

EPCA Report **No 115**

Special Report on the status of progress made in the control of air pollution based on the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court (2019-20) and the agenda for further action

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It is well understood today that people in Delhi and NCR (and in many other parts of the country) face a public health emergency because of extremely toxic air. This pollution is worse in winter, when the weather conditions lead to inversion (because of cold); moisture (that traps the pollutants) and poor wind (that does not allow for dispersion). This is why even though the sources of pollution remain constant through the year, the level of pollution peaks in winter.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has issued a number of extremely important directions to help combat this deadly and toxic pollution. Many of these directions, though aimed for Delhi and NCR, have countrywide impacts. The key objective is to ensure that there is implementation of the directions so that pollution is reduced – drastically and brings the necessary health benefits.

EPCA is submitting this special report to provide the status of progress made in the past years to combat air pollution and to recommend further actions that need to be taken, keeping in mind the need for strengthened enforcement and to ensure that actions to combat pollution can match the scale and severity of the problem.

The emission inventory for the sources of pollution in Delhi-NCR point to the key contributing factors as below:

1. **Vehicles are the key contributor to air pollution – in terms of all pollutants. In the vehicle segment, heavy commercial vehicles (trucks) and commercial/personal vehicles like taxi are the major polluting source.** This requires shift to public transport and restrictions on the entry of heavy duty trucks and other such polluting vehicles.
2. **Industrial pollution, including pollution from brick kilns and thermal power plants has increased in the past few years with the use of coal and other such fuels in these industries.**

3. Open burning of **municipal solid waste** because of lack of systems for processing, recycling and disposal of waste, including hospital waste.
4. **Dust pollution** because of poor enforcement of construction sites and open areas
5. **Stubble burning** by farmers in the neighbouring states during peak winter period of mid-October to mid-November.

1. Key actions directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court for control of air pollution

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has directed action on these key contributing sources as follows:

Key directions and progress made for control of air pollution

	Reports of EPCA	Directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and crucial progress made in actions needed for combating air pollution
1	Vehicular pollution	
1.1	EPCA Report no 93 on the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS): Resolving issues to expedite decision for construction of first Meerut-Delhi corridor	<p>6.3.2019: ordered the construction of the Meerut-Delhi RRTS corridor by resolving all outstanding issues</p> <p>6.3.2019 and 5.8.2019: ordered for a plan on the Delhi-Alwar and Delhi-Panipat RRTS corridors</p> <p>The construction of the first two corridors; Meerut-Delhi and Alwar-Delhi are in progress, based on the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court</p> <p>Once constructed, these high-speed transport corridors will provide convenience to commuters and greatly help in de-congesting the region.</p>

1.2	EPCA Report no 94,96,98,104,108,114 on implementing parking policy for Delhi	<p>10.8.2020: ordered for the parking plan to be implemented across Delhi and NCR.</p> <p>The Hon'ble Supreme Court has ensured that the parking policy and rules of the Delhi government (Delhi Maintenance and Management of Parking Rules 2019) will be implemented in Delhi and has directed that all NCR cities must implement parking policy and rules at the earliest.</p>
1.3	EPCA Report No 97 Special Report seeking urgent intervention on augmentation of public transport, including approval for phase IV of Delhi Metro and advancement in schedule for additional buses	<p>6.9.2019: Ordered for the construction of phase IV of Delhi metro after resolving all outstanding issues that were pending since 2014.</p> <p>The metro Phase IV once completed will greatly enhance public transport availability in Delhi</p>
		<p>5.8.2019: Ordered for time-bound improvement in the bus numbers and services in Delhi</p>
1.4	EPCA Report No 109 and 113 on RFID extension to all entry points into Delhi	<p>10.8.2020: Ordered that RFID would be implemented in all 113 entry points into Delhi.</p> <p>The implementation of RFID across all entry points will greatly improve the enforcement of Environment Compensation Charge (ECC) and reduce the entry of heavy-duty traffic, which is a big contributor to pollution, into Delhi.</p>
2	Industrial pollution/hot spot pollution control	

2.1	EPCA Report no 106 on hot spot pollution control	<p>28.2.2019: Ordered strict and time-bound enforcement of the Hot-Spot action plans submitted by EPCA</p> <p>The Hot-Spots contribute greatly to the air pollution and so, the plans include control from all sources of pollution – industrial emissions; industrial waste burning; municipal waste and dust control. Strict enforcement and implementation have been directed by the Hon’ble Court.</p>
3	Stubble burning	<p>28.2.2019: Ordered action to be taken by the states of Haryana, Punjab, UP on the in-situ management of crop residue and ex-situ management of crop residue.</p> <p>Strict implementation of these directions, based on plan filed by the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, will ensure reduction of stubble burning in the coming winter season.</p>
4	Hospital waste	
	EPCA Report no 110, 112 on biomedical waste management	<p>30.7.2020: Ordered for steps to be taken for management and effective collection and disposal of hospital waste, including COVID-19 biomedical waste.</p> <p>Implementation and compliance with these directions will greatly improve the management of infectious bio-medical waste, not just in Delhi but across the country.</p>

2. Agenda/plan for further action on combatting air pollution in Delhi/NCR and other key cities of India

The Action Plan for Air Pollution Control will require the following to be done in the coming years;

- 1. Stringent implementation of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on stubble-burning to ensure that there is both ex-situ and in-situ measures are taken to provide farmers with incentives and machinery. In addition, it will require enforcement during the crucial months of October-November so that fires are controlled and penalties imposed on non-compliance.**
- 2. Stringent implementation and enforcement in all the hot spots identified in Delhi and NCR, as per the plans submitted and directions issued so that all sources of pollution are controlled.**
- 3. Transition to clean fuel for combustion in industries across the NCR and restrictions on the use of coal as it is a key contributor to the pollution in the region.**
- 4. Time-bound and urgent implementation of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the phase IV of metro; construction of the different phases of RRTs and the augmentation of buses in Delhi.**
- 5. Time-bound implementation of the parking policy for NCR so that there are adequate restraints on vehicular traffic and growth, with simultaneous efforts in augmentation of public transport.**
- 6. Further plans for urgent and massive augmentation of public transport, not only in Delhi but across NCR and in particular for inter-and intra-NCR movement.**
- 7. Implementation of the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on the agreed 2022 schedule for thermal power plant emission standards.**