

Electric crematoriums at ghats of Ganga River

The government has executed the projects of waste water management, solid waste management and development of ghats & crematoria for cleaning Ganga River under Namami Gange Programme. Till date, 105 projects of wastewater management, 3 projects of ghat cleaning (SWM) and 37 projects of ghat & crematoria development have been taken up.

No information is available with respect to level of pollution due to cremation of dead bodies on small and big ghats of river Ganga. However, as per the Water Quality data of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Dissolved Oxygen which is an indicator of river health has been found to be within acceptable limits of notified primary bathing water quality criteria and satisfactory to support the ecosystem of river across all season and also for almost entire stretch of river Ganga.

Further, the river water quality assessment carried out in 2017 indicates improvement in water quality trends as compared to 2016. The Dissolved Oxygen levels have improved at 33 locations and is above the primary bathing water quality requirements of 5 mg/l, Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels and Faecal coliforms have improved at 26 locations and at 30 locations, respectively.

Some stretches, where improvement has been observed are:

- i. Ganga at Rishikesh U/S
- ii. Ganga at Haridwar D/S
- iii. Ganga at Allahabad D/S (Sangam),
- iv. Ganga at Kanpur D/S (Jajmau Pumping Station)
- v. Ganga at Varanasi U/S (Assighat)
- vi. Ganga at Buxar, Ramrekhaghat
- vii. Ganga at Punpun, Patna
- viii. Ganga at Diamond Harbour
- ix. Ganga at Garden Reach
- x. Ganga at Baharampur
- xi. Ganga at Howrah Shivpur

No information is available with respect to the issuing of Notices by the Hon'ble NGT to State Governments over disposal of dead bodies into the river. However, the Hon'ble NGT has made reference to the "Group of Secretaries Report" that indicated dumping of burnt and unburnt human dead bodies etc. amongst one of the factors causing pollution into the rivers, in their judgement dated 13/07/2017 in O.A. No. 200/2014 M.C. Mehta v/s Union of India.

As per entry 14 of 12th schedule of constitution of India, electric crematorium is responsibility of urban local bodies. However, NMCG provides financial assistance to set up crematoria, projects are approved within available resources. So far 54 crematoria have been taken up with NMCG assistance under different projects.

5 projects of electric crematoria have already been completed in Kolkata, Howrah, Mahestala, Hooghly-Chinsura and Halishahar town in West Bengal under NGRBA programme. Further 4 projects of electric crematoria are under construction at Garulia, Bhatpara & Naihati towns in West Bengal and Patna in Bihar with completion timeline of December, 2018.

This information was given by Union Minister of State for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Dr. Satya Pal Singh in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.
