

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES
(2020-21)**

SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA

**MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI – DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES, RIVER
DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION**

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2020-21)

**[Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations contained
in the Third Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of the Standing Committee on Water
Resources]**

EIGHTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

February, 2021 / Magha, 1942 (Saka)

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(2020-21)

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GANGA REJUVENATION

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2020-21)

(Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations
contained in the Third Report on ‘Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Jal
Shakti -

Department of Water Resource, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 9.2.2021

Laid on the Table of Rajya Sabha on 9.2.2021



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

February, 2021 / Magha, 1942 (Saka)

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COMPOSITON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES

(2020-21)

Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal - Chairperson

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2. Shri Vijay Baghel
3. Shri Bhagirath Chaudhary
4. Shri Nandkumar Singh Chauhan
5. Shri Nihal Chand Chauhan
6. Shri Chandra Prakash Choudhary
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14. Shri Kuruva Gorantla Madhav
15. Shri Hasmukhbhai Somabhai Patel
16. Shri Sanjay Kaka Patil
17. Vacant*
18. Smt. Nusrat Jahan Ruhi
19. Ms. Agatha K. Sangma
20. Shri D.K. Suresh
21. Shri A. Narayana Swamy

RAJYA SABHA

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29. Shri Subhash Chandra Singh
30. Shri Rewati Raman Singh
31. Shri Pradeep Tamta

* Shri D.S. Rathore, MP, LS ceased to be a Member w.e.f 28.12.2020

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. | Shri Manoj K. Arora | - | OSD (LSS) |
| 2. | Shri M.K. Madhusudhan | - | Director |
| 3. | Shri R. C. Sharma | - | Additional Director |
| 4. | Shri Gaurav Jain | - | Assistant Committee Officer |

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Standing Committee on Water Resources (2020-21) having been authorized by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Eighth - Report on the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee contained in their Third Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) on Demands for Grants (2020-21) relating to the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation).

2. The Third Report of the Committee was presented to Lok Sabha and laid on the table of Rajya Sabha on 5 March 2020. The Action Taken replies of the Government to all the recommendations contained in the Report were received in this Secretariat on 16 June, 2020.

3. The draft Report was considered and adopted by the Committee at their sitting held on 6.11.2020.

4. An analysis of the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/Recommendations contained in the Third Report (Seventeenth Lok Sabha) of the Committee is given at Annexure-II.

New Delhi
3 February, 2021
14 Magha, 1942 (Saka)

Dr. SANJAY JAISWAL
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Water Resources

CHAPTER I

REPORT

This Report of the Standing Committee on Water Resources deals with the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations contained in their Third Report (17th Lok Sabha) on the Demands for Grants (2020-21) of the Ministry of Jal Shakti – Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, which was presented to Lok Sabha on 5 March, 2020. Action Taken Notes in respect of all the 14 Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been received from the Government and these have been categorized as under:

- (i) Observations/Recommendations which have been accepted by the Government (Chapter II):

Para Nos. 3,4,5,6,8,9,11,12 and 13

(Total –9)

- (ii) Observations / Recommendations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government's replies (Chapter III):

Para Nos. NIL

(Total – NIL)

- (iii) Observations / Recommendations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee (Chapter IV):

Para Nos. 1,2,7,10 and 14

(Total – 5)

- (iv) Observations / Recommendations in respect of which final replies of the Government are still awaited (Chapter V):

Para Nos. NIL

(Total – NIL)

2. The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on some of the observations / recommendations in the succeeding paragraphs.

A. Analysis of Demands for Grants

Recommendation No. 1 (Para No. 2.1)

3. The Committee observed that an amount of Rs. 8960.39 crore (net) had been allocated in the Budget 2020-21 in respect of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR). However, out of Rs. 8960.39 crore, as much as Rs. 2675 crore was kept for servicing of anticipated liabilities towards National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) dues, effectively rendering budgetary allocation of merely Rs. 6285.39 crore. Further, the Department had been allowed to borrow an amount of Rs. 5000 crore from the NABARD. The Committee further noted that as compared to the last financial year (2019-20), there was an increase of Rs. 720.59 crore in the Revenue Section, whereas, there is a decrease of Rs. 5.45 crore under the Capital Section. In nutshell, there was an increase of Rs. 715.14 crore in demand for the year 2020-21. In this backdrop, the Committee found it intriguing that every year, there has always been under utilization of funds allocated to the Department. It was disheartening to note that the Department has persistently lagged behind in utilization of budgetary allocations during the last four years, i.e., actual expenditure of only Rs. 5313.48 crore as compared to BE allocation of Rs. 6887 crore in the year 2017-18. Further, there was an expenditure of only Rs. 7422.08 crore as compared to BE allocation of Rs. 8860 crore in the year 2018-19. The Committee were also concerned over the huge committed liability of Rs. 45812.80 crore towards outstanding principal and interest payments for borrowing from NABARD. Such increased dependence of the Department on the borrowing from NABARD over and above the budgetary provisions with apparently quite inadequate capacity to repay the loans, is not a healthy trend. The Committee, however, note that this year, Rs. 5000 crore had been allowed to be borrowed from NABARD which was substantially lower in comparison to provisions during previous fiscal years. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommended the Department to utilize the unused amount in the Projects which had been brought under the NABARD borrowings. The Committee further recommended that the Department should manage its resources more prudently in order to avoid future borrowings.

4. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (DOWR, RD&GR) during FY 2019-20 was permitted to raise extra budgetary sources for the identified projects being funded from Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) through NABARD. These projects as per Cabinet approval and scheme design are to be funded through LTIF route and budgetary funding for these projects including by way of diversion of savings available if any is not admissible. Details of Projects, EBRs approved and actually raised in FY 2019-20 are given in table below:-

Project	EBRs approved in FY 2019-20	EBR raised in FY 2019-20
Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) & HKKP - CADWM component under PMKSY	4200.00	1902.77
Rajasthan Feeder - Sirhind Feeder	196.00	0
Polavaram Irrigation Project	1850.00	1850.00
Shahpur Kandi	150.00	60.00
North Koel Reservoir Project	336.00	0.53
Total	6732.00	3813.30

Note: In March 2020, NABARD sought to raise Rs. 932.6057 crore (AIBP – Rs.764.4167 crore, CADWM – Rs. 108.66 crore, Shahpur Kandi Dam – Rs.59.529 crore) through EBR. However, due to the prevailing market conditions at that time, response of the investors was not encouraging and NABARD conveyed that it may not be desirable to raise resources from the market during the remaining period of FY 2019-20. This amount being on account of committed liabilities has been included in borrowing programme for FY 2020-21.

As regards utilization of the unused amount in the Projects which have been brought under the NABARD borrowings, unspent balance for previous releases available with the State/project authority and indicated in utilisation certificate is duly factored in while making fresh release.

NABARD borrowings under LTIF are limited to actual releases for identified projects, which are regulated according to physical and financial progress of projects. The recommendation of the Committee for more prudent management of resources of Department has been noted for necessary action”.

5. From the Action taken note furnished by the Department, the Committee note that the reply is silent with regard to measures taken/proposed to address the problem of under utilization of budgetary provisions over the years. Further the reply is also silent with respect to the steps taken/proposed to be taken to reduce the rising committed liability due to increased borrowings. The Committee are constrained to observe that on one hand the Department has not been able to utilize the funds fully, year after year ,and on the other hand, is resorting to borrowings from NABARD to finance its projects, which reflects poor budgetary management and inefficient management of resources. The Committee cannot but emphasize the need to exercise optimum care by the Department in assessing the requirements of

funds for each scheme/programme/unit, so that the budgetary estimates are realistic and concerted efforts be made for efficient utilization of budgetary allocations. The Committee, reiterate that the Department should put a strong case before the Ministry of Finance for augmenting budgetary resources of the Department, so as to obviate borrowings in future.

