



PARLIAMENT OF INDIA

RAJYA SABHA

201

DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS

TWO HUNDRED AND FIRST REPORT

ON

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS
CONTAINED IN THE ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHTH REPORT OF
THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ENVIRONMENT &
FORESTS ON THE DEMANDS FOR GRANTS (2008-2009) OF THE
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS

(PRESENTED TO THE RAJYA SABHA ON THE 17th FEBRUARY, 2009)
(LAID ON THE TABLE OF THE LOK SABHA ON THE 17th FEBRUARY, 2009)

RAJYA SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI
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MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT-RELATED PARLIAMENTARY
STANDING COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY,
ENVIRONMENT & FORESTS (2008-09)

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31. Shri Sita Ram Yadav

**Nominated w.e.f. 24th October, 2008

* Shri Babubhai K. Katara ceased to be a member of the Committee consequent upon his expulsion from the membership of the Lok Sabha w.e.f. 21st October, 2008.

Smt. Neeta Pateriya ceased to be a member of the Committee consequent upon her resignation from the Lok Sabha w.e.f. 19th December, 2008.

SECRETARIAT

Smt. Agnes Momin George, Joint Secretary

Shri A. K. Gandhi, Joint Director

Shri V.S.P. Singh, Deputy Director

Shri S. Rangarajan, Assistant Director

(ii)

PREFACE

I, the Chairman of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on its behalf, present this Two Hundred and First Report on the Action Taken by the Ministry of Environment & Forests on the recommendations contained in One Hundred and Eighty-eighth Report of the Committee on Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests.

2. The Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by the Ministry of Environment & Forests on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred and Eighty-eighth Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests on the Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests which was presented to the Rajya Sabha on 29th April, 2008.

3. There were twenty-one recommendations contained in the One Hundred and Eighty-eighth Report of the Committee. Action Taken Notes on the recommendations of the Committee were received from the Ministry on 16th October, 2008.

4. In the meeting held on 3rd February, 2009 the Committee considered the draft Action Taken Report and adopted the same.

NEW DELHI ;
February 3rd, 2009

Dr. V. Maitreyan
Chairman,
Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on
Science & Technology, Environment & Forests

REPORT

The Report of the Committee deals with the Action Taken by the Ministry of Environment & Forests on the recommendations contained in the One Hundred and Eighty-eighth Report of the Department-related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests on the Demands for Grants (2008-2009) of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, which was presented to both the houses of Parliament on 29th April, 2008. There were twenty-one recommendations in the Report of the Committee. Action Taken notes on the recommendations of the Committee were received from the Ministry on 16th October, 2008.

The Committee's recommendations, action taken thereon and comments of the Committee on the Action Taken by the Ministry of Environment & Forests are set out in the succeeding paragraphs: -

ELEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (2007-12) OUTLAYS

1. Recommendation (Para 3.1)

The Committee notes that for some schemes like Environmental Management in Heritage, Pilgrimage and Tourist Centres including Taj Protection and National Coastal Management Programme, which have engaged the attention of the country as a whole, not much emphasis has been given, even though they demand priority. The Committee feels the most of the Heritage, Tourist centres are facing a huge problem of pollution due to increase in domestic and foreign tourist influx. The Committee fails to understand as to how the Ministry will manage to tackle the problem, with such meager budgetary provisions of Rs. 0.01 crore and hopes that in future the Ministry would take up such cases emphatically with the Planning Commission.

Action taken by the Government

The scheme of Taj protection was taken up in the Ninth Five Year Plan as a centrally sponsored scheme on a 50 : 50 cost sharing basis with states. For the 10th Five Year Plan an outlay of Rs. 85 crores was approved. However, due to the scheme becoming sub judice, no releases were made for the scheme, since 2003-04, in the 10th Plan.

For the 11th Five Year Plan, as per requirements for all schemes, an independent evaluation of this scheme was launched in November, 2006. The final report of this evaluation study is likely to be received in about another month's time. Based on the evaluation study report a suitable decision towards continuation of the scheme and fund requirements in the 11th Five Year Plan will be taken. Pending such a decision, no financial provision has been made for the scheme in 2008-09. The notional amount of Rs. 0.01 crore is only to keep the budget head active.

As regards the National Coastal Management Programme, it is a new scheme aimed at implementing the recommendations of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan Report on Coastal Regulation. Such a scheme would require large funds and the same will be posed for external funding as and when a detailed scheme is formulated. However, as a first step, the World Bank has approved a Project Preparation Facility (PPF) to prepare a detailed project report for various components of the scheme. The allocation of Rs. 1.55 crores for 2008-09 for this project, it may be noted, is an initial amount towards establishing such project facility for the actual implementation of the project. Based on detailed project reports prepared under the PPF, necessary funding will be sought from Government/donor agencies for implementing the project. Hence the current allocations

are towards the PPF, based on which a full fledged scheme of National Coastal Management Programme would be prepared and implemented. The allocated funds are sufficient for the purpose for which the same are allocated.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and opines that the Ministry should pursue its projects in a time bound manner and strive for timely implementation of its projects. It also opines that Ministry should take all possible steps to avoid administrative and procedural delays which may lead to project cost overrun.

REASONS FOR SHORTFALL IN UTILISATION OF OUTLAYS

2. Recommendation (Para 6.3)

The Committee notes that the Ministry has attributed the reasons for the shortfall in utilization of outlays which are procedural, such as delay in release of matching grants by the State Government/forest departments, time lag in release of funds by the Ministry and actual availability of funds to the implementing agencies, delays in receipt of proposals, submission of utilization certificate, revalidation of unspent balances, completion of works etc. The Committee notes that the aforesaid reasons stated by the Ministry are routine in nature and mostly relate to procedure and administrative mechanisms, which need to be overcome and avoided in future by fine-tuning the procedures involved.

