GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1170
TO BE ANSWERED ON 01.08.2024

Threat due to air pollution

1170. SHRI S. SELVAGANABATHY:

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

(a) whether Government is aware that more than one million premature deaths are attributed to air pollution, if so, the details thereof;
(b) whether air pollution is a major factor for death of children under five years of age;
(c) whether Government recognises air pollution as a health emergency in the country and if so, the details thereof;
(d) whether Government's initiatives to reduce pollution have been successful so far and if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and
(e) whether Government proposes to increase funds to address the situation of worsening air quality in the country?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) & (b): There is no conclusive data available to establish a direct correlation of death exclusively with air pollution. Air pollution is one of the many factors affecting respiratory ailments and associated diseases. Health is impacted by a number of factors which include food habits, occupational habits, socio-economic status, medical history, immunity, heredity, etc., of the individuals apart from the environment.

(c) to (e): Considering the impacts of air pollution on human health, Government of India has launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) in January 2019 with an aim to improve air quality in 131 cities (non-attainment cities and Million Plus Cities) in 24 States/UTs by engaging all stakeholders. NCAP envisages reduction of 20-30% in PM concentrations by 2024-25 over baseline of 2017-18. Target has been revised to achieve reduction in PM10 level up to 40% or achievement of national standards (60 $\mu g/m^3$) by 2025-26. Cities are provided funding to meet critical gap for implementing city action plan to take measures to improve air quality.

Under NCAP, an amount of Rs. 19,614.44 crores have been earmarked to 131 cities during the period FY 2019-20 till FY 2025-26 out of which 49 Million Plus Cities/Urban Agglomerations are funded under XVth Finance Commission air quality grant and remaining 82 cities are funded by MoEF&CC under Control of Pollution Scheme. So far, an amount of Rs. 11,211.13 crores was released to 131 cities to implement City Action Plans in their respective cities.

To address higher air pollution levels due to low winds and cooler temperature during winter, all 131 cities have prepared Emergency Response Plan/Graded Response Action Plan.

Due to efforts made under NCAP, 95 cities out of 131 cities have shown improvement in air quality in terms of annual PM10 concentrations in FY 2023-24 with respect to the baseline of FY 2017-18. 18 cities have met National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10 (60 µg/m3) in FY 2023-24.

Further, the steps taken by the Government to improve air quality are enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

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Annexure I

Steps taken by the Government to improve Air Quality

National Clean Air Programme:

- City Action Plans (CAPs) have been prepared by all 131 cities and being implemented by Urban Local Bodies.
- The city specific clean air action plans prepared under NCAP target city specific air polluting sources like Soil & Road Dust, Vehicles, Domestic Fuel, MSW Burning, Construction Material and Industries.
- Performance based financial support is provided to these 131 cities for implementation of activities of City Action Plan.
- Further, funding for implementation of CAPs is mobilised through convergence of resources from various schemes of Central Government such as Swachh Bharat Mission SBM (Urban), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart City Mission, Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT), Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME-II), Nagar Van Yojna, etc. and resources from State/UT Governments and its agencies such as Municipal Corporation, Urban Development authorities and Industrial development authorities etc.
- Public Grievance Redressal Portal (PGRP)/helpline have been developed by all 131 cities to address public complaints of air pollution in timely manner.
- Emergency Response System (ERS/ GRAP) have been developed by all 131cities for taking action in air emergencies
- 95 cities out of 131 cities have shown improvement in air quality in terms of annual PM10 concentrations in FY 2023-24 with respect to the baseline of FY 2017-18. 18 cities have met National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for PM10 (60 $\mu g/m^3$) in FY 2023-24.

Other steps

- Notification of Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- Revision of emission standards for industrial sectors from time to time.
- Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality.
- Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like gases fuel (CNG, LPG, etc.).
- Promotion of ethanol blending.
- Launching of National Air Quality Index.
- Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards.
- Introduction of BS VI compliant vehicles across the country since April, 2020.
- Notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules.
- Installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by major industries.
- Installation of Vapour Recovery System (VRS) in new and existing petrol pumps selling gasoline >100kl per month in million plus cities and those selling >300kl per month in cities with population between 1 lakh to 1 million.

- For strengthening monitoring mechanism and effective compliance through self-regulatory mechanism, CPCB directed all 17 categories of highly polluting industries to install Online Continuous Emission Monitoring System (OCEMS).
- Shifting of all operational brick kilns to zig-zag technology.
- Department of Heavy Industry is providing subsidy on e-vehicles under Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME -II India) scheme.
- Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) has been launched as an initiative to set up Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants and make CBG available in the market for use in automotive fuels.

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