

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 987  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 07<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2020**

**DEATHS DUE TO AIR POLLUTION**

**987. SHRI ABU HASEM KHAN CHOWDHURY:**

Will the Minister of **HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE** be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of the impact of air pollution in New Delhi on the health of the people, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government or any organization under the administrative control of the Government including All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has carried out any study on gauging the impact of air pollution on the public health in context of India, if so, the details thereof;
- (c) if not, the manner in which the Government proposes to combat the diseases caused due to air pollution without having the credible causal links between air pollution and its impact on human health in context of India;
- (d) whether any deaths in the country have been caused due to air pollution; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

**ANSWER**

**THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND  
FAMILY WELFARE  
(SHRI ASHWINI KUMAR CHOUBEY)**

(a): As per widely available literature, it is a known fact that Air Pollution adversely affects human health.

As per Air Quality Level recorded and displayed at website of Central Pollution Control Board, New Delhi, Air quality worsening has been observed during the winter months (October to March). The worsening of Air Quality levels seems to be directly proportional to increase in patients reporting at Emergency departments of hospitals complaining of increased respiratory difficulty in almost all age groups especially in vulnerable population.

(b): Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with Public Health Foundation of India and Institute for Health Metrics & Evaluation conducted the study titled “The impact of air pollution on deaths, disease burden, and life expectancy across the States of India: The Global Burden of Disease Study 2017” published in the Lancet Planetary Health 2018 on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018. According to article 1.24 million (1.09-1.39) deaths in India in 2017,

which were 12.5% of the total deaths, were attributable to air pollution, including 0.67 million (0.55-0.79) from ambient particulate matter pollution and 0.48 million (0.39-0.58) from household air pollution. Of the total Disability-Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) attributable to air pollution in India in 2017, largest proportions were from lower respiratory infections (29.3%), chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (29.2%), and ischaemic heart disease (23.8%), followed by stroke (7.5%), diabetes (6.9%), lung cancer (1.8%), and cataract (1.5%).

Study done at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) also shows that 10-15% of people in Delhi suffer from chronic irritation and dry eye syndrome due to constant exposure to a high level of air pollutants.

(c): In January 2019, Government launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to tackle the problem of air pollution in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20 to 30 % reduction in PM10 and PM2.5 concentrations by 2024, keeping 2017 as base year. The overall objective is to augment and evolve effective ambient air quality monitoring network across the country besides ensuring comprehensive management plan for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution and enhancing public awareness and capacity building measures.

The plan includes 102 non-attainment cities, across 23 States and Union Territories, on the basis of their ambient air quality data between 2011 and 2015 and WHO report 2014/2018. A total of 86 city specific action plans have been approved for ground implementation.

In view of probable linkage of Respiratory illnesses with deteriorating Air Quality Index, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has also initiated following activities:

- Initiation of daily Sentinel surveillance for Acute Respiratory Illnesses in Emergency Department of Hospitals: initially in four hospitals (AIIMS, SJH, LHMC & RMLH), further to be expanded to two more hospitals in January, 2019 (National Institute of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases and Vallabh Bhai Patel Chest Institute)
- Providing feedback to hospitals for undertakings appropriate measures for managing respiratory illnesses in their hospitals
- Time and again issue Health advisory on health effects of Air Pollution to Health department of all States. This year health advisory was issued in September-October 2019 and then again after Diwali when AQI deteriorated beyond very Poor- Severe levels
- Prepared and shared IEC posters on Air Pollution and its health effects with State Health Departments
- Air Pollution and Health effects campaign have also been run on Social media (on the websites of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and National Centre for Disease Control, Twitter handle and Facebook page)
- The States and UTs have also been advised to initiate sentinel surveillance for Acute Respiratory Illnesses in at least four to five major hospitals in those cities which are being listed as highly polluted cities by Central Pollution Control Board.

(d) & (e): While air pollution is known to be one of the aggravating factors for many respiratory ailments, specific information on the number of cases and deaths exclusively due to air pollution is not available.

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