

 Precis

Environmental pollution affects health badly. The study of scientific imagination and experience it are two different things. The oxides of Carbon, Oxygen and Nitrogen along with some other toxins are major threats in the world. Air Quality life index has discovered, that urbanised people lose 4 years of their lives, due to breathing in contaminated air. 240 Million people are having contaminated air, that has crossed the WHO's guidelines. It's even more alarming, during smog season, when, hospitals faces hurdles in provision of space for patients and ultimately 19 people die because of air pollution. Karachites should come out of sluggishness. This problem leads to the death of 128K people every year. This is the regional problem, not limited to boundaries and must be felt at regional levels, to take efforts against it, it would have more chances to overcome the problem.

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Environmental pollution is bound to have an adverse impact on life expectancy and quality of health. Fair enough. But it is one thing to read about a far-flung scientific notion and a completely different scenario to live through it (rather, breathe through it). That a deadly cocktail of carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide with a splash of other toxins remains the world's largest health threat posed by the degrading environment has been reiterated to the point of repetition. However, a scathing revelation by the Air Quality Life Index indicates that people living in highly polluted urban centres could stand to lose up to four years of their lives.

Just to send the message right across the table, it was observed that the entire 240-million-strong population was breathing in the air whose particulate pollution average surpassed the WHO guidelines. While, shrill alarm bells go blaring every smog season when hospitals scramble to find room for patients, one particular episode of at least 19 people losing their lives to poor air quality

in Karachi should have rattled a complacent state out of its deep slumber. With the toxic air killing as many as 128,000 people every year, it is high time Pakistan jumps past the lip service and actually tackles mechanisms that reverse the horrifying trends. There's a lot that needs to be done to correct the damages incurred by households, the transport sector, industrial fumes, agricultural emissions and waste incinerators. Since we have already agreed upon the first National Clean Air Policy, common sense dictates that the environmental ministries follow the respective recommendations to work towards the set goals. The country needs a pair of functional lungs to worry about other crises.

It should also be realised that bad air is a problem being experienced throughout South Asia and therefore, region-wide approaches have a better chance at success. After all, air pollution does not seem to respect man-made boundaries and a significant contributor in one country is bound to unleash fury in another.