

SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON HEALTH HAZARD DUE TO RIVER POLLUTION

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 01 DEC 2025 7:16PM by PIB Delhi

Cleaning/rejuvenation of rivers is an ongoing process. It is the primary responsibility of States/Union Territories (UTs) and Urban Local Bodies to ensure required treatment of sewage and industrial effluents to the prescribed norms before discharging into the rivers and other water bodies

For conservation of rivers, the Ministry has been supplementing efforts of the States/UTs by providing financial and technical assistance for abatement of pollution in identified stretches of the rivers in the country through Central Sector scheme of “Namami Gange” for the rivers in Ganga basin, and Centrally Sponsored Schemes of National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) for other rivers Basins.

In addition, sewerage infrastructure is created under programs like Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) and Smart Cities Mission of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

Under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 and the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, States/UTs/Local Bodies and industrial units are required to install sewage and effluent treatment plants and comply with prescribed standards. CPCB, State Pollution Control Boards and Pollution Control Committees monitor compliance and take punitive action against violators. In addition, the industries are encouraged to reduce their waste water generation by technological advancement, reuse/recycle of waste water and maintain Zero Liquid Discharge where ever possible.

As per CPCB, there are total of 4,493 industries under Grossly Polluting Industries (GPIs). Out of which, 3633 number of industries were operational and 860 industries had closed down on their own. Amongst the operational industries, 3031 industries were reported to be complying with the environmental standards, while show-cause notices issued to 572 industries, closure directions issued to 29 non-complying industries and direction issued to 1.

As per the latest Report on ‘Polluted River Stretches (PRSS) for Restoration of Water Quality’ in rivers published by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in 2025, based on pollution assessment of 623 rivers, 296 PRSSs were identified on 271 rivers in 32 States/Union Territories (UTs). Details of the same are available at

<https://cpcb.nic.in/openpdf.php?id=UmVwb3J0RmlsZXN18xNzYwNjg5NDA4X21lZGlhcGhvdG80MzkyLnBkZg==>

The concerned States/UTs are required to prepare action plans for restoration of these stretches. In addition, these States/UTs are also requested to submit proposals based on severity of polluted stretches for consideration under the schemes run by the Central Government.

In order to use river waters for different purposes, CPCB sets distinct quality criteria for river water categorizing it based on its intended use. For drinking purposes water must meet Class A standards after disinfection and no conventional treatment and Class B for outdoor bathing. Moreover, as per Jal Jeevan

Mission portal, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation have provided 12.51 crores Rural Household Tap Water Connection since launch of Mission and overall having coverage of 81 percent of total rural households.

As per information available in Ministry of Jal Shakti there is no scientific study being conducted to assess health hazards faced by local communities due to contaminated river water.

The local authorities, communities and NGOs are involved in the efforts for reduction in river pollution and river rejuvenation across the country. Some of the initiatives taken for the involvement of stakeholders in river conservation are as below:

- In February 2025, under the public awareness campaign, various activities, such as cultural programme, Aarti on the banks of rivers, river cleaning drives, yatras, slogans/drawing/essay competitions etc. were carried out at various places in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Manipur, Maharashtra, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand etc. for awareness/participation of public in conservation of rivers.
- Jalaj Centers have been established by National Mission for Clean Ganga on various models such as Dolphin Safaris, Home Stays, Livelihood Centers, Awareness and Sale Points etc. to promote community participation and conservation awareness. Further, Ganga Paharis have been deployed as local community members trained as volunteers to protect and conserve biodiversity and cleanliness of rivers in Ganga basin.
- Namami Gange Program has been recognized as one of the top ten World Restoration Flagship initiatives during United Nations (UN) Conference on Biological Diversity by UN Decade, primarily for halting and reversing riverine environmental degradation, with peoples' active participation.
- The Ganga Utsav is celebrated as a tribute to the holy Ganges, emphasizing river rejuvenation and environmental awareness. Nation-wide exercise was conducted to raise public awareness about the importance of rivers and their conservation.
- Nation-wide, various initiatives have been taken to promote the cleanliness of the rivers, sanitation, and solid waste management under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain (JSA:CTR) has been launched by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, as an annual feature, for water conservation and management, reviving water bodies including rivers, public awareness, involvement of local bodies and communities and promoting water use efficiency. To further strengthen the momentum of JSA:CTR, the " Jal Sanchay Jan Bhagidhari", a collaborative effort with community partnership, has been launched in Surat, Gujarat on 06.09.2024 with the aim to enhance water recharge through rain water harvesting/aquifer recharge/borewell recharge/recharge shafts etc and shown very good results.

The information was provided by THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR JAL SHAKTI **SHRI RAJ BHUSHAN CHOUDHARY** in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

ND

(Rajya Sabha US Q102)

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