

Provision of amenities in rural areas at par with urban areas

613. SHRI RAM NATH THAKUR: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether two-third of population living in rural areas do not have access to adequate public amenities and livelihood opportunities;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether rural-urban divide has been widening day-by-day in the country;
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;
- (e) whether there is an urgent need for providing urban amenities to rural areas to end the divide; and
- (f) the steps being taken by Government for improving the quality of life in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI UPENDRA KUSHWAHA): (a) to (f) The Department of Rural Development is not maintaining any database of the rural population who are not having access to urban amenities. However, the Government is implementing the Scheme of Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) on pilot basis for bridging the urban-rural divide. The scheme proposes holistic and accelerated development of compact areas around a potential growth centre in a Gram Panchayat(s) through Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework for providing livelihood opportunities and urban amenities to improve the quality of life in rural areas. Leveraging of public funds with private capital and management expertise for creation and maintenance of rural infrastructure is the essence of the PURA scheme.

Development of waterways

614. DR. R. LAKSHMANAN: Will the Minister of SHIPPING be pleased to state:

- (a) whether, in spite of the fact that water transport is cheaper, can handle huge volumes of cargo and has less impact on environment, no big development in waterways has taken place in the country, so far;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the volume of cargo handled in the country through water transport system during the last five years; and

(d) whether Government has fixed any target to double the same during the next five years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING (SHRI KRISHAN PAL): (a) and (b) Development and regulation of only those waterways which are declared as National Waterways (NWs) come under the purview of Union Government. The responsibility of development of other waterways rests with the respective State Government. Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is developing the National Waterways-1, 2 & 3 for shipping and navigation by providing a navigational channel with targeted depth and width for most part of the year, aids for day and night navigation, fixed/floating terminals at selected locations for berthing and loading/unloading of vessels and intermodal connectivity at selected locations. IWAI also explored the possibility of developing the identified commercially viable stretches of NW-4 & 5 under public private partnership mode. However, this was not found feasible. Hence, efforts are being made to develop these waterways in a phased manner with budgetary support.

(c) The volume of cargo handled through inland water transport system (National Waterways, Goa waterways and Mumbai waterways) during the last five years is given below:

Year	Cargo Transported (in million tonnes)
2009-10	69.61
2010-11	74.30
2011-12	70.29
2012-13	23.68
2013-14	18.07 (provisional)

(d) As per the National Transport Development Policy Committee (NTDPC) Report, the target fixed for inland water transport is 25 billion tonnes kilo metre (btkm) by the year 2020 provided all the National Waterways have been made fully functional with necessary infrastructure facilities together with requisite policy frame work necessary to strengthen the IWT.