

Awaaz Foundation launches drive against noise pollution

RICHA KHARE

MUMBAI: Awaaz Foundation, in collaboration with some non-governmental organisations, colleges and the Indian Medical Association, unveiled the initiative, 'Your Awaaz against Noise' on Tuesday to create awareness of the adverse effects of noise pollution in the festival season.

Sumaira Abdulali, convener of Awaaz Foundation said, "One aspect of all religions is peace. Political parties are making inflammatory statements and almost defying the High Court's order. It can be dealt with only when people come together and speak up."

Explaining the adverse effect of noise pollution on health, Dr. M. V. Jagade, Consultant ENT surgeon at JJ hospital said, "Exposure to noise pollution above 80 decibels for eight hours a day for eight years will induce permanent deafness. Noise



HIGH VOLUME: Ganesh idols being carted from Lalbaug to pandals in the city. — PHOTO: RAJENDRA G.

pollution adversely affects every part of the human body."

Awaaz Foundation seeks to promote awareness that noise pollution is not an integral part of any religion. In this festive season, the Foundation has collaborated with Aured, a therapy centre for deaf children; Down to Earth, an NGO which moni-

tors children from BBD Chawls; the National Initiative for Safe Sound of the Indian Medical Association; Thadomal Shahani Centre for Media and Communication and the Sanskar India Foundation, along with some anti-noise pollution activists.

The writer is an intern at The Hindu

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Anti-noise crusaders launch campaign ahead of fests

HT Correspondent

■ htmetro@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: Less than a week before the city celebrates Ganeshotsav, anti-noise activists from city based non-profit Awaaz Foundation launched its campaign 'Gods against Noise' on Tuesday, to educate citizens about the health hazards of noise pollution.

The campaign is part of 'Your Awaaz against Noise', an ongoing year-long awareness drive against noise pollution by the NGO. It was launched with several stakeholders at the Mumbai Patrakar Sangh at Fort along with 20 children.

"Noise is a serious health hazard affecting residents of Mumbai, which is one of the noisiest cities in the world," said Sumaira Abdulali, convener, Awaaz Foundation. "After the Bombay high court recently passed a comprehensive order to curb noise levels during festivals, we hope to make a difference in the way festivals are celebrated this year through this campaign."

The NGO has been recording noise levels throughout the 13 days of the festival for the past 13 years. While noise levels dropped



■ The campaign was launched at the Mumbai Patrakar Sangh at Fort.

HT PHOTO

in 2014, levels were much above permissible limits last year.

Some of the groups that have tied up with Awaaz Foundation for the campaign include Aural Education for the Hearing Impaired (AURED), a therapy centre for deaf children; NGO Down to Earth that mentors children from Mumbai's BDD chawls; the Indian Medical Association; Thadomal Shahani Centre for Media and Communication, Bandra; Sanskar India Foundation and other anti-noise pollution activists.

Doctors from various fields such as ENT specialists, gynaecologists, cardiologists and psychiatrists jointly spread the mes-

sage about health issues as part of the campaign. "Exposure to noise pollution above 80 decibels (dB) for eight hours a day for eight years will induce permanent deafness," said Dr MV Jagade, consultant ENT surgeon and head of department at JJ Hospital and Grant Medical College.

Earlier this year, therapy centre AURED carried out hearing test for 25 traffic policemen and 3,000 slum children from different parts of the city at Mahim. "We observed that more than 50% of all traffic policemen and close to 1,500 children suffered hearing loss," said Vibha Shah, coordinator, AURED.

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Drive to curb festive noise pollution

Mumbai: The decibel levels are already on rise and amplifiers continue to blare, even at night with the beginning of the festive season, starting with idol parades for Ganesh Chaturthi next month. In the crusade for a quiet Mumbai, Awaaz Foundation is gearing up to curb noise attacks during the festive season with 'Gods Against Noise', a campaign to create awareness on the effects noise pollution can have on health. Awaaz has over the years measured noise at festivals, religious and cultural events of all communities and filed PILs against noise from firecrackers and loudspeakers.

"The idea is to celebrate without noise. As usual, we're going to map the sound levels and compare with previous years but what makes this year crucial is the number of court orders that have come through," explained Sumaira Abdulali, who has been at the forefront of the movement against noise pollution in the city.

For the upcoming season, Awaaz is collaborating with