

Citizen's Right to Clean Air

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**Concluding Workshop: Vehicle Emissions Project
Manila
February 28, 2002**

Knowledge based activism

CSE blew the lid on smog and smog makers in 1996 in the book
Slow Murder: The deadly story of vehicular pollution in India

The study investigated the problem of:

- Outdated vehicle technology
- Poor fuel quality
- Lack of transportation planning
- Poor maintenance of vehicles

The connection between the problem and these multiple factors eluded most Indian citizens.

To help people understand this CONNECTION and push for change *Right To Clean Air Campaign* was launched in November 1996 to:

- improve air quality planning
- build awareness through advocacy and networking
- undertake policy research to guide the campaign

Impact

Public campaign: A catalyst

CSE's *Right to Clean Air* campaign catalysed significant changes:

November 1, 1996: CSE released *Slow Murder: The deadly story of vehicular pollution in India*

November 18, 1996: The Supreme Court of India issued *suo moto* notice to the Delhi government to submit an action plan to control city's air pollution following the media reports on the CSE study.

December 1996: The Delhi government presented its first ever action plan to the Court to combat air pollution in Delhi.

November 1, 1997: CSE released its latest findings on mortality and morbidity in Indian cities and held government inaction responsible for this.

Impact

November 4, 1997: The environment minister announced his plans to issue a white paper on pollution and an action plan by December 2, 1997.

January 7, 1998: The Supreme Court of India directed setting up of a statutory body to advise Court on pollution control and monitor implementation of Court orders.

Dramatic spin off

?Between 1987-1997 the only substantive Court ruling – introduction of cat converters and unleaded petrol.

?After 1997 – as public campaign gathers momentum, a spate of significant rulings follow.

This helps Delhi to progress fast

Only court ruled. No decisions from government

Important Supreme Court rulings in Delhi

On fuel quality

Elimination of leaded petrol

Petrol and diesel with 500 ppm sulphur and petrol with 1 per cent benzene

Mandated supply of pre-mix petrol to two- and three-wheelers

On vehicle technology

Advanced enforcement of Euro II emissions standards for both petrol and diesel cars in April 2000

On alternative fuels

Move three-wheelers and taxis to CNG or clean fuels

Move the entire city bus fleet to CNG

Other measures

Strengthen air quality monitoring

Create bus terminus at the city boundaries to bypass incoming traffic

Set up two independent fuel testing laboratories to check adulteration

Directed special drives to control adulteration

Court and Civil society interface

Civil society moves courts

Judiciary intervenes in areas where country's executive has failed.

- Civil society institutions get an opportunity to drive policies and overcome obstacles posed by official inaction

Getting the Court orders implemented is yet another battle.

- Government remains passive and reactive about Court directions
- Strong business resistance builds up to Court orders

The onus shifts to civil society groups to break resistance

Confronting disinformation

Civil society can fight this battle only with science and information

An example: The CNG crisis

Strong opposition from the diesel industry and refineries

- Misinformation campaign to canvass for Euro II diesel technology as a comparable option to CNG.
- Consistent opposition from the government and diesel business that CNG is not viable
- Campaigns to discredit CNG like the rumour campaign that 'CNG causes cancer.'

Denial of science

Science of pollution becomes the immediate target of attack

Manufacturer denies everything that is known about particulate pollution in a court affidavit

- ✍ "I deny that particulate matter is rising to high levels or that it has special adverse health effects."
- ✍ "I deny that particulate matter is resulting in total excess deaths per year..."
- ✍ "I deny that there is no safe level of particulate pollution."
- ✍ "I deny that even if particulate levels are well below the standards, they remain dangerous to human health."
- ✍ "I deny that respirable suspended particulate matter are more deadly for the fact that they are breathed deep into the lungs and lodge there."
- ✍ "I deny that the smaller the particle the more harmful it is."

A major automobile manufacturer, Supreme Court affidavit, October 1999

Breaking resistance with science

Convoluting science

"...(the) threshold for the onset of the health effects has not yet been detected for particulate emissions. This means that the safe levels have not yet been identified which is totally different from stating (as EPCA has done) that there is no safe level of particulate pollution."