B. Low Budgetary Allocations

Recommendation No. 2 (Para No. 2.2)

6. The Committee noted that although the budgetary allocations of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR) had increased consecutively, except the year 2019-20, during the last four fiscal years from Rs. 6887 crore in the year 2017-18 to Rs. 8960.39 crore in the year 2020-21, the representative of the Ministry was not satisfied with the budgetary allocations. The Committee further observed that the initial Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) ceiling for the FY 2020-21 was Rs. 10238.61 crore for the Department. However, actual MTEF awarded to the Department was just Rs. 8960.39 crore. It is an undisputable fact that the challenges in the water sector of the country are enormous, however, in relative terms, the budgetary allocations of the Ministry are far from being acknowledged as sufficient. The primary reason for the lower budgetary allocations is that 'Water' being a State subject, the major responsibility for augmentation, conservation and efficient management of water resources, primarily, comes under the domain of the States. The role of Union Government is technical, advisory, catalytic and promotional in nature, which is a determining factor for lower budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation). At this juncture, when the Union Government has taken up the subject of 'Water' in an unprecedented Mission Mode, the Committee felt that merely hand-holding by the Union Government would not suffice and the Government has to play a pro-active role in 'Integrated Water Management' for environmental sustenance and sustainable economic development of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should make all out efforts to fully and optimally utilize the resources at its command and should assume a catalytic role in galvanizing the efforts of States and Union territories in this area. Only on making full and effective utilization of budgetary allocation, the Department could vigorously present its case before the Ministry of Finance to augment its budgetary allocation, in real terms, which would also result in reducing its dependence on borrowing from NABARD besides helping the resources-stretched States to implement the policies and programmes of the Union Government.

7. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“An allocation of Rs.8245.25 crore was made in BE 2019-20. This was reduced to Rs.7518.21 crore at RE level. In spite of constraints of lockdown imposed at a crucial time of financial year closing due to the COVID pandemic, the Department was able to utilise Rs.7416.28 crore (tentative pending finalisation of appropriation accounts). This is 99% utilisation RE level allocations and 90% utilisation of BE level allocations.

By comparison, in FY 2018-19 against BE allocations of Rs.8860 crore and RE ceiling of Rs.7612.52 crore, an expenditure of Rs.7422.08 crore was incurred. It was 97% utilisation of RE level allocations and 84% utilisation of BE level allocations.

Case for augmenting budgetary resources of the Department would be presented to Ministry of Finance at the time of finalisation of Revised Estimates for the current financial year”.

8. The Committee are not convinced with the contention of the Department that the utilization of budgetary allocation is very close to the Revised Estimates (RE) level, which is in the range of 97-99 %, given the fact that there had been a steady divergence between the Budgetary Estimates and Revised Estimates, over the years, which reflects poor estimation with regard to anticipated /projected expenditure for the next financial year. The Committee reiterate that the Department should make realistic projections of estimates for budgetary allocations and make all efforts for efficient utilization of budgetary allocation. Further this would greatly help the Department in making a claim for enhanced budgetary allocation, in real terms, from the Ministry of Finance.

C. National River Conservation Plan - Other Basins

Recommendation No.6 (Para No. 2.6)

9. The Committee observed that under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) - other basins Scheme, proposals for Projects are received from the State Government outside “Ganga Basin” and funded for taking up pollution abatement works in towns along various rivers and are considered for financial assistance on a cost sharing basis subject to their conformity with the Scheme Guidelines, pollution status, prioritizations, appraisal by independent Institutions and availability of Plan Funds. The Committee further noted that for the fiscal year 2020-21, an amount of Rs. 220 crore has been kept for the NRCP - other Basins which was a minuscule amount in comparison to budgetary allocation of Rs. 1640.02 crore which had been kept for river Ganga. The Committee came to know from the reply of the Department that higher allocations under this Scheme would be sought when approval to revised Scheme is obtained. The Committee were not happy with the meagre allocation

to this Scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommended that concerted efforts must be made to obtain the approval for the revised Scheme at the earliest so that higher allocation could be made available for the work pertaining to pollution abatement for all other major rivers of the country which are equally polluted as river Ganga and need urgent remedial measures.

10. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“A proposal for approval of the Cabinet for conservation and rejuvenation of rivers in an integrated manner in ten selected polluted river stretches in the country under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)- Other Basins, involving financial outlay of Rs. 8,117 crore was initiated by the Department. Based on inputs and advice to route the proposal through the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), a draft EFC Note with scheme size of Rs.35,640 crore for implementation in 10 years period has been prepared and under consultative process.

After approval of EFC, the approved proposal would be taken up for approval of the Cabinet based on which suitable allocation of funds would be sought from Ministry of Finance”.

11. **The Committee have been informed that the Department has initiated a proposal for conservation and rejuvenation of rivers in an integrated manner in ten selected polluted river stretches in the country under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)- Other Basins, with an outlay of Rs.8117 crore, and after approval of Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), the same would be brought before the Cabinet. While appreciating the efforts made by the Department in this regard, the Committee urge upon the department to expedite the process so that the said proposal would be approved/materialized at the earliest and suitable fund allocations are made to the proposed scheme in the next financial year 2021-22.**

D. Central Water Commission (CWC) – Expeditious implementation of Mihir Shah Committee Report

Recommendation No.7 (Para No. 2.7)

12. The Committee noted that the CWC has been entrusted with the general responsibility of initiating, coordinating and furthering, in consultation with the State Governments concerned, Schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country for the purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development. The Committee further noted that the Mihir Shah Committee Report had suggested for restructuring of the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) as well as creation of a unified new entity as

National Water Commission (NWC). For this intended purpose, the Department had engaged the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmadabad as a 'Consultant' for suggesting the amalgamation process and to suggest a structure for the new Organization, that incidentally submitted its Report in September 2018. Further, the Department had also set up a Working Group in 2018 to suggest the amalgamation of posts in CWC and CGWB. The creation of NWC involves additional financial implications, creation of new infrastructure, new services and creation of additional posts requiring approval from the Union Cabinet. The Department had further apprised the Committee that no time limit could be fixed in this regard since the process involves consultation with various Ministries/ Departments and approval/recommendations of Nodal Ministries and the CEE. The Committee are of the considered view that a paradigm shift is required in surface and ground water management in terms of introducing major reforms like merging of Central Water Commission (CWC) and Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). Since considerable time had already elapsed in undergoing the deliberation and consultation process, the Committee, therefore, desired that the Department should expedite the process in this regard so that major reforms in the water sector of the country could be carried out as per the needs of the time.

13. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“The observations of the Standing Committee regarding expeditious implementation of Dr.Mihir Shah Committee Report have been noted by the Department. In line with the objectives enumerated in the aforesaid Report, it is proposed to amalgamate organisations like the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and Central Water Commission (CWC) to create a new entity ‘National Water Commission’ (NWC) as an apex technical planning and policy arm of this Department, with the Secretariat status of an Attached Office.

NWC may also be responsible for project approval and appraisal as well as technical assistance to the Department and all stakeholders on policy matters, including each River Basin. NWC is proposed to be headed by Chairman, who will be an officer equivalent to the Secretary to the Government of India and each major River Basin is proposed to be under the overall charge of a Member, who will be an officer equivalent to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India. A proposal for the Committee on Establishment Expenditure (CEE) is under examination in the Department for the purpose. Inputs essential to preparation of proposal are being collected from the CWC and CGWB. This exercise may need more time as several issues relating to merging/ amalgamation of various cadres, service, and creation of posts at various levels are involved. The CEE proposal will precede the Cabinet Note and after approval by the CEE and thereafter approval by the Cabinet, NWC can be created. However, the observations of the committee have been noted for compliance”.

14. The Committee note from the Department's reply that a proposal for setting up the Committee on Establishment Expenditure (CEE) is under examination in the Department, for the purpose of working out modalities for creating a new entity, namely 'National Water Commission' (NWC) by amalgamating Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and Central Water Commission (CWC) and this exercise may need more time as several issues relating to merging/ amalgamation of various cadres, service, and creation of posts at various levels are involved. While expressing satisfaction over the progress made in implementation of Dr. Mihir Shah Commission report, the Committee desire that time lines should be fixed/laid down so that the exercise for creation of proposed 'National Water Commission' (NWC), as an apex technical planning and policy arm of the Department is completed within a definite time frame. The action taken in this regard may be apprised to this Committee, within three months of presentation of the report.

