



*Report on Awareness programme
on Diwali festival*



November, 2015

CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
Zonal Office (South)
Nisarga Bhavan, Thimmaiah Road
Shivanagar, Bengaluru - 560 079



Report on Awareness programme on Diwali festival

Diwali, the spectacular Hindu festival of lights is celebrated all over the country. The festival symbolizes the victory of light over dark, good over evil and knowledge over darkness. "Diwali, a contraction of the word "Deepavali" meaning row of lights in Sanskrit is often celebrated with food, cracker bursting, parties and, of course, colorful lights hanging everywhere.



In olden days Diwali signified bringing of light and happiness around but presently burning of firecrackers is the highlight of Diwali and for most of the people, Diwali is just a synonym to a night full of crackers

noise and smoke; Brighter the sparkles, louder the noise the greater the thrill. Fireworks are burst because it is believed that it drives away evil spirits. Today Deepavali is an amalgamation of gloom, darkness, despair, health problems, environment degradation and murk. Bursting of fire crackers create significant pollution.

This year, Diwali is celebrated all over the country during the second week of November and burning of fireworks is the highlight of the festival. There is a misconception among public that pollution due to Diwali crackers is only once-in-a-year event and so there is no need to worry about it. But bursting of fireworks add to the pollution level and its health impacts remain for several days.

Bursting of fireworks causes severe air and noise pollution which poses serious health hazards. The noise triggers annoyance, aggression, hypertension, high stress levels, hearing loss and sleep disturbance. Fireworks are mainly composed of toxic chemicals like lead,

barium, chromium etc., and these chemicals and gases like carbon monoxide, nitrogen and Sulphur oxides are released during bursting of fireworks, which are harmful to humans, animals, plants and overall environment.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) since last few years is monitoring ambient air and noise levels during Diwali festival and it is observed that the noise levels are above the prescribed limits both during day and night times. Hence, CPCB has taken initiatives to create public awareness towards minimizing the pollution levels by bursting of the fireworks and its associated adverse health impacts during the festivities.

On behalf of three toddlers - Arjun Gopal, Aarav Bhandari and Zoya Rao Bhasin, all aged between 6 and 14 months, PIL was filed - seeking immediate steps to curb Delhi's fatal air pollution including ban on fire crackers during Diwali. The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Writ Petition (Civil) No. 728/2015 regarding air & noise pollution due to fireworks on the eve of Diwali has directed the Government to give wide publicity to the ill effects of fireworks and encourage restraint or responsible use and to encourage teachers to tell students not to buy and use fireworks. Accordingly, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has ordered the following for compliance:

- *The Union Governments and all state Governments will give wide publicity to the ill effects of fireworks and advise people to be cautious accordingly.*
- *The Teachers, Lecturers, Asst. Professors, Professors of the Schools and Colleges to educate the students about the ill effects of the fireworks and to restrict its usage.*
- *Restrict window for use of fireworks to be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*
- *Resident Welfare Associations to hold community fireworks for brief period of 30 minutes on a single day*

CPCB for last few years is trying to create public awareness towards the high noise levels generated during the bursting of the crackers and its associated adverse health impacts. Noise standards for fire crackers have been notified vide GSR No.682 (E) dated 5th October, 1999 under the Environmental (Protection) Act. As per this notification, the manufacture, sale or use of fire crackers generating noise levels exceeding 125 dB (AI) or 145 dB (C)pk at 4 meters distance from the point of bursting are prohibited for individual fire crackers. For



fire crackers in series, these noise limits are suitably made more stringent depending upon the number of crackers in series. Fire crackers shall not be used at any time in silence zones, as defined in S.O. 1046 (E) issued on 22.11.2000 by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Observing that the 'Right to Sleep' is a fundamental right, the government of India has banned firecrackers between 10 pm and 6 am, on Diwali.

As per directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court, this office has undertaken several measures during October 25- November 12, 2015 to create awareness among public and to give wide publicity on ill-effects of crackers. Efforts were made by the office to educate and sensitize the children, parents public that that sound and air pollution harm them personally. Animals such as dogs and cats have a higher hearing range than humans, so they also suffer due to loud noise caused during Diwali celebrations. suggested various options to ensure a peaceful Diwali. This office took several measures urging public to make Diwali festival a noiseless and non-polluting celebration. This office vide letters, Emails, awareness programmes has tried to reach out to a large number of people. The measures taken are briefed in subsequent para.

Letters to Education Institutions

Children stick to directions and messages given by their teachers. The Supreme Court Order has therefore given more thrust to the teaching community as they can bring a remarkable change. Each teacher can tell and inspire hundreds of students not to burn fire crackers. The children have to be made responsible to take eco-friendly initiatives. Fireworks are fun, but they are also dangerous. Fireworks have caused and continue to cause serious and tragic accidents.

