

14.20 hrs.

Title: Consideration and passing of the Water (Prevention and control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 2000.
(Bill passed)

MR. CHAIRMAN : The House shall now take up Item No. 6. Shri T.R. Baalu.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU):

Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, be taken into consideration."

This Bill seeks to augment the resources of Central and State Pollution Control Boards and to promote economy in the use of water with a view to abating pollution.

With the passing of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the rapid expansion of industries and towns, the responsibility and workload of the Pollution Control Boards have increased considerably. However, the financial and other resources available with these Boards have not kept pace with the increase in cost and with the overall commitments, which involve increased financial liabilities.

The Cess rates fixed in 1991 are low and have not been revised so far. The State Governments and the Central and State Pollution Control Boards have been emphasising the need to enhance the existing Cess rates. While the responsibilities of State Boards are still growing, there has been no commensurate increase in their resources, and the current Cess rates have not proved to be a sufficient deterrent to push consumers to reduce the use of water.

Though nearly three-fourths of earth is water, the estimated volume of fresh water in our rivers, ground water, snow and ice is about 2.5 per cent only, the rest

being sea or salt water. Total usable fresh water supply to ecosystem and humans from river systems, lakes, wetlands, soil moisture and shallow ground water is less than one per cent of all fresh water and only 0.01 per cent of all the water on earth.

As per World Health Organisation, only 0.007 per cent of all water on earth is readily available for human consumption globally. This indicates that fresh water on earth is finite and also unevenly distributed. Thus, water, as a national resource is very precious. However, we are taking to unsustainable use of water, much water is wasted, used inefficiently and polluted through abusive exploitation. The per capita availability of fresh water is fast declining.

In India, the per capita average annual fresh water availability has reduced from 5177 cubic meters from 1951 to about 1820 cubic meters in 2001, and is estimated to further come down to 1341 cubic meters in 2025. Therefore, we are required to take all measures to promote conservation and efficient use of water. This Bill is a decisive step in this direction.

Sir, the proposal to enhance water Cess rates is in consonance with the Government's Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, which prescribes adoption of economic instruments for abatement of pollution and conservation of natural resources. Economic instruments integrate economic consideration into environmental decision-making. They offer an incentive to industries to reduce pollution below the levels determined by regulations and disincentive to those who use excessive water.

They encourage adoption of new technologies, cleaner production processes and promotion of non-polluting and environment-friendly products by favouring new research and development activities.

Further, the economic instruments help to promote conservation of natural

resources, and also act as a source of finance to the statutory agencies entrusted with the task of controlling pollution.

The standards of effluents are notified under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, and failure to comply with the prescribed standards attracts prosecution.

These regulations become more effective when combined with economic instruments, and the Water Cess Act offers an economic incentive to reduce pollution.

Water consuming industrial units which conform to the prescribed standards for effluents have to pay lower

amounts of cess, and this acts as a financial incentive for units to comply with the prescribed standards.

By enhancing the cess rates, this incentive becomes a stronger motivating force for reducing pollution.

The present proposal is to increase the current rates of cess on water consumption approximately three-fold over the existing rates.

The new rates will indicate the maximum permissible level and the actual rates will be notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forests from time to time.

Sir, the Bill also seeks to extend cess application to all categories of industries which consume water more than the prescribed minimum water quantity and discharge sewage or trade effluents.

However, cess on hydel power is proposed to be abolished on the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Bill as presented to the hon. House is in conformity with the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

The Bill has been drawn up as a result of consultation between the Central and State Pollution Control Boards and other Ministries and Departments.

Sir, through you, I look forward to this august House for valued opinion and support for this measure.

With these words, I move the Motion.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

"That the Bill further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, be taken into consideration. "

SHRI E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN (SIVAGANGA): Respected Chairperson, we support this Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill, 2000. But at the same time, we doubt whether making the water cess and collecting the cess for the purpose of the Pollution Control Board is constitutional or not. This point has to be answered. It is because now the Constitution is very clear in telling that water supply and drainage are in the State List of the Seventh Schedule, entry 17, which says: "Water, that is to say, water supplies, irrigation and canals, drainage and embankments, water storage and water power subject to the provisions of entry 56 of List 1."

In the same way, the State Governments have got powers regarding water on the surface. But at the same time, the Panchayats have now been vested with more powers of regulating water in their areas by the new amendment of the Constitution of India by making the Eleventh Schedule wherein the drinking water is the item 11 of the Eleventh Schedule. In the same ways, Nagarpalikas -- municipalities and corporations -- have got the right under the Twelfth Schedule to regulate water supply, that is, item 5 -- water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes.

Therefore, *in toto*, the power for regulating the water now shifts from the hands of the Central Government. Even if we take it in a comprehensive way, the land and the water underground is the property of the State. In the federal set up, the State has got the right on the land. Whatever is there inside the land., be it major or minor mineral, the right is with the State Government. It is classified by the Act of the Parliament.

But at the same time, water is now a scarce commodity in every State. A lot of fighting is going on; and the State Governments are coming forward with more legislations, to regulate groundwater, on the basis of sample laws of the Central Government. In Tamil Nadu, there is a new legislation now, as a result of which, people could not dig new wells. If they do, they will be prosecuted and imprisoned. So, very stringent management is going on just to preserve the scarce commodity, that is, water, which is an asset of a particular State.

Now, the Central Government wants to have cess on water, especially on the consumption made by the industry. The new Bill in Clause 2 says:

"(c) "industry" includes any operation or process, or treatment and disposal system, which consumes waters and/or gives rise to sewage effluent or trade effluent, but does not include any hydel power unit;".

No doubt, it is clubbed with the activity of the industry. It is clubbed with the production or manufacturing of an industry. Keeping that aspect in mind, as 'industry' is the subject of the Central Government, how can the Central Government have cess on water which is a scarce commodity for the villagers? The industries are now polluting the entire system of Indian social structure. They get some property in a particular village and they take away water

from the underground and from the surface, the rain water preserved in the tanks or from the irrigation tanks. They take out water with the help of very gigantic motors, making the villagers suffer because they will be without water for their agricultural purposes.

Therefore, I request the Government to do certain things. I know that the hon. Minister is very dynamic; he has created an environment friendly nation. India has become environment friendly now. By addressing many seminars and conferences, India is now one of the countries where environment is given the top priority. But at the same time, we have to look at the aspect of villagers who are dependent on water alone. Even for drinking purposes, many villages do not have water. Now, multi-purpose drinking water facilities are made available. Through Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Facilities, the Central Government is spending a lot of money to give water to one village which may be about 20-40 kms. away from a particular village. They dig out water and supply water to the whole village; so, the entire village is dependent on one source. If that source is also taken away by the industries, by way of their consumption – water cess is also now going to the Central Government or the State Government's Pollution Control Board – how can the local panchayats manage themselves? They will not get water for their drinking water purposes; their own resources are taken away by the industry. They do not get water either for drinking purposes or for irrigation purposes. This has to be looked into.

