

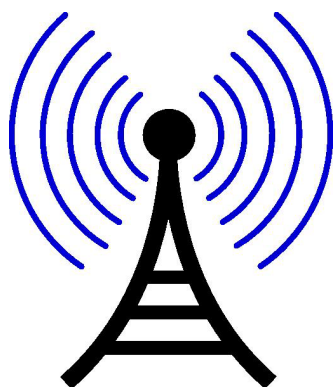


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CityMatters



Risk of Mobile Tower Radiation - II



Since our last article on 'Risk of Mobile Tower Radiation', there have been some developments, both positive and negative, in this arena. People have demonstrated against these towers in their areas fearing cancer and other diseases. In Shalimar Bagh area, six cases of cancer were reported near Plot no. 67 where the tower had been installed since 1996. The Shalimar Bagh Development Society had measured the radiation levels in building near the tower and found it above the danger level within 30 meters.



Cases of depression and mental peevishness have also been reported near towers. The provisions under Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 empower an executive magistrate to order closure of mobile towers near schools and hospitals on the complaint of public nuisance or health issues. There are also complaints that officials of Department of Telecom are avoiding the checking of radiation despite public complaints.

Removing towers is not a solution as these are needed for mobile phone network; the transmitted power must be reduced. The amplification of power in the cell towers can be reduced by removing the power amplifier or by reducing the gain of the antenna. By reducing the power, coverage area will be reduced which can be taken care of by using more cell towers or repeaters or in-building solutions. The height of towers should be increased. All towers in close proximity to schools and hospitals should be checked and removed, if too close. Also, it is a commercial activity which cannot be performed in a residential area.

On directions of the High Court, the levels of radiations were checked at three places in Jaipur and a report was submitted to the Court. It was found that the emissions were under the permissible limit and in one case, it was on the border line. After testing 509 towers in Jaipur and 1,086 towers in the state, the government declared that in 90 percent cases radiations were 'much lower' than the permissible limit. The Rajasthan government has requested the Centre to formulate a policy on cell phone towers.

From September 01, 2012, India will lower the level to one tenth of the prevailing standard, i.e. from 9.2 w/m² (watt per square metre) to 0.92 w/m². This is a preventive step against serious health risks posed by radiation emitted from towers which includes the possibility of developing certain types of cancer. The cause and effect relationship though has not been established yet. The telecom operators are, predictably, resisting the move. They say that lowering of electromagnetic radiation limits will give no health benefits but affect services and more towers will be needed to plug the gap increasing overall electromagnetic field.

As concern about radiation from phones and towers continue to grow in Jaipur, health experts advise a change of habits – spending less time on the phone, using hands-free devices, and texting rather than calling – to cut the risk. With growing awareness about the harmful effects of radiations emitted by mobile towers and people asking questions, it is advisable to observe new norms as a preventive measure till a central policy is formulated on the issue.

There is also a need to start awareness campaign in the city on usage of cell phone, such as avoiding excessive use, especially in case of kids and pregnant women; using hands-free devices; sending texts whenever possible rather than calling someone up; and restricting installation of mobile towers near crowded residential areas, schools and hospitals. Telecom companies are, therefore, urged to fund such campaign in public interest.

Pradeep S. Mehta
Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General

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Daughters are Precious

CUTS had undertaken intensive campaigns for discouraging female foeticide in Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan under its Rural Girl Child Empowerment Project with the support of Save the Children, UK.



Amir Khan's television debut, *Satyamev Jayate* has sharpened the focus on female foeticide. In Rajasthan female foeticide is a common phenomenon. The sex ratio in Rajasthan was 954 in 1981 which has been reduced to 883 as per census 2011. In Jaipur alone the ratio of girls between age 0 and 6 years is 859. The question is where all the girls have gone?

It is an irony that number of females compared to males is continuously decreasing in more developed and prosperous cities like Jaipur during the last three decades compared to backward districts like Chittorgarh. Does it mean female foeticide is becoming popular with the social, economic and educational development? One reason could be improved family planning measures with increase in education but at the same time more facilities for pre natal sex determination tests and improved medical care and abortion facilities in such cities.

CUTS had also undertaken intensive campaigns for discouraging female foeticide in Chittorgarh district of Rajasthan under its Rural Girl Child Empowerment Project with the support of Save the Children, UK.

In 2005-06, the team of Shripal Shekhawat and Meena Sharma, the two Jaipur-based journalists secretly filmed doctors willing to abort female fetuses in private and government hospitals across Rajasthan. The duo says the case was handed over to CID/CBI and FIRs were filed at Ashok Nagar police station in Jaipur. But the doctors, who had affiliations with politicians, bureaucrats and top government officials, got the cases moved back to their respective police stations. As soon as the sting operation was aired, the Rajasthan Medical Council cancelled the licences of 21 doctors. But they were reinstated six months later.

