

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1627
TO BE ANSWERED ON 27.07.2018

Survey on Environment Performance Index

1627. SHRI DUSHYANT CHAUTALA:

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

- (a) whether India is among the bottom five countries on the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018, plummeting 36 points from 141 in 2016, according to a biennial report by world economic Forum;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) whether the Government has also formulated any mechanism to conduct survey on environmental performance index within the country; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the actions taken by the Government in this regard?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST AND CLIMATE CHANGE
(DR. MAHESH SHARMA)

(a) & (b): The World Economic Forum ranked 180 countries on their performance across 24 metrics aggregated into ten issue categories including environmental health, air quality, water resource management, biodiversity and habitat, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, and climate change. As per the Environmental Performance Index (EPI) of World Economic Forum, India was ranked at 141st in 2016 and 177th position in 2018. An assessment indicates that the weightages given to the parameters at the three hierarchical levels (policy objectives, issue categories and indicators) are different in 2016 and 2018 iterations. The changes made have not been explained or backed by scientific arguments, and seem to be arbitrary. In 2016, the two policy objectives Environmental health and Ecosystem vitality had a weightage of 0.5 (or 50%) each; whereas in EPI 2018, it is 0.4 and 0.6 respectively. Further, for the category Air quality, the weightage given in EPI 2016 was 0.3, which has been increased by over 100% to 0.65 in EPI 2018. In EPI 2016, Air quality figured as a category only under Environmental health. However, in EPI 2018, Air quality figures under Environmental health, and there is a category Air pollution under Ecosystem vitality, which seems misplaced. Different weightages and difference in methodology used implies that rankings arrived at are not comparable and has its limitations. Under the category Water resources, the only indicator shown is Waste water treatment, which puts developed countries on the top since it is a measure of the capacity to address a problem. The report relied on data gathered by NASA Satellite in place of actual monitored data. Report has not been peer reviewed. Countries can be ranked on the basis of different criteria pollutants with different results.

(c) & (d) This Ministry has not formulated mechanism to conduct survey on EPI within the country. However, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has developed a Comprehensive Environmental Pollution Index (CEPI) which is a rational number to characterise the environmental quality at a given location following the logarithm of source, pathway and receptor. The Index captures various health dimensions of environment including air, water and land. CPCB has done a nation-wide environmental assessment of industrial clusters based on CEPI and 43 such industrial clusters having CEPI greater than 70, on a scale of 0 to 100, has been identified as critically polluted.