I request that there should be an overall review of this aspect to see whether this cess can go to panchayats and municipalities. Cess may be collected now; it may be challenged in the court; it may be looked into by the Legal Department whether it can be done properly or not. Till then, at least, water cess should be given to the panchayats and municipalities. They are dependent on water management only; water cess can be utilised for augmenting local resources and not for the management of the State Pollution Control Board or the Central Pollution Control Board. They can earn money for their own management through some other means, but they need not utilise this water cess. This is my first submission. Many of the multinational corporations, in the name of Coca Cola or Pepsi or in the name of some mineral water, are stealing away the entire resources of the villages.

Villages are becoming poorer and poorer day in, day out. Scientific studies are being carried out. With the help of satellite mapping, we could find out that the level of underground water throughout India, especially in South India and more particularly in Tamil Nadu, is very poor and if the same situation continues for 20-30 years, we will have another Sahara desert in South India. This is the finding of INSAT mapping. Remote-controlled scientific studies are coming out with a clear theory that we have to preserve water as far as possible. Environment pollution should be controlled as early as possible. We are not objecting to the prevention and control of pollution. It is very-very important as it eats away the vital part of the Indian social system.

Those multinational companies which are not allowed to start an industry in the West are being allowed to put up an industry in the Asian countries, especially in India. We know the Bhopal incident. That industry was totally prohibited in America and, therefore, they came forward to put up an industry in India, more so, in the central part of the city. Same thing happens with every chemical industry throughout India. The companies which are being banned by the European and American countries, we are very flexible in allowing them to start an industry here just because they are willing to do so and the result is, they pollute the mainland. Pollution cannot be controlled by remote control, sitting either in Delhi or Chennai. The Pollution Board is not so effective to catch the culprit red-handed. They can very easily cheat the Board by asking whether there is any public interest litigation in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has directed that all the 11 industries should be closed. Similarly, all the industries in and around Agra should be closed. This sort of dictum is being followed by the Ministry. They could not have the power to see that this type of pollution is controlled. Therefore, what I would like to stress upon is, the Central Government should give more teeth to the *panchayats* and local boards so that they can prevent pollution. We have got the Ministry. The hon. Minister Shri Baalu has floated a lot of enactments like the environment friendly Bio-diversity Act which has given power to the villages and communities. They can manage the assets, utilise usufruct and earn profit. This type of new thinking has come up in the way of legislation brought forward by the Environment Ministry. Why not the same thing comes up in this particular area also because according to the Constitution, water has to be managed by the local bodies?. Local bodies should have the system to monitor and punish the people as also to get the assets from the persons who are actually enjoying this facility for their industrial purposes.

I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to the fact that the original enactment, that is, the Water (Prevention and Control) Pollution Act, 1974, was initiated during the period of Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Pre-emptively this Bill was brought so that entire India can be protected from pollution as early as possible. Subsequently there was dilution of power. The Executive was not so efficient to implement this Act. I am afraid, even though we are having a cess of five paise per kilo litre, how are we going to manage it. What is the system? How is the human resource available with the Pollution Control Board going to enforce it?

Suppose an industry has not paid it, what is the remedy available? Are they going to file a suit? Are they going to enforce it through Revenue Recovery Act? Is there any tie up with the State Governments or the local

administration? All these things have to be considered. I think the talisman lies in giving power to the local bodies so that they can well manage the situation. At the same time, they can also protect their own interest by not allowing the industries to take away the water. We have got many examples to state in this regard.

The first violator is the respective corporation. I may be giving a contradictory view. On the one hand, I am saying that the corporations and the local bodies should have the power to execute water cess but on the other hand, I am saying that they are the violators of the pollution laws. It is because very easily, they put all the sewage at one place. It may be land or irrigation tank or waste land or wet land. Nobody bothers about it. How are we going to see that the pollution is properly controlled? Have we asked the corporations or other agencies to go in for re-cycling? All these things have to be considered. We are giving powers to one agency but we are not giving power to the grassroot people, which means the total system will be in chaos. Therefore, we have to give duties as well as rights to the same bodies so that they can enforce it properly. If we find any violation, we can compel that particular institution or the local body to mend ways. We can tell them that they have to obey the law, otherwise action will be taken against them.

I can give the example of Coimbatore Municipal Corporation where they are dumping a lot of sewage to the detriment of the people living in that corporation limit. People living there are having a lot of contagious diseases because the Corporation puts the sewage in the very mainland in Coimbatore. In the same way, a lot of river-beds are polluted by the industries which are placed nearby. Nobody can take action against them. There is no clear law to tell that you have violated the law, and, therefore, you will be prosecuted. We have to give the petition to the Pollution Board and they will have an inquiry sitting in Chennai or somewhere else. They will take their own time. If they go to court, then they will stop the entire industry. All these things are happening. Therefore, a clear system should be evolved so that the municipalities could control the industries and the municipalities themselves are also controlled properly.

With this observation, I would like to suggest that there should be a total review of this particular Bill. We may enact it now but afterwards the Ministry could look into it and have some discussion with the local administration to see that this enactment is enforced properly. It should not be that it remains only on paper or enforced in certain areas. No area should be left out for breeding corruption through official system.

With these words, I support this Bill but at the same time, I request for reconsideration of this Bill.

श्री रामपाल सिंह (डुमरियागंज) : सभापति जी, मैं इस बिल का समर्थन करने के लिए खड़ा हुआ हूँ। यह बिल वाटर-सेस के लिए लाया गया है क्योंकि तमाम इंडस्ट्रीज पानी का दुरुपयोग करती हैं। मूल बिल सन् 1977 में बना था। काफी समय हो चुका है और इसका दुरुपयोग बहुत बार किया गया है। इस बिल के माध्यम से वाटर-बोर्ड देखेगा कि पानी का दुरुपयोग न होने पाए और पानी प्रदूषित न होने पाए। कस्बों, शहरों में जो भी नदियां या नाले बहते हैं उनके द्वारा पानी का प्रदूषण होता है। पानी ही जीवन है और पानी को प्रदूषित होने से बचाना हमारा कर्तव्य है। इसलिए इस बिल का मैं समर्थन करता हूँ। इस एक्ट को पास किया जाए, जिससे आने वाले दिनों में मानव को बीमारियों से राहत मिले और उसका स्वास्थ्य ठीक रहे।

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (MURSHIDABAD): Mr. Chairman, Sir, before coming to the subject of the Bill, namely, Water Reservation and Control of Pollution Cess (Amendment) Bill, I would like to inform the House about a news item published in one of the important dailies today. It says, '48 students of a Delhi Government Girls High School in Shakurpur in North-West Delhi fell ill after drinking contaminated water from school taps'. The very heading of the Bill says 'Prevention and Control of Pollution' but this is the kind of water that we are drinking everyday. There was also another report in the newspapers recently that water was found to be contaminated in the sealed mineral water bottles. This is the actual position in regard to the so-called pollution free water all across the country.

