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Anmol Khandelwal, Executive Director

India's Air Pollution Crisis: Are Diesel Generators the Missing Piece of the Puzzle?

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Air pollution isn't just a smoggy skyline or a health advisory ringing on your phone—it's a crisis that is silently stealing from India's progress. While we celebrate our strides in GDP growth, air pollution costs India a staggering \$150 billion annually in health impacts, lost productivity, and environmental damage. Among the culprits lurking in plain sight are diesel generators (DG sets)—the power backups we rely on during outages but often ignore when it comes to their pollution impact.

From residential complexes to shopping malls, DG sets are everywhere, providing power when the grid fails.

Did you know that these machines are a major contributor to PM2.5 pollution, which worsens respiratory diseases, reduces life expectancy, and inflates healthcare costs?

According to studies, 13 out of the world's 20 most polluted cities are in India, and diesel generator emissions are a key contributor.

Delhi NCR alone, where AQI often plunges into hazardous levels during the winter, DG sets are outright banned during GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan) period unless they're

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Thousands of non-compliant generators continue to operate, pumping toxic air into our lungs.

It's Time to Retrofit DGs

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has laid down clear standards for diesel generators:

sets in CPCB I and CPCB II (above 19 kW) categories must be retrofitted with type-approved RECDs to meet emission norms. Users must ensure that their RECD is CPCB-certified and installed by authorized providers.

During GRAP periods, non-compliant DG sets cannot operate in notified NCR and other notified areas.

Under the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), several states, including Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab, have been notified to enforce stricter controls on DG emissions. But the responsibility doesn't just lie with regulators but also on businesses, housing societies, and individual users to ensure compliance.

What Can We Do as Citizens?

Check Before You Buy: Whether you're purchasing an RECD or asking someone to retrofit your DG, always ensure it's CPCB-certified.

Think Long-Term: While retrofitting might seem like an expense, it's a small price to pay compared to the health and economic costs of air pollution. Chakr Innovation also offers Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs) for hassle-free operations.

Choose Sustainable Brands: Trusted companies like Chakr Innovation offer easy, plug-and-play solutions like the Chakr Model, India's first type-approved RECD. Compact and cost-effective, it retrofits DGs without the need for bulky infrastructure.

Economic Losses: Air Pollution's Hidden Price Tag

India's air pollution crisis doesn't just harm public health—it's a major drain on our economy. According to a World Bank report, the country loses \$55 billion annually in lost labor output and an additional \$95 billion in health-related costs due to diseases caused by poor air quality.

At Chakr, we're proud of being one of the world's fastest-growing

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Delhi NCR: A Model to Follow: Delhi NCR's bold measures, including DG bans during GRAP periods and mandatory retrofitting policies, have set an example for other cities. But they are not there yet. This winter, Delhi's AQI hovered in the 'very poor' to 'severe' category, leading to school closures and health warnings. Cities across India must learn from Delhi's policies and act now before their air quality hits similar levels.

Air We Breathe: A Call to Action: Air pollution isn't just an environmental issue—it's an economic and humanitarian crisis. If we don't act now, India risks losing both its economic edge and the health of its citizens.

What can you do? If you own a diesel generator, don't wait for the next ban notice. Retrofit it with a certified RECD like the Chakr Shield. Not only will you comply with government norms, you'll also play a part in making our air cleaner.

Together, we can demand stricter enforcement of laws, hold businesses accountable, and push for sustainable practices. Because every step counts when it comes to protecting our air and our future.

Chakr -Anmol Khandelwal- A clean Air Ambassador

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