Action taken by the Government

Performance of the schemes is reviewed by the Secretary, Ministry of Environment & Forests regularly in Senior Officers meetings of the Ministry. Half-yearly

review meetings are also undertaken by the Planning Commission to monitor progress of various schemes/projects.

Schemes/projects are monitored regularly in Headquarters and by on the spot field visits by officials. Subject Divisions in the Ministry executing/implementing the schemes undertake regular field visits to carry out monitoring and review of various schemes/projects. Monitoring process, inter alia, include audit of accounts of grantee organization, submission of utilization certificates, expenditure statement and a progress report on the activities conducted by the grantee organization. Besides, Ministry has designated its senior officers as Nodal Officers for each state/UT, and these Nodal Officers visit their designated states/UTs regularly to, inter alia, monitor and review progress of schemes/projects in these states/UTs. Efforts are also being made to release funds electronically to the state governments and other implementing agencies to avoid procedural delays in disbursement of funds.

National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board shares the concern of the Committee in this matter. To minimize the procedural delays, the guidelines for National Afforestation Programme are being revised.

Reasons attributed by the Ministry for shortfall in utilization of outlays are routine in nature and mostly relates to procedural and administrative mechanisms, sincere efforts are being made by the Ministry to avoid delays. Some of these efforts are as given below:

- Initiatives have been taken to streamline the Electronic Clearance Mechanism which will help to reduce the time lag in release of funds by the Ministry to the recipient.

- From current financial year Sanction Order is being issued electronically through e-lekha website, the status of which can be followed up by the issuer and the recipient directly.
- Letters have been sent to the appropriate authorities of the State Government asking them to submit their proposals along with physical progress report and utilization certificate in the first quarter of the year, so as to ensure timely release of funds.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme – “Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries”, Government of India provides financial and technical assistance to State/UT Governments for the conservation and development of Protected Areas. During the last two years, there has been 100% utilization of funds under the Scheme. During the 11th Five Year Plan, it is proposed to modify the Scheme by incorporating additional components/activities and rename it as “Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats” with an outlay of Rs. 800.00 crores.

As regards the pollution abatement works for ameliorating water quality in rivers, funds are released on a 70:30 cost sharing between Centre and States straight to implementing agencies nominated by the State Governments and functioning under their control. The fund releases are made on a recurring basis based on factors that include the progress achieved in the projects in the States, matching shares by the respective State Governments after taking into account the Utilization Certificates. While the above essential procedures are followed, close coordination with the State Governments with correspondence both at official and Minister-level as well as frequent field visits by Central Government officers are resorted to monitor implementation of works.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and is of the view that the Ministry should ensure that procedural delays do not occur. The Committee is of the view that monitoring of progress of various projects on regular basis by the Ministry should also lead speedy utilization of outlays earmarked for the purpose.

NEW SCHEMES**3. Recommendation (Para 7.1)**

The Committee notes that priority in fund allocation has been accorded to ongoing schemes, leading to lower allocation for new schemes. The Committee is aware that given the resource constraint, the need to accord priority to ongoing schemes is genuine. However, the Committee is constrained to observe that with such low allocations, it would not be possible to pursue the new schemes with full strength. The new schemes which are proposed by the Ministry are in keeping with the new demand for conservation of the environment/wildlife in general and, therefore, should not lag behind due to paucity of funds. The Committee feels that the Ministry should take up the issue of more fund allocation at R.E. stage for new schemes, with the Planning Commission, in right earnest and impress upon them the need for such higher allocation, indicating the seriousness of the Ministry to achieve its new goals.

Action taken by the Government

Allocation of funds for new schemes has been largely dictated by overall availability of resources made available to the Ministry by the Planning Commission, priority being given to completion of ongoing schemes/components. It may be noted that the new schemes/new components of ongoing schemes are yet to be approved from

administrative/financial angles, which are likely to take some more time during the year. Depending upon the progress in obtaining these approvals and the time period within which these schemes become effectively operational during the year, the Planning Commission will be approached for additional funds at RE stage, depending upon the revised fund requirements of these schemes during the financial year.

The budget allocation for the new scheme 'Gram/Panchayat Van Yojana' for 2008-09 has been kept at a low level owing to the reason that the Scheme is still under formulation. Only when it is made fully operational, will there be need for substantial allocation. However if the need arises, enhanced allocation will be sought at RE stage during the current financial year itself.

Intensification of Forest Management (IFM) is not entirely a new scheme but has been framed for the scope of the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme (IFPS) which was operational during Xth Plan by adding four more components, namely –

- i) Conservation and Restoration of unique vegetation & Ecosystems;
- ii) Protection and Conservation of Sacred Groves;
- iii) Prevention, control and eradication of Forest Invasive Species (FIS); and
- iv) Preparedness for meeting challenges of Bamboo flowering and Improving Management of Bamboo Forests.

These components have been added to address the requirements of the specific subjects and to ensure overall health of the forests.

The process of finalization of scheme is still under way and is likely to take sometime, hence for the current financial year the allocation has been earmarked at a

lower side. During the next financial year, keeping in view the response of the States, enhanced allocations will be asked for as suggested by the Committee.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and is of the view that Ministry must ensure that Planning Commission release necessary additional budgetary support to meet the revised fund requirements of the projects at R.E. stage so that their progress is not adversely affected due to shortage of funds.

PREVENTION OF POLLUTION OF NATIONAL RIVERS

4. Recommendation (Para 8.6)

The Committee expresses its serious concern over the fact that though from the time of its initiation, crores have been spent on the Ganga Action Plan, there has not been much improvement in water quality in reality, despite the claims of the Ministry. The practice of dumping untreated sewage from cities on the banks of the Ganga and dead bodies and carcasses in the river continues unabated causing pollution. The Committee feels that the project has suffered due to apathy and lack of a suitable system in place to monitor the implementation.