Sir, the first point that I would like to make is that according to our Constitution, the subject of water is in the State List. So, after the passing of this Bill, the State Governments should be taken into confidence in regard to the implementation of the various provisions of this Bill. Since the subject of water is in the State List, the Ministry concerned would have to devise a process by which the various State Governments would be taken into confidence while implementing the various provisions of this Bill. I am in favour of this Bill. But I would like to know as to how the Ministry proposes to take the State Governments into confidence in this matter.

Sir, the basic object of this Bill is to increase the cess. It has been stated in the Objects and Reasons of the Bill that, 'the present rate of water cess is inadequate for the purpose of meeting the financial requirements of the Central and State Pollution Boards and so it is very much required to increase the rate of cess'. It has also been stated in the Bill that this increase in cess is meant only for the industrial sector. I would like to submit in this regard that the domestic sector should be exempt from this. It is not desirable to impose cess on water that is used for drinking and cooking purposes.

Sir, it has also been mentioned that, 'it is also expected that rationalisation of the cess rates structure will induce

discipline and economy in the use of water'. I suppose it is a bit ambitious thought. It is not possible to induce a sense of discipline and economy in the use of water by increasing the rate of cess. I feel, inducing discipline and economy in the use of water is required, but we need to devise some other system for doing this.

It has also been stated in the Statement of Objects and Reasons that this is necessary because gradually water is becoming a scarce natural resource. This is absolutely correct. Water is a scarce natural resource. We should try our best to protect this natural resource. We must devise some methods in order that we could protect this natural resource.

Now I come to the speech made by the hon. Minister while introducing the Bill. He talked about fresh water. But there is no context to observe that the fresh water is the minimum demand of every citizen of the country. What is the situation throughout the country today? It is not the case of a particular State. In different States like Delhi, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh; in South, North and central region; people are very much searching for fresh water, especially in rural areas. People are forced to drink the arsenic fluoride mixed water. This is a health hazard and would pose a big problem to the people. There is no proper treatment available. I am saying all this because our minimum requirement is the potable fresh water, which is not being provided to my countrymen.

Recently, the Government introduced the Swajaldhara programme. Hon. Rashtrapati has also mentioned about this programme yesterday in his Address. But, I have my own doubts because the previous programme launched by the Government of India for fresh potable water is almost stopped. I understand that it is a State subject. But for a long time, Government of India has also been giving some funds to build water treatment plants in order to make potable water available to the common people especially in rural areas and *basti* areas. I apprehend that it is now going to be stopped. Therefore, I would request through you, Sir, that the Government should take up this programme again to set up as many water treatment plants as possible in a big way, so that people would get fresh water as announced by the hon. Minister. Otherwise, there will be a great problem.

In my district of West Bengal, arsenic-free water is a craze of the common people. Arsenic water is like poison. Doctors and scientists say that arsenic fluoride is mixed in ground water throughout the country. At least 12-13 States are now suffering with this contamination. I request that proper action should be taken by the Government of India.

Coming to the provisions of the Bill, I see that cess is going to be increased for the industrial sector. There should be substantial increase of cess for the industrial sector for different reasons because it is now required to be done. But, at the same time, the Government should be cautious about how to use this extra cess and who will use it. There should be a proper mechanism to use this money to improve conditions in areas where pollution is taking place due to the industrial activities.

With these words, I would conclude my speech.

डॉ. रघुवंश प्रसाद सिंह (वैशाली) : सभापति महोदय, जल प्रदूषण के सम्बन्ध में जो संशोधन विधेयक माननीय मंत्री जी लाए हैं, उसमें कहा गया है कि 1977 में जो कानून बना था, उसी में फिर से संशोधन करने के लिए यह विधेयक लाया गया है। 1974 में जो विधेयक बना था, उसके अन्तर्गत केन्द्र और राज्यों का प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड बना। जब खर्चा-पानी घट जाता है तो उसे बढ़ाने के लिए टैक्स लगाया जाता है। हालांकि बिना कानून में परिवर्तन किए सन् 1991 में जल पर उपकर लागू करने के लिए बिना कानून के संशोधन हो चुका है।

लेकिन अब सरकार कानून में संशोधन करना चाहेगी। इससे उप-कर फिर बढ़ेगा जिससे सरकार चाहेगी कि प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड अच्छा काम करे। दुनिया में लोग जानते हैं कि जल ही जीवन है और जल के बिना काम नहीं चल सकता। पृथ्वी पर 97 प्रतिशत जल समुद्र का है जो खारा है और केवल 3 प्रतिशत जल ही मीठा है लेकिन वह भी प्रदूषित है। क्या मंत्री महोदय बतायेंगे कि उप-कर बढ़ाने से प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड की मदद होगी या उससे कोई सहूलियत होगी? गांवों में पीने की पानी की कमी है क्योंकि ग्राउंड वाटर प्रदूषित हो रहा है। सरकार ने इसके लिये क्या उपचार किया है? नदी-नाले, तालाब का जल या जब गड्ढे में जल एकत्र हो जाता है तो लोग उसमें कूड़ा-कचड़ा डाल देते हैं, जिससे ग्राउंड वाटर प्रदूषित होता है। हां, 200 फीट की गहराई पर पानी ठीक है। आज ही अखबारों में छपा है कि दिल्ली में प्रदूषित जल पीकर 34 बच्चे बीमार होकर अस्पताल में पड़े हुये हैं। इसका मतलब यह हुआ कि लोग कनटैमिनेटेड पानी पी रहे हैं। देश में आधी बीमारियां गन्दे जल से पैदा होती हैं। क्या उसके बाद भी सरकार को जल पर उप-कर लगाना होगा? हमारे देश में उद्योग लॉबी कितनी मजबूत है। चीनी उद्योग सब से ज्यादा प्रदूषण फैलाते हैं। प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड उसके खिलाफ कोई कार्यवाही करने में विफल हो रहा है।

14.57 hrs.

(Shrimati Margaret Alve in the Chair)

सभापति महोदय, जिन माननीय सदस्यों के ऐरियाज में चीनी मिल्स हैं, वे जानते हैं कि उनसे कितना जल प्रदूषण फैल रहा है। आज आधुनिक टैक्नोलौजी आ गई है जिससे प्रदूषण पर नियंत्रण किया जा सकता है। उसमें कुछ पैसे लगेंगे लेकिन मिल वाले पैसा नहीं लगाना चाहते हैं। वे पानी को प्रदूषित कर रहे हैं। पानी एक राष्ट्रीय सम्पदा है। उद्योग लॉबी कहती है कि पानी, हवा और आवाज में प्रदूषण है लेकिन इस सरकार के विचारों में प्रदूषण है। इन सारे प्रदूषणों से मुक्ति पाने के लिये क्या उपाय किये जा सकते हैं, सरकार बताये क्योंकि पानी के बिना काम नहीं चलने वाला है। जब पहाड़ों पर बर्फ पिघलती है, उसका पानी नदियों के रूप में नीचे आता है, उसमें भी प्रदूषण हो जाता है। वार्ड और तालाब का पानी भी दूषित हो जाता है लेकिन प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड के पास इस प्रदूषण पर नियंत्रण करने के लिये कोई उपाय नहीं है। आम जनता भी जान गई है कि ऊपर का पानी दूषित है लेकिन भूमि की 200 फीट की गहराई पर ट्यूबवैल से आया हुआ पानी ठीक है।

15.00 hrs.

