

KR Market reaches deafening decibel

SNEHA JHA

Bangalore—Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMT) buses and other automobiles at Kalasipalyam bus stand cause noise pollution, which poses a severe health hazard to the people who are exposed to it. The vehicles breach the ambient noise standards set by the Noise Pollution (regulation and Control) Rules, 2000. A survey conducted by the Mysore-based All India Institute of Speech and Hearing last year, revealed that the noise level observed here is 84 decibel (db), which grossly exceeds the permitted level prescribed under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The Central Pollution Control Board sets a standard of 65 db for commercial areas.

S.K Natraj, 52, owner of Kempaya Stall said that

he can not sit there for long. He has developed several problems like chronic headache, high blood pressure and disturbed sleep patterns. He goes for monthly check-ups to cope up with these problems. Doctors have advised him against sitting there for long. The discordant ambience has taken a toll on his health.

Another contributing factor are street side vendors, screaming their lungs out, vying for the attention of potential buyers.

"The shrill honking annoys me. But the route of these buses cannot be diverted", said Kavya, student at Government College of Nursing.

Doctors believe that piercing noises are harmful to health and

lead to nausea, headache and hypertension. "An intolerably high noise level can cause the eardrum to rupture. Noise is like a slow poison. The older generation is more vulnerable to its risks," said Suryanarayan Joshi, ENT surgeon at Victoria Hospital.

Chandra. R, a traffic constable said, "It is hard to monitor all the automobiles that are in bad condition. The city has around 1.25 lakh autos. Some use altered silencers. However they can be given a notice under the Motor Vehicle Act."

Mohan Krishna BG, Environment Officer at Karnataka

State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB) said, "We deal with noise pollution in industrial areas only. Monitoring commercial areas is not our duty. The police and Regional Transport Office (RTOs) address such complaints. Noise

pollution is an invisible form of pollution it cannot be monitored strictly."

K Jagdeesh, Assistant traffic manager, BMT said, " Heavy vehicular traffic in the area is the main reason for noise pollution. But BMT ensures that its vehicles do not contribute to the existing levels of noise pollution. Almost all our vehicles are mechanically sound and do not produce noise. If they do they are replaced as soon as possible."

LT Gayathri, Chief Health Officer, BBMP said, "I know the problem is significant and needs attention but we do not look into these matters. Noise pollution should be attended by authorities."



Vehicles and vendors create a cacophony at Kalasipalyam bus stand. Pic by author

Lead leading to health hazards

SHILPA KRISHNAN

Bangalore—The lead content in paints used on buses, toys, etc in India is above normal levels which is hazardous to the health of both adults and children.

Many items that children use are painted in colours like yellow, red and green. These colours contain the highest lead content. Items that are painted in these colours include school buses, toys and play items in the parks such as seesaws, slides, swings etc.

Health experts say that lead enters a child's body mainly through ingestion.

Children are more affected by lead for a number of reasons. Since their bodies are rapidly developing, they also absorb more lead than adults and their developing brains are in greater danger of being hurt by the lead. Lead in children can affect the brain, the nervous system, the blood cells, and the child's ability to absorb Vitamin D and calcium.

The symptoms include vomiting, stomach cramps and anemia. If the poisoning goes untreated and is severe enough, the child's brain can be seriously affected. This is called lead encephalopathy. The child can then have bouts of drowsiness, vomiting and irritability that can be followed by seizures, coma or even death. Kaveri Venkatesh, a mother of a two year old said, "I had no idea that lead was so harmful. I will have to be more careful about the toys my daughter plays with. The authorities must create more awareness about this matter."

enamel paints were found to contain lead ranging from 25 ppm to 14,000 ppm. In effect, 83.87% of the enamel samples had lead content ranging from 600 ppm to 14,000 ppm. Since plastic paints were found to contain low

India is supposed to conform to a maximum limit of 1,000 parts per million (PPM) or .1% of a total lead content. Even this is voluntary. Meanwhile, countries like the United States and Singapore have a limit of 600 ppm

concentrations of lead, of the total samples tested, 38% were found to contain high concentrations of lead.

"We usually check for lead content in paints during the time of Ganesha festival," said Mr.

Krishna Mohan, Environmental Officer, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board. "During that time the senior officers collect paints and test it in the central lab. If lead content is found then we warn the paint manufacturers. As such there are no punishments in place for

- Health hazards from lead**
1. Affects brains, nervous system and blood cells of small kids
 2. Causes stomach cramps, anemia, vomiting
 3. If not taken care of can lead to drowsiness, seizures, coma and even death.
 4. In men it affects the sperm movements resulting in miscarriages and birth defects in parents
 5. Even in women it can be cause of miscarriages and complicated pregnancies.

and even this figure is under review. China actually has a standard of 90 ppm.

In a study made in 2007 by the NGO Toxic Links, most oil-based

violators."

Lead is equally harmful for adults. Experts say that in men, lead can damage sperm and affect the sperm's ability to move. It can affect the number of sperm. These

effects on sperm can harm a man's ability to father children and have been linked to miscarriages and birth defects in their partners.

Experts also say that in women, exposure to high levels of lead may cause miscarriages, premature births, stillbirths and decreased fertility.

More recently, some studies found that pregnant women with levels of lead

in the umbilical cord blood of 10-15 ug/dl had children who suffer from learning and behavioral problems later in life. Lead in the pregnant mother's blood passes into the blood of the fetus that affect brain development.



School buses, toys and playground apparatus painted yellow, green and red have the highest lead content - pic Google Images

Pic(k) of the week



A ten year old girl working at a construction site. Government estimates say most of the 13 million India's child labourers are losing their childhoods working in hazardous industries. Rights activists put it closer to 60 million. - pic Sharath N. Murthy

Trend since ages

Consanguinous marriages are commonplace in Gollahalli village

ADITI SONI

Consanguinous marriages still are very common in Gollahalli village of Bangalore. The trend of consanguinous marriages means marrying in one's own blood relation. This is being carried on for about 200 years. Unaware of the consequences, all girls are married at about 13 or 15 year of age to uncle's son or cousins, in their own blood relation. Most of the villagers said that they marry their daughters at an early age so as to unburden their shoulders.

"I was married at the age of 13 to my cousin brother", said Shubhami, resident of Gollahalli who is the mother of two children out of which one is crippled.

It has been scientifically proved that consanguinous leads to death

of infants before, during or immediately after birth, also leads to increased incidence of birth defects, and genetic diseases including blindness, physical disorders, blood cancer, breathing problems, etc in children.

The main reason for this is that the couple commonly share 50 percent of their genetic make up, hence leading to some sort of mental or physical illness in their offsprings.

No government measures have been taken to spread the awareness among the people. Mr Rammohan a villager said "The trend is being carried on since ages with the main reason that we don't want our land to be given in someone else's hand. It's an ancestral property and the trend should be followed."

The Human Social and Welfare

Ministry still has not been able to spread the required awareness. No campaigns or workshops have been held. As a result, people are entirely unaware of the consequences which not just they, but their children also have to pay!

Rather, this site is not just visible here, but in other villages around too. In Devannahalli also, the such marriages are quite common and hence babies are also not perfectly fit.

Though this trend is quite common in Southern India, but the noticeable thing is that despite much scientific development, the old notions still exist, with people unaware of advancement. Generations have been suffering from mental and physical disabilities, but government is still keeping its eyes closed!