

BEFORE THE HON'BLE NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL

WESTERN ZONE BENCH AT PUNE

ORIGINAL APPLICATION NO. 174 OF 2024

IN THE MATTER OF:

Dr. Kalyani Mandke

...APPLICANT

Versus

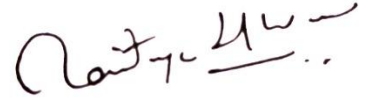
State of Maharashtra and Ors.

...RESPONDENT

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THROUGH

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SHORT NOTE ON BEHALF OF APPLICANT DETAILING SUGGESTIONS FOR NOISE CONTROL IN PUNE CITY DURING GANESH FESTIVAL

The present Application has been filed seeking enforcement of the ambient air quality standards in respect of noise during Ganesh Festival celebrated annually in Pune city through *inter alia* regulation of the use of loud-speakers in public places. That vide order dated 28.08.2024, this Hon'ble Tribunal had directed the Applicant to place on record certain suggestions regarding methods of mitigating noise pollution. Accordingly, recommendations to control noise pollution caused during Ganesh Festival are as follows:

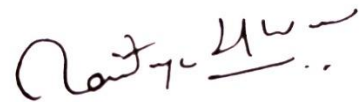
1. The Authorities may permit a Maximum of 2 Number of Speakers with 80-100 Watts Power to each Ganesh Mandal or user of loud-speakers in public places.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Limiting the number of speakers and their wattage helps to control the overall sound pressure levels (SPL). High SPLs, particularly above 85 dB, can cause irreversible damage to hearing over time. By capping the wattage and number of speakers, we reduce the risk of noise-induced hearing loss among festival attendees and local residents.
2. Additional Speakers should only be permitted in exceptional circumstances, and the mounting of such Speakers must be in a Series with a 20-foot distance between each Speaker.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Placing speakers 20 feet apart ensures even sound distribution without excessive amplification. This setup minimizes sound wave interference and reduces hotspots where sound levels might exceed safe thresholds. By controlling the speaker layout, we can maintain sound levels that are more consistent and less likely to exceed safe hearing limits across the pandal area.

3. The MPCB must ensure close monitoring and control of Speaker Bass Levels.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Low-frequency sounds, especially those below 150 Hz (bass sounds), carry more energy and can travel farther than higher frequencies. This makes them more likely to cause disturbances, particularly in densely populated urban areas like Pune city. Excessive bass can also cause vibrations that contribute to structural damage and increase stress levels among residents. By monitoring and limiting bass levels, we can significantly reduce the impact of noise pollution.
4. Ganesh Mandals and other users of loud-speakers in public places must be directed to ensure that a 15-Minute Break is taken after every hour of music played.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Continuous exposure to loud music can lead to auditory fatigue, where the ears become less sensitive to sound over time, increasing the risk of temporary or permanent hearing loss. Introducing a 15-minute break after every hour allows the auditory system to recover, reducing the potential for hearing damage and improving overall well-being among festival participants and the surrounding community.
5. The Authorities must ensure a restriction of 2 Dhol-Tasha Units Per Mandal.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Allowing only two units per Mandal reduces the overall sound output during processions, preventing excessive noise levels that can exceed safe limits. This measure ensures that the cultural tradition is respected while also protecting public health and minimizing disruption to the urban environment. Additionally, smaller, controlled processions are easier to monitor and manage, ensuring compliance with noise regulations.
6. The Authorities must ensure a limitation of 25 players per Dhol-Tasha Unit.
 - **Scientific Reasoning:** Larger groups of players exponentially increase sound levels, particularly in the lower frequency ranges, contributing to excessive noise pollution. By capping the number of players in each unit, we can control the intensity of the sound produced, thereby minimizing its potential harm while still preserving the cultural significance of the performance.

7. Additional regulation of Dhol-Tasha must be ensured due to harmful Low-Frequency Vibrations generated by such instruments.

- **Scientific Reasoning:** Traditional instruments like Dhol-Tasha generate low-frequency vibrations, with fundamental frequencies often below 10 Hz. These sub-audible frequencies can cause whole-body vibrations, which, if sustained for extended periods, may have adverse effects on internal organs and overall health. Limiting the duration and intensity of these vibrations helps protect the health of both performers and spectators.

It is stated that the above-mentioned suggestions have been scientifically authenticated by Dr. Kalyani Mandke, the Applicant in the present OA 174/2024/WZ, renowned audiologist with over 35 years of professional experience, and recipient of the ASHA Fellowship by the American Speech and Hearing Association in 2023.



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