



National Clean Air Programme

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The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has directed the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to modify the **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** which proposes 20-30% reduction of air pollution by 2024.

Key Points

- **NCAP:**
 - It was launched by the MoEFCC in **January 2019**.
 - It is the **first-ever effort in the country to frame a national framework for air quality management with a time-bound reduction target**.
 - It seeks to **cut the concentration of coarse** (particulate matter of diameter 10 micrometer or less, or **PM10**) and **fine particles** (particulate matter of diameter 2.5 micrometer or less, or **PM2.5**) by **at least 20%** in the **next five years**, with **2017 as the base year** for comparison.
 - **The plan includes 102 non-attainment cities**, across 23 states and Union territories, which were identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on the basis of their ambient air quality data between 2011 and 2015.
Non-attainment cities: These are those that have fallen short of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for over five years.
- **NGT's View:**
 - The enforcement of the **'Sustainable Development' principle** and **'Public Trust Doctrine'** require stern measures to be adopted to give effect to the mandate of international obligations related to environmental quality, for which the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** was enacted.
Public Trust Doctrine: It states that the sovereign, or state, holds the trust of people to manage the designated resources for the benefit of the people.
 - The **Right to Clean Air** stood recognized as part of Right to Life and failure to address air pollution is a denial of Right to Life under **Article 21**.

- **NGT's Directions:**

- The **timeline** to reduce air pollution by 20-30% by 2024 needs to be **reduced**.
- The **target** of reduction needs to be **increased**.
- It suggested the Ministry to review and action in terms of **shift to e-vehicles and CNG vehicles**, intensifying public transport system, mechanical cleaning of roads, enhancement of public parking facilities, improvement in fuel quality, and traffic management.
- It directed the state pollution control boards to ensure the **assessment and installation** of the requisite number of real-time online continuous **Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Systems within six months**.
- It also directed an expert team of the **Central Pollution Control Board** to **design a model** for source apportionment and carrying capacity assessment within two months which may be replicated for all the non-attainment cities.
 - **Source Apportionment:** It is the practice of deriving information about pollution sources and the amount they contribute to ambient air pollution levels.
 - **Carrying Capacity:** The concept of “carrying capacity” addresses the question as to how many people can be permitted into any area without the risk of degrading the environment there.

National Green Tribunal

- It is a specialised body set up under the **National Green Tribunal Act, 2010** for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
- It draws inspiration from India's constitutional provision of **Article 21**, which assures the citizens of India the **right to a healthy environment**.
- **Original Jurisdiction:** It is related to matters of “substantial question relating to the environment” and “damage to the environment due to specific activity”.
- It follows **principles of Natural Justice**.
- NGT is mandated to make disposal of applications or appeals finally **within 6 months** of filing the same.
- The NGT has **five places** of sittings, **New Delhi is the Principal** place of sitting and **Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai** are the other four.

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