

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 44
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.07.2023

Protection of occupationally exposed outdoor workers from air pollution

44. SHRI MUKUL BALKRISHNA WASNIK:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government has undertaken any study to assess the impact of air pollution, particularly on occupationally exposed outdoor worker groups such as safai karmacharis, security gaurds and waste pickers;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether Government has any plans to enact laws for protecting such groups from air pollution who are more vulnerable because of their occupation; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)

(a) to (d)

The central Pollution Control Board has assessed the impact of air pollution on occupationally exposed workers, staff associated with Solid waste management and ragpickers. It was observed that they were more vulnerable to adverse health impacts of air pollution and diseases like respiratory impairments, pneumonitis, gastrointestinal were prevalent among them. They also had increased risk of higher levels of heavy metals like chromium, lead and mercury in their bodies, with compromised lung functions.

To protect such groups from air pollution, Government has notified the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016, under which the Local Authorities and Village Panchayats of census town and Urban Agglomeration's are required to establish a system to recognise organisations of waste pickers or informal waste collectors and promote and establish a system for integration of these authorised waste pickers and waste collectors to facilitate their participation in solid waste management including door to door collection of waste. Also the local authorities and Panchayats shall ensure that the operator of a facility provides personal protection equipment including uniform, fluorescent jacket, hand gloves, raincoats, appropriate foot wear and masks to all workers handling solid waste and the same are used by the workforce.