Action taken by the Government

Regular monitoring of the projects is done both at the Central and State levels through a multilayer monitoring mechanism which reviews the policy issues, funding pattern and progress of works from time to time. Field visits are frequently done by the officers of the Ministry. Inadequacies in implementation, if any, are brought to the attention of the State Governments through letters addressed to Chief Ministers/Chief

Secretaries. As regards dumping of dead bodies and carcasses in the river, the Non Government Organizations/public have been requested to cremate dead bodies in accordance with Hindu ritual using the electric/improved wood based crematoria constructed under the Plan so that the environment is not polluted. The different local agencies/bodies are being persuaded to create public awareness in this regard. A number of public participation and public awareness programmes have been undertaken in different towns under Ganga Action Plan in the form of exhibition/workshops, street plays, rallies/padajatras by local people, school based programmes, and shramdan programmes by cleaning, sweeping the banks of river Ganga. Improved wood based crematoria schemes are also promoted under GAP-II in U.P. and Bihar.

Comments

The Committee expresses its displeasure over the evasive and routine reply furnished by the Ministry while the Ministry may be content with its efforts to clean the Ganga, the Committee is not at all satisfied with the progress made thus far in this regard. Surprisingly, the Ministry has not responded to the dumping of untreated sewage into the river which is one of the major sources of pollution. The Committee is constrained to observe that with such an apathetic and complacent attitude of the Ministry, the Ganga Action Plan would continue to suffer.

5. Recommendation (Para 8.7)

The Committee also expresses its concern at the fact that there has been marginal reduction in allocation due to slow progress of works in the Yamuna Action Plan in the three States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, despite the fact that water quality remains below the acceptable norms. Industrial and domestic sewage discharge and open

defecation continues, despite various legislations to control and stop the pollution levels. The Committee also expresses its concern at the fact that though there has been no dearth of funds for the Yamuna Action Plan, no satisfactory results have been achieved as regards cleaning of the river, which provides drinking water to Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and the river has in fact turned into a dirty drain.

Action Taken by the Government

Though there has been slow progress in the works of Yamuna Action Plan (YAP) Phase-II in the initial stage, presently works have gained up momentum. YAP-II is being implemented in the three States of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana on a 85:15 cost sharing basis between the Centre and the States. In Haryana, out of a total approved cost of Rs 62.5 crores, funds released by the Government of India till June, 2008 to the State Government have been to the tune of Rs.17.36 crores against which an expenditure of Rs.19.24 crores (including state share) has been reported. In Uttar Pradesh, out of a total approved cost of Rs. 124 crores, funds released by the Government of India till June, 2008 to the State Government have been to the tune of Rs.40.91 crores against which an expenditure of Rs.32.71 has been reported. In Delhi, out of a total approved cost of Rs. 387 crores, funds released by the Government of India till June, 2008 to the State Government amount to Rs.44.27 crores against which an expenditure of Rs.24.78 crores has been reported.

The second phase of YAP was started in December 2004 with the completion period of 5 years. This phase –II was formulated to take up other pollution abatement works of the river Yamuna, as prioritized by the States and includes, (i) installation/rehabilitation of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), rehabilitation/replacement

of trunk sewers in Delhi, (ii) installation of STPs, laying of sewer lines and rising mains in Agra, Uttar Pradesh and, (iii) laying of sewer lines in six towns of Haryana. The major allocation of YAP-II is for works in Delhi. The process of tendering and award of works are gathering momentum. The physical implementation in respect of the four core components of Delhi Jal Board have commenced and targeted to be completed in a period of two years. The work for fifth component has also been awarded for which works are likely to start after monsoon. In the meeting taken by the Chief Secretary, Delhi to review the progress of YAP-II works, Delhi Jal Board was asked to expedite the program of implementation particularly in view of the forthcoming Commonwealth Games.

In addition to this, the Delhi Government is undertaking large scale sewerage and non-sewerage works for preventing the pollution of Yamuna river. To ensure that only treated sewage is discharged into the river Yamuna, Delhi Govt./DJB has proposed to implement the interceptor sewer with the following features in a time bound manner at Rs.1500 crore :

- i) laying of interceptor sewers along three major drains namely, Najafgarh, Supplementary and Shahdara;
- (ii) augmentation of the existing capacity of Sewage Treatment Plants at the mouth of Delhi Gate drain and Dr. Sen Nursing Home Drain;
- (iii) intercepting 13 small drains into Bela Road and Ring Road Trunk Sewer after rehabilitation; and
- (iv) construction of additional Sewage Treatment Plants after utilization of full capacity of existing plants.

A proper mechanism already exists for ensuring coordination and management between the Centre and the State Governments for monitoring the works under the Plan. In order to further strengthen this mechanism, the High Powered Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Lt. Governor of Delhi has initiated action for preparation of an integrated plan addressing issues of both quantity in terms of river flow and quality of Yamuna river.

Comments

The Committee expresses its serious concern over the tardy progress of the project and low utilization of funds meant for the purpose and desires that the Ministry should utilize its fund allocation to its optimum level and take all the necessary steps for pollution abatement works of the river Yamuna.

6. Recommendation (Para 8.8)

The Committee also expresses its concern at the fact that no proper mechanism has been created towards recharging the Yamuna river. The Committee recommends that a proper system be set up for recharging the river by creating man-made water bodies like reservoirs and catchment areas, which can store the monsoon water, which usually goes into drains and then stored water can be released into the river during the lean season.

Action Taken by the Government

Regarding recharging the Yamuna river, the Ministry of Water Resources while discussing the issue of the maintenance of minimum flow of 10 cumecs in river Yamuna, has stated that the construction of proposed upstream storage structures (dams) namely, Renuka (H.P.), Lakhwar Vyasi & Kishau (Uttarakhand) are likely to augment flows in the river.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and observes that the Ministry should pursue the Yamuna Action Plan diligently and in a time-bound manner as the target of cleaning Yamuna is still far from being achieved.

7. Recommendation (Para 8.9)

The Committee feels that there is an urgent need to pin-point the reasons for the failure of such major projects and to take urgent steps towards rectifying the problem areas. The Committee also recommends that to make the projects result oriented, the Ministry should take stringent action against officials who are found lacking in terms of deliverance and penal action be taken against the defaulters for violating of legislations.

Action Taken by the Government

The strategy/ approach towards river conservation is reviewed by the Government from time to time as a continuous process. River conservation is a mammoth task requiring the involvement of all the stakeholders in the project and Central assistance is provided only to supplement the efforts of the State Government for pollution abatement through creation of proper civic infrastructure. Conservation of rivers is a dynamic activity with the ever increasing pollution load due to increase in population. The projects are implemented by the Implementing Agencies nominated by the State Governments and they are functioning under their administrative control. Officers from this Ministry frequently visit the work sites and hold meetings with the officers of the Implementing Agencies to review the progress of works and inadequacies in implementation, if any, are pointed out at the highest administrative level.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply. The Committee is of the view that it is for the Ministry to take effective action. It has the required resources and experts to undertake the work. The Ministry should be prepared with outcomes and action taken report.

8. Recommendation (Para 8.10)

The Committee further recommends that the Ministry should develop a proper coordination mechanism with the agencies/departments/ministries involved in cleaning up the river Yamuna and Ganga to solve the problem. The research activities of the scientific departments with regard to treatment and waste management may be put to optimum use to prevent pollution of rivers and lakes in the country.

Action Taken by the Government

The Steering Committee of National River Conservation Authority is having representations from the agencies/departments/ministries/ State Governments and serves the objective of proper coordination necessary for implementation of the programme. Besides the above, correspondence and interactions are resorted to ensure coordination between the concerned agencies. Committee's observation regarding utilization of the research activities of the scientific departments with regard to treatment and waste management for optimum use towards prevention of rivers and lakes has been noted.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and would like more effective action and project-wise accountability in place.

9. Recommendation (Para 8.11)

The Committee notes with concern that an amount of Rs.35.00 crores has been diverted from such a significant scheme like National River Conservation Programme(NRCP), to a non-critical area viz. the expenditure on establishment related matters. This points towards the lackadaisical approach of the Ministry towards the problem of river and lake water pollution across the country, though the pollution levels continue to rise at an alarming level.

Action taken by the Government

During the Financial Year 2007-08, the decision to re-appropriate funds from the major plan schemes of the Ministry of Environment and Forests was necessitated by the unilateral cut to the tune of Rs.70 crores by the Planning Commission and transferring the same to the non-plan budget of the Ministry. The transferred amount mainly related to salary and establishment related expenditure of various plan schemes. Lack of provision, by the Finance Ministry, of a corresponding amount in non-plan budget of the Ministry led to difficulty in payment of salaries and other establishment related expenses. To resolve the problem Ministry was advised by Finance Ministry to re-appropriate similar amount of funds from some larger schemes for Ministry's salary and establishment provisions. Accordingly, NRCP was one of the schemes from where funds were so re-appropriated on advise of the Finance Division.

Comments

The diversion of funds from plan to non plan has come to adverse notice of the Committee. Therefore, it feels that such an unhealthy tendency should be curbed.

FOREST CONSERVATION, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**10. Recommendation Para (Para 9.6)**

The Committee notes that the name of the programme 'Integrated Forest Protection Scheme' has been changed to "Intensification of Forest Management' with broadly the same objectives as the earlier programme with the addition of only two new components. The Committee fails to decipher the logic behind simply changing the nomenclature of the programme and feels that unless there is a will and resolve to do something concrete, mere change in the name would not result in any substantial gain. The new components that have been added now, could be accommodated even within the ambit of the earlier scheme, with slight modifications/additions.

Action taken by the Government

By adding two new components the scope of the scheme has been widened, and it has been made broad based hence the change of name. The two new components would address the specific interventions proposed which were not possible within the framework of existing scheme viz. Sacred Groves represent an example of community initiative to protect a forest area/patch of forests. These Sacred Groves are present sporadically in large part of the country, however in the recent years due to changing circumstances, these groves have remained neglected. To encourage the communities to protect these areas of unique biodiversity, some financial support is needed to take up activities which may include inventorization, mapping of resource, site specific fencing, various cultural operations, documentation of socio-cultural aspects, etc. Similarly, the areas representing unique vegetation & ecosystems would also require very specific

intervention. The total allocation for the scheme during the XIth Plan is Rs.600.00 crores which represents an increase of 50% over the Xth Plan allocations.

Comments

The Committee would like to know the details of initiatives taken by the Ministry to address the specific issues which were not possible within the framework of earlier schemes. The Committee is of the view that the Ministry should make optimum use of the enhanced budgetary support and inform the Committee about the progress made in this regard.

11. Recommendation (Para 9.7)

The Committee while noting that in the past, even sugarcane fields were counted as forest cover, recommends that the methodology of assessing the green cover needs to be modified and the latest satellite imaging techniques along with extensive ground truth cross checking, should be used to distinguish the actual forest cover from other tall crops and to correctly estimate the actual area under forest, since correct data assessment is essential for proper policy formulation and follow up action.

