GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3100
TO BE ANSWERED ON 20.03.2023

State Pollution Control Boards

3100.   SHRI PARVESH SAHIB SINGH VERMA:

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

(a)   whether the Government has taken note that State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) are understaffed, if so, the details thereof along with the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard;
(b)   whether there is a shortage of experts, scientists, medical practitioners, and academics in SPCBs, if so, the details thereof;
(c)   whether the Government has noticed that there is no focus on health while designing air pollution policies by most of the SPCBs, especially the Delhi Pollution Control Committee, if so, the details thereof; and
(d)   the appropriate steps taken or likely to be taken by the Government to resolve this issue?

ANSWER

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

(a) & (b):   The Central Government is well aware that there are vacancies in the State Pollution Control Boards. The Central Pollution Control Board has also conducted Performance Audit of State Pollution Control Boards/ Pollution Control Committees during 2019-20. Based on the report of performance audit of all SPCBs/PCCs, Chief Secretaries of all the States/UTs and all the State PCBs/PCCs had to fill-up the vacancies. The filling of vacancy in State Pollution Control Boards is the subject concerned with the respective State Governments. In this regard, CPCB has advised/suggested State Pollution Control Boards to fill the vacancies.

In General, the Engineers and Scientist recruited in the SPCBs/ PCCs are having minimum academic qualification of B.E./B.Tech (or) M.Sc / Ph.D.

(c) & (d):   Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) notified National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for 12 pollutants in 2009 to protect public health and environment from air pollution. The notified NAAQ standards are health based and periodic revision of NAAQS is being undertaken to include new advancements in fuel, technology, demographics as well as advancements in air pollution monitoring techniques, risk and exposure assessment. Review of NAAQS has been initiated and the study is sanctioned to a joint team lead by IIT Kanpur.

Air Quality Index a tool for effective communication of air quality status of the country including Delhi, which transforms complex air quality data of various pollutants into a single number (index value), nomenclature and colour.

AQ sub-index and health breakpoints are evolved for eight pollutants (PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3, and Pb) for which short-term (upto 24-hours) National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

Central Control Room at Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) acts as a national repository of ambient air pollution data collected by various government agencies, and continuously collects and disseminates air quality information including AQI.

Further, steps taken by Govt. to improve the air quality to reduce vehicular, industrial emissions are enclosed as **Annexure-I**.

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Measures taken by the Government for Air Quality Management

i. Vehicular Emissions:

- Leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI norms for fuel and vehicles since April, 2018 in NCT of Delhi and from 1st April, 2020 for rest of the country.
- Network of metro rails for public transport are enhanced and more cities are covered.
- Development of Expressways and Highways are also reducing the fuel consumption and pollution.
- Eastern Peripheral Expressway & Western Peripheral Expressway has been operationalized to divert non destined traffic from Delhi.
- Ban on all diesel vehicles older than 10 years and all petrol vehicles older than 15 years, in Delhi and NCR. (Hon'ble SC order dated 29.10.2018).
- Environment protection charges (EPC) have been imposed on diesel vehicles with engine capacity of 2000cc and above in Delhi NCR.
- Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like CNG, LPG, ethanol blending in petrol.
- Permit requirement for electric vehicles has been exempted.
- Promotion of public transport and improvements in roads and building of more bridges to ease congestion on roads.
- RFID (radio-frequency identity) system implemented by South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) for collection of toll and Environment Compensation Charges from commercial vehicles entering Delhi.
- Introduction of BS VI compliant vehicles across the country since April, 2020.
- 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.
- 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.

ii. Industrial Emissions:

