

**RAJYA SABHA**

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**\*SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE**

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**(Proceedings other than Questions and Answers)**

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**Monday, March 15, 2021 / Phalguna 24, 1942 (Saka)**

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**DISCUSSION ON WORKING OF MINISTRY OF  
JAL SHAKTI - *Contd.***

**PROF. MANOJ KUMAR JHA:** The issue of inter-linking of rivers has been going on for many years. By inter-linking of rivers, we can get rid of the problems that occur every year. If we are dreaming of becoming a five trillion dollar economy, then it is necessary that these basic things should also be worked out. 60 per cent of ground water is being used every year. But more than 100 per cent ground water is being used in many states like Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. So, a very important policy has to be formulated for these states in the coming days. The Finance Commission has made some suggestions regarding the water crisis. Among them, five suggestions are very important, which are ranging from setting water prices on graded basis to reuse of grey-water. There should be a separate policy for industrial houses to use ground water, as they often manipulate it by citing many things, the message of which is not well received. There is an extreme outbreak of water borne diseases in Seemanchal and Kosi regions. The Government will have to formulate a concrete action plan about the national water policy and climate change. I have been hearing from

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\* This Synopsis is not an authoritative record of the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

student life that Ganga is being cleansed. Regarding the Ganges, the matter is not progressing much further from a hollow symbolism. In many states, flooding has become a pattern, there is a calendar of floods. It should also be the responsibility of the Ministry of Jal Shakti to eliminate the political nexus formed over the incidences of the floods. No work has been done after our treaty with Nepal. The central government will have to intervene and decide that all the things that are being talked about for so many years should be implemented in real terms. It is imperative that we fulfill our commitments in durable manner. Today we have mineral water in our hands. We also have to think whether there is a particular kind of propaganda being run about water-borne diseases.

**SHRI PRAFUL PATEL:** It does not seem that some important steps may have been taken in the last few years for inter-linking of the rivers. Nowadays the discussion about interlinking of rivers has stopped and there is no work being done in any way. Many projects are started, but they take many years to complete. The project is completed in piecemeal manner. Till the completion of the projects, their cost increases greatly and then the problem of funding arises. The issue of funds needs to be looked into in the larger interest. In order to complete these projects, it must be thought of getting any long-term funding at a cheaper rate. Now lift irrigation, many other techniques have come in, due to which the irrigation-related demand of farmers has been rising. In irrigation also, the wastage of water is high and its utilisation is lesser. For this purpose, water-shed management, water harvesting may be done for cities and urban areas. We need to do a lot of work to actualise this vision. Finally, I only want to add that projects are pending in states as they are facing a shortage of funds. We should first strive to complete all the pending projects before starting new projects. I think only then we can achieve the goal for which Jal Shakti Ministry has been established.

**SHRI KANAKAMEDALA RAVINDRA KUMAR:** Water is one of the very basic needs for the existence of human kind. It is also fundamental for livelihood, food security and sustainable development. In this connection, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to Polavaram Irrigation Project. The project is now at a very low pace of progress. The unnecessary delay in this project has

occurred due to the non-serious attitude of the present State Government and this delay has caused huge cost escalation of the project. Not only this, the Rehabilitation and Resettlement package is minimal. I urge the Government to expedite the early completion of Polavaram Irrigation Project and ensure that adequate compensation to project affected people is provided at the earliest. I also urge the concerned Ministry to take up the water link project of Godavari and Krishna under the National Perspective Plan. Due to ever-increasing population, the demand for clean and potable drinking water is increasing day-by-day. Therefore, it has become very essential to find out new sources of water and also recharge fast depleting water table. Under these circumstances, rainwater harvesting techniques assume much importance. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether rainwater structures are mandatory or optional and whether there is any uniform policy in this regard at the national level.

**SHRI SHAKTISINH GOHIL:** India has 18 per cent of the world's population but it has only 4 per cent of the total drinkable water available. This is a matter of concern. I wonder why there has been a reduction in the grants of this department which has such a big responsibility. Prime Minister Agriculture Irrigation Scheme was announced in 2015 and it has been five years since it was launched, but still 58 per cent projects are listed as ongoing projects. A project named 'Sardar Sarovar Pariyojna' was started which includes four states, i.e. Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. This project is built on Narmada river. We brought such a scheme for the Project Affected Persons which was praised worldwide and provided land to them for resettlement in a transparent manner. But the High Court of Madhya Pradesh noted that due to corruption the rights of the poor people are being denied to them. A commission (Jha Commission) was set up to look into the issue and the then government lost as a result of this. This matter was with the Supreme Court for a long time. Now the Supreme Court has said that the report of the commission can be made public whenever government wants. I would urge the hon'ble Minister to table this report as early as possible. There was a lot of corruption in the "Namami Gange" project. Due to this, the water of Patna which naturally flowed into the Ganges, it was blocked and a flood situation arose in the city. The government had claimed 100 per cent toilets under the "Swachh Bharat Mission". The National Statistical

Survey is rejecting that claim. The Ministry of Jal Shakti issued guidelines to regulate and control ground water. This guideline states that the industry that uses 100 KLD water will have to use 20 percent less clean water in 3 years. For this, such industries will be audited every year. But not a single audit has been carried in the last three years. Several schemes such as "Pradhan Mantri Krishi Irrigation Yojana", Har Khet ko Pani (HKKP), increasing irrigation capacity, increasing of arable land, etc. were introduced. But they were not implemented. Under 'Namami Gange', it was proposed to spend Rs. 410 crore on the STPs Decentralized Treatment Project. No work was done in this project. Projects related to River Front Development, River Cleaning, River Surface Cleaning were also not completed.

**SHRIMATI KANTA KARDAM:** It is said that water is life and every drop of water is precious. The previous government paid no attention to the water problem. Ground-water level continued to deplete, population kept increasing and water receded continuously. If these problems were taken care of at that time, today cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi would not be facing water scarcity. Our hon'able Prime Minister is constantly working towards water conservation and to give speed to this work, for this the Ministry of Jal Shakti was created. In the last 6 years, the Ministry of Jal Shakti has been continuously working to eliminate the problems related to water and 'Swachh Bharat Mission'. The best use of water resources should be the priority of all of us. Whether it is irrigation or drinking water, we should preserve every drop of water. The Hon'ble Minister of Finance has announced in her budget speech that 'Jal Jeevan Mission (Urban)' will be launched with the objective of providing tap water connections to 2.86 crore urban homes. Under this scheme, the poor, dalit and deprived families will get water from tap to their homes. Today, the people of the country believe that clean water is flowing in our Ganges. Earlier, the dirty water of homes and cities was flowing through the pipes in the Ganges. Earlier there was a lot of dirt on the ghats. Today, not only in our country but also in the abroad, the water of Ganges is being supplied. There was a Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, and crores of people took a bath there because all the ghats have been cleaned there, the dirt was removed and the water has been made clean and uninterrupted. Liquid waste will be managed in 500 cities. Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) will be implemented in five years. To deal with

the serious problem of air pollution, the government has proposed to provide Rs 2,217 crore for 22 urban centers with a population of more than one million in this budget. Along with water conservation and clean water supply, serious work is being done on national and international subjects related to water. In spite of the global disaster Corona epidemic, in the year 2020, over one crore households in the country were provided with tap water connections. Our Hon'ble Minister of Jal Shakti has given a major impetus to the programme of this Ministry. He has worked very expertly on water management.

