

Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

to

phase out Nonylphenol

21st December, 2019

**Ahmedabad Management Association,
Vastrapur, Ahmedabad**

Report by



Toxics Link
for a toxics-free world

Minutes of the Meeting

Introduction

Nonylphenol, an endocrine disrupting chemical is being found in detergents used widely across the country. It is finding its way to the water bodies through detergents and threatening the environment and human health.

Toxics Link, conducted a study on the toxic chemical and found it in high concentration in all the tested detergent samples as well as in the water bodies. The chemical was also found in high concentration in the Tapti river. There are also studies which have claimed the extensive use of Nonylphenol in textiles.

Gujarat is known as the production hub for major detergent and textile industries. In this context Toxics Link conducted a stakeholder consultation meeting in the state to discuss the issues and concerns on the use of the detergent. The meeting was organized in coordination with Ahmedabad-based partner organization Paryavaran Mitra.

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Inaugural Session



Mahesh Pandya, Director of Paryavaran Mitra welcomed all the participants and talked about the objective of the conference. He further explained that Toxics Link has recently conducted a study on the chemical called “Nonylphenol” and mentioned that the findings of the report have been quite alarming. Sharing the findings of the report, Mr Pandya said that Nonylphenol has been found to be present in detergents and has the potential of polluting the surface water of the country. He further emphasized that the meeting had been organized to understand the issue of Nonylphenol and to further come up with a strategy to phase down/phase out this chemical from the country.

This was followed by a round of introduction from all the participants.

Mr. Satish Sinha, Associate Director of Toxics Link introduced the organization to the participants. He mentioned that Toxics Link has been working for more than 20 years on various environmental issues related to waste management and chemicals & health and majorly conducts policy, advocacy and research. Mr Sinha further added that the environmental group started its work on Bio-medical waste and was one of the pioneers of the campaign that led to the establishment of Bio-medical and E-waste rules. He also said that Toxics Link also initiated a campaign on Lead in Paints which has successfully resulted in the formulation of Lead in Paint regulations in India in the country. Mr Sinha also went on to say that the organisation worked extensively on the issue of mercury which resulted in the

phase out of mercury-based products such as thermometers besides being associated with a large network of partner organizations across the country. Proceeding to discuss the issue at hand he stated that we as consumers think that chemicals are for our benefits and it is improving the quality of life but it is one area about which the society is the most ill-informed.

“There are new diseases which we don't know how to tackle, which occurs due to various chemicals used in different consumer products and we don't realize the cost society has to pay for it”, Mr Sinha further added. He also said that people who invented DDT were given the Nobel prize but today we are banning it, as it causes pollution and there is huge impact of chemicals on environment, as not all chemicals are good for our life.

“We are classifying these chemicals based on their toxicity; some are carcinogenic, some are mutagenic, some are Endocrine disruptive chemicals (EDC) and so on. These chemicals harm us very slowly even at very small concentrations. Mostly women in India are suffering from PCOS which is one type of endocrine disorder that occurs because of the use of endocrine disruptive chemicals but we never think about this,” Mr Sinha stated. He also emphasized on the need for more data and action from the institutions in India on chemicals to understand the impacts they are posing to human health.

Mr Sinha pointed out to the fact that even though Nonyphenol has been banned from detergents in many countries across the globe, nothing has been done in India to address the issue.

[Session I: Presentation](#)

Tripti Arora, Coordinator, Toxics Link gave a brief presentation on **“Dirty Trail: Detergents to Water Bodies”**.



Introduction

She started her talk by explaining about Nonyphenol which is a phenolic compound first produced in 1940. “Nonyphenol is used for the formation of Nonyphenol Ethoxylate. It is an Endocrine disrupting chemical and used as surfactant/detergent”, said Ms Arora. She further touched upon other applications of the chemical such as in paint, paper and food packaging and went on to explain the environmental fate of NP and pointed out how it enters the environmental stream through its usage in textile industries and in detergents. Ms Arora also highlighted the potential of NP to reach even humans through the crops grown in water contaminated by the chemical. She further elaborated upon the health impacts of the chemical and stated that it causes a number of impacts on the environment such as fish feminization.

Ms Arora moved on to explain the human health impacts of Nonylphenol and stated that being an endocrine disrupting chemical it directly attacks the human endocrine system causing a number of reproductive and hormonal disorders. She also emphasized on its potential of crossing the placental barrier and thus impacting an unborn child and mentioned that UNEP has stated Nonylphenol to be a chemical of global concern. Nonylphenol’s potential of impacting cancer cells was also discussed during the presentation.

