

Vehicular pollution to hit generations: SC

Serious concerns: BS-VI emission standard is scheduled to come into force from April 1, 2020. Sushil Kumar Verma

The Supreme Court on Monday described the issue of vehicular pollution as “very serious” and a “critical problem” and observed that it would have an impact not only on this generation but also on the children yet to be born.

The apex court said the Government could not take the issue lightly and directed the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) to file an affidavit indicating the position as regards the availability of Bharat Stage (BS)-VI emission standard compliant fuel in Delhi.

BS-VI emission standard is scheduled to come into force from April 1, 2020 across the country.

A bench comprising Justices Madan B Lokur and Deepak Gupta asked the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) whether any study was conducted on environmental pollution, its effect on the health of people and the cost to deal with it.

Additional Solicitor General A.N.S. Nadkarni, appearing for the MoEF&CC, said a study was underway and that he would get back to the court with its details.

To this, the bench said if the Government did not have any material of its own and claimed that a scientific study carried out by any foreign scientist on the issue was useless, then it was creating a problem for itself as well as the people.

“It is a very, very serious matter. It is a critical problem. It is going to impact children who are already born and who are going to be born. We do not think that the Government of India will take it so lightly.

“It will have an impact for generations. There are slogans of sustainable development but this is very serious,” the bench observed.

Advocate Aparajita Singh, assisting the court as an amicus curiae (friend of the court), told the bench that the BS-VI norms should be made applicable in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) from April 1, 2019 as the government itself had acknowledged that the people were suffering due to pollution.

She also questioned the April 1, 2020 timeline for BS-VI norms.

“They cannot take the health of citizens so lightly,” Ms. Singh said, adding that as per the Centre’s affidavit, Rs. 80,000 crore were spent on BS-VI norms.

Electric cars

She also raked up the issue of electric cars in India and asked that when the manufacturers were able to make these cars, then why could they not shift to the BS-VI norms earlier.

Ms. Singh also said that cars which were not BS-VI compliant should not be allowed to be registered after the new norms came into effect.

Referring to data, she said pollution would come down by around 80% in case of the BS-VI

vehicles, as compared to the BS-IV ones.

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