Action taken by the Government

Corrective measures for improving accuracy of forest cover mapping have already been taken by Forest Survey of India (FSI). The measures include the following :

- (i) Ground truthing for the forest cover mapping has been made more intensive and objective;
- (ii) Interpretational errors of previous assessments i.e. 2001 & 2003 have been rectified by harmonizing the area figures presented in State of Forest Report (SFR) 2001 & 2003 on the basis of ground truthing and current interpretation;

- (iii) Steps for refining the methodology for forest cover mapping have been taken in the current cycle. The latest Indian Remote Sensing data i.e. IRS P6 LISS III is being used for the mapping; and
- (iv) A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of FSI has been constituted by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India to over see the issues related to methodology.

TAC includes members from Survey of India, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing (IIRS), National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO), Space Application Centre(Department of Space), State Forest Departments, Indian Agriculture Statistical Research Institutes (IASRI), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy (IGNFA), Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and FSI.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply.

NATIONAL AFFORESTATION AND ECO-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

12. Recommendation (Para 10.9)

The Committee expresses its concern at the fact that even though the Ministry intends to achieve the target of 33% of Forest cover by 2012, the only scheme that treats afforestation in a holistic manner and seeks to involve the communities and the society in general in the preservation and conservation of forests has been deprived of funds. The Committee notes with concern that the modalities for the scheme- Panchayat Van Yojana, are yet to be worked out with the Panchayats and feels that the Ministry should

have done the ground work for the scheme well before launching this programme so as to ensure utilization of funds and successful implementation of the scheme.

Action taken by the Government

National Afforestation and Eco-Development (NAEB) shares the concern of the Committee about the fact that the required level of plan allocation for achieving the target of 33% Forest and Tree Cover (FTC) has not been provided to the Ministry which has been pursuing the goal in right earnest. The Eleventh Plan allocation of Rs. 2000 crores for National Afforestation Programme shows an increase over the Tenth Plan allocation of Rs. 1205 crores. It is to be brought to the notice to the Committee that the Planning Commission has revised the target of achieving increase in forest and tree cover by five percentage points by the Year 2012. It is also to be stated that the new scheme of Gram/Panchayat Van Yojana is being finalized in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments by following due procedures. The notional allocation is to enable operationalisation of the scheme operational during current financial year.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and is of the view that the Ministry must approach Planning Commission for additional financial support at R.E. stage so that the programme may not lose importance on account of financial shortfalls. Further, the Committee is of the view that the Ministry should take necessary actions to expedite the finalizing of the new scheme of Gram/Panchayat Van Yojana in consultation with the concerned Ministries/Departments.

13. Recommendation (Para 10.10)

The Committee recommends that Ministry should formulate an effective strategy to create mass awareness about afforestation among poor people and tribal communities, who depend on forests in different ways as it may, in turn not only increase forest cover but would also provide better opportunity, empowerment, livelihood and security to them.

Action taken Report

NAEB has been undertaking various communication activities like organizing Vriksha Melas (Tree Fairs) in rural areas, awareness campaigns through Nehru Yuva Kendras, Song & Drama Divisions, State Forest Departments and advertisement on railway reservation tickets, Meghdoot post cards, etc. Realizing the need for more effective awareness creation among people, efforts are being made to develop more such activities in a focused and concerted manner targeting mainly the rural people.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION/TRAINING/EXTENSION

14. Recommendation (Para 11.5)

The Committee feels that to deal with the issue of conservation and preservation of environment, in a broad perspective, the younger generation should be made fully aware of the environmental concerns that are engaging the attention of the country and world at large. Though the Ministry has been doing a commendable job in promoting environmental education by imparting non-formal education at the primary and secondary school level and in colleges and universities, the Committee, however, feels

that there is a greater need to stress upon the system of formal education, by including the environmental concepts in the school/colleges/universities curriculum itself. In this direction the Committee recommends that the Ministry's proposal to enhance financial assistance to the states for training of school teachers for effective transaction of environment education curriculum in the school under the component of strengthening environment education in the school, should be given top priority. Effort should also be made to recognize schools that go green by banning use of plastic bags, etc. thereby sensitizing children towards environment and environmental issues.

Action taken by the Government

Ministry of Environment & Forests has encouraged and initiated several programmes and schemes to strengthen Environmental Education in the formal education system. One of the major initiatives taken in the formal education sector's Environment Education in School System (EESS) Project. This project initiated in 1999, was divided into two phases. In the first phase a comprehensive study was conducted to assess the status of environmental content in the school curriculum and to assess the effectiveness of classroom teaching. The study was conducted in all the states/UTs of the country and textbooks of all the classes from standards I to XII were analyzed. Based on the findings of the study, textbooks of the upper primary classes were infused with environmental concepts. These modified textbooks were used in the selected 100 schools of 15 states on pilot basis. The teachers involved in teaching these textbooks were also trained. While some of the states mainstreamed these textbooks, some others used the environmental content of these textbooks while developing textbooks for the entire state.

The Supreme Court of India also strengthened these efforts by issuing a directive to make environment education compulsory at all levels of education. At present the MoEF is helping the states/UTs in complying with this directive by providing financial assistance and technical expertise for infusion of environmental concepts in textbooks, training of teachers involved in teaching EE and development of resource material on EE.

Recently, the work accomplished by MoEF along with 'Centre for Environment Education' (Centre of Excellence) was compiled into a report named " Environmental Education in the Indian School System" – Status Report 2007. This report was launched at the 4th International Conference on Environmental Education.

Ministry of Environment & Forests is dedicated to the cause of strengthening EE in all the sections of the society from children to adults; Formal Education System is one of the best media to achieve this goal. The process of providing financial and technical support to the states has already been initiated. The aim is to train all the teachers involved in teaching EE and to infuse environmental concepts in textbooks of all languages in all regions of the country.

Comments

The Committee is of the view that the Ministry should ensure compliance of the direction of the Hon'ble Supreme Court that environment education be introduced at all levels of education. The orientation of certain sections of the syllabus towards environment education will not adequately address the issue. The need is to introduce environment education in school and University education.