Hence, letters were addressed to various departments, regulatory authorities, universities, education institutions, schools and colleges in Southern Zone requesting them to create awareness among public and students to avoid bursting of crackers as a social responsibility. Each staff in this office was assigned to forward the soft copy of the letter to minimum 10 people with a request to forward it to atleast 10 others, thereby an awareness chain was created and reached large number of people. Copy of the letter is placed as Annexure-III. In response to this, the State Government and concerned departments have taken measures to create awareness so as to avoid air & noise pollution due to fireworks on the eve of Diwali festival. Copy of one such letter from Directorate of Education, Government of Goa is placed as Annexure-IV



केन्द्रीय प्रदूषण नियंत्रण बोर्ड
CENTRAL POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD
पर्यावरण, वन एवं जलवायु परिवर्तन विभाग, भारत सरकार
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE, GOVT. OF INDIA

Tech 40/ Diwali/ ZOB/2015-16/1238-1275

October 27, 2015

To

Sub: Hon'ble Supreme Court Direction to Central and State Governments to curb the Air & Noise Pollution during Diwali festival

Ref.: The Hon'ble Court Order on W.P. (Civil) No. 728/2015 dated 16.10.2015

Sir,

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), GOI is the nodal agency for planning, promotion, co-ordination and implementation of India's Environmental Policies and Programmes. In order to regulate and control air and noise pollution at source, MoEF&CC has notified The Air (Prevention and Control) of Pollution Act, 1981 and The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 (as amended to date). These Rules stipulate the ambient air quality standards and noise levels for different designated areas so as to avoid pollution menace (Annexure).

This time Diwali is celebrated all over the country during second week of November 2015 and bursting of fireworks is the highlight of the festival. Bursting of fireworks causes severe air and noise pollution that poses serious health hazards. The noise triggers annoyance, aggression, hypertension, high stress levels, hearing loss and sleep disturbance. Fireworks are mainly composed of toxic chemicals like lead, barium, chromium, sulfate, potassium nitrate etc., and these chemicals releases gases like carbon monoxide, oxides of nitrogen, Sulphur dioxide etc., during bursting that are harmful to humans, animals, plants and overall environment. Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) since last few years is creating public awareness towards impact of minimizing pollution levels related with bursting of fireworks and its adverse health impacts during festivities. CPCB has notified noise standards for fire-crackers.

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The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the Writ Petition (Civil) No. 728/2015 regarding air & noise pollution due to fireworks on the eve of Diwali has directed the Government to give wide publicity to the ill effects of fireworks and encourage restraint or responsible use and to encourage teachers to tell students not to buy and use fireworks. Accordingly, the Hon'ble Supreme Court has ordered the following for compliance:

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- Restrict window for use of fireworks to be from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
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The details of "Record of Proceedings" of the said writ petition are available in the link http://court.nic.in/supremecourt/casestatus_new/querycheck_page2.asp. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) / State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) are monitoring the ambient air and noise levels by establishing manual & continuous ambient air quality monitoring stations and real time noise monitoring stations. The ambient air quality in selected cities is displayed on real time basis in the form of Air Quality Index (AQI) in the CPCB website in the interest of public. In general noise levels and few environmental parameters are higher than the national standards & bursting of fireworks will further deteriorate the ambient air quality and health hazards are likely to be more severe.

As directed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, the Central Pollution Control Board respectfully appeals all teaching community to educate and create awareness among students and public to avoid bursting of crackers as a social responsibility. The cumulative actions taken by the teaching community, regulatory authorities and public will definitely bring a significant change in the society that helps in improving the ambient air quality and minimizing noise levels. Let's join hands to **Save Environment by celebrating the Festival of lights only with lights.**

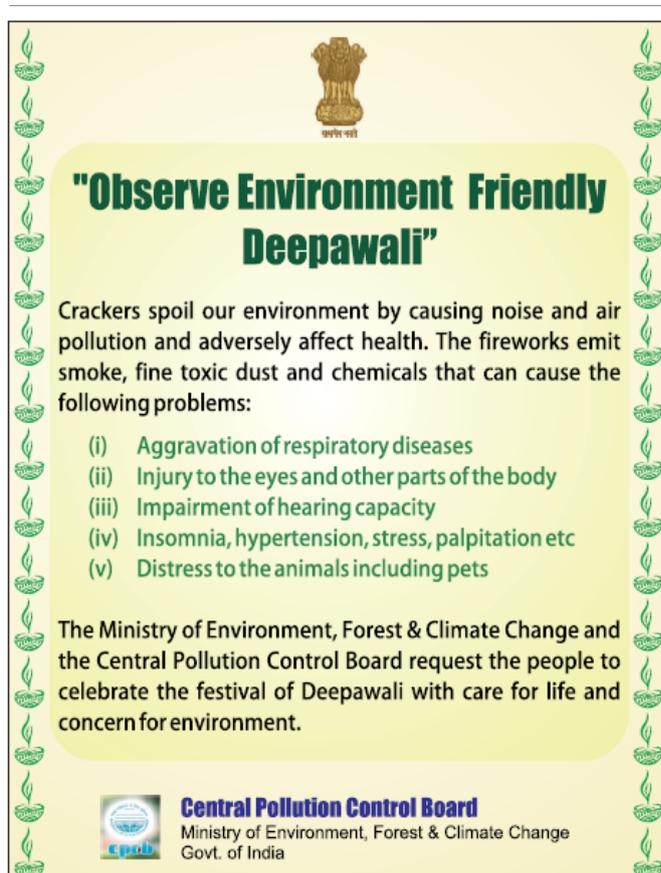
"Happy Diwali, Safe Diwali"

Encl: Standards for noise levels

Yours Sincerely
S. Suresh
27/10/2015
(S. Suresh)
Zonal Officer

Advertisement in leading Newspapers

Fireworks are fun, but they are also dangerous. Fireworks have caused and continue to cause serious and tragic accidents. People should be aware about the consequences before bursting the fireworks, hence to make people aware about the consequences wide publicity was given in print media.



The advertisement is a vertical rectangular poster with a light green background. At the top center is the State Emblem of India. Below it, the text reads: **"Observe Environment Friendly Deepawali"**. The main body of text states: "Crackers spoil our environment by causing noise and air pollution and adversely affect health. The fireworks emit smoke, fine toxic dust and chemicals that can cause the following problems:" followed by a list of five items: (i) Aggravation of respiratory diseases, (ii) Injury to the eyes and other parts of the body, (iii) Impairment of hearing capacity, (iv) Insomnia, hypertension, stress, palpitation etc, and (v) Distress to the animals including pets. Below the list, it says: "The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Central Pollution Control Board request the people to celebrate the festival of Deepawali with care for life and concern for environment." At the bottom left is the logo of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), and at the bottom right is the text: **Central Pollution Control Board**, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of India. The entire poster is framed by a decorative border of small green diya icons.

"Observe Environment Friendly Deepawali"

Crackers spoil our environment by causing noise and air pollution and adversely affect health. The fireworks emit smoke, fine toxic dust and chemicals that can cause the following problems:

- Aggravation of respiratory diseases
- Injury to the eyes and other parts of the body
- Impairment of hearing capacity
- Insomnia, hypertension, stress, palpitation etc
- Distress to the animals including pets

The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Central Pollution Control Board request the people to celebrate the festival of Deepawali with care for life and concern for environment.

 **Central Pollution Control Board**
Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change
Govt. of India

In public interest advertisement was released in colour format in four leading newspaper on Sunday, 8th November, 2015. The advertisement in English was released in Deccan Herald & New Indian Express, Kannada version in Prajavani and Hindi in Rajasthan Patrika. The newspaper clippings are placed as Annexure-II.

Analysis of Fireworks

To understand the composition of the fireworks, representatives from Sri Kaleshwari fireworks were invited to the office on November 6, 2015. They were briefed about the safety measures to be taken while firing the crackers.



Different types of fireworks like cracklers, flower pot, bombs etc. were opened to understand the fillers used inside the cracker. It was informed that the composition of fireworks is mentioned on the carton. The different chemicals used in the cracker impart different colours and different effects to the cracker. The customers should be cautious and must purchase the crackers composed of less quantity of chemicals. Once the crackers were opened and physically verified the chemicals it contains, it inspired the staff not to purchase fireworks.



Awareness Programme at Don-Bosco School

To create awareness and to instil sense of responsibility a Diwali awareness programme was organized jointly with Karnataka State Pollution Control Board and Vigyan Parishad at Don-Bosco School and pre-university college, Chitradurga on November 9, 2015. More than 500 students participated in the event.



The event was inaugurated by watering the plant by Sh. Muralidhara, Environmental Officer, KSPCB, Smt. Mahima T, EE, CPCB, Father Anand, Principal Don-Bosco School and Environmentalist Dr. H. K.S Swamy.

Sh. Muralidhara, Environmental Officer, KSPCB informed the students to minimize pollution by practicing good practices. Smt. Mahima T, EE CPCB made a detailed power point presentation on the associated impacts of bursting fireworks. It was informed that bursting of fireworks causes noise pollution, air pollution, solid waste containing paper and toxic chemicals, smog, accidents, burns etc., Dr. H. K. S. Swamy, environmentalist demonstrated the ill-effects of crackers using working models.



The event was given coverage in both print and electronic media. Newspaper clipping of Prajavani.



The students, teachers and all other participants took a pledge which is as follows:

“That we will fight pollution, we will celebrate the festival of lights by lighting only earthen lamps without crackers and contribute to safer and healthier future”

The students were also advised to implement the objectives of Swachh Baharat Mission so as to keep the surroundings, home and school clean. They were instructed to make judicious use of paper and other resources, avoid use of plastics, switch over to organic and renewable material like jute etc.

The biggest change that could be seen is that kids are being responsible and are taking eco-friendly initiatives to preserve the environment. Their thinking can make a big difference and we are sure to achieve a positive result in the coming years. This office is continuously making efforts to ensure that people enjoy a safe Diwali through awareness programmes inspiring them not to burn firecrackers.