Regulations of Nonylphenol:

- Globally USEPA, SNUR has restricted its use as surfactant.
- Denmark has banned NP in industrial cleaning.

- It is considered as a chemical of high concern in China and its use has been restricted.
- In Europe, NPE was phased out in detergent applications since 2000.
- India doesn't have a standard for Nonylphenol, however, we have a standard for phenolic compounds.

Alternatives:

There are alternatives of Nonylphenol, as per the US EPA's design for the environment:

C9-11 Alcohols, ethoxylated (6EO), Sodium lauryl sulphate, Ecosurf EH-9, etc.

Study on Nonylphenol

Ms Tripti Arora briefly explained the objectives and the methodology adopted to conduct the study. Later she moved on to share the findings: The study found NP ranging from 11.92%wt to 0.25%wt in concentration in all the 12 detergent samples that were analyzed. All water samples were also detected with high content of the chemical, with the highest being found in Bandi River, Rajasthan (**41.27ppm**).

In Tapi River, the chemical was found in concentration levels of **13.09 ppm**.

Session II: Discussion



The discussion was moderated by Mr Satish Sinha from Toxics Link who asked the representatives to share their views on the study.

Mr. Mahesh Patel, a representative of Nirma Ltd questioned whether the study found NP in Nirma samples. Upon learning that it was found in Nirma, he mentioned, “We don't think that we have this chemical in our products. We only use ionic surfactants and not non-ionic. Nonylphenol is used only in non-ionic ones”.

Ms. Anindita from CERC asked Nirma to test the raw materials in an accredited laboratory being used in manufacturing their products, so that the source of the chemical could be identified.

Mr. Sinha also put forth the suggestion to Mr Patel from Nirma to kindly test their products in a laboratory for Nonylphenol and then make the results public. It was suggested to Nirma that they could label their products if they are actually Nonylphenol-free which would also help in creating public awareness on the issue.

A participant mentioned that the source of the chemical needs to be identified. He also emphasized the need of monitoring to map various points through which NP is entering the water bodies.

One of the participants enquired if there is Nonylphenol present in drinking water. Ms. Tripti answered him saying that even Toxics Link is yet to test drinking water

although it's in the pipeline and the organization is planning to understand the presence of the chemical first before testing drinking water.

A brief discussion occurred on the BIS standard of phenolic compounds and development of a specific standard for Nonylphenol. It was suggested that CPCB can also develop effluent standards specific for this for different industries.

A representative from the textile industry categorically said that that they are using Nonylphenol in their manufacturing processes.

Mr. Piyush Mohapatra from Toxics Link mentioned that though P&G and Hindustan Lever have mentioned that they are not using Nonylphenol in other countries they have been found to be using NP in India and thus there is a need to address this double standard from the industry.

A participant enquired about the testing protocol for phenolic compounds versus Nonylphenol to which Ms Anindita from CERC answered that a specific test exists for Nonylphenol.

Another participant enquired about the strategy adopted by Toxics Link to bring standard on Lead in Paints.

Mr. Sinha mentioned that Toxics Link conducted its first study on Lead in paints 10 years back and tested a few samples wherein a high concentration of Lead was found. Also subsequent reports, a sustained media campaign and dialogue with the government created pressure on the industry and the government, he said. Mr Sinha also stated that due to Toxics Link's LIP report, the issue was raised in Parliament and a number of meetings were organized with the government. These continuous efforts later led to the Lead in Paint Law.

The former suggested that institutes can collaborate with different laboratories and test products to create a database on the presence of NP.

The representative of the state pollution control board told that that he is aware about the NP report but the issue was not exactly under their review. He said that there is a standard by the Central Pollution Control Board on release of the chemicals to water-COD is the major parameter for the waste water.

Finally the participants agreed that Nonylphenol is an issue of concern and suitable steps need to be taken through mutual efforts with the industries. Some were of the view that articles on the issues should be published in health magazines and consumer magazines to raise public awareness.

Recommendations from the meeting

- Identification of all sources of the chemical. A case study to map all the sources to take up the issue can be conducted.
- Development of an inventory.
- Creation of a stakeholder consultation group.
- Need for a standard/regulation specific to Nonylphenol.
- Representatives from Gujarat Pollution Control Board mentioned that they will take up the issue at their level.
- Need for public awareness and media programmes to create pressure on policy makers.
- A bigger national level stakeholder meeting is required to build the issue to the required level.
- Need for more research by the research institutes, universities in India to create more data.

