

Curbs on firecrackers: Study says reaction mixed

Respondents say action needed against other pollutants also

OUR BUREAU

Amritsar, October 16

Welcoming the Supreme Court ban on sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR, many people in other urban centres have sought similar curbs to be imposed to bring down air pollution levels in their cities, a random survey conducted by ASSOCHAM Social Development Foundation has found.

However, the majority of people seemed indifferent about the ban and questioned its relevance, the industry body said on Monday.

Other polluters

Many even said that construction activities, road dust, vehicular pollution, waste burning and similar activities were more polluting across most cities in India and the av-



Welcoming change About 35% of the respondents said that ban on sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR must be welcomed considering the need to avoid a spike in air pollution

thorities should take strong measures to keep a check on them. The social development arm of ASSOCHAM had interacted with about 1,500 people in 15 cities — Amritsar, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Chennai, Dehradun, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna, Raipur and Ranchi. The survey was conducted last week

to ascertain the views of people on the Supreme Court's October 9 order suspending sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR.

To hurt 'Brand India'

"Rising air pollution in cities is not just negatively impacting the environment but it might also hit sectors such as tourism and outdoor recreation, severely hurting 'Brand India' as people largely avoid polluted areas with dense and toxic air," said DS Rawat, Secretary-General, ASSOCHAM.

Appreciating the efforts of communities involved in spreading the word against firecrackers, he said schools, along with resident associations and those in healthcare/medical sector, have been carrying out campaigns to sensitise people about harmful effects of firecrackers which has also led to growing environmental awareness.

About 35 per cent of the respondents said that ban on sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR must be welcomed considering

the need to avoid a spike in pollution even though many were sceptical of its effectiveness.

Resentment

About 30 per cent expressed resentment and felt that the ban would dampen the festive mood as there has been a long tradition of lighting fireworks during Diwali, especially in the northern parts of India. Some of them even termed the ban unfair.

Many of them also said that it would only lead to rise in discrete sale of firecrackers and said that instead of being selective only for Diwali, there should be a blanket ban on firecrackers for all festivals.

About 20 per cent said that the ban is not going to make much difference to air pollution levels. Many said the authorities should have been considerate towards fireworks manufacturers, traders and their families.

The others suggested that industry in India must come up with green fireworks made of

special paper and without sulphur as after being lit they emit less smoke and leave almost no scrap. Overall, the majority of respondents said they are geared for Diwali as they have purchased face-masks to protect themselves from toxic air.

Declining market

There are about 800 licensed fireworks units in and around Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu where this industry accounts for a market size of about ₹2,500 crore and employs about 10 lakh workers in both organised and unorganised sectors.

As per experts, the fireworks industry in India has been registering degrowth of about 40 per cent annually during the last five years, leading to rapid decline in profit margins of manufacturers and traders owing to prevalence of illegally imported Chinese firecrackers, rising raw material prices, dearth of labour, restrictions imposed by local administration, anti-cracker campaigns and other inter-linked factors.

Working class people support cracker ban

'Pollution from firecrackers can't be ignored'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 16

Though the Supreme Court's decision to ban firecrackers in the National Capital Region has drawn mixed reactions from people, a majority of working professionals in the region have supported such prohibition, noted a quick random survey by Assocham Social Development Foundation.

While there is no doubt about construction activities, road dust, vehicular pollution, waste burning and other such factors being majorly responsible for deteriorating air quality in and around the city, majority of people in Delhi-NCR feel that no source of pollution is too small to be ignored when it comes to the public health concerns, highlighted the survey conducted by Assocham as part of its Corporate Social Development initiative. The Assocham Social Development

► **The Assocham Social Development Foundation (ASDF) randomly interacted with about 2,000 people in general at entry and exit points of Delhi Metro stations**

Foundation (ASDF) randomly interacted with about 2,000 people in general at entry and exit points of Delhi Metro stations across the city during the last weekend to ascertain views of common Delhiites on Supreme Court's October 9 order suspending sale of firecrackers in Delhi-NCR. "Banning sale of firecrackers is a very welcome move as smoke from fireworks is a common trigger for many individuals with asthma, many people experience respiratory distress, bronchitis, persistent cough, burning eyes, itchy throat and other related problems,"

Assocham president, Sandeep Jajodia said while releasing the findings of the survey.

"Air pollution in Delhi-NCR is not just devastating the environment but it might also hurt brand India thereby severely hitting sectors like tourism, outdoor recreation as people tend to stay away from polluted areas to avoid dense and toxic air," Mr Jajodia said.

"Sunshine and good air have become luxury for Delhiites who have been dealing with anxieties over pollution, traffic, and related stress," added the Assocham chief.

