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As Delhi Chokes After Diwali, Hazardous AQI 999 Triggers Air Purifier Buying Frenzy Across India

AQI hits 999 in pockets of the capital; brands report multi-fold rise in air purifier sales across India as toxic winter smog drives health-led purchases



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Article Content:

Delhi's air quality plunged to extreme levels after Diwali 2025, with PM2.5 concentrations averaging $488 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, more than three times higher than pre-festival readings. In several neighbourhoods, the Air Quality Index (AQI) maxed out at 999, while many others recorded values above 500, putting millions at risk during one of the capital's worst post-Diwali episodes in recent years. Firecracker emissions, stagnant winds and industrial activity combined to trigger the toxic haze that enveloped the city and pushed authorities into emergency response mode.

The severe deterioration has intensified consumer panic, prompting a steep rise in demand for air purifiers across Delhi-NCR and beyond. Retailers and manufacturers

estimate a 30–40 per cent spike during peak pollution weeks, although the sector remains seasonally skewed and continues to be a niche category in most parts of the country.

K N Srikanth, Director, Home, Kitchen and Outdoors, Amazon India, reported massive growth across categories. “We’ve witnessed a strong 5X increase in air purifiers compared to typical days and Delhi-NCR witnessing a sharp 20X surge. The growth spans across Amazon’s wide selection of air purifiers with the economy range (below Rs 10,000) growing 75 per cent YoY, the mid-range (Rs 10,000–Rs 20,000) rising 70 per cent YoY, and the premium segment (above Rs 20,000) surging 150 per cent YoY reflecting strong customer preference for solutions to improve indoor air quality. As customers prioritize cleaner air and healthier homes and workspaces, we offer widest selection of air purifiers starting at Rs 4,999 from popular brands such as Philips, Honeywell, Eureka Forbes, Dyson, Coway, and Levoit with over 30 models available with one-day delivery option across Delhi-NCR.”

Air Pollution Crisis Fuels Structural Rise in Demand

While Delhi remains the epicentre of winter smog, poor air quality is no longer confined to India’s metros. Anmay, Co-founder of Atovio, highlighted the widening footprint of hazardous air. “India’s air-quality problem is spreading beyond the usual hotspots. In late 2024, New Delhi recorded ‘Severe+’ days with officially reported AQI levels of 484 and higher. Even coastal cities like Mumbai are seeing PM_{2.5} levels above national safety thresholds. With 83 of the world’s top 100 polluted cities in India, the exposure is no longer limited to metros. At the same time, heightened health awareness post-COVID, widespread influencer/social-media messaging about air quality, and visible impacts on children and older adults are making air purification a must-have for more households than ever.”

Technology Takes Centre Stage

Players across the industry are rapidly innovating with filtration technologies, IoT integration, and product design. Anmay observed, “The category is evolving fast. While HEPA-14 remains the baseline, brands are incorporating smart sensors, IoT connectivity, UV/ion/plasma modules and sleek portable form-factors. Wearables and filter-free models are now gaining traction alongside room purifiers. Made-in-India brands such as Atovio are leveraging scientific lab validation (e.g., IIT Kanpur, NABL Lab testing), emphasizing zero-ozone emission safety and design aesthetics to stand out. Scalability is being built on direct-to-consumer, quick-commerce and differentiated product ecosystems rather than purely competing on price.”

Ayesha Prasad, AGM – Marketing, Kärcher India, described a seismic behavioural shift. “Air pollution in India has shifted from a seasonal spike to a persistent public health concern... Consumers are now more health-conscious and proactive, transforming air purifiers from discretionary purchases into essential household appliances. Demand is accelerating not only in homes but also in schools, offices, and healthcare spaces prioritising safer indoor environments.”

On innovation, she added, “Advanced technologies like HEPA 14 filtration, activated carbon, plasma ionisation, and UV sterilisation are raising performance standards... Smart features such as AI-enabled sensing, auto mode, app connectivity, and voice control reflect a growing demand for effortless, continuous protection.”

Energy-Efficient Innovation and User Experience

Sudhir Goel, Chief Business Officer, Acer India, noted the broader shift toward holistic indoor wellness. “Seasonal pollution, recurring smog events, and post-monsoon dust levels have made air purifiers a necessity rather than a luxury... Post-pandemic, people have also begun to prioritize the quality of air within homes, offices, and schools — much like water purification a decade ago.”

He detailed Acerpure’s approach. “Our air purifiers feature 4-in-1 filtration technology... The addition of UVC purification technology provides an extra layer of sterilisation... Distant Spiral Air Flow with 90° vertical and 80° horizontal oscillation ensures clean air circulates effectively up to 21 metres... These advancements are reshaping consumer expectations, moving the category from a reactive purchase during pollution season to a year-round essential for healthier, smarter living.”

Market Forecasts Show Strong Growth

Pooja Lahri, Vice President, Primus Partners, expects strong long-term expansion. “India’s Air treatment product market is set for significant growth between 2025 and 2035, with an estimated increase from USD 1.75 billion in 2025 to USD 5.16 billion by 2035. The demand for air purifiers is projected to grow from USD 151.52 million in 2025 to USD 381.37 million in 2033.” She also noted a nationwide shift driven by annual smog, post-COVID health awareness, and digital literacy, adding that consumers now view purifiers as essential rather than premium.

Sustainability and Circular Practices Emerge

Pallavee Dhaundiya Panthry, Chief Communication Advisor, World of Circular Economy (WOCE), stressed responsible innovation. “India’s urban air-quality challenge is a visible symptom of a deeper environmental crisis... innovation must now mean responsibility — from recyclable or bio-based filters, energy-efficient systems, and carbon-neutral manufacturing to circular designs that ensure minimal waste and maximum life-cycle efficiency.” She urged collective action, “Purifiers can’t be our escape route... The clean-air movement must begin with collective intent.”

Air Purification as Daily Wellness

Trevor Kuna, Chief Marketing Officer, QNET, said consumer behaviour has fundamentally changed. “Air purifiers have evolved from a seasonal buy to a daily essential, the biggest shift we see is in behaviour, families are no longer waiting for winter smog to act, they’re taking control of their indoor environments year-round.”

On rising tech expectations, he added, “The market is moving from filtration to intelligence... The next wave of innovation will merge air quality data with personal health insights, integrating seamlessly into smart home ecosystems.”

Indoor Pollution Awareness Expands to Kitchens

Indoor smoke from cooking is also gaining attention. Aarushi Agarwal, Head – Large Kitchen Appliances and New Businesses, Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals, said, “Every day, we check the AQI before stepping outside... But as we become more conscious of our health, it’s time to ask — what about the air inside our homes? The kitchen... is often where indoor pollution quietly begins.”

She highlighted Crompton’s approach. “Its Sylvaire and AQNova chimneys, powered by AirIQ Technology... sensing air quality in real time and adjusting suction automatically... In today’s era of conscious living, these smart chimneys are not just appliances — they reflect Crompton’s commitment to redefining healthier homes.”

India’s worsening air quality — visible most starkly after Diwali — has accelerated the shift toward indoor air-quality solutions. While sales remain seasonal, growing awareness, health priorities, and technology innovation are pushing air purifiers toward mainstream adoption across metros and Tier-II cities. As brands invest in intelligence, filtration science, and sustainable design, air purification is moving from a reactive purchase to a proactive way of living well.