

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1041

ANSWERED ON:24.02.2003

IMPROVEMENT OF ENVIRONMENT IN AND AROUND GANGA AND YAMUNA

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Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government propose to improve the environment around Ganga and Yamuna rivers;
- (b) if so, whether assistance of semi-government departments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) is likely to be taken in this regard;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether any study has been conducted in this regard; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof and further action taken/ proposed to be taken in the matter?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV):

(a) to (e) A scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) is under implementation to cover pollution abatement works in 155 towns along polluted stretches of 29 rivers spread over 17 States. Ganga and Yamuna rivers are also covered under NRCP. Details in this regard are given in the Statement enclosed. The objective is to improve the water quality of the major rivers, which are the major fresh water sources in the country through the implementation of the following pollution abatement schemes:

Interception and diversion works to capture the raw sewage flowing into the river through open drains and divert them for treatment.

Sewage treatment plants for treating the diverted sewage.

Low cost sanitation works to prevent open defecation on river banks.

Electric crematoria and improved wood crematoria to conserve the use of wood and help in ensuring proper cremation of bodies brought to the burning ghats.

River front development works such as improvement of bathing ghats etc.

Other miscellaneous works like public awareness, public participation etc. Assistance of semi-government departments and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) is also being taken to create public awareness for improving the environment around Ganga and Yamuna rivers. During the last three years, the services of the following NGOs have been taken to create public awareness under the Ganga and Yamuna Action Plans.

1. Utthan Centre for Sustainable Development & Poverty Alleviation
2. Rashtriya Grameen Krishi Vidyapeeth
3. Anusuchit Jati Avam Jan Kalyan Sanstha
4. Gram Udyog Bai Vidya Niketan
5. Jai Gayatri Ma Bal Vidya Mandir
6. Lok Sewa Sansthan
7. Vividh Kala Evam Jan Jagriti Sansthan
8. Vikas Udyog Samiti
9. Mumbaiirkpur Gramudyog Sansthan

10. Evergreen Education Society
11. Triveni Gramudyog Sansthan
12. All India Ubeerus Rays For Global Emergence
13. Bhawani Siksha Prasar Parishad
14. Paryavaran Sachetak Dal
15. Yuva Manch Samajik Sansthan
16. Shiv Shakti Gramudyog Sansthan
17. Sulabh International
18. Mehka Angan (Sub NGO)
19. Nari Chetana Sanghathan
20. Cultural Department
21. Aadrash Gram Udyog Samiti
22. Jan Jagriti Sansthan
23. Haryana Environmental Society
24. Prayas
25. Asian Centre for Organisation Research and Development
26. Joint Assistance Centre
27. Tata Energy Research Institute
28. Sulabh International Social Services Organisation
29. Centre for Social Research
30. Srithi
31. Action for Green Earth
32. Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre
33. Indian Environment Society
34. Samaj Sewa Sansthan
35. Shahid Virendra Smarak Samiti
36. All India Centre for Urban & Rural Development
37. Mayur Mahila Jagriti Sansthan

A number of evaluation studies for the works completed under Ganga and Yamuna Action Plans have been carried out the details of which are given in the enclosed statement. The recommendations of these evaluation studies are being used for making necessary corrections in the subsequent programmes.

STATEMENT

The following evaluations have been carried out under National River Conservation Plan for Ganga and Yamuna River Action Plans:

1. Evaluation of Ganga Action Plan Phase-I, A comprehensive evaluation of Ganga ActionPlan Phase-I by independent agencies (Universities and R&D Institutions) was undertaken in April 1995. The evaluation report has concluded that reduction of discharge of organic matter, a necessary first step in restoring the water quality, has been achieved to a fair level under GAP. Concern has been expressed about contamination of the river with bacterial pollution. However, it is mentioned that GAP as conceived and implemented is an appropriate programme for application to other river basins. The shortcomings of the programme have also been brought out in the report and have been taken note of for application in the subsequent programmes.

2. Cost Benefit Analysis of Ganga Action Plan Phase-I On the direction of the Planning Commission of India, a Cost Benefit Analysis of GAP Phase-I was carried out by Harvard Institute of International Development in 1995-96, in collaboration with reputed national institutes. Funds for the study was provided by the Government of U.K.

The broad conclusion of the study is that in spite of its many shortcomings, the GAP has delivered significant benefits to India. The water quality model of the river Ganga estimate the Ganga river quality during 1995 and beyond, both with and without the Ganga Action Plan Phase-I. The model showed that in 1995, a total stretch of river of about 437 km. between Rishikesh (UP) and Rajmahal (Bihar) still has biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) levels above the permissible limit of 3.0 mg/l. The problem stretch mainly lies between Kannauj and Varanasi. However, without GAP this stretch would have been about 740 km and more than 100 km would have exceeded 10 mg/l. Dissolved Oxygen (DO) levels would have been below 5.0 mg/l for a short stretch near Kanpur. Hence, it can be seen that GAP has made a significant difference to water quality.

Both users and non-users have benefited & the result is that the real rate of return on Phase-I is well above the 10% required to public sector projects.

It would be unreasonable for a developing country like India to expect to achieve in 10 years what it has taken countries with many more resources over 20 years to achieve particularly for much smaller rivers than Ganga. Second, the costs involved in other river cleaning-up programmes have been enormous, and given the similar type of objectives with relatively larger scale operations, the cost earmarked for the GAP is much smaller. Thus, in terms of both the cost and time taken, GAP compares favourably with those of the other major rivers of the world like Thames, Rhine and Danube.

3. Performance Evaluation of Sewage Treatment Plants set up under GAP-I The Central Pollution Control Board, on the directions of Supreme Court carried out a detailed inspection of the STPs set up under GAP Phase I in July, 2001. According to the conclusion and recommendations of the Inspection Report submitted by CPCB, out of 35 STPs sanctioned under GAP Phase I (3 STPs in Uttaranchal, 10 STPs in U.P., 7 STPs in Bihar and 15 STPs in West Bengal), 32 were commissioned and of these 29 were found functioning. The report also indicates that adequate fund allocation for O&M of STPs is not provided particularly in Bihar and U.P.

4. Performance Review of Yamuna Action Plan Project Works A performance review of Yamuna Action Plan project works (original and extended phase) was carried out by Alternate Hydro Energy Centre, Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee during the year 2002. On the basis of the assessment of the works in the YAP towns, it is concluded that the YAP is a well conceived and implemented Plan which has served the purpose of improving the water bodies receiving the water and the general environment of the towns. However, some short-comings have also been brought out which will be addressed in the subsequent phases of the Action Plan.