

Problem of Water Shortage

696. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIYA:

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court has recently directed Government to constitute a committee to conduct 'scientific research to solve the problem of water shortage in the country;

(b) if so, whether on the basis of the directions of the Supreme Court, Government has since taken any steps;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of other steps Union Government in consultation with State Governments propose to take to meet the shortage of water in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) to (d) The Hon'ble Supreme Court, through an order issued on 28th April, 2009, directed the Central Government to constitute a Committee, within two months from that date, with Secretary, Ministry of Science and Technology as the Chairman and Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources as Member and other technical members of the committee as nominated by the Chairman, for finding out inexpensive solution to address the problems of water shortage. In pursuance of this order, the Government of India has constituted a Technical Expert Committee with provisions for consultation with the representatives of the State Governments. Steps are also being formulated for wider consultation to the solutions found out through scientific research to address the problem of water scarcity in India.

Decline in Flow of Big Rivers

697. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:

DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether flow of water in world's largest rivers including India's Ganga has declined over past half century with significant changes found in about a third of big rivers;

(b) whether analysis of 925 major rivers from 1948 to 2004 showed an overall decline in total discharge;

(c) whether reduction in inflow of Pacific Ocean alone was about shutting off Mississippi river;

(d) whether according to report annual flow into Indian Ocean dropped by about 3 per cent or 1450 cubic kilometres; and

(e) if so, what are other points mentioned in study report and what steps are being considered?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT PALA):

(a) and (b) A paper titled "Changes in Continental Freshwater Discharge from 1948 to 2004" based

on a study carried out by Mr. Aiguo Dai and others has been published in the Journal of Climate. The authors have concluded that the results reveal large variations in yearly stream flow for most of the world's large rivers and for continental discharge. Authors have found that out of the top 200 rivers, there is no significant trend in case of 136 rivers whereas 19 rivers have shown upward trend and 45 rivers have shown downward trend. Details of the findings in respect of all the 925 rivers are not reported in the paper.

(c) As per a news release, the study found that annual freshwater discharge into Pacific Ocean fell by about 6% or 526 cubic kilometer - approximately the same volume of water that flows out of Mississippi river each year.

(d) The news release further states that annual flow into India Ocean dropped by about 3% or 140 cubic kilometer.

(e) Authors have made numerous assumptions and have mentioned in the paper that they "emphasize that stream flow, like precipitation, has very large year-to-year variations, which make detection of changes more difficult". Authors have further observed that their "results contradict the notion that global runoff has increased during the recent decades". "Comprehensive water data base in public domain and assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources" has been included as one of the goal in the draft mission document for "National Water Mission".

Flood water

†698.SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that almost every year during the rainy season the rivers flowing into India from Nepal bring flood water which causes loss of life and property in the country;

(b) if so, the reaction of Government thereto;

(c) whether Government has made any assessment regarding volume of additional water flowing into the country through these rivers;

(d) if so, the details regarding the volume of the additional water; and

(e) whether there is any plan to utilize this water by storing it properly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VINCENT PALA):

(a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Water being a state subject, flood management schemes are planned, funded and executed by the State Governments as per their own priority. The role of Central Government is technical, catalytic and promotional in nature. However, to provide central assistance to the flood prone States, a state sector scheme, namely, "Flood Management Programme (FMP)" amounting to Rs.8000 crore was approved 'in principle' by the cabinet in its meeting held on 02.11.2007 for XI Plan. A number of schemes from various States have been included under the aforesaid Plan

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.