—Major automobile manufacturer, Supreme Court affidavit, October 99

WHO clarifies

"This interpretation is certainly not correct. What we are saying is that effects occur at any concentration. There is no threshold for the onset of the effects meaning that for each concentration of particulate matter, there are already observed effects, starting from the lowest concentration of about 10 microgrammes per cubic metre and going to 150-200 microgrammes per cubic metre."

— WHO Expert, October 99

The challenge

Be on top of information to counter disinformation and to make right decisions

Resistance slows down progress

Controversy slows down progress in other strategies to curb air pollution

Air quality planning has still not progressed to address air quality objectives

Official indifference weakens regulatory framework needed to implement court orders on alternative fuels and new technologies.

In the absence of the proactive official agenda, judiciary and public opinion will continue to push the government

Building constituency

Public strategy to shape up public opinion and build up pressure

Partnership with technical professionals

- Involve experts -- doctors, technologists, economists among others, to improve technical understanding of issues, find solutions and counter misinformation.

Building peoples network

- Volunteers network to involve people in our campaign

Dissemination:

- People friendly communication strategy to shape up public opinion and provoke response. Involve media for better outreach.

Build up consumer pressure

- Public rating of the automobile industry to improve technology fast

Influencing legislators and Parliamentarians

- Design campaigns to put pressure on politicians

**If you want our votes
 GIVE US CLEAN AIR**

• Air pollution takes one life every hour in Delhi. One out of ten kids wheeze with asthma.
 • One out of every ten people in Delhi is likely to suffer from cancer

IT ISN'T EVEN SAFE TO BREATHE IN THIS CITY!

The citizens of Delhi have sought a pledge from the candidates for the Delhi Assembly election that they will take positive action to curb air pollution

Candidates who endorsed the pledge (keep an eye on them)

- SHEILA DHOTI, (I) (IND)
- K. S. AZAD, (M)
- SAUNDHYA GUPTA, (M)
- KRANJALWA, (I) (IND)
- PROF. RAGHUNATH SINGHAL, (M)
- JAGDEEP JINDAL, (I) (IND)
- RAJESHWARI KUMAR, (I) (IND)
- ANISH SINGH, (I) (IND)
- SANJAY MEHRA, (I) (IND)
- MANOJ KUMAR SINGH, (I) (IND)
- DR. YOGANAND SHASTRI, (I) (IND)
- JAGDEEP SHARMA, (I) (IND)
- RAJESH GUPTA, (I) (IND)
- PUSHPA AGGARWAL, (M)
- SHEKHAR SHARMA, (M)
- ADESH NARAYAN SHARMA, (I) (IND)
- SALUDDIN, (I) (IND)
- DR. V. V. MAHARAJ, (M)
- ANILKUMAR SINGH, (I) (IND)
- ADESH ANAND SINGH, (I) (IND)
- SUREA KAPOOR, (I) (IND)

Only 22 candidates out of the 85 we contacted have signed the pledge. News are from the BJP and 13 from the Congress

The Delhi chief minister was indifferent, among others

This is how much the politicians care for our health. We will closely watch those who have signed the pledge. To ensure that they keep their promise if they are elected

Politicians who are indifferent should realize that we don't vote for pollution and stress for our children. Clean air has votes, too

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Empower civil society

Empower civil society institutions for more effective interface with decision making systems.

- Strengthen civil society institutions in Asia, especially their scientific capabilities through training and networking with relevant scientific and civil society institutions.
- Strengthen linkage between civil society groups with scientific institutions through research partnerships to study emerging pollution problems and find solutions.
- Civil society must have access to information
- Involve civil society in decision making systems

51,779 DEAD BY BREATHING
AIR POLLUTION TOLL RISES FROM 40,351 IN 1991-92
 30% More Deaths In 1995! In Some Indian Cities Deaths Have Doubled

The Government Is In Control.

So It Thinks.
 A DELUSION!

YOU LINE UP FOR A TALKPETEST WHILE REAL CULPRITS GO SCOT-FREE

ONE MORE YEAR OF SLOW MURDER

JOIN OUR CAMPAIGN AGAINST AIR POLLUTION BEFORE YOU BECOME ANOTHER VICTIM
DONATE TO ENABLE RESEARCH AND RAISE A FUSS

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Thank you