

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Review of upper Yamuna River Cleaning Projects up to Delhi and Riverbed Management in Delhi

- The Standing Committee on Water Resources (Chair: Mr Parbatbhai Savabhai Patel) submitted its report on “Review of Upper Yamuna River Cleaning Projects up to Delhi and Riverbed Management in Delhi”, on February 6, 2024. Key recommendations of the Committee include:
- **Groundwater extraction:** The Committee noted that water yielded from production wells in Yamuna is supplied for irrigation and domestic/industrial usage. The Delhi Jal Board has installed 130 production wells in Yamuna floodplains which yield 196 Megalitres per day (MLD) water. There is still scope for withdrawal of additional 190 MLD of water. This demand increases during non-monsoon seasons and pumping of groundwater by borewells leads to drying of the river course. The Committee recommended that the agricultural sector adopt micro and drip irrigation techniques, and practice water budgeting and watershed management.
- **Sand Mining:** The Committee observed that 3,792 cases of sand mining were recorded in Haryana in the last five years. Excessive sand mining causes riverbed alteration, affecting river courses and causing bank erosion. The Committee recommended the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation to: (i) coordinate with Yamuna basin states to prevent illegal sand mining, and (ii) create a portal to collect relevant information on encroachment, debris dumping and sand mining from states.
- **Riverbed Pollution:** The Committee observed a rise in cases of debris dumping in Yamuna from one in 2018 to 610 in 2021. High levels of metals such as lead, copper and zinc were found in various sludge samples collected from Yamuna which is a severe health hazard. The Committee recommended that: (i) the Department prepare rules regarding dumping of debris, (ii) controlled dredging be explored to remove debris and heavy metals from the bottom of the riverbed, and (iii) a system for proper disposal of heavy metal polluted sludge be framed.
- 28 industrial clusters in Delhi discharge their wastewater to Yamuna and its tributaries. Of these, only 17 clusters are connected with Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs), and the capacity utilisation of these CETPs is only 32%. The Committee recommended that the states: (i) assess and regulate all unauthorised industries, and (ii) enhance capacity utilisation of CETPs and connect all industrial clusters with it.
- **Water Quality:** The Committee noted that between 2021 and 2023, out of 33 monitored locations, the water quality in 23 locations did not comply with the Primary Water Quality Criteria for Outdoor Bathing (PWQC). The level of dissolved oxygen, which is prescribed to be greater than 5 mg/l for life sustenance, was found to be virtually non-existent in Delhi.
- **Sewage pollution:** The Committee observed that untreated sewage from municipalities contributes to 80% of pollution load in the river, and causes foam formation. Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) in all Yamuna states are functioning below their optimum utilisation capacity. In Uttarakhand the utilisation capacity is 57% and in Uttar Pradesh it is 78%. Under Namami Gange Programme, only six out of 11 sanctioned STP capacity generation projects in Delhi and six out of 20 projects in Uttar Pradesh have been completed.
- The Committee recommended that: (i) states plug untreated sewage flowing into drains, (ii) states provide sewerage network to all households and unauthorised colonies, (iii) STP capacity be enhanced, and the gap between capacity generation and utilisation be bridged, and (iii) a Clean Yamuna Fund be set up under Namami Gange.
- **Fertiliser and solid waste pollution:** The Committee observed that excessive use of fertilisers could be causing contamination of Yamuna bank soil. There is also a large gap between solid waste generation and processing capacity, especially in Delhi. The Committee recommended: (i) exploring ways to promote organic farming near Yamuna, (ii) installing screens on drains, and (iii) shifting cremation sites away from the river bank.

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