E. National Water Mission (NWM)

Recommendation No.10 (Para No. 2.11)

15. The Committee observed that the Government of India has established National Water Mission (NWM) as one of the eight National Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). The main objective of NWM is conservation of water, minimizing wastage and ensuring its more equitable distribution, both across and within the States through integrated water resources development and management. However, it was disheartening to see that though NWM was constituted to implement the goals on a Mission Mode, it was still functioning as a part of the Ministry. Further, limitations of administrative and financial powers, shortage of regular officers/staff, and reduction in budget were the major bottlenecks in the implementation of the Projects. The Committee were of the view that to realize its full potential and to function as per its stated mandate, the National Water Mission needed to be made independent of the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommended that the Department should take necessary measures in this regard. The Committee further recommended that the Department should initiate measures for enhancement of funds and posting of regular officers/staff in the Mission to address the above-mentioned issues in a pragmatic manner.

16. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“The approved scheme does not envisage functioning of National Water Mission independent of DOWR, RD&GR. Requirement of personnel is being met by hiring of consultants and young professionals, apart from posting of regular officers against approved vacancies. Allocations under the scheme would be enhanced depending on pace of expenditure and components under the approved scheme”.

17. The Committee are not inclined to accept the contention of the Department that the approved scheme does not envisage functioning of National Water Mission independent of DOWR, RD&GR. The Committee are of the considered opinion that given the importance and the mandate of the National Water Mission, it is imperative that the Mission should be accorded independent status so that it can have administrative and functional autonomy, which are essential for fulfilling the objectives set under the mission. The Committee therefore recommend that the approved policy in this regard should be revisited and explore the ways and means for according independent status to the Mission.

F. Farakka Barrage Project (FBP)

Recommendation No.14 (Para No. 2.15)

18. The Committee observed that the main objective of the Farakka Barrage Project is to divert adequate quantity of Ganga waters to Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system through a feeder canal for preservation and maintenance of Kolkata Port by improving the regime and navigability of the Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system. The Committee found that there was always under utilization of funds under FBP, i.e., actual expenditure of Rs. 138.27 crore as against BE of Rs. 205.04 crore in the year 2014-15. Further, in the year 2018-19, Rs. 114.25 crore was actually incurred against the BE of Rs. 209.25 crore. The Committee noted that the main reason for shortfall in expenditure in the work of replacement of Gates was due to various constraints like restricted working area and poor accessibility for replacement of Gates and hydro-mechanical components due to a busy rail-cum-road bridge adjacent to the site. Further, the Committee were astonished to find that only 149 regular employees were working in Farakka Barrage Project as against the sanctioned strength of 824 which is only 18% of the sanctioned strength. Such a huge shortage of manpower did not auger well for the smooth working of the FBP and displayed the

indifferent attitude of the Department towards the upkeep and maintenance of FBP. The Committee would like to be apprised of the review of manpower requirement by the Department taking into account the technological advancements over the years which might have facilitated various activities/processes. The Committee also recommended the Department to take urgent measures to fill up the vacancies which are essential for smooth running of Farakka Barrage Project at the earliest. The Committee would like to know the details of such measures. Further, the Committee would like to be apprised of the specific reasons for constant under utilization of funds under FBP. They also recommended the Department to make necessary changes in its procedure for budgetary estimations so as to improve the utilization of budgetary allocations.

19. The Department in its action taken note has replied as follows: -

“A detailed Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) study has been undertaken for assessing the requirement/optimising of manpower of Farakka Barrage Project (FBP) for its smooth functioning as per the present requirements/necessity. The report of SIU is under process for making a reference to Ministry of Finance.

As per the budget allocation w.r.t FBP for the FY 2014-15 was BE (Rs.205.04 cr), RE (146.71 cr) and the AE (Rs.138.27 cr.) which is 94% of RE 2014-15. Further, for FY 2018-19 BE(Rs.209.25 cr), RE(Rs.123.47 cr) was allocated against which AE (Rs.114.25 cr) which is 93% of RE 2018-19 .

Fund requirement at BE stage is made as per the work in progress (repair & maintenance, gate installation etc.) and anticipated during the year. Utilization of the fund at the RE stage which is based on corrected assessment is more than 90% in all these years. FBP has constrained in utilisation of allocations due to the following reasons:

- a. Due to the mass retirement, during the last 5 years, the staff strength (both technical and administrative) has gone down to 15% of the sanctioned strength this resulted in savings under Salaries.*
- b. Due to the vacancies in technical staff, proposed works could not be taken up in time, causing underutilization of fund.*

Due to various reasons like delay in supply of steel, materials from Bhilai Steel Plant, which affected progress of hydraulic gate fabrication & erections work, also contributed to non-utilization of the planned fund”.

20. From the reply of the Department, the Committee note that there is a huge gap between BE and RE in respect of fund allocation for Farraka Barrage Project during the FY2014-15 and FY2018-19. The Committee do not accept the Department’s contention that actual expenditure vis –a-vis R.E has been more than 90% during the

said years, given the fact that there is a wide variation in budgetary projections at BE and R.E. stages, which shows that there is a poor financial planning at B.E. stage resulting in substantial revision of BE allocations at RE stage. The Committee, urge the Department to follow prudential financial norms so that as far as possible the budgetary projections are realistic and concerted efforts be made for efficient utilization of budgetary allocations. Taking note of the fact that a detailed study by Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) has been undertaken by the Department for assessing the requirement/optimising of manpower of Farakka Barrage Project, the Committee desire that the study should be completed expeditiously and reference be made to the Ministry of Finance for sanction of posts , so that the vacancies in the FBP are filled up at the earliest .

CHAPTER - II

OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Recommendation No.3 (Para No. 2.3)

Low Per Capita Water Availability

The Committee observe with a high degree of concern that the average annual per capita water availability in the years 2001 and 2011 was assessed at 1816 cubic meters and 1545 cubic meters respectively which could reduce further to 1340 and 1140 cubic meters in the years 2025 and 2050 respectively. The Committee note that the major reason for continual decrease in the per capita water availability is increase in population of the country. The per capita availability of water has reduced from 5177 m³/ year in 1951 to 1545 m³/ year in 2011. The largest water consuming sector in the country is the agriculture, followed by domestic and industrial sector(s). The Committee further observe that the Department has taken various steps to augment the per capita water availability, viz., launching of Jal Shakti Abhiyan, formulation of National Perspective Plan (NPP), implementation of National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM), etc. In this chronology, the Government has also launched Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL) which is a Central Sector Scheme with the objective of sustainable management of ground water with emphasis on demand side interventions and community participation. While appreciating the renewed efforts of the Department in this regard, the Committee would like to lay emphasis on the need for speedy execution of these Schemes and Programmes so that its benefits could be disseminated at the ground level at the earliest.

Reply of the Government

The Department is making vigorous efforts to implement/ execute these initiatives and optimise outputs and outcomes thereunder. A brief on current status under these initiatives is as under.

National Perspective Plan

The National Perspective Plan (NPP) was prepared in August 1980 by the then Ministry of Irrigation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti) for water resources development through inter basin transfer of water from water surplus basins to water-deficit basins. Under the NPP, the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) has identified 30 links (16 under Peninsular Component and 14 under Himalayan Component) for preparation of Feasibility Reports (FRs).

Under the NPP, four priority links have also been identified for preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPR) under the Peninsular Rivers Component viz; Ken-Betwa link project (KBLP), Damanganga-Pinjal link project, Par-Tapi-Narmada link project and Godavari-Cauvery link project. Based on the concurrence of the concerned States, DPRs of KBLP, Damanganga-Pinjal link project and Par-Tapi-Narmada link project have been completed and sent to concerned States.

