

# Karnataka: Bengaluru added 10% of pollution in the last two years

DH Contributor, Bengaluru, Karnataka, May 12 2020, 18:27 ist updated: May 12 2020, 18:27 ist 4-5 minutes

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**By Kapil Kajal**

The debate of increase in Bengaluru's air pollution is a contentious one. While the Karnataka

State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) claims that the level of air pollution has decreased compared with previous years, environmentalists and activists say otherwise.

Dr H Lokeshwari, Chief Scientific Officer, KSPCB, stated that the air pollution levels in Bengaluru have declined continuously for the last five years. She mentioned that from 2014 to 2018, it was found out that the annual average Air Quality Index (AQI) values changed from 'moderate' to 'satisfactory'.

Further, the annual average of PM10 decreased by 28% in 2018, when compared to data in 2014, while PM2.5 saw a decrease of 29% from 2015 to 2017, she added.

The air pollution [data](#) from the monitoring stations of the KSPCB in Bengaluru also show a decrease in air pollution.

## Increase in PM 10 and PM 2.5 level in Bengaluru

PM 2.5 was not tested in 2014

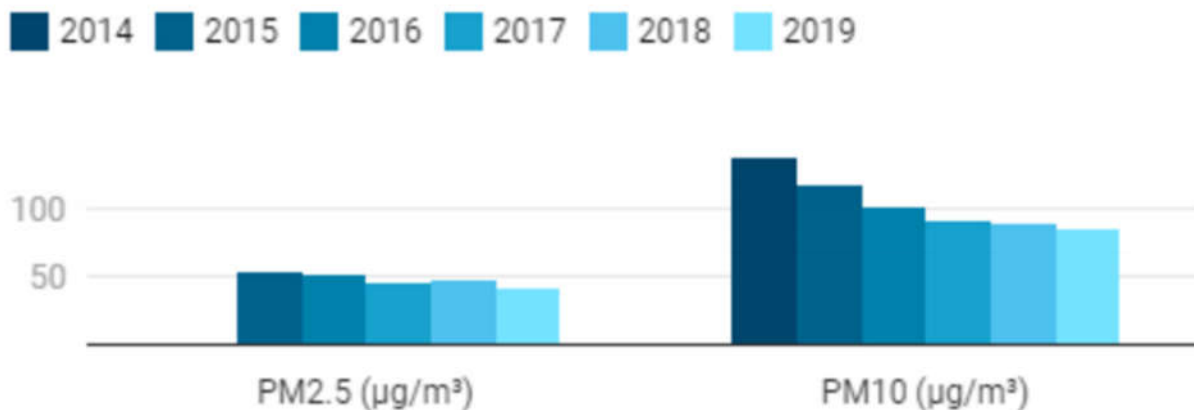


Chart: 101Reporters • Source: KSPCB • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Inhaling PM10 and PM2.5 can lead to many chronic diseases like asthma and lung infection.

### **Misleading data**

Dr TV Ramachandra, a professor with the Centre for Ecological Sciences at the Indian Institute of Sciences, highlighted that giving average data for air pollution by the KSPCB is a wrong practice as in a big city like Bengaluru, there are the areas as polluted as Majestic, and there are the areas as clean as Jayanagar or Lalbagh, forcing us to ignore the problem areas.

He explained that the data for half of the pollutants are not available, and the KSPCB misleads the public.

Dr Yellapa Reddy, the Governing Council Member of the Foundation for Ecological Security of India, stated that he doesn't believe in government data because of their inappropriateness. He mentioned that 75% of the monitoring stations are not working or partially working, and remaining stations also gives data on very limited days, so we are getting partial data.

He added that the monitoring stations are installed in such places where there is a green cover all around the station, there is no monitoring station on MG Road while the main office of the KSPCB is on MG Road.

He claimed that the KSPCB doesn't fix the monitoring station there as the pollution level values would be higher and even they have installed monitoring stations on the height equal to the first floor which can not take the real pollution level value on the ground.



He highlighted that data for some of the most polluted parts of the city like Majestic and Peenya Industrial Area are unavailable. He said it is important to understand the problem and how big it is. Without proper data, the problem will be ignored, he said. So, the KSPCB should change those machines to new and accurate ones as the 20-year-old machines will not work now, he commented.

Akshay Hebilkar, Director at Eco-Watch, a non-governmental environmental conservation organisation, stated that while the number of vehicles is increasing, the health-related issues owing to pollution are increasing, it is worrisome that KSPCB claims that pollution is decreasing, as it's the agency whose sole purpose is decreasing air pollution while they are in negligence, he added.

He said that while the pollution levels are increasing, we are removing tree cover, which helps in absorbing the maximum amount of carbon dioxide. Air pollution levels are increasing, and it is bound to increase if we do not take precautions and Bengaluru is set to become the next Delhi soon, he added.

(Author is Bengaluru - based freelance writer and a member of [101Reporters.com](http://101Reporters.com), a pan-India network of grassroots reporters.)