PREVENTION OF AIR AND WATER POLLUTION

15. Recommendation (Para 12.3)

The Committee notes with concern that the budgetary support for the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has been decreased substantially, despite the fact that it is a premier central agency responsible for control and prevention of pollution, and pollution continues to rise unabated across the country. The Committee is also constrained to note that the responsibility and the funds for the civic infrastructure projects, for controlling urban pollution, hitherto funded under NRCP, has been transferred to the schemes like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) and Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Towns (UIDSMT) under the Ministry of Urban Development and the funds under CPCB has been reduced.

Action taken by the Government

The budgetary support to CPCB during the last three years is provided below:-

Financial Year	Fund allocation	Expenditure
2007-08	45.00 crore	37.50 crore
2006-07	42.90 crore	37.57 crore
2005-06	39.00 crore	38.46 crore

The explanation for the decrease of expenditure has been furnished by CPCB as under:-

- (i) CPCB has set up demonstration projects for implementation of Municipal Solid Wastes (Management & Handling) 2000 on cost sharing basis with local bodies in respect of one to two towns in each state of the country. However with the introduction of scheme like JNNURM and UIDSMT by Ministry of Urban Development and to avoid duplication and over lap, the budget estimates for 2007-08 and as envisaged for 2008-09 have been accordingly revised.

- (ii) During the period, CPCB has established continuous air quality monitoring stations, undertook demonstration project for Solid Waste Management, Source Apportionment studies and has also established its Zonal Offices in its own premises including slow process of establishment of the said stations, the expenditure has been lower than it was expected.
- (iii) Utilisation Certificates are awaited from some State Pollution Control Boards for reimbursement of charges for Water and Air Quality Monitoring for the newly sanctioned monitoring stations during 2007-08.
- (iv) There has been no effect on performance of activities by CPCB and the CPCB has been adequately utilizing the funds for equipping itself to undertake monitoring of water and air.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply.

16. Recommendation (Para 12.4)

The Committee also notes that the allocation under the Promotion of Central Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) has been only marginally increased from Rs. 4.00 crores in R.E. 2007-08 to Rs. 4.45 crores in B.E. 2008-09 and expresses its concern that the CETPs which are an essential component in the treatment of industrial and domestic sewage, has been allocated lesser funds. The Committee strongly recommends that the Ministry should seriously look into the issue of polluting industries, which discharge their effluents directly into river and lakes. It also recommends that the Ministry may think in terms of taking some harsh measures like imposing heavy penalties and issuing closure notice to such Industrial setups, if they fail to install the requisite effluent treatment plants within a specified time.

Action taken by the Government

The concept of CETPs envisages to treat the effluent emanating from the clusters of compatible small and medium scale industries. A Centrally Sponsored Scheme has been

under implementation by the Ministry of Environment and Forests for enabling the small and medium scale industries to set up Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETP) including upgradation of the existing CETPs. The scheme for financial assistance for the CETPs is given below;

- State Subsidy - 25% of the total project cost;
- Matching Central Subsidy - 25% of the total project cost;
- Entrepreneurs contribution - 20% of the total project cost;
- Loan from financial institutions - 30% of the total project cost;
(IDBI, ICICI or any other nationalized Banks, State Industrial Financial Corporation etc.)

Central assistance upto 25% of the total cost of the CETP is provided as a grant to the CETP on the condition that a matching grant is sanctioned and released by the State Government. The funds to the CETPs are routed through the concerned SPCBs.

It is found that most of the State Governments are not forthcoming in sending proposals of the CETPs . The State Governments have been requested many times to send proposals for establishment of the CETPs in their State along with their comments after coordinating with their State Environment Department, so as to consider them for sanction of Central Subsidy. Lack of response from the State Governments, barring a few, is the main reason for only marginal increase of the outlay for the scheme of CETPs during the year 2008-09.

Wherever the industries are failing to install the requisite effluent treatment plants or failing to comply with the discharge standards, necessary actions are being taken by the concerned State Pollution Control Boards under the provisions of various Environmental Acts.

Comments

The Committee is constrained to note that the lack of response from most of the State Governments in sending proposals for the CETPs hampers the setting up

of plants. It is of the opinion that the Ministry must play proactive role and ensure better coordination with the State Governments in this regard and should take all possible actions for timely setting up of new plants wherever effluents are found to be discharged into rivers and lakes without treatment.

WILDLIFE PRESERVATION

17. Recommendation (Para 13.9)

The Committee notes the constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for conservation of tiger in the country, the population of which is declining due to unabated poaching. The Committee expresses the concern at the fact that though anti-poaching legislations have been in force since 1972, the country has seen a steady decline in population of tigers, which lead to the intervention at the Prime Ministerial level. These point towards the failure of the Ministry in ground implementation of existing legislations. The Committee expresses its doubts as to whether the Ministry would be able to check the decline in the number of tigers, just by renaming the already existing schemes. The Committee, therefore, recommends that initiative for wildlife protection should be taken up by the Ministry with full vigour and resolve, that it does not remain a mere legislation on paper.

Action taken by the Government

Milestone initiatives taken by Government of India for conservation of tiger :

Legal steps

- (i) Amendment of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for providing enabling provisions for constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. The punishment in cases of offence within a tiger reserve has been

enhanced. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that has been used for committing any wildlife offence.

