

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE  
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5017

ANSWERED ON:23.12.2014

DISEASES AND DEATHS BY AIR POLLUTION

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that as per the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Emissions Gap Report, 2014 over 100,000 premature deaths take place every year in India due to excessive air pollution;

(b) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether India may also be heading towards an epidemic of babies born with deformities or suffering from mental retardation due to air pollution and if so, the remedial steps proposed to be taken in this regard;

(d) whether the Government has conducted any study to assess the disease burden of air pollution in the country and if so, the details and outcome thereof; and

(e) the policy initiatives being taken by the Government to curb air pollution including energy efficient measures in transport and industry?

**Answer**

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) FOR ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE (SHRI PRAKASH JAVADEKAR)

(a) to (c) The Emission Gap Report -2014 was published by United Nations Environment Programme in November, 2014. In the report it is mentioned that emissions from fossil fuels and biomass burning account for the major quantum of energy- related air pollution. The emitted substances include Parti- culate Matter (PM), precursors of tropospheric (the lower layer of the atmosphere) Ozone (O3) Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Sulphur Dioxide (SO2), Carbon Monoxide (CO) and organic compounds and metals. These compounds have a wide range of harmful impacts. The most recent global burden of disease report estimated that in 2010, there were 3.5 million prema- ture deaths from indoor smoke from solid fuels and another 3 million premature deaths were caused from urban air pollu- tion. Energy efficiency improvement can reduce impact of air pollutants by lowering the burning of fossil fuels and air- polluting emissions, leading to health benefits in addition to those described in health and well being. The report poin- ted out that nearly 100 000 premature deaths could have been avoided annually in Brazil, China, the EU, India, Mexico and the US by 2030 through energy efficiency measures in the tran- sport, buildings and industrial sectors. Government of India has released National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) on June 30, 2008, which indicates eight national missions. Two missions namely, National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE) and National Mission on Sustainable Habitat (NMSH) are focussing on energy efficient measures in transport and industry sectors.

(d) & (e) The Government has not conducted any study to assess the disease burden of air pollution in the country. However, CPCB had entrusted 3 epidemiological studies on the impact of air pollution on health (two in urban areas and one in rural areas) to Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Kolkata. The findings of the studies indicate several pulmonary and systematic changes, altered immunity and damage to chromosomes and DNA and other health impairments associated with cumulative exposure to high level of particulate pollution which may aggravates / increase the risk of various diseases including pulmonary cardiovascular and cancer but, it is not the only cause of aforesaid diseases. The Government has taken various measures to contain air pollution from transport and industry which interalia include, supply of cleaner fuels as per Auto Fuel Policy, use and promotion of gaseous fuel for public transport in select cities, pollution under control (PUC) certificate system for in-use vehicles, stringent source specific industrial and process related emission standards and their compliance, use of beneficiated coal in thermal power plants, strengthening public transport, expansion of metro train system, implementation of revised emission norms of gensets, implementation of city specific action plan in 16 cities, etc.