

Aims and Objectives of the EPA

The chief aims and objectives of the Environment Protection Act, 1986 are listed below.

1. Implementing the decisions made at the United Nations Conference on Human Environment held in Stockholm.
2. Creation of a government authority to regulate industry that can issue direct orders including closure orders.
3. Coordinating activities of different agencies that are operating under the existing laws.
4. Enacting regular laws for the protection of the environment.
5. Imposing punishments and penalties on those who endanger the environment, safety and health. For each failure or contravention, the punishment includes a prison term of up to five years or a fine of up to Rs. 1 lakh, or both. This can also be extended for up to seven years in cases.
6. Engaging in the sustainable development of the environment.
7. Attaining protection of the right to life under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Main Provisions of Environment Protection Act

The EPA empowers the Centre to “take all such measures as it deems necessary” in the domain of environmental protection.

1. Under the law, it can coordinate and execute nationwide programmes and plans to further environmental protection.
2. It can mandate environmental quality standards, particularly those concerning the emission or discharge of environmental pollutants.
3. This law can impose restrictions on the location of industries.
4. The law gives the government the power of entry for examination, testing of equipment and other purposes and power to analyse the sample of air, water, soil or any other substance from any place.
5. The EPA explicitly bars the discharge of environmental pollutants in excess of prescribed regulatory standards.

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