लेकिन 25-30 फीट पर मिलने वाला पानी प्रदूषित है। उस पानी का स्वाद भी अच्छा नहीं होता उस पानी को पीने की इच्छा नहीं होती। लेकिन उसके सुधार के लिए कोई इंतज़ाम और नियंत्रण नहीं है। ग्राउंड वाटर के बिना आदमी पानी कैसे पियेगा। इसलिए उपकर में कुछ बढ़ाने का काम सरकार कर रही है।

हाइडल पावर को इन्होंने मुफ्त कर दिया है तो थर्मल पावर में क्यों चार्ज रखा है? थर्मल पावर में भी पानी का इस्तेमाल होता है। उसमें भी डीमैटीरियलाइज़ वाटर दिया जाता है और वह भी प्रदूषित होता है। विभिन्न मैटल्स उसमें रहते हैं तो पानी जब भाप बनकर जाता है तो ट्यूब लीक करती है थर्मल पावर में और फिर कोयले की जो राख है उसको बनाने में भी पानी की ज़रूरत होती है। हाइडल में पानी बहता है, हाइडल में पनबिजली में पानी का खर्चा नहीं है। ऊपर से पानी बहता है और नीचे जाता है तो उससे बिजली पैदा होती है। उसमें पानी दिया जाता है, उसको आपने मुफ्त कर दिया ठीक है लेकिन थर्मल पावर को इसमें रखा है कि उस पर टैक्स बांधेंगे और टैक्स लेंगे। इस बात को भी साफ करिये। इसमें इन्होंने कहा है कि सरकार को जहां मन में आएगा यह छूट दे देगी। इस तरह की छूट रखनी है तो कानून क्यों लाए? उद्योगपतियों की लॉबी है और सरकार पर ये उद्योगपति लोग हावी हैं इसलिए कुछ करोड़ रुपये बचाने के लिए उनकी फ़ैक्ट्रियां प्रदूषण करती हैं। प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड भी काम नहीं करता है। मैं उदाहरण देना चाहता हूँ कि जहां-तहां फ़ैक्ट्रियों द्वारा प्रदूषण किया जाता है। गांवों में प्रदूषित पानी से मछलियां मर रही हैं और आम जनता वह पानी पीती है। बड़े लोग तो 10 रुपये लीटर वाला पानी खरीदकर पीते हैं मगर उसकी जांच में पाया गया है कि 60 प्रतिशत बोतल वाला पानी प्रदूषित है। किसान को 8 रुपये लीटर दूध का दाम मिल रहा है और 10 रुपये लीटर में पानी बिक रहा है। हाय री सरकार और हाय री व्यवस्था! क्या इंतज़ाम है?

जल ही जीवन है जो कहावत है वह तभी व्यवहार में आएगी जब जल प्रदूषित नहीं होगा और आम लोगों को स्वच्छ पानी पीने के लिए मिलेगा। यह ज्यादातर गरीब लोगों का सवाल है। गरीब आदमी जो पानी उपलब्ध हो जाता है, वही पी लेता है और उससे बीमारियां होती हैं। आधुनिक मैडिकल साइंस बता रहा है कि आधी बीमारियां प्रदूषित पानी से होती हैं। पेट की खराबी और कई बीमारियां तब होती हैं जब विभिन्न तरह के कीटाणु पानी के साथ देह में चले जाते हैं। इसको देखकर माननीय मंत्री जी बताएं कि केवल जल प्रदूषण निवारण तथा नियंत्रण उपकर जो लगाएंगे, उससे ठीक है कि प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड जो राज्यों और केन्द्र में हैं, उनको बल मिलेगा, उसकी आर्थिक हालत सुधरेगी। वह ज्यादा इफ़ैक्टिव हो सकेगा, यह कल्पना की गई है। लेकिन इससे प्रदूषण पर नियंत्रण होगा और लोगों को स्वच्छ जल मिलेगा और आगे का काम ठीक कैसे चलेगा, यह बात स्पष्ट रूप से बताई नहीं गई है। अधिकारी लोगों ने बिल बनाकर दे दिया और मंत्री जी ले आए हैं लेकिन यदि स्वच्छ पानी का प्रबंध लोगों के लिए होगा और प्रदूषण रोकने का काम होगा, तब हम इस बिल के समर्थन में हैं अन्यथा हम इसकी खिलाफत करते हैं।

नदी का पानी, तालाब का पानी और ग्राउंड वाटर, तीनों को प्रदूषण से बचाने का क्या प्रबंध सरकार ने किया है जिससे आम लोगों को ठीक लैवल पर स्वच्छ ग्राउंड वाटर मिल सके, इसके लिए मंत्री जी को क्या जानकारी है यह बताएं और तभी इस बिल को पास किया जाए अन्यथा हम इसके खिलाफ हैं।

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA (MAVELIKARA): Madam Chairman, at the outset, I would like to welcome this piece of legislation which has been presented by the hon. Minister of Environment and Forests Shri T.R. Baalu.

The Water Cess Act was enacted in 1977. The objective of the Act was to augment the resources of the Central Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Boards. It was enacted to provide for the levy and collection of cess on the consumption of water by the specified industries and local authorities. The cess rate was revised, for the first time, in 1991 by effecting an approximately three-fold increase. The cess is collected by the State Pollution Control Boards and later on disbursed as per the formula notified by the Government.

The proposed amendment is to strengthen the Pollution Control Boards. When we are augmenting the resources of the Central Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Boards, when we are trying to rationalise the cess rate, I would like to mention one or two very important points before the hon. Minister.

Today, the serious concern of the entire humanity is pollution – the pollution of the rivers, the pollution of the small ponds and water sources. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the State Pollution Control Boards are functioning to our expectations. We are welcoming the steps taken for augmenting the cess. At the same time, I would like to know whether the Government of India has taken any step to review the performance of the Central Pollution Control Board and the State Pollution Control Boards. Of course, the State Pollution Control Boards are functioning under the control of the State Governments. At the same time, the Central Pollution Control Board has also got the same control over the State Pollution Control Boards. In my opinion, the dismal picture can be seen everywhere. Rampant corruption can be seen in some of the State Pollution Control Boards. There are a lot of allegations raised umpteen number of times in various forums. They have not been taken seriously by the Government. This is a very serious matter. The Pollution Control Boards are expected to play a very vital role in our country. But, unfortunately, this is not happening.

Next, water is a very precious wealth in the present day situation. The water scarcity is a major concern of the whole humanity. The historian says that if there is a third-world war, it will be fought on water. In Syria, there was a small war fought on water. It was not noticed properly. There was a war fought on water. The rivers are polluted in a large scale. There is over-dependence on the ground-water. There is no scheme for preserving the rain water. Also, serious attention is not paid by various Governments for preserving the natural water sources. Mr. Minister, of course, this is not entirely your subject. This is a subject which is connected with the Water Resources Ministry also. So, when we are talking about water pollution, these issues are to be addressed properly.

What is happening now? Most of the rivers are drying or dying in our country. Wherever you go, you can see the big bridges. There is no water. The bridges were built up once upon a time when the rivers were full and active. We can see the bridges on the rivers and rivers without any water at all. If one river dies, the State dies, the culture dies and the humanity dies. So, proper attention has not been paid to this aspect.

Now, the major concern is regarding selling of rivers in certain States. In my State of Kerala, major multinational

companies are trying to purchase river water in a large scale.

It was started when the Left Democratic Front Government was in power in Kerala.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN (CHIRAYINKIL): No; that is not correct. ...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Your Government had started it.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : But the implementation was done by your Government.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : It has become a very controversial matter in Kerala. I would like to know whether any State Government is empowered to sell the river water to the multinational companies.

SHRI VARKALA RADHAKRISHNAN : Shri Antony has started it.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Shri Antony has not taken any decision on this matter. Your Government had started this. Our Government has not taken any decision on this matter. ...(*Interruptions*) I do not want to enter into any kind of argument here on this matter. I am talking about the general problem being faced by the people in the country. It is not only in Kerala, but in other places also, the multinational companies are coming and they are trying to take away the water from the rivers. This is going to be a major environmental problem in our country. That is my concern.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : But after they bottle, it is even more polluted.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Yes; that has been widely reported in newspapers.

I would like to point out here that there is no cess levied by the Government on these people who are selling water at Rs. 10 and Rs. 15 and earning profit out of this.

SHRI PRIYA RANJAN DASMUNSI (RAIGANJ): Madam Chairperson, there should be an inquiry as to whether the Health Minister or the Environment Minister is responsible for the selling of polluted water. Who gave clearance for this? All the facts should be tabled in the House very soon. We cannot spare the Minister on this count, because they are playing with the life of the people in the name of water.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : They have given a clean chit to the bottlers by saying that the standards are set by the World Health Organisation.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Madam, this is a very serious issue. What they are selling is not at all mineral water. It is so-called mineral water. They take water from our own rivers, bottle it, put their label and are earning profit out of it, but there is no cess levied on them.

I would like to submit that the time has come to check all these kinds of activities. There should be some kind of restriction on use of water because our rivers are getting polluted and due to that, environmental degradation is taking place.

In our country, drinking water problem is the major issue in every village. The ground water level has gone down. The ponds and wells have dried up and have been completely abandoned by the people. There is no water for agricultural operations. Every State is fighting with its neighbouring State for water. Tamil Nadu is fighting with Karnataka, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh are fighting for water and Punjab and Rajasthan are also fighting. Even our State Kerala is fighting with Tamil Nadu for water. So, due to scarcity, it has become a national issue which is concerning all sections of the society.

Madam, river pollution is a major problem in our country. The hon. Minister is well aware about the holy river Pamba in Kerala. Pamba is a holy river which is catering to the requirements of thousands of Sabarimala pilgrims in our State of Kerala. Pamba is the major river in our State and that is polluted now. This is known to the Minister. The Government of Kerala has submitted a proposal for cleaning this river and the Minister was very kind enough to give assurances to our Chief Minister and also Members of Parliament from Kerala. Shri Francis George, myself and other Members of Parliament from Kerala approached the Minister and requested him to take necessary action for the proper cleaning of the river Pamba.

I would request that this work should be included in the National River Conservation Project and more money should be allotted to this project instead of giving money to Pollution Control Boards which have become very corrupt. If more and more money is given to the National River Conservation Project, they can take up many more programmes and clean our rivers. So, I would like to emphasise that the Pamba Action Plan is very much essential for the State of Kerala because the Pamba river caters to the requirements of thousands of pilgrims who come to Sabarimala every year.

There is another river called Manimala and this also meets the requirements of Sabarimala pilgrims who are coming from different parts of the country.

Thousands of pilgrims are coming to Erimeli and also utilising the Manimala river. It should be included either in the Pamba Action Plan or a separate plan has to be prepared by the Ministry of Environment and Forests so that Manimala river can be cleaned up. Why I am saying this is because in the coming days, this is going to become a major issue. So, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has to pay more attention in cleaning up the rivers and preserving the natural water resources. More and more attention should also be given towards proper implementation and functioning of the State Pollution Control Boards.

Of course, we have a water policy. Under the changed circumstances, it is all the more necessary to have a relook on the water policy which we are having. In my opinion, a comprehensive water policy should be brought forward before this august House to have a relook on the major issues that are being faced by the people and the society.

A major challenge is coming from the side of the MNCs and big industrialists. I am giving you an example. In our State, Kochi is having an industrial belt. The people of Kochi and surrounding areas are not getting drinking water. At the same time, all major industries in that area are getting plenty of water. Why are we allowing them to do that? Even in the villages, the people are not getting drinking water. But these industries are getting enough water. Why are we allowing them? We are having a serious shortage of water for agricultural operations. In this case, why can't we tell them to desalinate the seawater and use it? Anyway, they are investing a lot of money. Why can they not utilise seawater for industrial purposes?

I suggest that by looking into the scarcity of water, the Government of India should instruct them to utilise seawater for their industrial operations so that the poor people can be saved from the scarcity of water.

Since the Minister hails from the State of Tamil Nadu and has always been fighting for the Cauvery water, I think, these issues have to be addressed seriously. These issues can be sorted out only when we have a vision.

The Standing Committee has given three recommendations. I congratulate the Minister because he has accepted those recommendations. One recommendation is excluding the hydel projects. The cess on water used for domestic purposes need not be increased. The cess need not be levied on the use of water by hydel power units. All industries which use water and cause pollution may be covered under the Act by examining Schedule I of the Act. These three recommendations have been accepted. You have respected the wishes of the Standing Committee. I express my deep gratitude to you for this gesture.

This issue is very serious. Within the context of discussing a small amendment will not satisfy the House. I think some time has to be found out separately. This House has to discuss the issue of scarcity of water, preservation of natural resources and effective utilisation of rain water. All these aspects have to be discussed properly.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : Now, the hon. Minister.

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI): I would also like to speak on this subject. ...(*Interruptions*)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I am calling from the list before me. There has been some confusion in the list given by the Secretariat. I will just check up.

...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BIKRAM KESHARI DEO (KALAHANDI): Madam Chairperson, I rise here to support this Bill which has been moved by the hon. Minister of Environment and Forests for imposition of cess on water.

It is very important because water is life and there are lot of stories about water in history also. When Shahjahan was jailed in Red Fort in Agra, he wanted to drink the water of Yamuna, but was refused that water by Aurangzeb. So, it is written on the Taj Mahal that 'Blessed are the Hindus who offer water to the dead'.

Therefore, water is life and it definitely is the source of life in this planet Earth. To conserve it, our Minister has taken the initiative and I congratulate him on this move. But at the same time, Madam Chairperson, I would like to say that water has been carelessly dealt with since long.

