



# E-NEWSLETTER

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK:

### ECHOES OF AWARENESS: SOUND, SAFETY, AND SUSTAINABILITY IN MONSOON 2025

*Dear Readers,*

*As the rains of Monsoon 2025 wash over the country, they bring both relief and reflection—reminding us of the urgent need to tune into environmental signals, especially those often ignored, like noise pollution. In this third issue of our newsletter from the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH), we focus on this growing yet under-addressed public health challenge that continues to affect millions in urban India.*

*In collaboration with the Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, we've continued our community outreach this quarter, with noise pollution awareness activities. The session engaged local residents in understanding the health hazards of everyday noise and simple steps for protection. Our section EcoHealth Dialogues: Building Expertise Among Medical Professionals also features the celebration of World Environment Day and with a tree plantation drive and a CME organized jointly by the Department of Community Medicine and the Department of ENT. The event focused on the theme of "Green and Healthy Transport Systems" and drew participation from experts and healthcare professionals alike.*

*This edition's Research Rendezvous, features a systematic review titled "Progress and Recommendations of Developing Occupational Exposure Limits for Noise." Together, these updates reflect our shared commitment to advocacy, research, and capacity building in environmental health.*

*As we listen more closely to the sounds around us—whether disruptive or restorative—let this issue serve as a call for mindful action. We hope you find this edition informative and thought-provoking. As always, we welcome your feedback, ideas, and contributions.*

*Here's to quieter cities, healthier workplaces, and empowered communities!!*

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# STAY IN THE LOOP: STAY INFORMED!

Up-to-Date With Events and Recent Advances

## Expanding Jobs for a Growing India: PM-VBRY Launches 1st August 2025

The Union Cabinet has approved the rollout of the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana (PM-VBRY) from 1st August 2025, a major employment-linked incentive initiative under the broader Viksit Bharat mission. With a financial outlay of ₹99,446 crore, the scheme targets the creation of 3.5 crore jobs over two years, including 1.92 crore first-time entrants into the workforce.

PM-VBRY is designed to promote job generation, especially in the manufacturing sector, by offering direct financial incentives to both employers and new employees.

Under Part A, first-time EPFO-registered workers with monthly salaries up to ₹1 lakh will receive incentives worth one month's EPF wage (capped at ₹15,000), in two installments after 6 and 12 months of service. The second installment is linked to completing a financial literacy program, and part of the amount will be retained in a savings account to promote long-term financial discipline.

Part B offers support to EPFO-registered employers hiring additional workers on a sustained basis. Employers can receive up to ₹3,000/month per new hire for two years—extended up to four years for the manufacturing sector. Incentives are structured by wage slabs, with employers required to add at least two new employees (if their workforce is under 50) or five (if 50 or more employees).

This employment push, active between 1st August 2025 and 31st July 2027, marks a significant step toward inclusive economic growth by linking development directly with livelihoods.

**Source: Press Information Bureau**

**Contributed By:** Dr Madhvi Dhamania (Assistant Professor, PSM, ESIC Alwar)

## Mitigation Measures in Punjab and Haryana to Curb Air Pollution

In a push to accelerate air pollution abatement efforts, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) held two high-level review meetings on 3rd July 2025 with the State Governments of Haryana and Punjab in Chandigarh. Chaired by Shri Rajesh Verma, the sessions evaluated implementation of key sectoral actions and strengthened inter-departmental coordination in both States.

The Haryana review covered critical areas such as preparedness for eliminating paddy stubble burning under the 2025 Action Plan, use of biomass pellets in brick kilns, thermal power plant compliance, and achieving co-firing targets of at least 5% biomass. Progress on road dust mitigation, EoL vehicle disposal, ANPR camera installation, cleaner mobility adoption by aggregators and e-commerce platforms, and migration of buses and auto-rickshaws to clean fuel was also discussed.

Similarly, Punjab's review focused on its paddy stubble elimination strategy, pellet use in kilns, thermal plant emission compliance, and vehicular pollution control—including transitioning buses to cleaner fuels and restricting polluting vehicles' entry into Delhi. CAQM urged timely implementation of all directions to avoid winter air quality deterioration.

