



Wildlife Protection Act 1972

The Wildlife Protection Act 1972 is a comprehensive law enacted to protect India's wildlife and biodiversity. The Wildlife Protection Act 1972 provides for the protection of wild animals and plants and regulates the hunting, trade, and commercial exploitation of wildlife.

The Wildlife Protection Act 1972 includes provisions for declaring protected areas and empowers the government to take measures to conserve and protect wildlife. It also provides for the establishment of the Wildlife Advisory Board to advise the government on wildlife-related matters.

Under the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, a number of illegal activities related to wildlife are prohibited. The act also provides for stringent penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for violation of its provisions. The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 is widely considered to be one of the strongest wildlife protection laws in the world and has been instrumental in conserving India's rich biodiversity and protecting its endangered species.

Wildlife Protection Act 1972 Salient Features

Some of the main features of the act are :

Prohibition of Hunting: The act prohibits hunting of any wild animal specified in the schedules of the act unless the hunting is carried out under a valid licence.

Establishment of Protected Areas: The act empowers the government to declare areas as any one of the following protected areas:

Regulation of Trade and Commerce: The act regulates trade and commerce in wildlife and its products through a system of permits and licences.

Penalties for Offences: The act provides for stringent penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for violation of its provisions, including illegal hunting, trade, and commercial exploitation of wildlife.

Wildlife Advisory Board: The act provides for the establishment of the Wildlife Advisory Board to advise the government on wildlife-related matters.

Protection of Endangered Species: The act includes provisions for the protection of endangered species, and empowers the government to take measures to conserve and protect them. Different levels of protection are mentioned in various schedules under the act.

Power to Make Rules: The act gives the government the power to make rules for the implementation of the act, including rules for the regulation of trade and commerce in wildlife and its products.

Seizure and Forfeiture of Property: The act provides for the seizure and forfeiture of property used in the commission of offences under the act, including the seizure of wildlife and its products

Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974

Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 is a comprehensive legislation that regulates agencies responsible for checking on water pollution and the ambit of pollution control boards both at the centre and states.

The Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 was adopted by the Indian parliament with the aim of prevention and control of Water Pollution in India.

The salient features of Water (Prevention And Control Of Pollution) Act, 1974

- Water Act 1974 aims to prevent and control water pollution.
- The Act provides for maintenance and restoration of quality of all types of surface and groundwater.
- It provides for the establishment of Central and State Boards for pollution control.
- The Act assigns powers and functions to these Boards to control pollution.

- The Act has provisions for funds, budgets, accounts, and audit of the Central and State Pollution Control Boards.
- Under Water Act 1974, Sewage or pollutants cannot be discharged into water bodies including lakes and it is the duty of the state pollution control board to intervene and stop such activity.
- The Act prohibits disposal of any poisonous, noxious or polluting matter to the flow of water in a stream. However, dumping of any material into a stream for the purpose of reclamation of land is not considered an offense.
- The Act provides for severe and deterrent punishments for violation of the Act which includes fine and imprisonment. Anyone failing to abide by the laws of under is liable for imprisonment under Section 24 & Section 43 ranging from not less than one year and six months to six years along with monetary fines.
- One of the important provisions of the Water Act, 1974 is to maintain and restore the ‘wholesomeness’ of our aquatic resources.

Forest Conservation Act 1980

- The Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980 (FCA, 1980) is an act by the Parliament of India which ensures conservation of forest and its resources.
- It was enacted by the Parliament of India in order to control the ongoing deforestation of the forests of India. It came into force on October 25, 1980 containing five sections.
- Amid news reports mentioning future amendments to the FCA 1980 by the Environment Ministry, the act and its provisions become important from the current affairs perspective.

Objectives of the Forest Conservation Act 1980

Protect the forest along with its flora, fauna and other diverse ecological components while preserving the integrity and territory of the forests.

Arrest the loss of forest biodiversity . Prevent forest lands being converted into agricultural, grazing or for any other commercial purposes and intentions.

The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981

The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, came into force on 29 March 1981. It is one of the main forms of legislation to control and prevent air pollution in India. It also mandated the state pollution control boards to prevent and control air pollution. The act comprises 54 sections in 7 chapters.

Salient Features of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981

Any liquid or gaseous substance that is present in the atmosphere at a concentration that has the potential to harm people, animals, plants, or the environment is referred to as air pollution .

Air (Prevention And Control Of Pollution) Act, 1981 is Act Number 14 of 1981. It is mentioned as “An Act to provide for the prevention, control, and abatement of air pollution, for the establishment, to carry out the purposes above, of Boards, for conferring on and assigning to such Boards powers and functions relating to it and for matters connected in addition to that.”

Parliament passed the National Air Act to carry out the decisions made at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm in June 1972.

