletal national policy on resettlement & rehabilitation needs to be formulated such that project affected persons share the benefits through proper rehabilitation.
- Adequate emphasis needs to be given to the physical and financial sustainability of existing water resources facilities. There is need to ensure that the water charges for various uses should be fixed such as to cover at least the operation and maintenance charges initially and a part of the capital costs subsequently.
- Management of the water resources for diverse uses should incorporate a participatory approach by involving users and other stakeholders alongwith various governmental agencies, in an effective and decisive manner.
- Private sector participation should be encouraged in planning, development and management of water resources projects for diverse uses, wherever feasible.
- Both surface water and ground water should be regularly monitored for quality. Effluents should be treated to acceptable levels and standards before discharging them into natural streams. Minimum flow should be ensured in the perennial streams for maintaining ecology.
- Efficiency of utilization should be improved in all the diverse uses of water and conservation consciousness promoted through education, regulation, incentives and disincentives.
- There should be a Master Plan for flood control and management for each flood prone basin. In flood control and management, the strategy should be to reduce the intensity of floods.
- Land erosion by sea or river should be minimized by suitable cost-effective measures. Indiscriminate occupation of, and economic activity in coastal areas and flood plain zones should be regulated.
- Needs of drought-prone areas should be given priority in the planning of project for development of water resources. These areas should be made less vulnerable through various measures.
- The water sharing/distribution amongst the states should be guided by a national perspective with due regard to water resources availability and needs within the river basin.
- Training and research efforts should be intensified as an integral part of water resources development.