Further, draft DPR of Godavari-Cauvery link project consisting of three links viz; Godavari (Inchampalli/Janampet) – Krishna (Nagarjunasagar), Krishna (Nagarjunasagar) – Pennar (Somasila), Pennar (Somasila)-Cauvery (Grand Anicut) link projects has been completed and circulated to party States in March 2019.

The Government is pursuing the inter-linking of rivers (ILR) program in a consultative manner and accorded high priority. A “Special Committee for Interlinking of Rivers” has been constituted in September, 2014 under the Chairmanship of Hon`ble Minister of WR, RD & GR (now Ministry of Jal Shakti) for the implementation of ILR programme. Seventeen meetings of the Special Committee for ILR have been held so far (last meeting held on 26.02.2020). Further, a Task Force for Interlinking of Rivers has been constituted by MoWR, RD & GR (now MoJS) in April, 2015. Eleven meetings of the Task Force for interlinking of rivers have been held so far and the last meeting was held on 18.10.2019. Concerted efforts have been made for generating consensus with development of alternative plans and also setting out road maps for implementation of mature projects.

The proposed transfer of water through the ILR projects may lead to increase the per capita availability of utilisable water in the country.

Initiatives by National Water Mission

Besides increasing population, rapid urbanization, changing lifestyles, increasing industrialization, inadequate rainfall and inefficient water use in agriculture as well as industry sector are reasons for sharp decline in groundwater volume in the country and decline in per capita water availability. NWM has taken several steps to address demand side issues.

- a) All central Ministries / Departments have been requested to install water saving aerators in the taps in toilets and build rain water harvesting structures like dug wells, bore wells, recharge trenches, recharge pits, etc. in every premises to ensure that rain water is conserved and used to recharge the ground water aquifers.
- b) An Inter-Ministerial meeting was held under the chairmanship of Secretary, DOWR, RD&GR to encourage states to start the processes without delay to “Catch the next Rains”. State Governments have been advised to ensure building Rain Water Harvesting Structures (RWHS) to trap rain water from roof-top and open-grounds of all government, semi-government and corporate establishments before the onset of the next monsoon.

- c) Sahi Fasal campaign has been launched to encourage farmers in the water stressed areas to grow alternate crops which are not water intensive but water efficient; economically remunerative; healthy and nutritious; suited to the agro-climatic-hydro characteristics of the area; and are environmentally friendly. Creating awareness among farmers on appropriate crops, micro-irrigation, soil moisture conservation etc; weaning them away from water intensive crops like paddy, sugarcane etc to crops like corn, maize etc which require less water; assisting policy makers to frame policies that make effective pricing of inputs (water and electricity); improve procurement and market for these alternate crops; create appropriate storage them etc ultimately leading to increase in the income of farmers are the key elements of “SahiFasal”
- d) State Specific Action Plans (SSAPs) for Water Sector covering Irrigation, Industry, domestic and waste water of a State/UT, where financial assistance of Rs. 50 lakh to major states and Rs. 30 lakh to small states/UTs as a grant for formulation of such plans is provided. MOUs have been signed with 25 States/UTs for preparation of SSAPs. Five States (Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal) have completed the first phase of SSAPs.
- e) Baseline studies have been undertaken for improving water use efficiency in irrigation sector and studies have been awarded to North Eastern Regional Institute for Water and Land Management (NERIWALM - Tezpur) - 5 nos., Water and Land Management Training and Research Institute (WALMTARI - Hyderabad) – 10 nos., Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI - Aurangabad) – 6 nos. and Centre for Water Resources Development and Management (CWRDM - Kerala) – 5 nos.
- f) Capacity building and training of various stakeholders particularly that of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies and Water Users Association.
- g) A seminar series - “Water Talk” - to promote dialogue and information sharing among participants on variety of water related topics has been initiated to create awareness, build capacities and to encourage participation in conservation and saving of water. 12 Water Talks have so far been conducted.
- h) National Water Mission Awards have been instituted to recognize excellence in water conservation, efficient use of water and sustainable water management practices. First National Water Mission Awards, 2019 were held on 25th September, 2019 during which 22 winners were awarded in various categories.

National Aquifer Mapping and Management (NAQUIM)

National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme was started in 2012. By the end of March 2020, nearly 13 lakh km² of the 25 lakh km² mappable area of the country has been covered. In an effort to expedite the coverage, the remaining area of ~12 lakh km² is envisaged to be covered in three years (2020-23).

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA

Atal Bhujal Yojana has been launched from 01-04-2020. The scheme is to be implemented in seven states, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly 8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts in these States. ATAL JAL will promote panchayat led ground water management and behavioral change with primary focus on demand side management

Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore to be implemented over a period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25), 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan, and be repaid by the Central Government. The remaining 50% shall be through Central Assistance from regular budgetary support. The entire World Bank's loan component and Central Assistance shall be passed on to the States as Grants.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.4 (Para No. 2.4)

National Water Framework Law

The Committee observe that a draft National Water Framework Bill, 2016 formulated by the Ministry seeks to provide an over-arching National Legal Framework based on the principles for Protection, Conservation, Regulation and Management of 'Water' as a vital and stressed natural resource, under which, the Legislation and Executive action on 'Water' at all levels of governance can take place. The Bill was circulated to the States to elicit their opinion. Some of the States like Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Jharkhand have supported the Bill with some suggestions/comments. However, the State Government(s) of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab, Odisha and Bihar are not in favour of the draft Bill as they feel that the Bill would infringe on the rights of the States. The Bill is under examination in Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Delhi and Lakshadweep. The Committee are aware that the Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation is regularly pursuing the matter with the State Governments for seeking their cooperation for early enactment of the National Water Framework Bill. Since nothing tangible has come out during these long years of deliberations with the State Government(s), the Committee are of the view that the Department should vigorously impress upon the States to shrug off their apprehensions/predicaments in the overall interests of the citizens of the country, beyond the geographical boundaries of their respective State, so that such an important piece of legislation could be enacted and implemented at the right earnest.

Reply of the Government:

Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is regularly pursuing the state governments for seeking their cooperation for early enactment of the National Water Framework Bill. The Bill requires to be finalized keeping in view the delicate balance in relationship between the Centre and the State. However, as recommended by the Committee, the Department would again urge the States to furnish their views expeditiously so that their apprehensions may be addressed to effectively.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.5 (Para No. 2.5)

Namami Gange

The Committee observe that the Government of India (GOI) has launched the Namami Gange Programme to accomplish the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution, conservation and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga and its tributaries with a total budgetary outlay of Rs.20,000 crore for the period from FY 2014 -15 till 31.12.2020. The Committee further note that under the Namami Gange Programme, so far, a total of 310 Projects have been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 28,909.59 crore, out of which, 114 projects have been completed and made operational, and rest of the projects are at various stages of implementation. Further, out of these 310 Projects, 152 belong to Sewerage Infrastructure. However, only 46 of these Projects have been completed. While appreciating the ambitious Programme of Namami Gange, which aimed at cleaning and rejuvenating river Ganga by December, 2020, the Committee are concerned to note that the implementation of this Programme has not been able to keep pace with the earlier conceived timelines. The Committee further note that the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016 empowers the National Mission for Clean Ganga to implement the Projects in a fast track manner. Taking cognizance of this Order, the Committee hope that the Projects would now be completed in a time bound manner without any further delay.

Reply of the government

So far, till 31-03-2020, a total of 313 Projects have been sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 28,966.53 crore, out of which, 122 projects have been completed and made operational, and rest of the projects are at various stages of implementation. Further, out of these 313 Projects, 152 belong to Sewerage Infrastructure. 51 of these Projects have been completed, balance 101 Projects are at various stages of Execution.

In year 2019-20, 21 new Projects were sanctioned and 34 Projects were completed, including 14 Sewerage Infrastructure Projects. The total expenditure in FY 19-20 had been 2,673.09 Cr.