On 4th July 2025, CAQM teams visited ex-situ biomass utilization projects in both states, including pelletisation, CBG, and biomass power plants. These field inspections provided firsthand insights into progress and gaps. The Commission emphasized stronger coordination, strict enforcement of directions, and sustained efforts to ensure measurable air quality improvement ahead of winter.

**Source: Press Information Bureau**

## Technology and Policy Advances to Reduce Coal Mining Pollution

All coal mining operations in India are conducted with valid statutory clearances such as Environmental Clearance, Forest Clearance (where applicable), Consent to Operate, and Groundwater Clearance. These are issued as per guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and are routinely monitored through compliance submissions. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Environmental Management Plans (EMP) form the backbone of project appraisals, ensuring measures for dust suppression, biodiversity conservation, noise mitigation, and land restoration are integrated into the project lifecycle.

In addition, the Government has issued comprehensive Mine Closure Guidelines (2025) that promote a holistic approach—emphasizing skill-building, land reclamation, and post-mining community development. Coal and power companies such as CIL, NTPC, and DVC are actively investing in CSR activities in coal-rich regions like Jharkhand and Odisha to enhance livelihoods, promote afforestation, and improve access to basic amenities.

To address emissions, India is also strengthening coal gasification. An incentive scheme with a ₹8,500 crore outlay has been launched to promote coal and lignite gasification projects. Rebates in revenue share, streamlined coal linkages, and relaxed technology transfer rules are being introduced to support private and public sector involvement. The creation of a new sub-sector under Non-Regulated Sector linkage auctions marks another significant step to diversify coal utilization sustainably.

In collaboration with State Governments and local stakeholders, land acquisition and resettlement are being carried out transparently. Reclaimed mining lands are being transformed into eco-parks, reservoirs, and tourism hubs, offering both environmental and economic value. Mine voids are being reused for irrigation, drinking water supply, and aquaculture. Afforestation drives and community sapling distributions are also expanding the region's green cover.

Looking ahead, the Government aims to balance energy security with environmental sustainability. While no formal timeline exists for phasing out inefficient coal mines, a clear thrust on greener technologies, circular resource use, and community integration is reshaping India's coal future.

**Source:** Press Information Bureau

## Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendar!!



### National Events:

- Occupational Safety and Health- OSH India Expo – Mumbai from September 16-18, 2025, in Mumbai, Maharashtra

### International events:

- International Conference on Environmental, Safety and Occupational Health (ICESOH-25) – Dublin, Ireland on August 28–29, 2025
- International Conference on Occupational Health and Safety (ICOHS-25) on August 14–15, 2025 (Milan, Italy)
- International Conference on Occupational Safety and Health at Work (ICOSHW-25) – Dubai, UAE on October 14–15, 2025
- Transport and Pollution Conference (TaP-2025) – November 4–6, 2025, Rueil-Malmaison, France.
- Inter-Noise 2025, the 54th International Congress & Exposition on Noise Control Engineering – August 24–27, 2025, São Paulo, Brazil.





# ECOHEALTH DIALOGUES: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AS ROOTS OF CHANGE



## Listening Beyond the Noise: Building Awareness on Hearing Health

Noise pollution is an increasingly serious yet often overlooked public health concern in India, especially in densely populated urban areas like Delhi. Daily exposure to elevated noise levels from traffic, construction, loudspeakers, and festive firecrackers has placed Delhi among the noisiest cities in the country, with many locations consistently exceeding the safe limit of 85 decibels. Prolonged exposure to such noise can cause not only temporary hearing disturbances but also irreversible noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL), tinnitus, and early-onset auditory fatigue. NIHL—second only to age-related hearing loss—results from damage to the cochlea's hair cells due to prolonged exposure to recreational or occupational noise. Vulnerable groups include traffic police, construction workers, children studying near busy roads, and young individuals who use headphones at high volumes. Studies from different parts of the country have shown that between 22% to 40% of traffic police personnel suffer from NIHL. In Bhubaneswar, hearing assessments conducted on World Hearing Day 2025 found that over one-third of Delhi's traffic police had measurable hearing loss.

Beyond auditory damage, chronic noise exposure also affects sleep quality, stress levels, cognitive function in children, and cardiovascular health. Although India's Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000, set clear decibel limits for residential and silent zones, weak enforcement—particularly during festivals and political events—undermines their impact.

