(vii) During IX Plan period, the area of Tiger Reserves has increased from 33,167 sq. km. to 37,761 sq. km.

(viii) Funding support under Centrally Sponsored Schemes for improvement of habitat and augmenting water supply is also provided.

Progress in Ganga Action Plan

2784. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ganga Action Plan was launched in 1985 to bring the water quality in Ganga and its tributaries to bathing levels;

(b) whether, despite having spent more than Rs. 900 crores over 15 years, there has been no reduction in the bacterial load in the river, to the desired level;

(c) whether the technology adopted by the National River Conservation Directorate was found wanting; and

(d) whether NRCD has abandoned its activities since September, 1999 for want of funds and if so, the reasons for not making funds available?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The Ganga Action Plan was launched in 1985 to improve the water quality of river Ganga to bathing quality as per designated best use criteria of Central Pollution Control Board as below:—

Class B : Outdoor Bathing Quality

Dissolved Oxygen	=	5 milligram per litre or more
Biochemical Oxygen Demand	=	3 milligram per litre or less
Total Coliforms	=	500 MPN/100 millilitre

An expert Committee chaired by Chairman, Central Pollution Control Board, reviewed and revised the bacterial quality standards for river water and treated waste waters as below:—

River water quality-standards for bathing class	Fecal coliform count of MPN 500 per 100 ml(Dcsirable) MPN 2500 per 100 ml (Max. permissible) Fecal Streptococci 100 per 100 ml(Dcsirable) 500 per 100 ml(Max. per).
Treated waste water-standards	Fecal coliform count of MPN 1000 per 100 ml(Desirablc) MPN 10,000 per 100 ml(max. permissible)

The total expenditure incurred under Ganga Action Plan Phase-I till March, 2000 is Rs. 451.70 crore and that under Ganga Action Plan Phase-ll is Rs. 547.89 crore. The conventional technologies for sewage treatment adopted under Ganga Action Plan Phasc-I were not specifically designed to reduce bacterial load. Notwithstanding this, there has been a reduction in the bacterial load, which, however, continues to be higher than the standards prescribed by the Expert Committee. For the future schemes of Ganga Action Plan Phase-ll and National River Conservation Plan, the State Governments have been advised to support, wherever land is available, the waste stabilisation pond technology for waste water treatment in view of its cost effectiveness and capability to reduce bacterial load to desired levels.

(d) The Ganga Action Plan Phasc-I stands closed on 31.3.2000, However, the National River Conservation Directorate has not abandoned its activities and is continuing with the implementation of schemes under Ganga Action Plan Phase-ll which has since been merged into the National River Conservation Plan.