**SHRI HARSHVARDHAN SINGH DUNGARPUR:** This Ministry is very important for India. The main focus of our Hon'ble Prime Minister is to provide tap water to every household. Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation has mainly two aspects. One is Jal Jeevan Mission and the other is Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) for sanitation. The Water Resources Management Policy has some key features. One is the enhancement, water for available use, water harvesting, which is very important and which should be made compulsory for all the households. Another important part of this Ministry is relating to inter-State river water disputes. Under the Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019, when a State puts in a request regarding a dispute, the Central Government will set up a Disputes Resolution Committee to resolve the dispute. Central Government will set up inter-State River Water Dispute Tribunal for the adjudication of water disputes. The Tribunal must give its decision within a period of three years, which may be extended by another two years. Another important area is groundwater contamination which is a big issue in India. In India, many district of several states are affected from arsenic, fluoride Nitrate and iron. The 15th Finance Commission noted that the number of water quality affected habitations may increase as deeper drilling of drinking water sources may lead to contamination of groundwater. Another important feature is the Swachh Bharat Mission(Gramin). The cost of construction of individual household toilets has been increased. The Government is mainly focussing on declaring ODF villages as ODF Plus. Another important feature of the Ministry is Jal Jeevan Mission. Functional household tap connection for every rural home is its main feature. The principle is no one should be left out. Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, the focus is on service delivery rather than metered water supply. For long term water

security and assured water supply to every home, every village is to prepare a Village Action Plan which is known as VAP. Potable water supply to quality-affected habitation is a top priority under the Jal Jeevan Mission. There is also an important feature regarding rivers -- Ganga rejuvenation and development of ghats. There is a need to set up sewage treatment plants in all villages.

**SHRI SUBHASH CHANDRA SINGH:** A serious water crisis may arise in the future. I am also a Member of the Standing Committee on Water Resources. Focus should be given on strengthening the rainwater harvesting system. In addition, small dam projects should also be considered. Most of its expenditure should be borne by the Central Government. Odisha is a small State so funds for this State should be provided in the ratio of 90:10. To strengthen the rainwater harvesting system, it is very important to extend the working days of MNREGA by another 50 days in the affected State. The problem of waterlogging is a major problem in urban areas. We are also facing this problem in Odisha. Despite the order of the Supreme Court, the builders do not leave the ponds either. I think there should be stringent laws for this. There should be no difference in the funds for construction of toilets in rural areas and urban areas. Toilets constructed under 'Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)' should also have water supply. Therefore its budget allocation should be increased. Odisha should be provided relief in sharing pattern to run this project smoothly. The exploitation of ground water is very high in India. In the year 2019-20, Odisha has been given 100 per cent coverage under the 'Har Ghar Jal Mission'. For this also, the sharing pattern should be changed accordingly, only then 100% water supply will be possible in rural areas.

**DR. BANDA PRAKASH:** The main thrust areas of this Ministry are water resources, river development and Ganga rejuvenation. The second one is drinking water and sanitation. 52 per cent of unirrigated areas in the country depend upon the rain water. The Government should provide the irrigation water resources to agriculture lands in the country. There is no action, orientation or programme in this Budget. Even for drinking water also, the Government has covered only 3.32 crore rural households. And the Government says that it would complete the total programme by 2024.

Telangana is also working on water resources areas. The terrain of Telangana is geographically such that major rivers flow deep below the ground level and, therefore, irrigation is possible only with the multistage lift irrigation scheme. It requires large capital investment. The lift irrigation is very crucial for improvement of farmers' income and growth in the agriculture. The Telangana Government has already taken Kaleshwaram Project which lifts the water from 611 metres height. We successfully completed it within three years. Even the Ministers also appreciate it but we never get any finance from the Government of India. We request the Government to grant some amount to the Kaleshwaram Project and Palamuru Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme and other lift irrigation schemes. Besides, we have taken another project, that is, Mission Kakatiya for restoring all the minor irrigation tanks and lakes in Telangana. The programme helped in rejuvenating 46,531 tanks and lakes storing 265 TMC water across the State for five years. The Government said that whatever the NITI Aayog recommends, we would follow that. NITI Aayog recommended Rs. 5,000 crores of grants for this Mission Kakatiya three years back. But as on today, we are not getting money for that one. We have started Mission Bhagiratha. The hon. Prime Minister inaugurated that programme three year back at Siddipet District. We have completed it now. So, the Government is supposed to pay some money to Telangana State also under the Mission Bhagiratha. We request the Government to, at least, pay the maintenance grant for five years.

**SHRI RAM SHAKAL:** There is a network of rivers in our country. Our rivers are definitely the lifeline of our country. Our former Prime Minister late Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee used to say, the day we inter-link these rivers, we will feed the whole world. If we had taken initiative on this, we would have been successful in providing water to the fields of the farmers of our country today. Earlier, there used to be a well for drinking water in the village, which had water about 50-60 feet below. But today gradually the wells are being dried up in villages. Earlier, there used to be a pond in the village, today it is slowly drying up. We have exploited nature for our convenience. For our convenience, we built huge dams on rivers and set up large power projects, due to which we are facing various problems today. Water is a basic natural resource for our livelihood, food security and sustainable development. For the economy of a developing country like India, the

demand for water resources has increased rapidly due to urbanization and industrialization. Therefore, its conservation and management is a matter of greater importance. By inter-linking of rivers, drought can be prevented and irrigation facilities can be provided to the fields of the farmers all over the country. The Government has launched the '*Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana*' to provide a fair amount of water for the crops. Much of the emphasis under this scheme is on maximum utilization of water resources, so as to prevent the damage caused by floods and droughts. This scheme has been launched to overcome water shortage. The land which is arable will be benefited by this scheme. The Prime Minister has announced the '*Jal Jeevan Mission*'. The Government has set a target to provide piped water to all houses by 2024 under this scheme. The Ministry of Jal Shakti is responsible for the development, maintenance, efficient use of water resources in the country and coordination of clean drinking water programme in the rural areas. In 2021-22, 9 thousand 22 crore rupees have been earmarked by the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. Apart from this, 5 thousand 131 crore rupees are being provided for important irrigation schemes. The '*Atal Bhujal Yojana*' was launched by the Prime Minister in 2019, through which a scheme was introduced to strengthen the framework of the Institute of Surface Management and to bring about a change at the community level for sustainable groundwater management.

**LT. GEN. (DR.) D.P. VATS (RETD.):** 81 percent of the budget of the Ministry of Jal Shakti is meant for '*Jal Jeevan Mission*' and sanitation and 10 percent for water resources. India is a water stressed country. We have to provide water to 17 percent of the world's population, while we have only 4 percent fresh water resources. Punjab and Haryana are full states but their capitals, secretariats and high courts are still common. The sharing of water is the most contentious issue between them. The present status is that Haryana is getting very less share of 3.5 MAF water awarded by the Supreme Court. Through you, I want to request the Government of Punjab to provide river water to Haryana. Providing water of the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) will benefit the country to a great extent.



**SHRI RAMJI:** Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar gave dalits the right to drinking water from Mahad Satyagraha. By framing the Constitution, he also provided dalits and backward people equal rights. But even today, dalits, backward and all tribal villages do not have proper arrangements for drinking water in this country. Dalits and tribals are even killed for water at many places. According to a report, 92 percent of dalits in Madhya Pradesh do not have the right to drink water in school. My request to the Government is that proper arrangement for drinking water should be made in the villages of dalits and tribals as well as in slums where there is no such facility. Lakhimpur Khiri district gets severe floods every year due to inflow of water from Nepal in Sharda river. Because of this, thousands of acres of crops are wasted and people become homeless. The Government is requested to take some concrete steps to prevent this horrible flood so that thousands of people are not rendered homeless.

*Discussion concluded and the Minister to reply later.*

**Desh Deepak Verma,**  
*Secretary-General.*

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**ERRATA TO THE SYNOPSIS OF DEBATE  
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<b>Page No.</b>	<b>Line No.</b>	<b>Correction</b>
279	31	Remove 'the beauty of' before 'the Taj'.
285	10	Add 'T' before 'rise'.