

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**LOK SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION No. 1326**  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.12.2023

**Air Pollution**

1326. SHRI BENNY BEHANAN:

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

- (a) the reason behind the consistently meagre allocation for combating Air Pollution, specifically, the new Commission for Air Quality Management;
- (b) whether the Government plans to combat the rising sulphur dioxide emission in the country; and
- (c) whether the air pollution features within the framework of the national health policy, considering its significant impact on citizens' health?

**ANSWER**

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

**(a)**

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) has been set up for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas for better co-ordination, research, identification and resolution of problems surrounding the air quality index and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

The Central Government provides financial year based funds under Grants-In-Aid to the CAQM for carrying out its establishment related expenditure on account of Salary and General Expenditure. The funds under Grants-in-Aid is not meant for pollution abatement. 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. Under NCAP, it has been envisaged to achieve targets of 20 to 30% reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024 in 131 cities of 24 States/UTs with respect to base year 2017. Subsequently, the target has been revised to achieve up to 40% reduction or achieve National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) in terms PM concentrations by 2025-26.

Under NCAP, an amount of Rs. 19,711 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 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission air quality grant. So far till November 30, 2023, an amount of Rs. 9,635 crores were released to 131 cities to implement City Action Plans in their respective cities.

**(b)**

The analysis of ambient air quality data with respect to SO<sub>2</sub>, reveals that during 2019, 2020 and 2021, a total of 313 cities, 350 cities and 379 respectively were within National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) and only 1 city exceeded the Standard.

#### **Steps taken by Central Government to reduce SO<sub>2</sub>**

- a. **Notification regarding SO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub> emission standards** have been issued for Thermal Power Plants.
- b. **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.

Further various actions of the city action plans also help to combat the rising sulphur dioxide emission in the country, some of which are as follows:

- a. Strict enforcement against illegal use of dirty industrial fuels with high sulfur and heavy metals fuels, including fuels that do not have specifications laid down or are included in the acceptable fuels as mandated by state pollution control boards
- b. Conversion to CNG/PNG from pet coke / wood / coal / Furnace oil.
- c. Clean Fuel & Fuel Quality for Vehicles
- d. Regular check and control of burning of municipal solid wastes
- e. Proper management of landfill sites to prevent spontaneous fire.

**(c)**

National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health (NPCCHH) at NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) is a flagship programme under National Health Mission (NHM), MoHFW, focusing on the implementation of climate change impact on health issues in States and Districts. Within NPCCHH, air pollution and its associated health concerns have been identified as one of the priority health issue. National Health Policy 2017 identified seven priority areas for improving the environment for health. Reducing the indoor and outdoor air pollution is one of the priority areas.

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