

ANNEXURE 45

ROLE OF RKMVU IN FIGHTING AIR POLLUTION / SOUND POLLUTION IN WEST BENGAL

AIR POLLUTION is one of the greatest environmental problems in the world today. RKMVU is doing its bit in helping fight this menace by active participation in a major governmental effort in this area. A faculty member of the Physics department is a member of the Research and Development Committee of the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) and is directly involved in evaluating and commissioning various projects to control this menace and other pollution hazards.

Whereas the city of Kolkata is fairly covered with stations monitoring air pollution round the clock, the same cannot be said of the city of Howrah. Setting up such stations in Howrah had been a problem in the past because of various reasons, one of the principal reasons being locational responsibility. Fortunately, RKMVU has achieved that level of trust and the WBPCB has requested that RKMVU allow a monitoring station to be set up in its Belur campus. RKMVU has responded positively to this suggestion and the process has already been initiated and a MOU will be signed soon. The entire cost of the project will be borne by the WBPCB as well as all subsequent maintenance costs.

Once this state of the art monitoring station comes up, our students will be able to participate in various projects related to air pollution and contribute their bit in creating awareness and fighting the menace of air pollution. (Annexures : airpollution 1, 2, 3)

SOUND POLLUTION is another hazard that is affecting the lives of children and elderly people in cities and industrial areas of India today. There are various sources of sound pollution and one which is particularly dangerous because of its instantaneous effect. This source is the decibel level of firecrackers.

In West Bengal the existing law limits the sound of firecrackers to 90 db whereas in the rest of India the permitted level is 125 db. Powerful lobbies, citing business losses, filed a case in the Supreme Court National Green Tribunal against this. The NGT subsequently asked for a reconsideration of this limit by carrying out scientific investigations to support the upper limit of 90 db. As per the directions of the Court, a committee was set up consisting of a physicist and doctors who would do the investigation. The Vice-Chairperson of the committee (a faculty member of the Physics department of RKMVU) was entrusted the responsibility of selecting appropriate personnel and laboratory sites where the very sensitive experiments can be carried out.

After a detailed survey of all central and state research institutes in Kolkata , he selected the Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI) as the locale for the experiments. Accordingly, the Head of the Sound Engineering Department, SRFTI was involved, and detailed investigations were carried out on consenting humans after fulfilling all ethical requirements of the United Nations for such experiments. All experiments were videographed in real time. Subsequent medical findings by the doctors (among the best ENT specialists in Kolkata) in the committee established the harmful effects of high decibel sound on humans and the report was submitted to the NGT.

West Bengal retains the upper limit of 90 db. Impact has been such that the Delhi Government has requested WBPCB to help in implementing the same in the state of Delhi.

In this fashion RKMVU explores proactively to serve the society with available resources.

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