

Delhi Air Pollution - Need for Administrative Alterations

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Air pollution in Delhi is being recognised as one of the biggest public policy challenges that India is facing.

\n

- However, the shortfalls in the existing mechanism and approach call for course corrections.

\n

\n\n

What is the present mechanism?

\n\n

\n

- The present institutional framework includes the government at three levels, the Centre, the Delhi government and local municipal corporations.

\n

- It also involves three entities on the judicial side, the Supreme Court, the Delhi High Court and the National Green Tribunal.

\n

- Then there are the three regulatory/enforcement bodies -

\n

\n\n

\n

- i. the Central Pollution Control Board

\n

- ii. the Delhi Pollution Control Committee

\n

- iii. the SC-mandated Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the NCR Region (EPCA)

\n

\n\n

What are the shortfalls?

\n\n

\n

- **Administrative** - The primary reason for the inability to respond in a coordinated manner is the multiplicity of actors involved.

\n

- Evidently, there are a number of entities working, but with little coordination.

\n

- There is also lack of clarity on who should be held accountable, as dissipated authority leads to dissipated accountability.

\n

- **Approach** - There are few signs of intervention for pollution control in the ground level.

\n

- Most of the interventions at present lack any evidence-based approach.

\n

- There is lack of proper evaluation on the effectiveness of the efforts and measures carried out.

\n

- There is little clarity even on what is causing pollution in the first place.

\n

- The studies done so far lack the quality and depth to unequivocally establish the pollution sources and their respective contributions.

\n

\n\n

What is desired?

\n\n

\n

- **Single Agency** - A single empowered agency under the Union government to deal with the issue on a war footing is required.

\n

- Importantly, the leadership role of such an agency should be clear and unambiguous.

\n

- **Centre** - The central government control is essential because pollution is a problem irrespective of geographical boundaries.

\n

- Evidently, Delhi's problem has its genesis partly beyond the city's borders.

\n

- Also, any solution will have components beyond the administrative and financial capabilities of regional/local governments.

\n

- **Executive control** - The agency has to be fully under the control of the executive.
\n
- It should be appointed by it and be answerable to it.
\n
- There is space for judicial intervention but it has to happen in a manner that does not force initiative from the executive.
\n
- **Judiciary** - The SC has shown initiative and leadership in bringing the pollution issue to the forefront.
\n
- But it should not take policy-making away from the executive which is assigned for that role.
\n
- Court's nature of intervention has to change, and it should transform its role from that of a policy analyst or a problem solver.
\n
- It should only be an institution that protects citizens' rights by holding the governments of the day accountable.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: Indian Express

\n