The pre-Independence per capita consumption and availability of water was very high, but now if you take the statistics, you will see that per capita availability and consumption of water has drastically gone down. Therefore, clearly indicating that water has become a very scarce commodity and it should be protected carefully.

At the same time, I would like to say that the Pollution Boards of the Centre and the States, who are supposed to

monitor the proper utilisation of water have not been able to do. In my Legislative Assembly career for three terms, I have been a member of the Forest and Environment Committee at the State level in Orissa. A lot of cases were booked against industrialists who were polluting the water but not a single conviction was made. So, from here you can come to know the seriousness with what the various Pollution Boards are functioning. So, some seriousness has to be gone into for implementing and checking pollution in water.

Now, Ganga Action Plan is there. At the same time for cleaning up Brahmaputra some money has been sanctioned. Similarly, there are rivers in Orissa, there are rivers throughout the country which are being gradually polluted, thereby affecting the marine life there. Polluted marine life means the survival of the poor people, the survival of the fishermen is in jeopardy. To save the lives of the people, the marine life has to be protected and it can only be protected if the waters are clean and effluents are treated properly.

Madam, as a member of some committees in the States, like Estimates and Public Accounts, we visited a lot of steel plants, including *Navaratnas* and all and you will be surprised to know that not a single water treatment plan was running. At Rourkela when we visited, the water treatment plan was closed. JK Paper Mill, which has got a massive plant on the Nagavalli River in Orissa, has completely polluted the Nagavalli River, thereby the entire marine life has been destroyed and the fishermen are dying of starvation. Today, allegations of starvation deaths are made before the Human Rights Commission. Their intake of protein has gone down, the intake of calories is very low as compared to the other parts of the population.

Therefore, this cess, which the hon. Minister has initiated is a very good step. I hope money is spent in the right direction for the protection of water. The abolition of cess on hydropower unit is welcome because hydropower is generally clean power. It is known as one of the cleanest source of energy. So, removing the cess on hydropower is a good move. I support this Bill for imposing cess on water. It is a welcome move, but at the same time it should be implemented with right earnestness.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : I am sorry, there were names, but they were not listed. Now, I call Shri Dharamraj Singh Patel.

श्री धर्म राज सिंह पटेल (फूलपुर) : सभापति महोदया, जल (प्रदूषण निवारण तथा नियंत्रण) उपकर (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2000 जो मंत्री जी ने पेश किया है, उसके संबंध में मैं इतना ही कहना चाहूंगा कि जल प्रदूषण को दूर करने के संबंध में मंत्री जी का प्रयास आंशिक है। सब माननीय सदस्यों ने इस बात पर प्रकाश डाला है कि भूमि के अंदर जो जल है, जिसका उपयोग कुओं द्वारा किया जाता है, वह इतना प्रदूषित हो गया है कि अब पीने लायक नहीं रहा। मैं अपने फूलपुर संसदीय क्षेत्र इलाहाबाद में बरसात के दिनों में दौरा करने गया था तो वहां देखा कि सैकड़ों कुओं में पानी एकदम उमर आ चुका है जो काला है। गांव के लोग उस पानी को पीने में असमर्थ थे। वे हमसे कह रहे थे कि हम कैसा पानी पी रहे हैं। इस तरह जहां जल उमर है, जहां उमर भूमि है या नदियों का किनारा है, जहां नदियों में जल भरा हुआ है, वहां जल उमर होने की वजह से पानी गंदा है जिसे लोग पीने के लिए मजबूर हैं।

अभी आपने ब्रह्मपुत्र आदि अनेक नदियों की तरफ ध्यान आकृष्ट किया है। मैं गंगा प्रदूषण के बारे में आपको बताना चाहता हूं। अभी इलाहाबाद में मेला लगा था जिसमें साधु-संतों के साथ-साथ सैकड़ों लोग भी गए थे। वहां गंगा जल काफी प्रदूषित हो चुका है। जो नदियां हजारों सालों से पवित्र मानी जाती हैं, जहां लाखों लोग कुंभ में संगम स्नान करने जाते हैं और जहां लोग मरने वाले की अस्थियां बहाने जाते हैं, वहां का जल काला हो गया है, लाल चमड़े के पानी से लाल हो गया है। कुंभ मेले में भी सर्वे किया गया। कई सर्वे रिपोर्ट आ चुकी हैं जिसमें गंगा जल प्रदूषित पाया गया है। लेकिन इस बार तो आश्चर्य ही हो गया कि लोग वहां नहाना ही नहीं चाहते थे। हम जानना चाहेंगे कि आंशिक बिल लाकर और थोड़ा सा कैंस बढ़ा कर केन्द्रीय प्रदूषण बोर्ड या राज्य बोर्ड कौन सा उपाय करने जा रहे हैं? जो भूजल ज्यादा उपयोग हो रहा है, उसे आप रोक देंगे।

आप बहुत ही समझदार और योग्य मंत्री हैं। आप कम से कम एक व्यापक बिल लाएं जो नदियों की साफ-सफाई के संबंध में हो, गांवों में जो ट्यूबवैल खराब हैं, उनके संबंध में हो या जो वायु प्रदूषित नदियां हैं, उनकी सफाई के संबंध में हो। इस संबंध में एक व्यापक बिल लाना चाहिए जिससे पवित्र नदियों की सफाई हो सके। आप कुओं के प्रदूषित जल का क्या उपाय कर रहे हैं। सरकार की भविय में नदियों की सफाई के संबंध में क्या योजनाएं हैं। हमको लगता है कि गंगा, यमुना, सरस्वती का पानी जिस तरह गंदा हो चुका है, काला और लाल पानी हो चुका है, कुछ दिन बाद वहां लोग दर्शन करने नहीं जाएंगे, गंगा नदी को भूल जाएंगे और यह एक ऐतिहासिक कमी होगी। इसलिए मैं अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा कि आप व्यापक बिल लाएं। भारत सरकार यह बताए कि वह नदियों और कुओं की सफाई के लिए कौन से उपाय करने जा रही है जिससे देश को लाभ हो। इसी अनुरोध के साथ मैं अपनी बात समाप्त करता हूं।

SHRI PRABODH PANDA (MIDNAPORE): Madam Chairperson, I rise not to object the Bill. As such, the name of the Bill is all right. The name of the Bill is, Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess (Amendment) Bill. But it appears that the Bill itself deals with the enhancement of the cess rate and it is not adequate in regard to the control of pollution.

First of all, I would like to say one thing in regard to the cess rate. It was already mentioned earlier by one hon. Member in this august House that as per the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, as per the Eleventh Schedule, the subject of water has gone to the institution of local self-government.

Minor irrigation and such other subjects have gone to the institution of local self-government. So, that cess is collected by State Pollution Control Boards and deposited in the Consolidated Fund of India. Later, it is disbursed to the Boards after the Appropriation Bill is passed by Parliament but is there any provision for any share to the local self-government? Since this subject has been entrusted to the local bodies, we should discuss whether we should

give teeth to the local bodies so that they can regulate and control pollution.

