

OVER 160-200 MILLION INDIANS COULD BE EXPOSED TO LETHAL HEAT WAVES ANNUALLY: WORLD BANK

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November 30, 2022 08:21 pm | Updated December 01, 2022 01:15 am IST - NEW DELHI

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With the demand for cooling shooting up, there will be a demand for a new air-conditioner every 15 seconds, the World Bank has said. File | Photo Credit: The Hindu

From 2030 onwards, more than 160 to 200 million people [could be exposed to a lethal heat wave in India every year](#), and around 34 million Indians will face job losses due to heat stress-related productivity decline. By 2037, the demand for cooling is likely to be eight times more than current levels, the World Bank has said in a report.

In this scenario, it is imperative for India to deploy alternative and innovative energy efficient technologies for keeping spaces cool. According to the report, "Climate Investment Opportunities in India's Cooling Sector", this could open an investment opportunity of \$1.6 trillion by 2040 besides reducing greenhouse gas emissions significantly and creating 3.7 million jobs.

With the demand for cooling shooting up, there will be a demand for a new air-conditioner every 15 seconds, the report said, leading to an expected rise of 435% in annual greenhouse gas emissions over the next two decades. Thus, there is a need to shift to a more energy-efficient pathway which could lead to a substantial reduction in expected CO2 levels.

The report proposes a roadmap to support New Delhi's India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP) 2019, through new investments in three major sectors: building construction, cold chains and refrigerants.

Adopting climate-responsive cooling techniques as a norm in both private and government-funded constructions can ensure that those at the bottom of the economic ladder are not disproportionately affected by rising temperatures. The report suggests that India's affordable housing program for the poor, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), can adopt such changes on scale.

It also proposed enacting a policy for district cooling which could lead to the consumption of 20-30% less power than the most efficient conventional cooling solutions. District cooling technologies generate chilled water in a central plant which is then distributed to multiple buildings via underground insulated pipes. This brings down the cost for providing cooling to

individual buildings. Apart from this, guidelines for implementation of local and city-wide urban cooling measures such as cool-roofs should also be considered.

To minimise rising food and pharmaceutical wastage during transport due to higher temperatures, the report recommends fixing gaps in cold chain distribution networks. Investing in pre-cooling and refrigerated transport can help decrease food loss by about 76% and reduce carbon emissions by 16%.

Improvements in servicing, maintenance and disposal of equipment that uses hydrochlorofluorocarbons, alongside a shift to alternative options with a lower global warming footprint, are also recommended. This can create two million jobs for trained technicians over the next two decades and reduce the demand for refrigerants by around 31%.

“India’s cooling strategy can help save lives and livelihoods, reduce carbon emissions and simultaneously position India as a global hub for green cooling manufacturing,” said Auguste Tano Kouamé, the World Bank’s Country Director in India.

“The right set of policy actions and public investments can help leverage large scale private investment in this sector,” said the authors of the report, Abhas K. Jha, Practice Manager, Climate and Disaster Risk Management, South Asia and Mehul Jain, Climate Change Specialist, World Bank. “We recommend that these moves be accelerated by creating a flagship government mission to address the challenges and opportunities from rising temperatures in India,” they added.

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