



**REQUEST FOR EMPHASIS ON MEASURES FOR
BETTER AIR QUALITY IN YOUR
ELECTION MANIFESTO**

We, the undersigned are medical professionals writing to request your party to take up the issue of air pollution control in your manifesto for Lok Sabha Elections 2019 and outline timebound measures to protect public health from ill effects of air pollution.

Today, over 99% of India's population is breathing air that is much worse than WHO or even Indian Standards and 14 of the world's 15 most polluted cities are in India. Clearly, we are headed towards a health epidemic.

The health ill-effects of Air Pollution have been highlighted in numerous studies times and again by both Indian and International organizations. According to an Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) led report, household air pollution was responsible for 5% of the total disease burden in India in 2016, and outdoor air pollution for 6%. It further goes on to state "the contribution of air pollution to disease burden remained high in India between 1990 and 2016, with levels of exposure among the highest in the world". Air Quality Life Index, developed by Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago, suggests that Indians, on an average could gain 4.3 years in life expectancy (and up to 10 years for those residing in Delhi-NCR) if the WHO air quality standards were met. Recent studies from Bangalore and Jaipur highlight the incidence of childhood asthma at a shocking high of 24%. Recent studies have also detected air pollution deposits even in the placenta of pregnant women, leading to a significant increase in the risk of premature birth and of low birth weight and thus lifelong damage to health.

Worrying trends visible in our everyday medical practice also correlate with new studies being published about the link of Air Pollution and health. We are witnessing an increase in the incidence of respiratory ailments, lung cancer (especially in non-smokers), the occurrence of lung cancer in younger age group, higher incidence of high blood pressure and an increase in heart and brain attacks.

While measure have been taken by the Central and various State governments for the reduction of indoor air pollution and ambient air pollution, we are still a long way from achieving W.H.O. standards. In 2018, India remained ahead of China to retain the tag of the fastest growing economy. Now, it must also prioritize its citizen's health and achieve W.H.O. set air quality standards before China. All talks about a Progressive India, Safe India, Strong India, and Economically Developed India will fail without a Healthy India.

We, the Citizens of India, Doctors, and caretakers of Indian Citizens, urge and request you to make air pollution control a priority in your election manifesto and outline timebound measures to protect public health from ill effects of air pollution.



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