Hindi film superstar Aamir Khan met Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and pressed for speedy trial of female foeticide cases. Gehlot met Arun Mishra, Chief Justice, Rajasthan High Court over the issue and he has given an in-principle nod to set up a fast track court for expediting trial in cases of female foeticide.

Only legal action is not sufficient; there is a need to change the mentalities. Jaipur has emerged as the foremost place in Rajasthan denying girls the right to be born. About 300 female fetuses are aborted every day in Rajasthan after the sex determination test and this abhorrent practice is making a serious impact on the sex ratio in 0-6 years' category. The main cause for the decline in sex ratio was the sex determination tests.

Over 1,800 sonography centres are functioning in Rajasthan and out of them, 1,000 are regularly violating the Pre conception and Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex selection) Act (PCPNDT Act).

"Jaipur is the biggest 'mandi' (market) in Rajasthan for sex determination and murder of female fetuses in the womb,"

said Dr. Chaudhary who is part of 'Let girls be born' project of Plan India.

Alarmed over the skewed sex ratio, the state government recently announced steps to curb pre-natal sex determination tests at ultrasound clinics. The Rajasthan government cancelled licences of six sonography centres and issued notices to 24 others for their suspected involvement in female foeticide and violating laws. However, private hospitals and Nursing Homes Society

protested against "arbitrary attitude" of Rajasthan Health Department while carrying out crackdown against female foeticide. Expressing support on the need to stop female foeticide, their secretary, Kapoor said those found guilty should be suspended, however, the government should be impartial in its approach.

A wide plan of action on the basis of an effective strategy is the need of the hour. There is a need for change in mentality that daughters are not burden but assets. This would be possible only through imparting education and making them self-reliant. They do not need protection but empowerment. The people should realise that killing of girl foetus would create an imbalance in the society and moreover, they are equal to boys in every respect.



A 'Smoke-Free' City

A 'smoke-free task force' has been constituted in Jaipur for proper implementation of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Product (prohibition of advertisement and regulation of trade and commerce, production, supply and distribution) Act-2003 (COTPA-2003).



The state government has stepped up efforts to implement COTPA in the state. The Department of Medical, Health & Family Welfare has constituted the smoke-free task force in Jaipur which would inspect the city twice in a week to fine the COTPA violators at public places.

The smoke-free task force would ensure that the ban on *hookah* bar is enforced properly, sale of tobacco products should not be done in the radius of 200 metres of educational institutes and if anyone is found smoking even in government offices he would be fined ₹200. (Tol, 26.04.12)

Ghat Ki Guni to be Delayed

The opening of *Ghat Ki Guni* tunnel, which is aimed at providing an alternative route to the narrow Jaipur-Agra road, is likely to get delayed further. Recently, the Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) shifted the deadline to first week of August from June 30, 2012.

Around 80 percent of the tunnel work is complete. However, finishing



work is time consuming and will take at least two more months. Also, construction and widening of roads at the entry and exit of the tunnel at both ends is a challenging task for the JDA.

The tunnel project has been held up due to minor finishing works in the last phase. Meanwhile, the JDA has drawn a systematic blueprint to avoid traffic congestion at the entry and exit of the *Ghat Ki Guni* tunnel. (Tol, 05.06.12)

JDA to Develop Footpaths

In a bid to facilitate hassle-free movement for pedestrians, the JDA is planning to develop footpaths on major city roads. In this regard, the JDA's engineering wing has been directed to prepare a status report on city roads on the basis of which the design for footpaths will be drafted.



Roads, which witness more pedestrian movement, will have footpath constructed at a height of two metres. Roads, with more vehicular traffic, will have footpaths constructed at a lesser height and may have a ramp for car parking.

For several roads recently repaired, the JDA plans to reduce the height of existing footpaths. The median of some roads will be increased to ensure that the traffic from the opposite direction do not jump the lane. (Tol, 16.06.12)

Metro Updates



DMRC Chief to Check Metro's Progress

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) Managing Director Mangu Singh will inspect the civil works at metro sites in the city and meet Shanti Dhariwal to discuss the progress of project. Singh is scheduled to visit *Chandpole* and *Civil Lines* metro stations and *Mansarovar* depot.

During his previous inspection in February 2012, metro officials informed him that only 35 percent civil works of depot had been completed. The DMRC director had expressed his dissatisfaction and asked contractors to engage more manpower on an urgent basis. Singh is supposed to seek report on the compliance of the directions issued by him during his previous visit. Meanwhile, as per DMRC, only 55 percent civil works have been over of the entire project. (DNA, 28.06.12)

Metro gets Rs 630-cr boost from Centre

The Union Ministry of Urban Development has approved ₹630 crore loan for the first phase of Jaipur Metro project between *Mansarovar* and *Badi Chaupar*. The approved proposal has been forwarded for examination to the Planning Commission of India. After clearance from the Planning Commission the final sanction will be done by the Public Investment Board (PIB), a body under Ministry of Finance.