I would like to draw your attention and, through you, the attention of the hon. Minister concerned to the fact that in several places, particularly in West Bengal in more than 200 blocks, the underground water has been polluted. There are problems caused by arsenic, chloride and saline content. So, I would like to know whether the Government has taken up any programme to control pollution in those areas.

I am unable to understand why the hon. Minister has not mentioned about the thermal power stations. The thermal power stations cause a lot of pollution as they discharge spoilt water into rivers, which is harmful to the fish and also to the environment. So, something should be done in this regard.

There are also problems faced by our peasants. Some hon. colleagues have mentioned here about multinational companies coming in, using the water for selling and making money. They are getting all the water for making money but the peasants are not getting water in their localities for irrigation. It is not possible for them to get fresh water also.

The intention of this Bill is basically all right but it is not adequate. The local bodies should be given enough teeth so that they can regulate and control pollution by taking stringent action against those who pollute fresh water.

With these words, I conclude my speech.

श्री रामदास आठवले (पंढरपुर) :सभापति महोदया, यह जो बालू साहब जल (प्रदूषण निवारण तथा नियंत्रण) उपकर (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2000 लाए हैं, इसके बारे में हमारा यही कहना है कि पानी में जो पौल्यूशन है इससे हमारे देश के बहुत सारे लोगों का जीवन खतरे में आ रहा है। कंपनियां पानी भी लेती हैं और पानी खराब भी करती हैं। जहां-जहां कंपनियां हैं, वहां का पानी दूषित हो जाता है और वही पानी वहां के लोगों को पीना पड़ता है। इसलिए हमारा कहना यह है कि कंपनियां भी चलनी चाहिए और लोगों को नौकरी भी मिलनी चाहिए लेकिन इसका मतलब यह नहीं है कि कंपनियां वहां का पानी दूषित करें क्योंकि दूषित पानी से लोगों का जीवन खराब होता है। इसलिए कंपनियों को अपने दूषित पानी को नदियों में नहीं डालना चाहिए।

इस सम्बन्ध में आपको उद्योग विभाग से बात करनी चाहिए। मंत्री जी जो यह विधेयक लाए हैं कि पानी साफ होना चाहिए, उसका हम समर्थन करते हैं। बालू जी अच्छे मंत्री हैं। वे बालू हैं, लेकिन हमारे साथ लालू भी हैं। हम लोग अच्छा काम करेंगे इसमें कोई राजनीति नहीं होनी चाहिए। इसलिए पानी में कोई राजनीति नहीं लाई जानी चाहिए। पानी को साफ रखने के लिए आपके विभाग को काम करना चाहिए। बालू जी मजबूत मंत्री हैं। आज ये उधर हैं, कल हमारे साथ भी आ सकते हैं। आप उधर भी रहेंगे तो हमें उम्मीद है कि आप अच्छा काम करेंगे। तमिलनाडू की स्थिति ऐसी है कि अगले चुनाव में जब हमारी सरकार बनेगी तो ये हमारे साथ आ सकते हैं। जो विभाग मंत्री जी सम्भाल रहे हैं, वे अच्छी तरह से सम्भालेंगे, ऐसी हम आशा करते हैं और इस बिल का समर्थन करते हैं।

MADAM CHAIRMAN : He is making predictions on your behalf.

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): Madam, first of all, I should assure my friends in the Opposition as well as in the Ruling Party that I will be honest wherever I am.

Many of the hon. Members who have participated in this debate have very well pointed out the shortcomings and appreciated whatever has to be appreciated; they never fail to appreciate. So, first of all, I want to thank the hon. Members who have participated in the debate on this piece of legislation. At the same time, many Members have gone beyond the ambit of this Bill. But whatever it is, the suggestions given by them will definitely be taken care of and I will see that those suggestions are considered favourably and properly.

This Bill mainly pertains to the industrial water. It is a rather deterrent not to use more water. The water should not be used unnecessarily and whatever is required for a particular unit should be used in a careful and measured manner. But, at the same time, those who are using the water without having any rational approach are being fined also. This cess is intended for those who are not using the water rationally.

The hon. Member, Shri Sudharsana Nachiappan is a learned lawyer. He knows about it. Of course, it is their own Bill. The first Bill was brought in 1977 and it was passed in 1977. This has been empowered by Article 248 and by the empowerment of Article 248, this Bill has been brought before the Parliament. So, there would not be any ambiguity or any such thing as far as the constitutional provisions are concerned. However, at the same time, Shri Sudharsana Nachiappan wanted to know as to what would be the sharing. The sharing would be like this: the State Pollution Control Boards will get 80 per cent and the Central Pollution Control Board, which is under my domain, will have only 20 per cent. This particular issue was lingering for more than one decade.

Since 1991-92 onwards, the State Pollution Control Boards were vociferous and they were arguing in various interactions, in various seminars, and particularly in the Coimbatore Conference on 1st January, 1992, if I am correct, all the Ministers of Environment and all the Consultative Committee Members had participated wherein they argued that the cess should be revised. They argued that it has to be increased manifold.

So, I have restricted it to three times over and above what we are receiving now. The money, which is collected, goes to the Exchequer of the Central Government and once again, it is returned to the State Pollution Control Boards. In fact, after enacting the Environment Protection Act, 1986, the activities of the Pollution Control Boards have increased a lot and their responsibilities have increased manifold. To match the work, they could not deliver

properly. That is why, whatever amount is being collected now, 80 per cent of that amount will go to the State Pollution Control Boards.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : But the concern everywhere is that they will create only jobs and employ more people, but will not do real work for controlling pollution. All the money will go there.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Madam, I do admit that you are correct. We have to see the machinery. It all depends upon the Head of the Department. It all depends upon the person who is holding the portfolio also. I do not think that there will be any problem. Hereafter, the State Pollution Control Boards may not come and say that they are not having financial resources and so on. This Bill is merely to see that the resources of the State Pollution Control Boards and Central Pollution Control Board are increased.

Shri Moinul Hassan has also questioned whether the States will be taken into confidence in such matters. The States have already been taken into confidence. The Ministers have been taken into confidence. I have personally interacted with many of the Environment Ministers during the Coimbatore Conference. This total money which is being collected, about another Rs. 130 crore to Rs. 140 crore, will augment their resources. It will help the State Pollution Control Boards.

Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh has asked why the rivers are polluted, a lot of water bodies are polluted and that the Ministry has not taken care. He has mentioned especially that the Ganga is polluted and so on. He is one hundred per cent correct. Madam, when late lamented leader Shri Rajiv Gandhi was in power in 1985, he had envisaged the National River Conservation Programme. In that Programme, the Ganga Action Plan I was envisaged. What is the length of the river Ganga? It is 2,525 kilometres. What is the pollution load that had been taken into account at that particular point of time to deal with? It is not even 30 per cent. Let us say, it is 35 per cent. The money was invested to deal with the pollution load of 35 per cent. That has been created now. We have dealt with only 35 per cent. How do we expect 100 per cent result? When I compare it with the river Thames, I find that river Thames is 250 kilometres only.