Presently, 73 Sewerage Infrastructure Projects are under various stages of execution and 28 Projects are under tendering. It is expected that in the year 2020-21, as many as 42 Projects may achieve their completion and the expenditure projected for sewerage infrastructure alone in the current year is Rs. 2,500 Cr. which is comparable with Rs 2,673 Cr expenditure (in FY 19-20) for the entire NMCG projects.

However, the Current Pandemic situation due to COVID-19 and consequent Lockdown, has slowed down the progress of various projects, including Sewerage Infrastructure Projects. Construction work has been allowed since April 20th 2020 but site have not become fully functional due to insufficient labour force. It is expected that the work may restore to full speed by end of June 2020 only. Therefore, there may be some lag in the progress in first 2 quarters of this year but with constant monitoring by National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG) and concerted effort by the executing agencies it is expected that projected progress will be achieved and the projects will get completed in a time bound manner.

The details of projects under NMCG are given below:

Year	Number of Sanctioned Projects	Sanctioned Cost (Rs. in crore)	Number of Completed projects
Till March, 2014	72	4,608	16
2014-15	21	3,184	10
2015-16	7	584	2
2016-17	60	2,678	11
2017-18	40	9,547	10
2018-19	92	7,781	39
2019-20	21	584	34
Total	313	28,966	122

Details of financial progress over the years in Namami Gange are given below:

Rs in crore

Year	Amount Disbursed by NMCG
2014-15	170.99
2015-16	602.60
2016-17	1062.81
2017-18	1625.01
2018-19	2626.54
2019-20	2673.09
Total	8761.04

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.6 (Para No. 2.6)

National River Conservation Plan - Other Basins

The Committee observe that under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) - other basins Scheme, proposals for Projects are received from the State Government outside “Ganga Basin” and funded for taking up pollution abatement works in towns along various rivers and are considered for financial assistance on a cost sharing basis subject to their conformity with the Scheme Guidelines, pollution status, prioritizations, appraisal by independent Institutions and availability of Plan Funds. The Committee further note that for the fiscal year 2020-21, an amount of Rs. 220 crore has been kept for the NRCP - other Basins which is a minuscule amount in comparison to budgetary allocation of Rs. 1640.02 crore which has been kept for river Ganga. The Committee have come to know from the reply of the Department that higher allocations under this Scheme would be sought when approval to revised Scheme is obtained. The Committee are not happy with the meagre allocation to this Scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that concerted efforts must be made to obtain the approval for the revised Scheme at the earliest so that higher allocation could be made available for the work pertaining to pollution abatement for all other major rivers of the country which are equally polluted as river Ganga and need urgent remedial measures.

Reply of the Government

A proposal for approval of the Cabinet for conservation and rejuvenation of rivers in an integrated manner in ten selected polluted river stretches in the country under the National River Conservation Plan (NRCP)- Other Basins, involving financial outlay of Rs. 8,117 crore was initiated by the Department. Based on inputs and advice to route the proposal through the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC), a draft EFC Note with scheme size of Rs.35,640 crore for implementation in 10 years period has been prepared and under consultative process.

After approval of EFC, the approved proposal would be taken up for approval of the Cabinet based on which suitable allocation of funds would be sought from Ministry of Finance.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 11 of Chapter – I of the Report)

Recommendation No.8 (Para No. 2.8)

Central Ground Water Board

The Committee observe that Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) is a multi-disciplinary scientific Organization with a mandate to develop and disseminate technologies, monitor and implement National Policies for the scientific and sustainable development and management of India's Ground Water resources including their exploration, assessment, conservation, augmentation, protection from pollution and distribution based on the principles of economic and ecological efficiency and equity. The Committee note that CGWB has a total strength of 4015 personnel out of which 2748 (Scientifics -880 & Engineering -1868) are Technical and 1267 are non-Technical. Around 31% posts in the CGWB are vacant due to various reasons. The Committee believe that in view of the precarious situation of groundwater in the country, shortage of staff to the extent of 31% hampers the smooth functioning of the Board and further aggravates the already alarming scenario as far as groundwater is concerned. The Committee, therefore, urge that CGWB, in consultation with the Union Public Service Commission and the Staff Selection Commission, takes immediate measures to fill up various vacancies without further delay to enable the Board to carry out its tasks efficiently and in a result-oriented manner.

Reply of the Government

Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has a total strength of 4015 personnel out of which 2748 (Scientifics -880 & Engineering -1868) are technical and 1267 are non-technical. About 1261 (31%) posts in CGWB are vacant due to various reasons such as in process of recruitment with staff selection commission's and UPSC; non recruitment due to various court cases and pending amendment of recruitment rules.

Around 100 vacancies of Scientific Officers are in final stage with the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) where interviews are to be held for direct recruitment and Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) is to be convened by UPSC for promotion. However, due to lockdown and restrictions in place in view of COVID-19, the process has been stalled. It is expected that once Rail/Road/Air movement is restored, the UPSC will take necessary steps to hold the interviews and DPC meetings. Similarly, nearly 225 dossiers of candidates selected by various Staff Selection Commission (SSC) Regions are awaited to be received until normal services are restored. At Member level (pay level 14), out of the six posts, two are lying vacant and efforts are being made to fill the vacancies. At Regional Director level (pay level 13), out of the 18 posts in scientific cadre, 11 are lying vacant due to pending case in the Hon'ble court.

Giving utmost importance to the issue of Filling up of Vacancies in CGWB, the Secretary, DoWR,RD&GR has been conducting meeting on regular basis. Recently, a meeting, thru Video Conference, was held on 5th May 2020, which was presided over by the Secretary, DoWR,RD&GR. While going over the progress made, the Secretary was of the view that certain Posts, created in past, may not be of relevance and their efficacy needs to be ascertained in present day context where latest IT tools (like CAD, CAMs etc), modern technology / techniques and option to outsource certain tasks (like drilling bore wells etc), are available. The Secretary instructed that CGWB and the Ministry (GWE) should conduct a thorough review of posts and their vacancies so that redundant / not so relevant posts are replaced with New Posts with desired skill sets. Such an exercise should result into bringing focus on priority posts vacancies and recommending some new posts (in lieu of existing ones, as Matching Saving) with desired skills, needed in present times / future.

CGWB is making all-out efforts for filling up all the vacant posts with the concerned authorities. However, the present manpower in CGWB is not adequate for timely completion of all the envisaged targets. Secretary (WR, RD & GR) has reviewed the manpower situation in the Board and has advised to conduct a thorough review of posts as per the skill requirements.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.9 (Para No. 2.9 and 2.10)

Development of Water Resources Information System

The Committee note that Development of Water Resources Information System (DWRIS) is a Central Sector Scheme continuing from the Twelfth Five Year Plan. It aims for standardized National Water Information System with a network of 'Data Banks' and 'Data Bases', improving data quality and processing capabilities through a country wide network of Hydrological Observation Stations. In addition to this, it endeavours towards early Flood Warning System as an important non-structural measure for flood management. Further, the Pilot Census of major and medium irrigation projects has also been envisioned under this Scheme. It also strives to create an integrated data bank to tackle coastal erosion in a scientific manner keeping in view the long term perspective and challenges of climate change.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned averments, the Committee are astonished to learn that CWC is monitoring live storage status of 123 major reservoirs of the country on weekly basis which is only 66.36% of the live storage capacity estimated to have been created in the country. Though, the CWC has expanded Hydrological Observation Network from the existing 878 Stations to 1598 Stations all over the country, the lack of adequate manpower at the Hydrological Observation (HO) sites is a major impediment for running and maintenance of HO stations. Besides, absence of regular staff, both Supervisory and Skilled Work Assistant for HO works, has resulted in outsourcing of manpower. The Committee feel that the HOs need to be equipped with adequate manpower for their smooth functioning. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Department should take urgent and effective measures to fill up the vacancies by recruiting skilled manpower. Further, the Committee desire that the CWC should expand its monitoring base to cover the 100% live storage capacity created in the country within a fixed timeframe.

