

Air quality in cities

1624. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE be pleased to state:

- (a) what has been the impact of biomass burning on the quality of air in Indian cities, especially Delhi-NCR;
- (b) whether the measures contained in the National Policy for Management of Crop Residue, 2014 have been implemented;
- (c) if so, the details thereof; and
- (d) what steps are being taken by Government to ensure that the quality of air in cities like Delhi do not become worse?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR): (a) Biomass, stubble or agriculture residue burning impacts air quality in the vicinity, be it city, town or village. However, movement of plume of fine particles or various gaseous pollutants from biomass burning depends upon meteorological factors such as, wind speed, wind direction, mixing height, humidity, etc. Biomass burning impact air quality of adjacent cities/towns, however, there is no conclusive study available that biomass burning in neighbouring States would always impact quality of air in Delhi.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare is implementing the National Policy for Management of Crop Residue, 2014 through various State Governments. As per the data provided by Punjab Pollution Control Board, substantial reduction in paddy residue burning is reported in the State of Punjab. A total of 7553 fire events have been reported during 15th October to 15th November, 2015 as against 12368 events during same period in 2014. As per the Haryana Space Applications Centre report, there is a reduction in stubble burning in 2014 compared to 2013 in Haryana.

(d) The steps taken by the Government to improve ambient air quality in cities like Delhi *inter-alia* include:

- Notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards 2009, envisaging 12 pollutants;
- Formulation of regulations/statutes;
- Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality;

- Introduction of cleaner/alternate fuels and promotion of public transport network;
- Creation of infrastructure for pollution control;
- Promotion of cleaner production processes, setting up of common pollution control facilities etc.

The Government, after realizing the gravity of pollution, has also taken more concrete measures as listed below:

- Clean India Mission (Swacch Bharat Abhiyan) launched on 2nd October, 2014;
- Draft Rules for handling and management of municipal waste have been notified for comments of stakeholders;
- Implementation of Bharat Stage IV norms in the 63 selected cities and Bharat Stage III norms in rest of the country;
- National Air Quality index launched by the Prime Minister in April, 2015 starting with 10 cities;
- Banning of burning of leaves, biomass, municipal solid waste in cities like Delhi;
- Relevant draft rules, including those pertaining to construction and demolition waste notified;
- Co-ordination meetings held at official and ministerial level with Delhi and other State Governments within the National Capital Region (NCR);
- Short-term plan has been reviewed and long-term plans have been formulated by states to mitigate pollution in NCR;
- Stringent industrial standards have been formulated and notified for public/stakeholder's comments; standards for sugar industry, thermal power plants and CETPs have been finalized;
- Government is giving high priority for public partnership in lane discipline, car pooling, vehicle maintenance, pollution under control certification, idling of vehicles etc;
- Out of 3386 major industries, 1782 industries have installed on-line continuous (24X7) monitoring devices; others are in process of installing; and
- Construction of peripheral eastern and western expressways around Delhi to divert non-destined vehicles.