

COVID-19 lockdown: How work from home has brought down pollution level

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By Kapil Kajal

While Bengaluru is in lockdown amid the [COVID-19](#) pandemic, the curbs on vehicles and construction have improved the air quality levels of the city, data show.

A usual day at the Silicon Valley of India would mean being stuck at traffic, but the citywide shutdown has forced people to stay at home and even the construction work in the city has taken a backseat over the fear of COVID-19. However, it has a plus side as it has lowered the air pollution levels in the city.

Experts and data from various websites including the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) show lower air pollution levels than usual in the city. The first case of COVID-19 was reported on March 10, forcing several tech companies to ask their employees to work from home.

When compared, the Air Quality Index (AQI), an indicator of air pollution, levels last year were much higher, according to the KSPCB.

Place	Average 24 hours AQI in March 2019	Average 24 hours AQI in March 2020
Hebbal	101	65
Jayanagar	115	74
Kavika	105	70
Nimhans	105	85
Silk Board	105	77

(Source- [KSPCB](#))

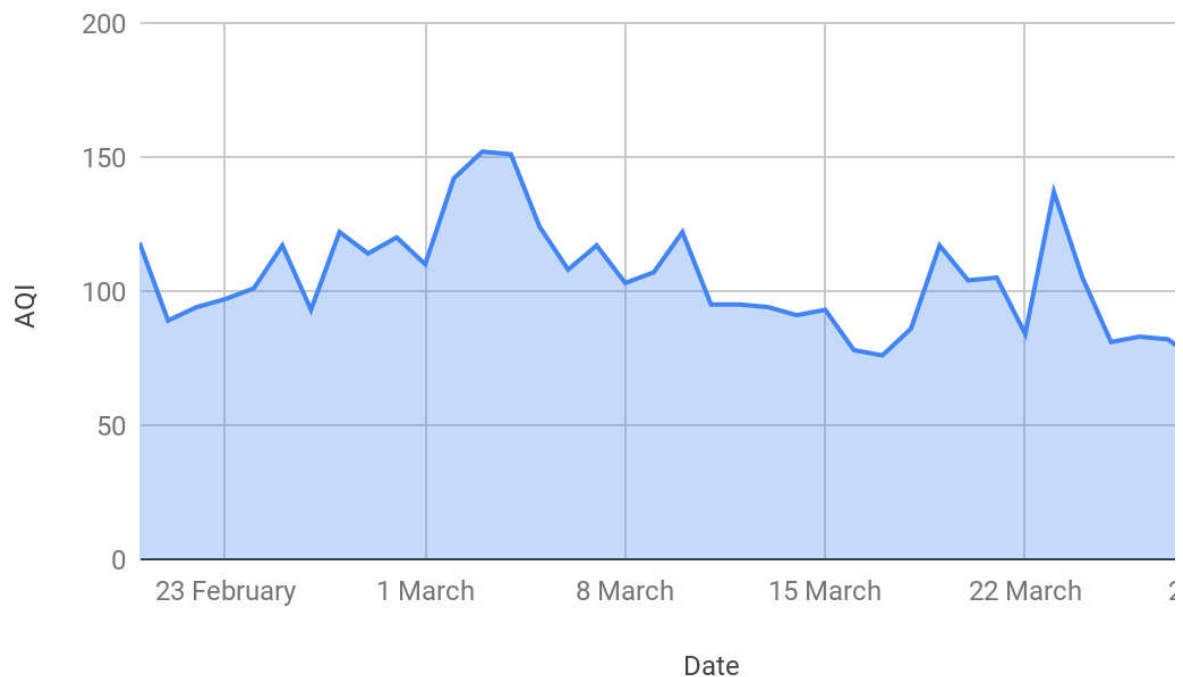
Srikant S, 32, a software engineer, stated that he is not getting out of the house, he stays inside since the first case was reported, his company gave him work from home. He also added he used to take his car to work which is currently not in use.

According to [Airvisuals](#), an air quality database website, the AQI levels of Bengaluru has improved from moderate to satisfactory after March 10 and from satisfactory to good in some areas after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced 21 days lockdown on 24th March. According to the AQI index value, the range between 0-50 is considered as good, 51-100 is satisfactory, 101-200 is moderate and beyond that, it is considered as poor and with each increasing level, the health consequences multiply.

The AQI on March 10 was 122, while it saw a steep decline to 95 on March 11, which further dropped to 76 on March 31.

Dr TV Ramachandra, a professor at the Indian Institute of Science, stated that the vehicular pollution contributes nearly 45% of the total air pollution, and now in this situation when the vehicles are limited, the pollution is bound to be less.

AQI vs. Date



(Source of Information- Airvisual.com)

Arvind N, 24, a delivery executive who delivers food in the Indiranagar area, mentioned that he used to face a lot of traffic before the citywide shutdown, but now he delivers faster and the traffic is down by at least 60-70% in the area, as per his estimation.

The KSPCB ambient AQI data shows that the AQI in Jayanagar reached 161 on March 3 and it reduced to 60-80 after March 10. Other areas like NIMHANS, Kavika and Silk Board also registered an AQI range between 101-150 at the starting of the month but it drastically decreased to AQI 60-80 after March 10 and further the AQI reduced to less than 50 in some areas after 24th March.

Dr Yellapa Reddy, the Governing Council Member of the Foundation for Ecological Security of India, stated that COVID-19 has come as a reality check for Bengaluru and its residents when the cars are not being used, the city has closed its malls and everything, everybody is fearing coming out, the companies have given work from home, automatically the air pollution is reduced.

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Average 24 hours AQI in the beginning, mid and end of the month

