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Bangalore is breathing poison

Bhargavi Kerur / DNA

It is high time to chuck those carbon-dioxide emitting two wheelers and hitch hike a ride on a car or take a bus to office to reduce harmful emission of carbon dioxide (Co2), says a study by Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Science.

In a first ever study on "Emissions from India's Transport Sector," TV Ramachandra and M Shwet Mala of the Centre for Ecological Sciences (CES) at IISc have collated data and analysed the emission of greenhouse gases. Transport, after power generation is the elading cause of carbon dioxide emission in all 28 States and seven Union Territories (UT).

The study, which is slated to be published in a special issue of the journal Atmospheric Environment, reveals that Bangalore is the second leading metropolitan city in India with regard to Co2 emissions, after Chennai. While Chennai contributes to 13.5 per cent of the total Co2 emissions, Bangalore adds 12.4 per cent, followed by Kolkata at 8.7 per cent, Delhi at 8 per cent and Hyderabad at 7.1 per cent.

Globalisation, which spurred economic activities resulted in the concentration of such activities in certain load centres, fueled rapid growth of vehicles and increase in traveling distance. "During the last two decades, the number of registered motor vehicles has increased dramatically from 5.4 million in 1980 to 72.7 million," the report stated.

"The urban population of India, which constitutes 28 per cent of the total, is predominantly dependent on road transport. Around 80 per cent of passenger and 60 per cent of freight movement depend on road transport. Traffic composition of six mega cities of India - Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata shows that there is a significant shift from the share of slow moving vehicles to fast moving vehicles and public transport to private transport," the study said.

Among the different types of motor vehicles, percentage of two wheelers has shown rapid growth, doubling every five years, and it now constitutes 70 per cent of the total number of motor vehicles in India.

Among the various modes of transport, the road and aviation sector are major contributors to pollution. With road transport adding 94.5 per cent of Co2 emissions, there is a stress on the need to re-look at the design of this entire sector. The aviation sector adds another 53.3 per cent.

"The study analysed emissions by all modes—road, rail, air and water. It was revealed that the road sector is the greatest contributor of Co2 with 94.5 per cent. Hence, it is high time that the public transport system be improved. Also, fuel efficient vehicles and fuels should be used, such as the CNG or battery operated vehicles, which will help reduce emissions, as has been implemented in Delhi," said Ramachandra.

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