श्री धर्म राज सिंह पटेल : हमने रिपोर्ट में पढ़ा है कि गंगा एक्शन प्लॉन का प्रथम फेस खत्म हो गया है और उस पर 500 करोड़ रुपया खर्च हो चुका है लेकिन अभी तक 35 प्रतिशत ही काम हुआ है।

सभापति महोदया : आप पहले उत्तर तो सुनिये।

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Yes, it is correct that about Rs. 460 crore have been spent. In that, we have dealt with only 30 per cent to 35 per cent of the pollution load. That is why, I want to compare it with the river Thames in London. It took 39 years whereas Ganga Action Plan I was envisaged in 1985 and last March, the programme was completed. But whatever money was there in the kitty had been spent and we made good of it. That is all. But I cannot say that 100 per cent success has been achieved. I will not claim 100 per cent success. It is only 35 per cent. The river Thames took 39 years and they poured money like anything, but in spite of that, they could achieve results only after 100 years.

Salmon fish reappeared only after hundred years. The problem of pollution of rivers cannot be dealt with immediately. I cannot say that all the pollution took place under your Government. All the State Governments are requested several times to see that abatement of pollution in the rivers takes place. How do rivers get polluted in the first place? Rivers are getting polluted because of drainage, because of the municipal waste, because of industrial waste, etc.

For your information Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, there are 1,555 high-polluting industries in India, of 17 categories of industries, only 23 units are polluting. Action against those 23 polluting industries has already been taken by the Ministry. We are not keeping quiet. If you notice that any industrial unit is flouting the rules and regulations of the Environment Protection Act, you can as well write to me. You can send a telegram to me; or you can even tell me orally in the Parliament. Within minutes of that I can initiate action against that unit. There is no problem in that. Out of all the Members of Parliament, Madam, I do not know how Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh is managing to write four letters every week. Perhaps he could advise the other Members of Parliament on that. If he had raised this with me personally, the problem would have been solved by now.

I now come to the point raised by Shri Ramesh Chennithala. He is my neighbour. He is from Kerala.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : That is the problem.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Not in politics, Madam. In politics he is far away from me and in fact quite opposite to me.

He knows pretty well that I had taken much pains to discuss all these matters with my officers. I had promised his

Chief Minister as well as him on the other day that the river Pamba will be taken care of. I said that after the due process, technical scrutiny is gone through, the project would be taken into consideration. This project has to be taken to the Cabinet for clearance. His party ruled the country for more than 40 years. During that time he failed to get this project cleared. Now he is using his friend to see that something is done in this regard. Cleaning of the Pamba is a very important matter. Lakhs and lakhs of pilgrims visit Ayyappa temple from all over the country. I told Chief Minister of Kerala as well as the Hon'ble Member – because he pointed his finger at me I am saying this – that I was ready to discuss with my Secretary and officers to see that a Rs.25 crore project is cleared within a week or 10 days. But they had not come back to me. Is it not a fact?

SHRI K. FRANCIS GEORGE (IDUKKI): We do not agree with that. The project has been submitted. You have been very gracious to consider it very favourably. To our understanding, the 25-crore rupee project is now pending in your Ministry. We want early clearance of that project.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Your project proposal is now under consideration of the Department. I have already promised to your Chief Minister that I will be taking up this project as and when possible. The processing will take some time. It is you who have delayed it.

SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : We are not blaming you. We are only requesting you to speed it up.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Anyway, this is all said in a friendly way.

I will now come to what Shri Bikram Keshari Deo has said. He is a very great environmentalist. He has attended many world conferences along with me. I agree with what he said. Shri Patel talked about Ganga Action Plan I and II and so on. I have already replied to that.

Shri Dasmunsi, a sweet enemy and good friend of mine, talked about the bottled water. As you know pretty well, it pertains to the Department of Consumer Affairs.

But as a Government, as a Cabinet Minister, I do admit that I am also responsible. Our hon. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs who is also the Union Health Minister has already taken some action in this regard.

Previously, they were in power and it was their Government at that point of time. Everybody agreed and it was envisaged and said that the BIS standards should be kept up. So, everybody kept up the BIS standards. But now from some NGOs, there is a hue and cry. But I can assure this august House that our Government will take proper action on this issue.

Madam Chairperson, Shri P.H. Pandian wanted to know whether the local bodies would be given their due share. Yes, of course, the local bodies would be given their due share. It is because 80 per cent money goes to the State Pollution Control Boards only. So, the State Pollution Control Boards would definitely take care of local bodies in protecting the water and doing the pollution abatement activities and so on.

I want to tell the House that for the past 100 years, the temperature of the globe has increased...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : Sir, what about my suggestion?

SHRI T.R. BAALU: I have already answered to that. I would not come to that side. In the very beginning I had told that I would not come to that side.

SHRI RAMDAS ATHAWALE : But automatically, you will come to this side...*(Interruptions)*

SHRI T.R. BAALU: Madam, for the past 100 years, the temperature of the globe has increased by about 0.6 degree centigrade. This phenomenon has occurred. The scientific community is vociferously deliberating this issue in the world summits and so on for the past so many years.

This climate change and the temperature increase is because of emission of carbon dioxide. During the second half of the 20th Century, developmental activities had taken place in many countries including India. Now, many of the Western countries which are responsible for the heavy emission of the carbon dioxide have come forward to see that such an emission is reduced and that the environment is protected. But at the same time, some countries especially the US is not at all having any rational approach towards this phenomenon.

As far as India is concerned, it is for us to see that emission of carbon dioxide is controlled properly. This is the root cause for the melting of ice, inundation of river, rise of sea level, erosion of soil and so on which are also

responsible for depleting water in the sub-soil.

So, it is for everybody to see that this emission is controlled. At any point of time, it has to be controlled. The emission of carbon dioxide which is the culprit for the climate change will have to be contained. For this purpose, our State Pollution Control Boards as well as the Central Pollution Board are devoting the entire time.

Madam, I have covered all the points raised by the hon. Members. But if there is anything to be further clarified to any of the hon. friends, I will brief them.

Now, I request that this Bill may kindly be passed.

MADAM CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977, be taken into consideration. "

The motion was adopted.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The House shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

The question is:

"That clauses 2 to 6 stand part of the Bill. "

The motion was adopted.

Clauses 2 to 6 were added to the Bill.

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Clause 1

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 4,--

for "2000"

substitute "2003" (2)

(Shri T.R. Baalu)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 1, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted,

Clause 1, as amended, was added to the Bill.

Enacting Formula

Amendment made:

Page 1, line 1,--

for "fifty-first"

substitute "fifty-fourth" (1)

(Shri T.R. Baalu)

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That Enacting Formula, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Enacting Formula, as amended, was added to the Bill.

The Title was added to the Bill.

SHRI T.R. BAALU: I beg to move:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

MADAM CHAIRMAN : The question is:

"That the Bill, as amended, be passed."

The motion was adopted.