- Notification regarding SO_2 and NO_x emission standards have been issued for Thermal Power Plants
- Ban on use of pet coke and furnace oil as fuel in NCR States since October 24, 2017 and ban on use of imported pet coke in the country since July 26, 2018, with exception for use in permitted processes (processes in cement plants, lime kilns and calcium carbide manufacturing units).
- Shifting of industrial units to PNG.
- Installation of online continuous emission monitoring devices in highly polluting industries.
- Brick kilns shift to zig-zag technology or vertical shaft or use Piped Natural Gas as fuel in brick making to reduce pollution.
- System and Procedure for Emission Compliance Testing of Retro-fit Emission
- Control Devices (RECD) for Diesel Power Generating Set Engines up to Gross Mechanical Power 800 kW developed.
- Development of low carbon strategies across sectors such as phasing out older coal based power plants, compliance of standards, City Gas Distribution (CGD) network, emphasis on improved power reliability in urban areas, etc.

iii. Air Pollution due to dust and burning of waste:

- Notification of seven waste management rules covering solid waste, plastic waste, e-waste, bio-medical waste, C&D waste, hazardous waste and battery waste.
- Setting up infrastructure such as waste processing plants.
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic and e-waste management.
- Ban on burning of biomass/garbage.
- Bio-mining of three dumpsites at Bhalswa, Okhla and Ghazipur is being carried out.
- Under Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi', agricultural machines and equipment for in-situ crop residue management are promoted with 50% subsidy to the individual farmers and 80% subsidy for establishment of Custom Hiring Centers. In 2022, the Scheme has been merged with Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM) and SMAM has been merged with RashtriyaKrishiVikasYojana (RKVY).
- The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) on 17.09.2021 directed the coal-based Thermal Power plants situated up to a radius of 300 Km of Delhi to co-fire biomass based Pellets, Torrefied Pellets/Briquettes (with focus on paddy straw) with Coal (up to 5-10%).

iv. Monitoring of Ambient Air Quality:

- Expansion of air quality monitoring network of manual as well as continuous monitoring stations under programmes such as National Air Monitoring Programme (NAMP).
- Initiation of pilot projects to assess alternate ambient monitoring technologies such as satellite-based monitoring.

v. National Clean Air Programme:

- With the prime objective of abating Air Pollution, the Ministry, in 2019 launched a National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a National-level Strategy outlining the actions for reducing the levels of air pollution at city and regional scales in India.
- NCAP targets to achieve reduction upto 40% in Particulate Matter10 (PM10) concentrations or achieve National Ambient Air Quality Standards by 2025-26 in targeted 131 cities across the country.
- Under NCAP, Non-attainment cities have been identified based on ambient air quality levels exceeding National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) which were notified to protect human health. City Specific Clean Air Action Plans have been prepared and rolled out for implementation in 131 non-attainment and million plus cities.
- Activities in these cities include strengthening of ambient air quality network, source apportionment studies, dust mitigation equipment, composting units, infrastructure for non-motorized transport, shifting to clean energy in unorganized sectors, etc.
- The NCAP focuses on multi-sectoral sources of pollution including power plants, industries, vehicles, open burning of waste, construction & demolition activities, etc.; inter-Ministerial coordination for convergence of actions and interventions; and partnership with Institutes of National repute and International Agencies as Knowledge Partners
- PRANA a portal for monitoring implementation of NCAP has been launched.

vi. Other Steps:

- Public Grievances and Response System (PGRS) is developed under NCAP.
- Emergency Response System (ERS) has been prepared in NCAP cities.
- Air quality monitoring cell has been constituted across the country in NCAP Cities.

- Public Complaints regarding air pollution issues in Delhi NCR are taken through 'Sameer App', 'Emails' (Aircomplaints.cpcb@gov.in) and 'Social Media Networks' (Facebook and Twitter).
- Introduction of green crackers with low emission and noise levels. Green Crackers have 30% potential reduction of PM and gaseous emissions compared to conventional firework.
- Ministry is promoting people's participation and awareness building among citizens for environmental conservation through Green Good Deeds that focus on promotion of cycling, saving water and electricity, growing trees, proper maintenance of vehicles, following of lane discipline and reducing congestion on roads by car-pooling etc.
- Extension of UjawalaYojana to ensure shifting to cleaner fuel.
- Swacch Bharat Mission and Waste Management initiatives.
- The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) has come out with a policy to curb air pollution in NCR, along with a standard list of approved fuels for NCR for industrial and other applications.