

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3193
TO BE ANSWERED ON 06.08.2021

Pollution in Himalayas

3193. SHRIMATI RANJANBEN DHANANJAY BHATT:

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

- (a) whether the Government is aware that the Himalayas have been affected by pollution caused by the urban areas of the country;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government proposes to take any steps to save Himalayas from carbon emitted by urban pollutants;
- (d) if so, the details thereof; and
- (e) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

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

(a) and (b) Some studies have been conducted by various organizations/ institutes in the country on the effect of pollution in Himalayas. The study conducted by H.N.B Garhwal University at Satopanth Glacier in the Central Himalayas indicates that black carbon is majorly transported through air mass from Indo Gangetic Plains.

The G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG) have also conducted studies on two glaciers i.e., Parbati in Himachal Pradesh and Gangotri in Uttarakhand. The observations showed moderate presence of carbonaceous aerosols viz. organic, elemental and black carbon.

Also, studies conducted by National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research and Space Physics Laboratory under Ministry of Earth Sciences at their Himansh station in Lahaul-Spiti region have revealed that the total suspended particulate matter showed significant variations having dominance of mineral dust components (~67%). The black carbon contributes ~4% to near surface composite aerosol mass concentrations.

However, in this regard, detailed research is required for complete understanding of the black carbon emissions in the Himalayas.

(c) and (d)

The Government of India has taken several steps to curb environmental pollution in Himalayan states which, inter alia, includes leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI norms for fuel and vehicles from 1st April, 2020; Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels like CNG, LPG, ethanol blending in petrol; Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME) -2 scheme; shifting of Brick kilns to zig-zag technology; setting up of waste processing plants; Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic and e-waste management, etc.

The Central Government launched National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) as a long-term, time-bound, national level strategy to tackle the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20 % to 30 % reduction in Particulate Matter concentrations by 2024.

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is giving financial assistance to States for setting up of waste to energy plants. Scheme like 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' is promoting use of cleaner household cooking fuels

Under Central Sector Scheme on 'Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ management of crop residue practices have been introduced in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi'.

The States and Union Territories of the Indian Himalayan Region have taken several steps to curb environmental pollution which inter-alia includes banning of burning of plastic and garbage, establishment of compactors to compact segregated recyclables (plastic, rubber, cardboard, jute bags etc.). Government of Himachal Pradesh has also regulated the number of vehicles plying to Rohtang pass to 1200 (800 diesels and 400 petrol) in a day.

(e)

Does not arise.
