

## PREFACE

State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs), constituted under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974, are entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and controlling environmental pollution. Successive enactment and framing of rules have specified the powers and functions of the SPCBs in different areas of their intervention.

Constituted with a two-tier administrative set-up consisting of a Board of Members and the regular administrative and technical staff and with a network of field offices, each SPCB is required to perform such functions as advising the State Government on matters relating to pollution, developing methods, standards and technology to abate pollution, administering pollution control and creating awareness among the public about the ill-effects of pollution.

At the instance of the Planning Commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) undertook a review of all the 25 SPCBs in the country with the objectives of studying their structure, organizational set-up, staffing pattern, finances and training requirements, examining their functioning with reference to the functions stipulated in the Pollution Control Acts, identifying the constraints in their functioning and suggesting remedial measures therein.

The main findings of the study are:

- The composition of the State Boards is mostly characterized by dominant presence of non-technical members, differential availability of staff for monitoring a certain number of polluting industrial units, discomforting vacancy positions, influx of contract and casual employees and varying ratios of technical to non-technical staff. Absence of any fixed norm for determining the staffing pattern of SPCBs is an important cause for the above. The field formations of some SPCBs are not commensurate with the task at their hand.
- There are vast variations in the financial positions of different SPCBs. Some SPCBs are heavily dependent on Government grants while some rely helplessly on their own insufficient resources. A few SPCBs claim to be financially self-reliant. With widely varying number of polluting industries across States and given the different types and rates of fees charged on industries, the potential for generating 'own resources' differs across SPCBs.
- Most of the SPCBs run considerable revenue surpluses even while they have not fulfilled the requirements for capital expenditure. Prohibitive spending restrictions imposed by State Governments are an important cause for this.

- The degree of inventorisation of polluting industrial activities accomplished by the SPCBs is not generally satisfactory. The inventorisation of small polluting units is yet to take off.
- Compliance of industrial units with the stipulated pollutant standards is poor in some States. Absence of an effective punitive mechanism instigates non-compliance.
- Most of the SPCBs do not supply the required number of observations on air and water quality to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). Some of the sanctioned monitoring stations are not operational. Inadequate financial norms per sample and greater reliance on contract employees for monitoring lead to this.
- Crucial activities like training to staff, generation of awareness among the public regarding different aspects of pollution and research and development remain low-priority items of expenditure in the budgets of most of the SPCBs.

Based on these findings, suggestions have been made to improve the functioning of SPCBs. It is hoped that these findings and suggestions will be of some value to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, the CPCB and the SPCBs in taking corrective actions and in strengthening the mechanism of pollution control in the country.

The study received constant support and encouragement from Deputy Chairman, Planning Commission, Minister of State for Planning, Statistics and Programme Implementation, Secretary, Planning Commission and Chairman, Evaluation Advisory Committee. The study was designed by Shri. Prahlad Kumar, the then Deputy Adviser and continued under the guidance of Shri. K.L.Prasad, Director. Shri. Antony Cyriac, Research Officer has provided commendable assistance in the processing and compilation of data and report writing. The efforts put in by the officers of PEO Headquarters and the Regional Evaluation Offices under the guidance of Shri.V.K.Bhatia, Joint Adviser, P.E.O deserve special mention. A list of officers and members of staff who were associated in the conduct of this study is given in the annexure.

The invaluable help and co-operation extended by the officers of CPCB and the Environment and Forests Division of the Planning Commission are gratefully acknowledged.

(S.P.Pal)

Adviser (Evaluation)

Place: New Delhi  
Date: