

## **Role of Maharashtra Pollution Control Board in Prevention Control of Water Pollution in Maharashtra**

Water pollution means contamination of water or alteration of the physical, chemical or biological properties of water by discharge of various kinds of wastes into water, directly or indirectly, which renders water harmful for public health, health of animals, plants, aquatic organisms etc. A performance audit of the role of the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board, which was responsible for implementation of various Acts and Rules in the State related to pollution, covering a period from 2006-07 to 2010-11 was conducted. It was noticed that the sources contributing to water pollution in the State had not been identified; industries were running without valid consents; domestic and industrial effluents were being released into water bodies without treatment etc. Some of the significant findings are as follows :

- None of the six test-checked Regional Officers had prepared the databases of the pollutants, sources of the same and pollution loads, as a result of which, risks to the environment and health caused by water pollution could not be assessed by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board.
- The Maharashtra Pollution Control Board did not initiate any action to prepare a river health booklet or identify any river for pilot study for abatement of water pollution.
- There was no mechanism in place for monitoring the validity period of the consents granted to various industries by the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board. As of August 2011, 10,156 consent applications were pending for more than 120 days.
- In 18 urban local bodies, domestic effluents were discharged without any treatment and in seven urban local bodies, the treatment capacity was in the range of 48 to 94 per cent vis-à-vis the sewage generation.
- There were 14,737 water pollution-prone industries in the State of which 1,726 industries had only partial effluent treatment facilities and 356 industries had no effluent treatment facilities.
- Common Effluent Treatment Plants and Effluent Treat Plants were found inadequate to treat industrial effluents and the treated effluents exceeded the consented standard of Chemical Oxygen Demand and Biological Oxygen Demand.
- Due to non-completion of the works under the National River Conservation Programme, untreated sewage water (around 27 million litres per day) was being discharged into the Krishna river at Sangli. At Nanded, though the work had been completed, the entire untreated sewage/waste water (60 MLD) was being directly discharged into the Godavari river due to non-commissioning of the programme.

- Since 2000-06, 23 polluted river stretches were identified (July 2007) by the Central Pollution Control Board, which further increased to 28 by October 2010. Though polluted river stretches in the State had increased from 23 to 28 during the last eight years, Maharashtra Pollution Control Board had not taken any action to prevent further deterioration.
- Assessment of lake water quality by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board was found to be inadequate.
- The number of water-borne diseases increased from 3.14 lakh in 2006-07 to 21.24 lakh in 2010-11, which indicated the failure of the respective authorities in mitigating water pollution.
- Maharashtra Pollution Control Board had not adhered to its own norms prescribed for collection of samples from industries to monitor pollution levels.
- The Integrated Management Information System introduced by Maharashtra Pollution Control Board with a view to systematize pollution control functions did not yield the desired results.

The deficiencies in the implementation of Acts and Rules for water pollution control had not only affected the health of human beings but also the environment.