"Though schools along with resident welfare associations and those in healthcare/medical sector/community have been carrying out campaigns across India with a view to sensitise people about harmful effects of firecrackers, a judicious mix of command and control measures is the key to protect public health," he said further.

એસોચેમનો સરવે

માત્ર ફટાકડાથી જ નહીં પરંતુ કચરો બાળવાથી પણ હવાનું પ્રદૂષણ થાય છે

ફટાકડા પર પ્રતિબંધ સામે 30% લોકોની નારાજગી

ભારતર વ્યૂજ | અમદાવાદ

સુપ્રીમ કોર્ટ, દિલ્હી - એનસીઆરમાં ફટાકડાના વેચાણ પર મુકેલા પ્રતિબંધને દેશના ઘણાં શહેરી વિસ્તારોમાં પણ આવકાર્યો છે અને શહેરમાં વસતા લોકોએ હવાના પ્રદૂષણનું પ્રમાણ ઘટાડવા માટે આ પ્રકારે વિવિધ શહેરોમાં પણ અંકુશ મૂકવો જોઈએ, તેવું એસોચેમના સરવેમાં જોવા મળ્યું છે. જો કે, આ પ્રકારે ફટાકડા પર પ્રતિબંધ મૂકવાના મુદ્દે મોટાભાગના લોકો જુદા જુદા મત ધરાવે છે. ફટાકડાના વેચાણ પર પ્રતિબંધ સામે 30 ટકા લોકોએ નારાજગી દર્શાવી છે. દિવાળીમાં ફટાકડા ફોડવાની વર્ષો જૂની પરંપરા હોવાથી સુપ્રીમ કોર્ટના પ્રતિબંધને કારણે તહેવારોનો 'મૂડ' મારી નાખ્યો છે.

દર વર્ષે દિવાળીમાં જ પ્રદૂષણનું પ્રમાણ વધી જતું હોવાથી લોકોના સ્વાસ્થ્યનું રક્ષણ કરવા પગલાં લેવા મહત્વની બાબત છે. આ સરવેમાં મોટાભાગના

લોકોએ જણાવ્યું છે કે, શહેરમાં કન્સ્ટ્રક્શન, ઉડતી ધૂળ, વાહનોનું પ્રદૂષણ, કચરો બાળવો, વગેરે સહિત ઘણાં પરિબળો એવા છે કે જેના કારણે એર ક્વોલિટી ઘટે છે અને પ્રદૂષણ ફેલાય છે. સત્તાધીશોએ, પ્રદૂષણ ફેલાવતા આવા પરિબળો પર અંકુશ મૂકવા પગલાં લેવા જોઈએ. અમદાવાદ, ભોપાલ, બેંગ્લુરુ, મુંબઈ, દિલ્હી, પટણા, જયપુર, સહિત 15 શહેરોમાં લગભગ 1,500 નાગરિકો સાથે પરામર્શ કરાયો હતો.

એસોચેમના જનરલ સેક્રેટરી ડી. એસ. રાવતે કહ્યું કે, શહેરોમાં વધતા પ્રદૂષણને કારણે ફક્ત પર્યાવરણ પર માઠી અસર પડે છે, એટલું જ નહીં પરંતુ પ્રવાસન આઉટડોર રીક્રિએશન, વગેરે ક્ષેત્રોને નુકસાન પહોંચે છે. ફટાકડા ફોડવાથી ધુમાડાને કારણે લોકોને અસ્થમા, શ્વાસમાં મુશ્કેલી, સતત કફ જામેલો રહેવો, ગળામાં બળતરા, વગેરે જેવી તકલીફ કાયમી જોવા મળતી હોવાથી ફટાકડાના વેચાણ પર પ્રતિબંધ મુકાયો છે.

પ્રતિબંધથી ફરક નહીં પડે

- ફટાકડા ફોડવાથી થતી સ્વાસ્થ્ય પર પડતી માઠી અસરને કારણે 35 ટકા લોકોએ ફટાકડાના વેચાણ પરના પ્રતિબંધને આવકાર્યો છે.
- કેટલાક લોકોએ કહ્યું કે, ફક્ત દિવાળીમાં જ નહીં, પરંતુ તમામ તહેવારોમાં ફટાકડા પર પ્રતિબંધ લાદવો જોઈએ.
- 20 ટકા લોકોનું કહેવું છે કે, આ પ્રતિબંધ મૂકવાથી ખાસ ફરક નહીં પડે, સત્તાવાળાઓએ, ફટાકડાની ફેક્ટરીમાં કામ કરતા વર્કર્સ, ઉત્પાદકો, વેપારીઓ અને તેમના કુટુંબીજનો વિશે વિચારવું જોઈએ.