Reply of the Government:

Requirements at semi-skilled and unskilled levels are being met by outsourcing. In relation to skilled Supervisory level, a proposal for creation of 261 posts at the level of Junior Engineer for running and maintenance of Hydrological Observation Sites and also Water Quality Laboratories under Development of Water Resources Information System (DWRIS) Scheme is under consideration.

CWC is monitoring the live storage of important reservoirs across the country and issuing weekly bulletin every Thursday since 1981. The number of reservoirs being monitored is being increased periodically to get better coverage of the storages across the country. However, as per constitutional provisions, water is a state subject and the reservoirs are mostly owned by the state governments. For including any reservoir under CWC monitoring, historical data of past ten years is required for carrying out analysis besides making arrangements for obtaining data regularly on weekly / daily basis from the state governments/project authorities. Hence, concurrence of project authorities / state government is required to include any reservoir under CWC monitoring system. In general, reservoirs having live storage capacity more than 100 Million Cubic Meter (MCM) are included under the CWC monitoring system. However, some reservoirs of lesser capacity are also included, particularly in drought prone regions, as per concurrence of the project authorities /state governments.

The recommendation of the Committee in relation to expansion of monitoring of liver storage capacity by Central Water Commission (CWC), regular efforts are being made to obtain the data / concurrence from project authorities / state governments for inclusion of more and more projects under the CWC monitoring system and enhance the coverage of the same.

Regarding filling up of the vacancies to man the HO sites, it is informed that the matter was taken up with ministry of Finance and DoPT etc. as it involves several issues such as revival of posts, framing of Recruitment rules etc. Additional information has been sought by those departments. While the same is done, action is also taken engage manpower through outsourcing so that the work at those sited is not affected.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.11 (Para No. 2.12)

Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme

The Committee observe that during 2016-17, Ninety Nine (99) on-going Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) Major/Medium Projects along with their CADWM works having a potential of 76.03 lakh hectare and estimated cost of Rs. 77,595 crore have been identified in consultation with the States, for completion in Phases up to December, 2019. However, the Committee observe that out of 99 prioritized Projects and 7 Phases (total 106 Projects), AIBP works of only 40 Projects have been completed. For completion of rest of the Projects, the deadline has been extended up to March, 2023. The Committee are not satisfied with the progress of implementation of these Projects, especially, in view of the fact that funds are available for these Projects through Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) created in NABARD. The Committee are apprehensive that with this pace, even the extended timeline would not be met. The Committee, therefore, recommend that concerted efforts be made by the Department to complete these Projects within the extended deadline as these Projects are financed through LTIF carrying loan liabilities.

Reply of the Government:

After inclusion under PMKSY-AIBP, 40 priority projects have been completed by March 2020. Out of Ultimate Irrigation Potential (UIP) of 76.03 Lakh hectares (L.ha) of these 99 prioritized projects; potential of 41.39 L.ha was created upto March, 2016 and the balance potential to be created was 34.64 L.ha. Against this balance 34.64 L.ha, irrigation potential of 18.19 L.ha. has been created through the 99 prioritized projects during 2016-2019.

The following initiatives have been made under the PMKSY-AIBP scheme for monitoring and expedient completion of projects.

- An online MIS portal has been developed for monitoring overall and component-wise physical and financial progress of the prioritized projects.
- Physical and financial progress of projects is monitored through the field units of Central Water Commission. One nodal officer for each of the 99 priority projects has been identified who is responsible for updating the physical and financial progress of the project regularly in the MIS developed for this purpose.
- The Cropped Area estimation in the command of 99 priority projects is being carried out annually through remote sensing.

- Use of pressurized pipe irrigation and micro irrigation, wherever feasible, is being adopted to increase efficiency. In Odisha & Maharashtra, land acquisition of 6200 ha & 4920 ha. respectively is reported to have been avoided in distribution system by adopting underground Piped Distribution (PDN).

The physical progress of the prioritized projects is being comprehensively reviewed by Hon'ble Minister, Jal Shakti and Secretary (DoWR, RD & GR) from time to time. Matter has been taken up at the level of Secretary (DoWR, RD & GR) with the Chief Secretaries of all concerned States requesting that a special drive be taken up to complete as many ongoing PMKSY-AIBP projects by 31.03.2021 as possible. To overcome issues related to railway / highway / gas pipe line crossings in various projects, matter has been taken up with Chairman of Railways / National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) / Gas Authority of India Ltd. (GAIL) to accord top priority in resolving these issues. Thus, concerted efforts are being made so that projects can be completed within revised time schedule.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.12 (Para No. 2.13)

Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)

The Committee note that the Twelfth Plan Schemes of Flood Management Programme (FMP) and River Management Activities & work related to Border Areas have been merged as "Flood Management and Border Areas Programme" (FMBAP) for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs. 3342 crore. There are 83 ongoing Projects under FMBAP. Out of these 83 Projects, 14 Projects have been completed and remaining are expected to be completed by end of March 2021. The Committee take cognizance of the fact that issues such as acquisition of land for the Project, litigations, non-release of State Share and inadequate budget allocation are the major impediments due to which the Projects are not completed on time. In view of the need for timely completion of these Projects, the Committee recommend the Department to hold discussion with State Governments/Project Authorities and resolve the underlying factors due to which Projects are not finished within the fixed timeline.

Reply of the Government

Progress of works under Flood Management Programme (FMP) as per the extant guidelines is monitored by Central Water Commission (CWC), Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC) and Brahmaputra Board (BB) in their respective jurisdiction and these agencies closely liaise with concerned State Governments for timely completion of the projects. The review meetings involving State Governments, Monitoring Agencies and DOWR, RD&GR are held regularly to expedite early completion of FMP projects.

Nevertheless, considering emergent nature of FMP projects, review meetings as suggested the Committee would be held with all stake holders for expediting completion of remaining 69 FMP projects.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Recommendation No.13 (Para No. 2.14)

The Committee observe that the management of floods in the States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh caused by the rivers originating from Nepal has been a matter of serious concern. In this regard, Government of India has been regularly interacting with the Government of Nepal for construction of Dams on these rivers for mutual benefit of the two countries which includes flood control. Discussions are also held at three-tier mechanism established in this regard. The Committee note that though the draft final DPR of the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project has been prepared by M/s. WAPCOS Limited, no specific reply has been furnished regarding the execution and completion of the Project. The Committee would like to know the timeline for completion of the Pancheshwar Project as well as the reasons that could cause functional delay in the Project. The Committee are of the view that the Ministry should play a proactive role in completion of these Projects as it would help in combating the menace of flood in downstream States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh by the rivers originating from Nepal.

Reply of the Government:

A joint Team of Officials/ Experts (ToE) has been constituted by both the countries to discuss and resolve the comments on DPR including issues raised by Nepal on the interpretation of Mahakali Treaty, sharing of the Mahakali waters and assessment of project benefits in order to finalize the DPR. The first meeting of ToE was held on 21-23 August 2017 at Kathmandu and second meeting on 5-6 September 2017 at New Delhi and the third meeting of ToE was held on 27th -28th February, 2019 at Kathmandu.