In response, a health talk was conducted on 25th July 2025 at RHTC Barwala by residents and interns of the Department of Community Medicine, with support from the COEH team. The session addressed common sources and effects of noise pollution and emphasized preventive strategies like safe listening habits, ear protection, and community-level noise control. The event concluded with an interactive discussion to resolve public queries and encourage behavioural change at the grassroots level.



**Contributed By:** Dr. Priyanka Aggarwal (SR), Dr. Shweta Goswami (AP), Dr. Puneet Mishra (MOIC), Dr. Bratati Banerjee (Director Prof.), Dr M M Singh (HoD & Director Prof.)

# ECOHEALTH DIALOGUES: BUILDING EXPERTISE AMONG MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS

## From Roots to Routes: Celebrating World Environment Day with Green Action and CME Learning

The Department of Community Medicine, Maulana Azad Medical College, in collaboration with the Centre for Occupational and Environmental Health (COEH), marked World Environment Day on 5th June 2025 with a blend of community action and academic engagement. The day began with a tree plantation drive within the MAMC campus, led by Dr. M.M. Singh, Head of the Department, and supported by faculty members Dr. Shivani Rao (Associate Professor), Dr. Hariom Solanki (Assistant Professor), Dr. Shweta Goswami (Assistant Professor), and Dr. Surabhi Puri (Assistant Professor). Senior and junior residents, along with departmental and COEH staff, also took part, reaffirming their commitment to greener institutional spaces and climate-conscious healthcare environments.



In the afternoon, a Continuing Medical Education (CME) session was held from 2:30 to 4:00 PM in Anandibai Hall, 3rd Floor, Department of Community Medicine. Organized jointly by the Departments of Community Medicine and ENT, along with COEH (IVPSS), the CME focused on the theme “Green and Healthy Transport Systems – Use Metro, Stay Healthy.”

The session saw participation from 40 attendees and featured expert talks highlighting key intersections between transport, health, and climate. Dr. Manish Priyadarshi (Director, NITI AAYOG) spoke on Net Zero Emission Strategies, Dr. Nitish Dogra (Consultant Transportation Research and Injury Prevention Centre (TRIPC), IIT Delhi) elaborated on environmental and health co-benefits of sustainable transport, while Dr. Hariom Solanki emphasized the relevance of the Fit India Movement in promoting active mobility. Together, the day’s events emphasized that building a sustainable future requires both grassroots action and knowledge exchange—“from roots to routes.”







## HEALTHIER INDIA: FITNESS SHOULD BE A LIFESTYLE NOT JUST AN EVENT



On June 21, the world once again acknowledged one of India's most timeless contributions—Yoga. What began in secluded forests and ashrams has transformed into a global wellness movement, thanks to India's consistent efforts to promote yoga as a holistic path to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Recognizing its global relevance, the United Nations declared June 21 as International Yoga Day in 2014. This year marked the 11th celebration with the theme 'Yoga for One Earth, One Health', emphasizing our interdependence with the planet, animals, and environment.

The WHO recommends at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity per week, but more than 60% of Indian adults fall short. Urbanization, sedentary work, increased screen time, and shrinking open spaces have led to declining physical activity. Among children, outdoor play is increasingly being replaced by digital engagement, elevating risks for obesity and lifestyle diseases. Coupled with the growing consumption of processed foods, sugary drinks, and rising rates of smoking and alcohol use, India faces mounting health challenges.

India is now burdened with both infectious diseases and an alarming rise in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular illnesses. The country is known as the "Diabetes Capital of the World," and 1 in 4 Indians is hypertensive. These conditions account for more than 60% of deaths nationwide. The annual direct cost of managing NCDs and physical inactivity-related mental health issues exceeds \$3.2 billion, projected to surpass \$35 billion by 2030—excluding loss in productivity and quality of life.

In response, the Government of India has launched national initiatives like Khelo India, the FIT India Movement, and Yoga for All, aiming to encourage physical fitness and holistic living across age groups. These programs foster a culture of well-being through school-based activities, public campaigns, and community engagement. Grassroots yoga camps, especially in government schools and rural blocks, have helped extend accessibility beyond urban elite circles. Greater investment in parks, walkways, and safe public spaces will be crucial to sustaining the momentum. Continued efforts are also needed to address fitness among women and marginalized groups, who often face barriers to participation.

