

People commuting on Outer Ring Road among the worst hit by air pollution

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By Kapil Kajal

While the Outer Ring Road (ORR) was constructed to address the traffic problems ailing the city, the continuous inflow of vehicles in the city has made ORR one of the most polluted and congested parts of the city. The ORR is a 60-kilometre road connecting the major highways of the city.

The part of the ORR connecting Silk Road, KR Puram and Electronic city is the hub of IT companies and more than 15 lakh people work in that area. Dr TV Ramachandra, a scientist with the Indian Institute of Science, stated that the people, travelling to that part of the city, live in various parts and the majority of them commute on their personal vehicles and that increases the

air pollution to an extreme level as nearly 45% of the pollution in the city is contributed by vehicular emission, comprising fine particulate matter (PM), carbon oxides and nitrogen oxides.

Additionally, regular construction can be seen on the ORR leading to an increase in PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀.

An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EAIR) for the Peripheral Ring Road (PRR) mentions the air pollution on the roads which connects the PRR to the ORR.

At the ten monitoring stations set up across the stretch, the PM₁₀ concentration ranged from 80.5 to 89.0 µg/m³ (1µg=10 lakh g), PM_{2.5} ranged from 40.4 to 46.8 µg/m³, which is higher than the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation of 20 µg/m³ for PM₁₀ and 10 µg/m³ for PM_{2.5}. The report also indicated high levels of nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxide.

The EAIR report added that the gaseous emission from vehicles deteriorates the ambient air quality and affects health. For the construction on the road, the dust generation owing to material handling, operation of crushers, movement of construction vehicles and construction activities have an adverse effect on the health of construction workers as well as the public in the surrounding communities and the dust settled on leaves may reduce the growth rate of the plants, the report mentioned.

Dr Yellapa Reddy, the Governing Council Member of the Foundation for Ecological Security of India, mentioned that people stuck in traffic are among the most vulnerable to catch air pollution-borne diseases.

He castigated the authorities for the unplanned development and corruption which has increased the level of air pollution.

Particulate matter can penetrate, lodge deep inside the lungs and enter the blood system and chronic exposure to particles contributes to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as of lung cancer, according to the [WHO](#).

A study on ring roads stated that eco-driving would reduce air pollution while being economical for the driver. There is also a reduction in noise pollution, accident rate, travel time and enhancement of road safety, compared to the usual driving mode, the study stated.

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