Administrative steps

- (ii) Strengthening of antipoaching activities, including special strategy for monsoon patrolling, by providing funding support to Tiger Reserve States, as proposed by them, for deployment of antipoaching squads involving ex-army personnel / home guards, apart from workforce comprising of local people, in addition to strengthening of communication / wireless facilities.
- (iii) 100% Central assistance provided to 17 Tiger Reserves as an additionality for deployment of Tiger Protection Force, comprising of ex-army personnel and local workforce.
- (iv) Constitution of the National Tiger Conservation Authority with effect from 4.09.2006, for strengthening tiger conservation by, interalia, ensuring normative standards in tiger reserve management, preparation of reserve specific tiger conservation plan, laying down annual / audit report before Parliament, constituting State level Steering Committees under the Chairmanship of Chief Ministers and establishment of Tiger Conservation Foundation.
- (v) Constitution of a multidisciplinary Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau called as Wildlife Crime Control Bureau with effect from 6.6.2007 comprising of officers from Police, Forest, Customs and other enforcement agencies to effectively control illegal trade in wildlife.
- (vi) Approval accorded for declaring eight new Tiger Reserves.

- (vii) The revised Project Tiger guidelines have been issued to States for strengthening tiger conservation, which apart from ongoing activities, interalia, include funding support to states for enhanced village relocation/rehabilitation package for people living in core or critical tiger habitats (from Rs. one lakh/family to Rs. ten lakhs/family), rehabilitation/resettlement of communities involved in traditional hunting, mainstreaming livelihood and wildlife concerns in forests outside tiger reserves and fostering corridor conservation through restorative strategy to arrest habitat fragmentation.
- (viii) A scientific methodology for estimating tiger (including co-predators, prey animals and assessment of habitat status) has been evolved and mainstreamed. The findings of this estimation/assessment are bench marks for future tiger conservation strategy.
- (ix) Around 31111 sq.km. of critical/core tiger habitat identified in 17 states.
- (x) Memorandum of Understanding developed for better/concerted implementation of conservation inputs through tiger reserve states.

Financial steps

- (xi) Financial and technical help is provided to the states under various centrally sponsored schemes, viz. Project Tiger and Development of National Parks and Sanctuaries for enhancing the capacity and infrastructure of the states for providing effective protection to wild animals.

International Cooperation

- (xii) India has a Memorandum of Understanding with Nepal on controlling trans-boundary illegal trade in wildlife and conservation, apart from a protocol on tiger conservation with China.
- (xiii) A Global Tiger Forum of Tiger Range Countries has been created for addressing international issues related to tiger conservation.
- (xiv) During the 14th meeting of the Conference of Parties to CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species), which was held from 3rd to 15th June, 2007 at The Hague, India introduced a resolution along with China, Nepal and the Russian Federation, with directions to Parties with operations breeding tigers on a commercial scale, for restricting such captive populations to a level supportive only to conserving wild tigers. The resolution was adopted as a decision with minor amendments. Further, India made an intervention appealing to China to phase out tiger farming, and eliminate stockpiles of Asian big cats body parts and derivatives. The importance of continuing the ban on trade of body parts of tigers was emphasized.

Reintroduction of Tigers in Sariska Tiger Reserve

One male and a female tiger have been reintroduced in Sariska Tiger Reserve (Rajasthan), based on the recovery strategy suggested by the Wildlife Institute of India. Initially the tigers were housed in in-situ enclosures for acclimatization. Both the tigers have been now released in the wild with GPS radio collar. Their movements are being closely monitored.

Creation of Special Tiger Protection Force (STPF)

- (a) The policy initiatives announced by the Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 29.2.2008, interalia, contains action points relating to tiger protection (para 114, Sl. No. 73). A one-time grant of Rs. 50.00 crore has been proposed to the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) for raising and deploying the Special Tiger Protection Force. A proposal in this regard has been prepared and process is underway for the needful.
- (b) Proposal relating to Promulgation of an Ordinance for amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 to provide enabling provisions for constituting the Special Tiger Protection Force submitted with the concurrence of Union Ministry of Law and Justice to the PMO. Process is ongoing for the needful.

Forest occupancy and population estimates of tiger as per the refined methodology

State	Tiger km ²	Tiger Numbers		
		No.	Lower limit	Upper limit
<i>Shivalik-Gangetic Plain Landscape Complex</i>				
Uttarakhand	1901	178	161	195
Uttar Pradesh	2766	109	91	127
Bihar	510	10	7	13
Shivalik- Gangetic	5177	297	259	335
<i>Central Indian Landscape Complex and Eastern Ghats Landscape Complex</i>				
Andhra Pradesh	14126	95	84	107

Chattisgarh	3609	26	23	28
Madhya Pradesh	15614	300	236	364
Maharashtra	4273	103	76	131
Orissa	9144	45	37	53
Rajasthan	356	32	30	35
Jharkhand**	1488	Not Assessed		
Central Indian	48610	601	486	718
<i>Western Ghats Landscape Complex</i>				
Karnataka	18715	290	241	339
Kerala	6168	46	39	53
Tamil Nadu	9211	76	56	95
Western Ghats	34094	412	336	487
<i>North East Hills and Brahmaputra Flood Plains</i>				
Assam*	1164	70	60	80
Arunachal Pradesh*	1685	14	12	18
Mizoram*	785	6	4	8
Northern West Bengal*	596	10	8	12
North East Hills, and Brahmaputra	4230	100	84	118
Sunderbans	1586	Not Assessed		
Total Tiger Population		1411	1165	1657

* Population estimates are based on possible density of tiger occupied landscape in the area, not assessed by double sampling.

** Data was not amenable to population estimation of tiger. However, available information about the landscape indicates low densities of tiger in the area ranging from 0.5 to 1.5 per 100 km².

Comments

While appreciating the efforts made by the Ministry for conservation of tigers, the Committee is hopeful that the population of tigers in the country would increase following the action taken. There is need to set up a validation of count on a regular basis.

