

(c) Recruitment Rules for the post of Library and Information Assistant will be framed in due course as per the guidelines of the above office memoranda.

Pollution in rivers

†*378. SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Central Government has spent Rs. 26 billion on cleaning 38 major rivers of twenty States during the last ten years but not even a single river could be made pollution free despite incurring such a heavy expenditure; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Pollution load on rivers has increased over the years due to rapid urbanisation and industrialization. Abstraction of water for irrigation, drinking, industrial use, power etc. compounds the challenge.

Conservation of rivers is an ongoing and collective effort of the Central and State Governments. The Centrally sponsored scheme of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) has been started to supplement the efforts of the State Governments in this regard. The objective of NRCP is to improve the water quality in the polluted stretches of the major rivers in the country through implementation of various pollution abatement works. River conservation projects such as creation of civic infrastructure for sewage management and disposal are also being implemented under other central schemes, such as Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns, as well as under State sector schemes.

The NRCP presently covers polluted stretches of 38 rivers in 178 towns spread over 20 States. An amount of Rs. 2610.74 crore has been released to the State Governments during the last ten years by the Central Government. The water quality in terms of Bio-chemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) values for major rivers is reported to have improved as compared to the water quality before taking up pollution abatement works under NRCP, based on independent monitoring undertaken by reputed institutions. However, the levels of bacterial contamination in terms of fecal coliform are reported to be exceeding the maximum permissible limit at a number of locations. Sewage treatment capacity of 4064 mld (million litres per day) has been created so far in the country under the Plan. However, there is still a large gap between sewage generation and the treatment capacity. Inadequate operation and maintenance (O&M) by the Urban Local Bodies, under-utilisation of the Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), delay in acquisition of land, litigation etc. have been the major shortcomings in the implementation

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

of the Plan. Compliance of effluent discharge standards by industries also needs to be more strictly enforced by the State Pollution Control Boards to improve the river water quality to desired level.

Implementation of STEP in Andhra Pradesh

*379. SHRIMATI GUNDU SUDHARANI: Will the Minister of WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that Government is implementing the Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) in Andhra Pradesh;
- (b) if so, the aims and objectives of the Scheme;
- (c) the details of training or employment opportunities provided to marginalized women in that State for making them self-reliant; and
- (d) how the above scheme is different from the Swadhar and Ujjwala Schemes which are aimed at destitute women?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI KRISHNA TIRATH): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir.

The aims and objectives of the scheme are:—

- To mobilize women in small viable groups and giving them facilities like access to credit and other inputs.
- To provide training for skill up gradation.
- To enable groups of women to take up employment-cum-income generating programmes of their own, or to access wage employment.
- To provide support services for further improving and employment conditions of women and for access to health care, literacy, legal literacy, and other information.

The list of projects funded under STEP in Andhra Pradesh is given in Statement (*See below*).

- (d) While the objectives of STEP scheme are to provide training for skill up gradation of marginalized and assetless women mobilizing them into groups to take up income generation activities, the Swadhar scheme aims to provide primary need of shelter, food, clothing and care to the marginalized women/girls living in difficult circumstances. The objectives of Ujjwala scheme are to prevent trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation through social mobilization, involvement of local communities and awareness generation programme. The schemes also provides for rescue and rehabilitation of trafficked women and their reintegration.