



WHAT ENVIRONMENT ARE WE CREATING FOR OUR CHILDREN?

CIVIL SOCIETY HAS TO RAISE ITS VOICE

Dr NARESH TREHAN, Chairman & Managing Director, Medanta Heart Institute

People are alarmed, but they don't know what to do. They are looking towards the government for a solution. We know that solutions are there, but they require a lot of determination, hard work and a collaborative effort by civil society. These are things that we need to be serious about throughout the year, not only when the crisis hits. The health of this country is a matter of concern for both the central and the state government. They have to take it seriously, else, a lot of people are at risk. Today, 60-70% of the smog is coming from crop burning. For the sake of our children and all those who are suffering, we must raise our voice.



DELHI IS UNFIT FOR HABITATION

Dr ARVIND KUMAR, Chairman, Centre for Chest Surgery, and Director, Institute of Robotic Surgery, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital

I would not call the present situation just alarming. It is unfit for human habitation. Ideally, if you are a healthy conscious person, none of us should be living in this city. If this continues, we are going to see a Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and lung cancer epidemic. There should be a ban on crackers across India. Farmers should be provided with alternatives to crop burning. The use of brooms should be stopped immediately. Dirt on the road is better than dirt blown into the air and going in our lungs.

WE WILL SEE THE DAMAGE THE AIR IS CAUSING IN THE YEARS TO COME

Dr ANURAM SIBAL, Senior Medical Director, Apollo Hospital Group

When the Air Quality Index (AQI) hits 300 or 400, the air is bad for everyone, like children or those with respiratory illness, heart conditions or the elderly.

When the AQI deteriorates to the extent that it has, the air is bad for everyone. We see the consequence of breathing this air in those who have respiratory problems, but there is a lot of damage happening in the rest of the population as well. We will not be able to see it today, but we will see it in the years to come. There needs to be a collective effort, everyone needs to come together, because this is something that affects everyone.

START TAKING SMALL STEPS INSIDE THE HOUSE

Dr NITIN VERMA, Associate Director, Paediatrics, Max Speciality Hospital

It is a matter of shame that individuals and doctors are coming forward, but the people who should be here, the stakeholders, the government, are either sleeping or have decided not to do anything about the problem. You can't have a calamity like this happening every year. Being a paediatrician, I would like to talk about children - the future of tomorrow. We need food, shelter and air to survive, and look at the quality of the air. What are we creating for our children? Within the house, people can take small steps, like wet mopping and use vacuum cleaners if they can afford them.



GIRLS EXPOSED TO THIS HAVE A HIGHER CHANCE OF BREAST CANCER

Dr SIDHARTH SAHNI, Senior Consultant Breast Surgeon, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital

The situation is catastrophic, and it has been for the last five years. The biggest reason behind this is crop burning. It has now become a biannual thing - it has started happening in the spring as well as at the onset of winter. If a girl in her 20s is exposed to this environment, at 40, her chances of getting breast cancer are six times higher. It is a problem which is affecting everyone. Farmers need to be given an alternative to stubble burning.

KEEPING MULTIPLE CARS HAS BECOME A FASHION IN DELHI

Dr SUNIL DUBEY, Emergency and Trauma Care, Medanta - The Hospital

There is a six-fold increase in the number of patients coming in with respiratory problems. Earlier, in a month, we would get 10-12 patients, now that has increased by six times. We need to work on our lifestyle as well. Keeping multiple cars has become a fashion in Delhi. That attitude needs to change.



YOU SHOULDN'T STEP OUT IF VIX IS ABOVE 400

Dr VIVEK NANGIA, Director and Head of Pulmonology, Fortis F-15, Rajendra Road Hospital

With time, people have become insensitive to the level of pollution around us. The approved AQI standard by WHO is 60, and the government has already stretched it to 100. Now, they don't even react until it is 400. For healthy people, it is recommended that if the level is above 400, they should stop going out. The AQI is 800 today, and we are still not reacting. It is an emergency situation and if we don't react now, it will be too late.



THOSE PREPARING FOR MARATHONS ARE RISKING THEIR LIVES

Dr KK AGGARWAL, National President, Indian Medical Association

We are standing here at Rashtrapati Bhawan with the AQI at 815. You should not even step out when the AQI crosses 300. This is like a natural disaster. Instead of asking the government to protect you, you need to protect yourself. Even healthy people should not be out in this condition. If you are a heart or a lung patient, go see your doctor and if you do have severe respiratory issues, stay at home and reduce exertion. While you are resting, you take in fewer pollutants. No marathon should take place at this time, those who are preparing for marathons are risking their lives. Heart attack, paralysis, asthma and sudden death can occur. Forget about the actual marathon, even preparing for it is risky.

YOU CANNOT ESCAPE THIS PROBLEM BY LEAVING THE CITY



Dr NITISH DOGRA, Associate Professor, International Institute of Health Management

At this point, crop burning is the primary problem. Another thing that happens throughout the year which people don't pay attention to is the use of the traditional *chulha* in rural areas. There are certain areas in the city that have the worst air quality - like Anand Vihar, Purjahi Bagh and RK Puram - they have most of the construction sites. You cannot escape this problem by leaving the city. In fact, people should not step out at this time because the AQI is not suitable for any of us.

WE ARE NOT EDUCATING PEOPLE ENOUGH



Dr ALOK CHOPRA, Consultant Physician, Cardiologist & Lifestyle Management, Aarbh Hospital

Every day, I am pained to see my patients suffering - especially the elderly, who have worked really hard to recover. We are not educating people enough. It needs education at all levels. We have to make people understand. Everybody is self-centred, we need to see the world as our society.

IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED TO STOP A CATASTROPHE



Dr NAVIN DANG, Director, DV Gangli Lal

We were talking about pollution 20 years back, but now, it has become a reality. We are sitting on a volcano of lung issues and respiratory problems, and immediate action should be taken to stop a catastrophe.

THIS IS A NATIONAL EMERGENCY



Dr ASHWANI CHOPRA, Director & Consultant (Geriatrician), Aarbh Hospital

It is truly a national emergency and each one of us has to take responsibility for it. We must mobilize people to make them aware and approach authorities to stop all sources of pollution. We are practising doctors, we see how people are suffering especially elderly people. We must take this seriously.