

Decibel levels soar due to honking & loud speakers  
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HYDERABAD: As decibel levels continue to soar, experts cite increasing number of vehicles, mindless honking and delay in zoning of areas as prime reasons for the current situation in key commercial areas. As per Telangana State Pollution Control Board (TSPCB) data, the day-time noise level in commercial areas of Abids, JNTU and RC Puram hover around 70-74 decibels as against the permissible limit of 65 decibels. Similarly, night-time temperatures, too, remain on higher side of the permissible limits in these areas.

At The Zoo Park, marked as a sensitive area, both the day-time and night-time noise levels are higher than the standard. "We have no restrictions on use of loud speakers, honking or even silent zones. We need to have rules to control noise," said senior environmentalist W G Prasanna Kumar.

"Only if the areas are zoned, restrictions on honking and loudspeakers can be imposed," he said.

Noise monitoring systems in Hyderabad are at residential zones of Jubilee Hills, Tarnaka, commercial zones of Abids and Punjagutta, the Jeedimetla industrial zone and the silence zone at the Zoo Park. "We are working with traffic police and transport department to encourage people to use public transport so that there are less vehicles on the road and less honking," a PCB official said.

Noise pollution is also a health hazard. "Noise can affect health and behaviour. Unwanted noise plays major role in damaging physiological health whereas prolonged exposure to unwanted noise can lead to psychological problems and impair hearing. Hypertension, tinnitus, hearing loss, high stress levels, sleep disturbances and other harmful effects can be result of noise pollution," said Dr Vishwa Swaroop Reddy, an ENT specialist.