Initially, when JMRC took up phase-I of the project, it was estimated to be ₹1,250 crore, which included only the civil work between *Mansarovar* to *Chandpole*. But, the project was later expanded to *Bari Chaupar* and other important works like rolling stock were clubbed together. Thus the project cost swelled up to ₹3,150 crore. (DNA, 30.05.12)



Delayed Metro Gets on Track

Despite non-availability of important land, the Jaipur Metro Rail project has started turning into a reality and the tracks to run coaches are likely to be laid down from June 2012.

DMRC official said that important works related to tracks, telecommunication and signalling, are likely to be kicked off in a few days. A major lot of tracks have already arrived in Jaipur and works for laying of the tracks will start soon.

The operation works for metro projects are in progress, but it is also true that civil works are facing non-availability of land. The land piece of *Dhamani Garden* is stuck in legal wrangle.

The land was acquired to rehabilitate the families whose houses are likely to be demolished for civil works near *Ram Nagar* metro station. But, the owner of the garden moved court against the acquisition. (DNA, 29.05.12)

Equal fare for All Buses

Jaipurites may travel in AC city bus at general fare as Jaipur City Transport Services Limited (JCTSL) has submitted a proposal to the state government for equal fare of all types of low-floor bus. After receiving approval of the government, fare of AC buses will be reduced.



Jaipur is currently running with 290 low-floor buses: among them 270 are general (non-AC) whereas 20 buses have AC facility. Minimum and maximum fare of general low-floor bus is ₹6 and ₹25 respectively. On the other hand, travelling in AC bus costs ₹10 for five kms and maximum ₹35. (<http://jaipur.co>; 12.04.12)

High Security Number Plates

For safety of vehicles and to reduce road-based crimes, state government is all set to implement the scheme of fixing high security registration plates (HSRP) in vehicles. The scheme will be applicable



for new cars from May but for old vehicles it will begin from June.

The scheme will be mandatory for every vehicle. For registration, vehicle owners will have to be physically present

with original papers. Later on, the process will be available online where vehicle owners will have to file online applications and make e-payments.

These security number plates will be enabled with hot stamped chromium based hologram, ingress IND legend, laser etched nine character code and a snap lock.

These tamper-proof number plates will prove helpful for law enforcement agencies to trace vehicles involved in crimes. (RP, 19.05.12)

'Naya Jaipur' Still on Paper

The ambitious housing project of the state government, 'Naya Jaipur' continues to remain on paper as the JDA officials are hesitant to take up the controversial project. At the end of 2009, Urban Development and Housing Minister Shanti Dhariwal announced the project, which runs 105 sq km in the Khonagorian area behind the Jhalana hills.

The area was later reduced to 39 square km out of which 25 square km was reserved for the green city and 14 square km to develop the heritage city.

JDA does not have the requisite land there and most of the land belongs to the cooperative housing scheme. At the moment, there is no plan to develop the heritage city or green city.

The JDA will face a number of problems in later stages in developing the area as proposed by the state government. In the reserved area, people are constructing houses and it would be impossible to remove them later.

(Tol, 30.06.12)

Anti-encroachment Drive Fails

The much-hyped anti-encroachment drive of Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) in the Walled City failed to gather steam. Temporary encroachments by vendors and make-shift cart owners in front of shops could not be removed as most did not bother to pay any heed to JMC's warnings.

Meanwhile, the JMC has identified and prepared a list of 12 places for rehabilitation which will be proposed to the vendors' representatives at a meeting.



The JMC will study the land title before proposing rehabilitation for vendors. The civic body will study the feasibility of developing an underground market at *Ramganj Chaupar*, where the vendors can be rehabilitated.

The JMC teams removed encroachments on the stretch from *Surajpole Bazaar* to *Badi Chaupar*. In *Hawa Mahal* (west) area, encroachments were removed from *Chandpole Gate* to *Chhoti Chaupar*. (Tol, 02.05.12)

Student Pass for City Bus

The JCTSL has decided to open counter for providing new concession passes to students for travelling on low-floor buses. Students can travel with 50 percent concession on these passes while commuting on this public transport.



Counters are being opened at 14 offices connected to the Rajasthan State Roadways Transport Corporation (RSRTC). The filled forms should be attested by the concerned educational institutions.

A photo of student and a copy of fees receipt deposited at the institute should be attached with the form. The students can submit the forms at the same counter and can get the passes within a week.

Students will be allowed to travel at concession when they possess the new prescribed passes and not the identity cards issued by the educational institutes.

(RP, 26.06.12)

Sources: DNA: Daily News and Analysis; RP: Rajasthan Patrika; Tol: Times of India