As we celebrate International Yoga Day 2025, let it be more than a symbolic event. Let it mark a commitment to a healthier lifestyle—rooted in mindful eating, regular activity, mental peace, and social responsibility. Making fitness a part of daily life is not only a personal goal but a collective step toward building a healthier, stronger India.

**Contributed By-**Dr.Pappu Prasad Shah (Post Graduate Student, PSM)





# RENDEZVOUS WITH RESEARCH

## Progress and recommendations of developing occupational exposure limits for noise-A systematic review

### Background

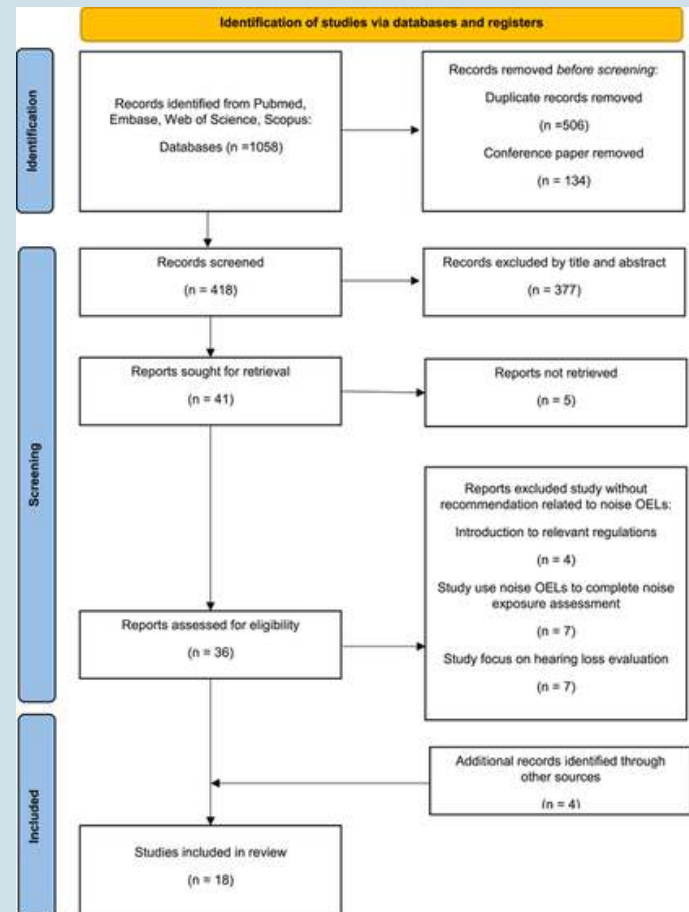
Noise exposure limit is one of the critical measures to prevent noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL). This review aimed to review the progress and recommendations for developing occupational exposure limits (OELs) for workplace noise.

### Methods:

A systematic review was used. Thirty-eight national or international organizations' noise exposure standards (including OEL) and laws, regulations, and guidelines for noise exposure control were analyzed. Articles on recommendations for revising noise OEL standards between 2000 and 2023 were selected.

### Results

The definition of different noise types (especially for non-steady and impulsive noise) varied worldwide, and the used 8-h OEL varied from 80 to 90 dB(A). Maximum sound pressure level ( $L_{max}$ ) and noise dose for industrial noise and peak sound pressure level ( $L_{peak}$ ) for impulsive noise have been incorporated into the OELs. Countries developed noise risk management measures based on OELs, action levels (ALs), and exposure risk ratio or classification. The risk of co-exposure to noise and ototoxic organic substances and the effects of noise on susceptible populations were concerns in EU country standards. Scholars suggested revising the existing noise exposure standards based on noise's temporal structure (expressed by kurtosis), effective noise level, impulsive noise OEL, action level, and key factors of risk assessment.



### Conclusion

Indicators such as  $L_{max}$ , noise dose,  $L_{peak}$ , and action level can be incorporated into noise OELs. Developing noise OEL standards should consider the co-exposure of noise and ototoxic substances, HPD's noise attenuation, susceptible groups, and noise's temporal structure.

**Source:** Zeng A, Huang Y, Xin J, Li J, Qiu W, Zhang M. Progress and recommendations of developing occupational exposure limits for noise—A systematic review. *Heliyon*. 2024 Sep 30;10(18).