

[17 August, 2004]

RAJYA SABHA

Effect of melting glaciers

1464. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that according to the first report on melting glaciers and their impact by Sagarmatha, rivers in India are going to shrink in 40 years;

(b) whether it is also a fact that Britain's Department of International Development gave a decade-by-decade analysis of rivers over the next 100 years; and

(c) if so, what steps Government propose to take to preserve this precious natural resource through water harvesting and water recharging?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) In the Executive Summary of the report on the project "Snow and Glacier Aspects of Water Resources Management in The Himalaya (SAGARMATHA)" published by Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, UK, there is a reference to accelerating rate of retreat which according to report has led to speculation by some experts that Himalayan Glaciers will disappear within the next 40 years as a result of global warming. However, the Executive Summary of the report concludes that "according to the model results, for many areas, the catastrophic water shortages forecast by some experts are unlikely to happen for many decades; if at all."

(b) The report has presented future decadal variations. However, the report itself states that, these result should not be considered definitive.

(c) Water being a State subject, the schemes relating to rain water harvesting and ground water recharge are implemented by the respective State Governments. However, Government of India also promotes rain water harvesting and ground water recharge through various schemes.

Erosion of ground water resources

1465. SHRIMATI SARLA MAHESHWARI: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware about the danger of unregulated exploitation of water resources; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to regulate them and to check the erosion of ground water resources?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Water being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments to regulate unrestricted exploitation of water resources and to prevent misuse of ground water. The Central Government has constituted the Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for regulation and control of ground water management and development. The CGWA has notified 11 critical areas on consideration of over-exploitation of ground water resources. Further the CGWA has notified 32 over-exploited areas in the country for registration of ground water structures.

The Central Government has initiated following measures to check declining levels of ground water resources:—

- (i) Implementation of a Central Sector Scheme for Study of Recharge to Ground Water in the country.
- (ii) Circulation of Manual/Guidelines on Artificial Recharge of Ground Water to the States/Union Territories to enable them to formulate area specific artificial recharge schemes to check the declining trend in ground water levels.
- (iii) Circulation of a Model Bill in the year 1970 which was recirculated in 1992 and again in 1996 to all the States/Union Territories to enable them to enact suitable legislation for regulation and control of ground water development.
- (iv) Organisation of mass awareness programmes and training courses on rain water harvesting and artificial recharge of ground water.
- (v) Launching of a website on Roof Top Rain Water Harvesting (www.cgwb.net) to make aware and educate the public about various techniques of harvesting rainwater and store it for future use.