Noise Pollution

Causes and Control

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Dr. Shafqat Alauddin

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PREFACE

Sound, a normal feature of our life, is the means of communication and enter-tainment in most animals, including human beings. It is also a very effective alarm system. A low sound is pleasant whereas a loud sound is unpleasant and is commonly referred to as 'noise'. Noise can be defined as an unpleasant and unwanted sound.

Whether a given sound is as pleasant as music or as unpleasant as noise depends on its loudness, duration, rhythm and the mood of the person. But loud-ness is definitely the most significant criterion which converts sound into noise. Exposure to loud noise is indeed annoying and harmful too.

Noise is a physical form of pollution and is not directly harmful to the life supporting systems namely air, soil and water. Its effects are more directly on the receiver i.e. man. Noise pollution is the result of modern industrialized urban life and congestion due to over population.

Even though noise pollution is not fatal to human life, yet its importance cannot be overlooked because repeated exposure to noise reduces the sleeping hours and productivity or efficiency of a human being. It affects the peace of mind and invades the privacy of a human being. The importance of noise pollution as environmental problem is being recognised as the ill effects of noise on human health and environment are becoming evident with each passing day.

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. While the elderly may have cardiac problems due to noise,

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According to the World Health Organization, children are especially vulnerable to noise, and the effects that noise has on children may be permanent. Noise poses a serious threat to a child's physical and psychological health, and may negatively interfere with a child's learning and behavior. Noise pollution is a major problem in India. The government of India has rules & regulations against firecrackers and loudspeakers, but enforcement is extremely lax.Awaaz Foundation is an Indian NGO working to control noise pollution from various sources through advocacy, public interest litigation, awareness, and educational campaigns since 2003. Despite increased enforcement and stringency of laws now being practised in urban areas, rural areas are still affected.The Supreme Court of India had banned playing of music on loud speakers after 10pm. In 2015, The National Green Tribunal today directed authorities in Delhi to ensure strict adherence to guidelines on noise pollution, saying noise is more than just a nuisance as it can produce serious psychological stress. However, implementation of the law continues to remain poor.

—Dr. Shafqat Alauddin

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