During the course of the ToE meetings, most of the technical issues have been discussed and resolved to the satisfaction of both sides. However, certain fundamental issues relating to the interpretation of certain clauses of the Mahakali Treaty still remains to be resolved bilaterally by both Government of India and Nepal and both the Governments are under discussions at highest level towards finalization of India-Nepal Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project under the guidance of Ministry of External Affairs.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

CHAPTER – III

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DO NOT DESIRE TO PURSUE IN VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REPLIES

NIL

CHAPTER – IV

RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS IN RESPECT OF WHICH REPLIES OF THE GOVERNMENT HAVE NOT BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE COMMITTEE

Recommendation No. 1 (Para No. 2.1)

Analysis of Demands for Grants

The Committee observe that an amount of Rs. 8960.39 crore (net) has been allocated in the Budget 2020-21 in respect of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR). However, out of Rs. 8960.39 crore, as much as Rs. 2675 crore has been kept for servicing of anticipated liabilities towards National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) dues, effectively rendering budgetary allocation of merely Rs. 6285.39 crore. Further, the Department has been allowed to borrow an amount of Rs. 5000 crore from the NABARD. The Committee further note that as compared to the last financial year (2019-20), there is an increase of Rs. 720.59 crore in the Revenue Section, whereas, there is a decrease of Rs. 5.45 crore under the Capital Section. In nutshell, there is an increase of Rs. 715.14 crore in demand for the year 2020-21. In this backdrop, the Committee find it intriguing that every year, there has always been under utilization of funds allocated to the Department. It is disheartening to note that the Department has persistently lagged behind in utilization of budgetary allocations during the last four years, *i.e.*, actual expenditure of only Rs. 5313.48 crore as compared to BE allocation of Rs. 6887 crore in the year 2017-18. Further, there is an expenditure of only Rs. 7422.08 crore as compared to BE allocation of Rs. 8860 crore in the year 2018-19. The Committee are also concerned over the huge committed liability of Rs. 45812.80 crore towards outstanding principal and interest payments for borrowing from NABARD. Such increased dependence of the Department on the borrowing from NABARD over and above the budgetary provisions with apparently quite inadequate capacity to repay the loans, is not a healthy trend. The Committee, however, note that this year, Rs. 5000 crore has been allowed to be borrowed from NABARD which is substantially lower in comparison to provisions during previous fiscal years. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend the Department to utilize the unused amount in the Projects which have been brought under the NABARD borrowings. The Committee further recommend that the Department should manage its resources more prudently in order to avoid future borrowings.

Reply of the Government:

Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (DOWR, RD&GR) during FY 2019-20 was permitted to raise extra budgetary sources for the identified projects being funded from Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) through NABARD. These projects as per Cabinet approval and scheme design are to be funded through LTIF route and budgetary funding for these projects including by way of diversion of savings available if any is not admissible. Details of Projects, EBRs approved and actually raised in FY 2019-20 are given in table below:-

(Rs. in crore)

Project	EBRs approved in FY 2019-20	EBR raised in FY 2019-20
Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP) & HKKP - CADWM component under PMKSY	4200.00	1902.77
Rajasthan Feeder - Sirhind Feeder	196.00	0
Polavaram Irrigation Project	1850.00	1850.00
Shahpur Kandi	150.00	60.00
North Koel Reservoir Project	336.00	0.53
Total	6732.00	3813.30

Note: In March 2020, NABARD sought to raise Rs. 932.6057 crore (AIBP – Rs.764.4167 crore, CADWM – Rs. 108.66 crore, Shahpur Kandi Dam – Rs.59.529 crore) through EBR. However, due to the prevailing market conditions at that time, response of the investors was not encouraging and NABARD conveyed that it may not be desirable to raise resources from the market during the remaining period of FY 2019-20. This amount being on account of committed liabilities has been included in borrowing programme for FY 2020-21.

As regards utilization of the unused amount in the Projects which have been brought under the NABARD borrowings, unspent balance for previous releases available with the State/project authority and indicated in utilisation certificate is duly factored in while making fresh release.

NABARD borrowings under LTIF are limited to actual releases for identified projects, which are regulated according to physical and financial progress of projects. The recommendation of the Committee for more prudent management of resources of Department has been noted for necessary action.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 5 of Chapter – I of the Report)

Recommendation No. 2 (Para No. 2.2)

Low Budgetary Allocations

The Committee note that although the budgetary allocations of the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (DoWR, RD & GR) has increased consecutively, except the year 2019-20, during the last four fiscal years from Rs. 6887 crore in the year 2017-18 to Rs. 8960.39 crore in the year 2020-21, the representative of the Ministry was not satisfied with the budgetary allocations. The Committee further observe that the initial Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) ceiling for the FY 2020-21 was Rs. 10238.61 crore for the Department. However, actual MTEF awarded to the Department was just Rs. 8960.39 crore. It is an undisputable fact that the challenges in the water sector of the country are enormous, however, in relative terms, the budgetary allocations of the Ministry are far from being acknowledged as sufficient. The primary reason for the lower budgetary allocations is that 'Water' being a State subject, the major responsibility for augmentation, conservation and efficient management of water resources, primarily, comes under the domain of the States. The role of Union Government is technical, advisory, catalytic and promotional in nature, which is a determining factor for lower budgetary allocation to the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation). At this juncture, when the Union Government has taken up the subject of 'Water' in an unprecedented Mission Mode, the Committee feel that merely hand-holding by the Union Government would not suffice and the Government has to play a pro-active role in 'Integrated Water Management' for environmental sustenance and sustainable economic development of the country. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Department should make all out efforts to fully and optimally utilize the resources at its command and should assume a catalytic role in galvanizing the efforts of States and Union territories in this area. Only on making full and effective utilization of budgetary allocation, the Department can vigorously present its case before the Ministry of Finance to augment its budgetary allocation, in real terms, which will also result in reducing its dependence on borrowing from NABARD besides helping the resources-stretched States to implement the policies and programmes of the Union Government.

Reply of the Government:

An allocation of Rs.8245.25 crore was made in BE 2019-20. This was reduced to Rs.7518.21 crore at RE level. In spite of constraints of lockdown imposed at a crucial time of financial year closing due to the COVID pandemic, the Department was able to utilise Rs.7416.28 crore (tentative pending finalisation of appropriation accounts). This is 99% utilisation RE level allocations and 90% utilisation of BE level allocations.

By comparison, in FY 2018-19 against BE allocations of Rs.8860 crore and RE ceiling of Rs.7612.52 crore, an expenditure of Rs.7422.08 crore was incurred. It was 97% utilisation of RE level allocations and 84% utilisation of BE level allocations.

Case for augmenting budgetary resources of the Department would be presented to Ministry of Finance at the time of finalisation of Revised Estimates for the current financial year.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 8 of Chapter – I of the Report)

Recommendation No.7 (Para No. 2.7)

Central Water Commission (CWC) – Expeditious implementation of Mihir Shah Committee Report

The Committee note that the CWC has been entrusted with the general responsibility of initiating, coordinating and furthering, in consultation with the State Governments concerned, Schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country for the purpose of Flood Control, Irrigation, Drinking Water Supply and Water Power Development. The Committee further note that the Mihir Shah Committee Report had suggested for restructuring of the Central Water Commission (CWC) and the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) as well as creation of a unified new entity as National Water Commission (NWC). For this intended purpose, the Department had engaged the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmadabad as a 'Consultant' for suggesting the amalgamation process and to suggest a structure for the new Organization, that incidentally submitted its Report in September 2018. Further, the Department had also set up a Working Group in 2018 to suggest the amalgamation of posts in CWC and CGWB. The creation of NWC involves additional financial implications, creation of new infrastructure, new services and creation of additional posts requiring approval from the Union Cabinet. The Department has further apprised the Committee that no time limit could be fixed in this regard since the process involves consultation with various Ministries/ Departments and

approval/recommendations of Nodal Ministries and the CEE. The Committee are of the considered view that a paradigm shift is required in surface and ground water management in terms of introducing major reforms like merging of Central Water Commission (CWC) and Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). Since considerable time has already elapsed in undergoing the deliberation and consultation process, the Committee, therefore, desire that the Department should expedite the process in this regard so that major reforms in the water sector of the country could be carried out as per the needs of the time.

Reply of the Government:

The observations of the Standing Committee regarding expeditious implementation of Dr.Mihir Shah Committee Report have been noted by the Department. In line with the objectives enumerated in the aforesaid Report, it is proposed to amalgamate organisations like the Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) and Central Water Commission (CWC) to create a new entity 'National Water Commission' (NWC) as an apex technical planning and policy arm of this Department, with the Secretariat status of an Attached Office.

