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Noise pollution- a threat to human health with special reference to household noise

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Abstract: *The present and future generations have to solve three severe problems, namely 3 P's, i.e. population, poverty and pollution in order to survive and lead a quality life. Pollution being the most dangerous problem among them like cancer in which death is sure but slow. Environmental pollution is assuming dangerous proportions globally and India is no exception. Massive industrialisation and urbanisation in the name of economic growth are thought to be the major causes of environmental pollution. This gift of modern living, industrialization and urbanization unless checked timely would pose a serious threat to human living.*

Key Words: Pollution, Poverty, Industrialisation, Urbanisation

Introduction:

The present generation and the coming generations have to solve three grave problems, namely, population poverty and pollution if they have to survive. Pollution being the most dangerous problem likes cancer in which death is sure but slow. Environment pollution is assuming dangerous proportions all through the globe and India is not free from this poisonous disease. This is the gift of modern living, industrialization and urbanization. Unless timely action is taken we have a forbid and bleak future for the world.

Noise pollution or noise disturbance is the disturbing or excessive noise that may harm the activity or balance of human or animal life. The source of most outdoor noise worldwide is mainly caused by machines and transportation systems, motor vehicles, aircraft, and trains. Outdoor noise is

summarized by the word environmental noise. Poor urban planning may give rise to noise pollution, since side-by-side industrial and residential buildings can result in noise pollution in the residential areas.

Indoor noise can be caused by machines, building activities, and music performances, especially in some workplaces. Noise-induced hearing loss can be caused by outside (e.g. trains) or inside (e.g. music) noise.

High noise levels can contribute to cardiovascular effects in humans and an increased incidence of coronary artery disease. In animals, noise can increase the risk of death by altering predator or prey detection and avoidance, interfere with reproduction and navigation, and contribute to permanent hearing loss.

What is noise pollution?



The word noise is derived from the Latin term *nausea*. It has been defined as unwanted sound, a potential hazard to health and communication dumped into the environment with regard to the adverse effect it may have on unwilling ears.

Section 2 (a) of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 includes noise in the definition of 'air pollutant'.

Section 2(a) air pollution means any solid, liquid or gaseous substance including noise present in the atmosphere such concentration as may be or tend to injurious to human beings or other living creatures or plants or property or environment.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, acoustic noise is defined as any undesired sound.

Chamber's 21st Century Dictionary defines noise as a sound; a harsh disagreeable sound, or such sound; a din. It defines pollution as an excessive or annoying degree of noise in particular area, e.g. from traffic or aero plane engines.

Section 2(c) of the Environment Protection Act, 1986 defines environmental pollution to mean the presence in the environment of any environmental pollutant. Section 2(b) of the said Act defines environmental pollutant to mean any solid, liquid or gaseous substance present in such concentration as may be, tends to be injurious to environment.

Noise can be described as sound without agreeable musical quality or as an unwanted or undesired sound. Thus noise can be taken as a group of loud, non-

harmonious sounds or vibrations that are unpleasant or irritating to ear.

A decibel is the standard for the measurement of noise. The zero on a decibel scale is at the threshold of hearing, the lowest sound pressure that can be heard.

Sources of noise pollution:

There are numerous sources but may be broadly classified into two classes such as indoor and outdoor:

1. Outdoor:

Industries/factories, vehicular movements such as car, motor, truck, train, tempo, motor cycle, aircrafts, trains. Construction work defence equipment's, explosions, playing of loudspeakers during various festivals etc. The higher the speed of an air craft's the greater the noise pollution. air craft's has added more noise for the persons who live near aerodromes. Another source of noise pollution connected with aero planes has been scaring away of birds. Satellites are projected into space with the help of high explosive rockets also contributes to noise pollution.

2. Indoor:

Indoor noise is created by various domestic appliances and loudly played radio or music systems, and other electronic gadgets etc.

Noise pollution like any other pollutants are also by-product of industrialisation, urbanisations and modern civilization. From the industrialisation point of view noise pollution has two sources, i.e. industrial and non-industrial. The industrial source includes the noise from various industries and big machines working at a very high intensity. Non-industrial source of noise



includes the noise created by transport/vehicular traffic and the neighbourhood noise generated by various noise pollutants.

Harmful human health effects of noise pollution:

Persistent noise pollution not only affects human beings but also it affects the animals and vegetation. Prolonged exposure to intense noise :

- ✓ Leads to hearing loss,
- ✓ Leads to cardiovascular diseases,
- ✓ Affects nervous system,
- ✓ Causes stomach ailments,
- ✓ Causes dementia,
- ✓ Hinders normal speech,
- ✓ Causes amnesia,
- ✓ Reduces concentration,
- ✓ Loss of efficiency,
- ✓ Causes fatigue,
- ✓ Leads to abortion

Conclusion:

In the aforesaid premises it can be concluded that noise pollution like any other pollution is caused by industrialisation, urbanisation and population explosion. Noise pollution not only degrades and disturbs human lives but also adversely affects animals and plants.

Suggestions:

The following suggestions can be made to combat noise pollution in all forms.

- ✓ Controlling roadways noise created by traffic
- ✓ Building quiet jet engines

- ✓ Redesigning industrial equipments producing less noise
- ✓ Establishment of secluded residential zones
- ✓ Developing new technology for household gadgets producing less noise
- ✓ Using firecrackers in open space
- ✓ Restricting playing of musical bands in residential area beyond reasonable time
- ✓ Creating awareness among people about the adverse effects of the noise pollution
- ✓ Strict implementation of laws relating to noise pollution

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