Features of the Forest Conservation Act 1980

The Forest Conservation Act of 1980 come with the following features:

The Act restricts the state government and other authorities to take decisions first without permission from the central government.

The Forest Conservation Act gives complete authority to the Central government to carry out the objectives of the act.

The Act levies penalties in case of violations of the provisions of FCA.

The Forest Conservation Act will have an advisory committee which will help the Central government with regard to forest conservation.

The National Environment Policy 2006

The National Environment Policy builds on the existing policies (e.g. National Forest Policy, 1988; National Conservation Strategy and Policy Statement on Environment and Development, 1992; and the Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution, 1992; National Agriculture Policy, 2000; National Population Policy, 2000; National Water Policy, 2002 etc).

It is intended to be a guide to action: in regulatory reform; programmes and projects for environmental conservation; review and enactment of legislations by Central, State and Local Government.

The dominant theme of this policy is that while conservation of environmental resources is necessary to secure livelihoods and well-being of all, the most secure basis for conservation is to ensure that people dependent on particular resources obtain better livelihoods from the fact of conservation, than from degradation of the resource.

The policy also seeks to stimulate partnerships of different stakeholders, i.e. public agencies, local communities, academic and scientific institutions, the investment community, and international development partners, in harnessing their respective resources and strengths for environmental management.

Objectives

These objectives relate to current perceptions of key environmental challenges

Conservation of Critical Environmental Resources:

To protect and conserve critical ecological systems and resources, and invaluable natural and man-made heritage, which are essential for life-support, livelihoods, economic growth, and a broad conception of human well-being.

Intra-generational Equity: Livelihood Security for the Poor:
To ensure equitable access to environmental resources and quality for all sections of society, and in particular, to ensure that poor communities, which are most dependent on environmental resources for their livelihoods, are assured secure access to these resources.

Inter-generational Equity:

To ensure judicious use of environmental resources to meet the needs and aspirations of the present and future generations.

Efficiency in Environmental Resource Use:

To ensure efficient use of environmental resources in the sense of reduction in their use per unit of economic output, to minimize adverse environmental impacts.

Integration of Environmental Concerns in Economic and Social Development :

To integrate environmental concerns into policies, plans, programmes, and projects for economic and social development.

Enhancement of Resources for Environmental Conservation:

To ensure higher resource flows, comprising finance, technology, management skills, traditional knowledge, and social capital, for environmental conservation through mutually beneficial multi-stakeholder partnerships between local communities, public agencies, the academic and research community, investors, and multilateral and bilateral development partners.

Principles

This policy has evolved from the recognition that only such development is sustainable, which respects ecological constraints, and the imperatives of justice. The Objectives stated above are to be realized through various strategic interventions by different public authorities at Central, State, and Local Government levels. They would also be the basis of diverse partnerships. These strategic interventions, besides legislation and the evolution of legal doctrines for realization of the Objectives, may be premised on a set of unambiguously stated Principles depending upon their relevance, feasibility in relation to costs, and technical and administrative aspects of their application.

Central and State Pollution Control Boards: Constitution and power

Central Pollution Control Board

The Central Pollution Control Board has been constituted to prevent and control water pollution as well as maintain the wholesomeness of water. It has the power to direct the State Pollution Control Boards. The Board, by law, can order the closure, prohibition or regulation of any industry, operation or process or stoppage or regulation of supply of electricity or water or any other services to the polluting or offending industry. In addition to this, the Central Pollution Control Board, as a part of its function of Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance, has the power to collect, compile and publish the technical and statistical data relating to water pollution.

State Pollution Control Board

The State Pollution Control Boards have been entrusted with the power to lay down standards of discharge as well as the treatment of effluents into water bodies for all persons to comply, including body corporates. In order to achieve the aim of controlling and preventing water pollution, the state Pollution Control Boards have the power to:

- i. Obtain information: maintain records of the flow or volume of the effluents, carry out stream surveys and gather information regarding the disposal system from the industry or business establishment.
- ii. Take samples of effluents, from any stream or well, for analysis.
- iii. Enter and Inspect at any time to carry out the function of the Board or for examining the plant, records etc.

- iv. Impose restrictions on new or modified discharge outlets.
- v. Refuse or withdraw consent for the establishment of any industry or business.
- vi. Carry out other works in connection with the direction of the Board.
- vii. Perform emergency operation in the event of excess pollution of stream or well and dispose the polluting matter
- viii. Apply to the Courts to restrain the polluting industry or restrict such polluting activity.

Issue immediate orders of closure, prohibition or regulation of industries for the violation of standards or non-compliance of any orders as well as stopping of electricity or water supply to the offending establishment, in order to reduce the discharge of pollutants.