NWC may also be responsible for project approval and appraisal as well as technical assistance to the Department and all stakeholders on policy matters, including each River Basin. NWC is proposed to be headed by Chairman, who will be an officer equivalent to the Secretary to the Government of India and each major River Basin is proposed to be under the overall charge of a Member, who will be an officer equivalent to the Additional Secretary to the Government of India. A proposal for the Committee on Establishment Expenditure (CEE) is under examination in the Department for the purpose. Inputs essential to preparation of proposal are being collected from the CWC and CGWB. This exercise may need more time as several issues relating to merging/ amalgamation of various cadres, service, and creation of posts at various levels are involved. The CEE proposal will precede the Cabinet Note and after approval by the CEE and thereafter approval by the Cabinet, NWC can be created. However, the observations of the committee have been noted for compliance.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 14 of Chapter – I of the Report)

Recommendation No.10 (Para No. 2.11)

National Water Mission (NWM)

The Committee observe that the Government of India has established National Water Mission (NWM) as one of the eight National Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). The main objective of NWM is conservation of water, minimizing wastage and ensuring its more equitable distribution, both across and within the States through integrated water resources development and management. However, it is disheartening to see that though NWM was constituted to implement the goals on a Mission Mode, it still functions as a part of the Ministry. Further, limitations of administrative and financial powers, shortage of regular officers/staff, and reduction in budget are the major bottlenecks in the implementation of the Projects. The Committee are of the view that to realize its full potential and to function as per its stated mandate, the National Water Mission needs to be made independent of the Ministry. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that the Department should take necessary measures in this regard. The Committee further recommend that the Department should initiate measures for enhancement of funds and posting of regular officers/staff in the Mission to address the above-mentioned issues in a pragmatic manner.

Reply of the Government

The approved scheme does not envisage functioning of National Water Mission independent of DOWR, RD&GR. Requirement of personnel is being met by hiring of consultants and young professionals, apart from posting of regular officers against approved vacancies. Allocations under the scheme would be enhanced depending on pace of expenditure and components under the approved scheme.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 17 of Chapter – I of the Report)

Recommendation No.14 (Para No. 2.15)

Farakka Barrage Project (FBP)

The Committee observe that the main objective of the Farakka Barrage Project is to divert adequate quantity of Ganga waters to Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system through a feeder canal for preservation and maintenance of Kolkata Port by improving the regime and navigability of the Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system. The Committee find that there has always been under utilization of funds under FBP, i.e., actual expenditure of Rs. 138.27 crore as against BE of Rs. 205.04 crore in the year 2014-15. Further, in the year 2018-19, Rs. 114.25 crore was actually incurred against the BE of Rs. 209.25 crore. The Committee note that the main reason for shortfall in expenditure in the work of replacement of Gates is due to various constraints like restricted working area and poor accessibility for replacement of Gates and hydro-mechanical components due to a busy rail-cum-road bridge adjacent to the site. Further, the Committee are astonished to find that only 149 regular employees are working in Farakka Barrage Project as against the sanctioned strength of 824 which is only 18% of the sanctioned strength. Such a huge shortage of manpower does not auger well for the smooth working of the FBP and displays the indifferent attitude of the Department towards the upkeep and maintenance of FBP. The Committee would like to be apprised of the review of manpower requirement by the Department taking into account the technological advancements over the years which might have facilitated various activities/processes. The Committee also recommend the Department to take urgent measures to fill up the vacancies which are essential for smooth running of Farakka Barrage Project at the earliest. The Committee would like to know the details of such measures. Further, the Committee would like to be apprised of the specific reasons for constant under utilization of funds under FBP. They also recommend the Department to make necessary changes in its procedure for budgetary estimations so as to improve the utilization of budgetary allocations.

Reply of the Government

A detailed Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) study has been undertaken for assessing the requirement/optimising of manpower of Farakka Barrage Project (FBP) for its smooth functioning as per the present requirements/necessity. The report of SIU is under process for making a reference to Ministry of Finance.

As per the budget allocation w.r.t FBP for the FY 2014-15 was BE (Rs.205.04 cr), RE (146.71 cr) and the AE (Rs.138.27 cr.) which is 94% of RE 2014-15. Further, for FY 2018-19 BE(Rs.209.25 cr), RE(Rs.123.47 cr) was allocated against which AE (Rs.114.25 cr) which is 93% of RE 2018-19 .

Fund requirement at BE stage is made as per the work in progress (repair & maintenance, gate installation etc.) and anticipated during the year. Utilization of the fund at the RE stage which is based on corrected assessment is more than 90% in all these years. FBP has constrained in utilisation of allocations due to the following reasons:

- a. Due to the mass retirement, during the last 5 years, the staff strength (both technical and administrative) has gone down to 15% of the sanctioned strength this resulted in savings under Salaries.
- b. Due to the vacancies in technical staff, proposed works could not be taken up in time, causing underutilization of fund.
- c. Due to various reasons like delay in supply of steel, materials from Bhilai Steel Plant, which affected progress of hydraulic gate fabrication & erections work, also contributed to non-utilization of the planned fund.

(O.M. No. LAFEAS-SCWR023/18/2020-SCWR dated 05.03.2020)

Comment of the Committee

(Please see Para No. 20 of Chapter – I of the Report)

CHAPTER – V

**RECOMMENDATION/OBSERVATION IN RESPECT OF WHICH FINAL REPLY OF THE
GOVERNMENT IS STILL AWAITED**

NIL

**New Delhi
3 February 2021
14 Magha, 1942 (Saka)**

**Dr. SANJAY JAISWAL
Chairperson
Standing Committee on Water Resources**

MINUTES OF THE FIRST SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES (2020-21) HELD ON FRIDAY, 6 NOVEMBER, 2020

The Committee sat from 1400 hours to 1430 hours in Committee Room No. 'C', Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal – Chairperson

MEMBERS

LOK SABHA

2. Shri Kaushal Kishore
3. Shri M. Dhanush Kumar
4. Shri Hasmukhbhai Somabhai Patel
5. Shri Dipsinh Shankarsinh Rathod

RAJYA SABHA

- 6 Sardar Balwinder Singh Bhunder
- 7 Dr. Kirodi Lal Meena
- 8 Shri Arun Singh
- 9 Shri Subhash Chandra Singh
- 10 Shri Pradeep Tamta

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|---------------------|
| 1. | Shri Manoj K. Arora | - | OSD (LSS) |
| 2. | Shri M.K. Madhusudhan | - | Director |
| 3. | Shri R. C. Sharma | - | Additional Director |

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting and congratulated them on their nomination /re-nomination to the Committee for the year 2020-21.

2. *** *** *** *** *** *** ***

3. The Committee then took up for consideration four draft Reports namely draft Reports on the Action Taken by the Government on the Observations / Recommendations contained in the First and Third Reports of the Committee on "Demands for Grants (2019-20) and (2020-21)" of the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation) and draft Reports on Action Taken by the Government on the Observations/ Recommendations contained in the Second and Fourth Reports of the Committee on "Demands for Grants (2019-20) and (2020-21)" of the Ministry of Jal Shakti (Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation). After some deliberation, the Committee adopted all the draft Reports unanimously and without any changes / amendments. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to present the above four Reports to both the Houses of Parliament in the next Session of Parliament.

4. *** *** *** *** *** ***

The Committee, then, adjourned.

*** Minutes in respect of other matters kept separately.

ANNEXURE – II

[Vide Para 4 of the Introduction]

ANALYSIS OF ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS CONTAINED IN THE THIRD REPORT (SEVENTEENTH LOK SABHA) OF THE COMMITTEE

(i)	Total number of Recommendations/Observations	14
(ii)	Recommendation/Observations which have been accepted by the Government Recommendation Nos. 3,4,5,6,8,9,11,12 and 13	Total – 09 Percentage– 64.28%
(iii)	Recommendations/Observations which the Committee do not desire to pursue in view of the Government’s replies Recommendation Nos. NIL	Total – 00 Percentage – Nil
(iv)	Recommendations/Observations in respect of which replies of the Government have not been accepted by the Committee Recommendation Nos. 1,2,7,10 and 14	Total – 05 Percentage – 35.71%
(v)	Recommendation/Observation in respect of which final reply of the Government is still awaited Para Nos. NIL	Total – 00 Percentage – Nil