Conclusion

Mr. Piyush thanked everyone for their participation and suggestions. He said that he will need the help of all the stakeholders in Toxics Link's campaign to phase out Nonylphenol from the products.

Stakeholder strategy meeting to phase out nonylphenol

Organized by: Toxic Link, Delhi & Paryavaran Mitra, Ahmedabad

Venue: Ahmedabad Management Association, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad

Date: 21/12/2019

Registration sheet

Sr. No.	Name	Organization	Contact No.:	Email Id:	Signature
1	Mahesh Patel	NIRMA LTD.	98251 83065	md_mandavi@nirma.co.in	M Patel
2	Rajni Dore	Manriya Technology Forum	0265 - 2437957		Rajni Dore
3	Manisha Patel	Paryavaran Milia	99091788 66	manishapatel75@gmail.com	M Patel
4.	Khyati Patel	Green catalyst	932000 1455	pkhyati96@gmail.com	Khyati
5	Chavda Nuznin	C.E.R.C (Sumerth)	83206198 15	chavda nuznin@gmail.com	Nuznin
6.	Desai Fushin	C.E.R.C (Sumerth)	816099 756	desai fushin 127@gmail.com	Fushin Desai
7	Panchal Ankit S.	CERE (Saath)	951048 7457	Panchalankit 466@gmail.com	Ankit
8	Gupta Ketan R.	CERO (Saath)	85300 22287	KETAN GUPTA 742995@gmail.com	Ketan
9	Balbirsingh N. Ploing	Spectrum Dyest & chemicals Pvt. Ltd, Baling (Sind)	98241 06565	hr@spectrumdyest.com	B N
10	Narash Thakar	Formel PRO GPCB	98989 11889	narashthakar@gmail.com	N Thakar 21/12/2019
11	Anushta Mehta	Consumer Educat & Research Centre	9727323 033 9127333033	033 chemical.anushta@gmail.com	Anushta

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Sr. No.	Name	Organization	Contact No.:	Email Id:	Signature
12	Sheikh Abdul Rehman	Bujarat Univ. (Toxicology)	9586143-767	abdulsheikh143@gmail.com	
13	Nisha Pawar, Rajput.	K.K. Shuster.	7990684511	rajputnisha2589@gmail.com	
14	Vandana Narwari	MSO, Vadodara	8238611987	vandanarawari710@gmail.com	
15	Pavan K. Shah	Env. Consultant	9426360372	pavanshah1991@yahoo.co.in	
16	RAJENDRA JATAI	Chemical Mfg.	9925159501	info@surechem.in	
17	Damini Shah.	"	"	"	
18	Rishi Shah	Consultant	9427613274	editor@countdown-net	
19	Pawan Shukla	Nirma Limited	9033068846	Pawanshukla19.pw@gmail.com	
20	Shivam Dovers	MSO, Vadodra Paryavaran Mitra	98212229200	shivamdover1920@gmail.com	
21	Harsh Kingal	Paryavaran Mitra	9409299915	harshkingal@gmail.com	H. IAK
22	Anil Sahu	MSO	851889191	sahu_anil2@rediffmail.com	

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Sr. No.	Name	Organization	Contact No.:	Email Id:	Signature
23	Vivek SETHI	Thinkgreen / Environment	98240 77276	info@thinkgreen.co.in	V Sethi
24	Nandani Dove	First India newsfeez	990420 3562	dexternandani@gmail.com	N.D
25	Gopal Shah	Shreeji EMS management services	982551235	shreejies@gmail.com	G
26	Mehesh Parmar	Paryavaran Mitra	96271 73787	paryavaranmitra@gmail.com	Mehesh
27	A.P. Satro	CPCB	94274 46496	dipakratholia@yahoo.com	A
28	Prakash Vaghela	Euteck Laboratory A'bad	98240 12121	emspakash@gmail.com	P
29	Tushar Pancholi	Paryavaran Mitra Vibha Kendra	94277 26877	joonpancholi@gmail.com	T
30	Kaifan Trivedi	Trivedi	7640 15571	KaifanTrivedi@gmail.com	K
31	Shailesh Nayak	Mid day	99248 51369	shaileshnayak1@gmail.com	Shilesh
32	Zalakhadhari	GSTV	76000 41456	zalakhadhari@gmail.com	Z
33	Ayushi Yagnik	Mantavya News	97376 81044	ayushivyagnik1995@gmail.com	A