18. Recommendation (Para 13.10)

The Committee expresses concern over the general apathy, that the Ministry has shown towards implementation of legislations regarding forest conservation, protection of wildlife etc. and recommends that the legislations may be forcefully enforced to prevent any further degradation of environment. In this direction the Ministry should take into account the man – animal conflict that the country is currently facing due to pressure of development and encroachment of forest land. The Committee welcomes the increase of the funds for relocation of families from the tiger habitat to the periphery, from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 10.00 lakhs and recommends that the Ministry make concerted efforts towards expediting the relocation of families, and ensuring peaceful co-existence of both man and animals.

Action taken by the Government

Through the 2006 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been established. This has considerably strengthened the legal provisions for dealing with wildlife matters in the country. Similarly, addressing man-animal conflict is one of the priority areas of the Ministry. The Ministry under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes provides financial and technical assistance to the State/UT Governments for various

activities aimed at the conservation of wildlife including mitigation of man-animal conflicts.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and would like to see better implementation of legislation and accountability at all levels.

19. Recommendation (Para 13.11)

The Committee expresses its concern that a large number of vacancies, both in the centre and states have yet not been filled up. The Committee had last year expressed its concern over this matter. Filling of the vacancies in the posts of forests wardens and forests guards are of prime importance for the implementation of the legislations regarding forest conservation and animal protection; the state governments are lagging behind in the filling of a large number of vacancies at these levels. The Committee recommends that the Ministry should vigorously pursue the filling up of posts with the state governments and monitor the filling up of vacancies, besides filling up of vacancies at the Central Level.

Action taken by the Government

The day-to-day management of Protected Areas, Tiger Reserves and Elephant Reserves is vested primarily with the concerned State/UT Governments. As such, the filling up the vacancies of frontline staff in such areas lies with the State/UT Governments. The Ministry has time and again requested the State/UT Governments to fill up the vacant posts on a priority basis.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and observes that the Ministry could not absolve itself of its responsibilities by citing laxity on the part of the state governments. The Committee is of the view that the Ministry is the Central authority for wildlife conservation and through better co-ordination and management it could enforce the defaulter states to fill up the vacancies of frontline staff. The central financial aids and grants sanctioned under the wildlife

preservation schemes to these states could be withheld or curtailed on account of non-compliance.

20. Recommendation (Para 13.12)

The Committee further recommends that Ministry should adopt a strategy towards controlling supply of wildlife and its products to both domestic as well as international markets. The control would not only require strengthening human but also enhanced technical surveillance; web patrolling; media watch; creation of crime data bank; strengthening/capacity building of enforcement and prosecution process; life style/livelihood issues of communities subsisting on wildlife, etc. The Ministry should also embark on a strategy of creating awareness amongst the international buyers; using bilateral and multilateral mechanisms in trade; international trade regulatory mechanisms and other foreign policy measures to reduce the demand.

Action taken by the Government

Control of poaching, taxidermy and illegal trade in wild animal and plant species is identified as a strategy for action under the National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-16). The implementation of the Action Plan is periodically reviewed and monitored by the Ministry with the concerned State/UT Governments. Further, the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has stringent provisions against hunting and illegal wildlife trade.

India is signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), which regulates international wildlife trade. India also is a member of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) Global Tiger Forum (GTF). Further, India is a founder member to the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT). Similarly, India has bilateral arrangements with China and Nepal on preventing illegal wildlife trade across the borders.

Through the 2006 amendment to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau was established in 2007. The Bureau compliments the efforts of Enforcement Agencies and enhances their technical capacity to deal with the illegal wildlife trade and raises awareness about that. The Bureau is in the formative stages of its

functioning and has initiated actions to fulfill the above mandate to combat wildlife crime.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and is of the opinion that India being signatory to international forum can prevent the illegal wildlife trade across the borders to some extent, but in addition Ministry must deal violations of laws with stringent actions to combat wildlife crime.

URBAN WASTE MANAGEMENT

21. Recommendation (Para 14.2)

The Committee recommends that the Ministry of Environment & Forests should seriously pursue the stakeholders-municipalities, corporations, etc., to use these technologies which besides being environment friendly have a number of advantages over the conventional means like incinerations, landfills, dumping in the sea or other water-bodies, composting, etc. The Ministry should ensure that such sewage treatment plants are integrated/installed at least in Delhi, Kanpur and other cities along with the Yamuna and the Ganga which have virtually turned the river into a nallah by dumping untreated sewage. The Committee also recommends that action in this regard be taken on priority in a time-bound manner.

Action taken by the Government

Since, the Secretary-in-Charge of the Department of Urban Development of the concerned State or the Union Territory has the overall responsibility for the enforcement of the provision of the Municipal Solid Waste (Management & Handling) Rules, 2000 in the Metropolitan Cities and the District Magistrate or the Deputy Commissioner of the concerned District has the responsibility for enforcement of these Rules within the

Territorial Limits of their Jurisdiction as per the criteria and the procedure and time limits laid down in Schedule II, the Ministry has forwarded the recommendation of the Committee to Ministry of Urban Development to take necessary action on the recommendations. Further, they are responsible to develop the necessary infrastructure for collection, storage, segregation, transportation, processing and disposal of municipal solid waste. The municipal authority or an operator of a facility has to obtain an authorization from the State Pollution Control Board or the Committee before setting up the waste processing and disposal facility including landfills. The selection of technology for the Solid Waste Treatment Plant is entirely the decision of the State/Local Bodies depending on the quantity and characteristics of the wastes and the local circumstances. The Ministry has no role in prescribing these technologies. It is upto the implementing agencies to decide and adopt any suitable technology as per the filled conditions. However, the information with regard to the two technologies developed by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) have been made available to the Government of NCT of Delhi.

Comments

The Committee notes the reply and desires that the Ministry should neither abdicate its responsibility of controlling pollution nor leave the matter entirely to other agencies like Municipalities/States etc. The Committee is of the opinion that the Ministry should continue to play a proactive role so as to control and abate all kind of pollution including urban waste.
