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NOISE POLLUTION: THE INDIAN SCENARIO

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Abstract

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This article reviews the literature on research conducted during the last two decades on traffic noise impact in India. Road traffic noise studies in India are fewer and restricted only to the metropolitan areas. The urban environmental quality of developing cities has been deteriorated by an unlimited increase of vehicles and population, consequently the continuous increase in intensity of traffic noise level due to the population has degraded urban quality of life. Continuous high level of noise is the source of severe health problems such as psychological disturbances, irritation, hypertension, heart problems, tiredness, headache etc. The present article gives a glimpse of the traffic noise effects and the present research scenario in India till date and can provide a background for current and future researchers.

Besides the growing level of air and water pollution, the rising road traffic noise pollution has been recognized as a new threat to the inhabitants of cities. Sound that is unwanted or disrupts one's quality of life is called a noise when there is lot of noise in the environment, it is termed as noise pollution. Sound becomes undesirable when it disturbs the normal activities such as working, sleeping and during conversations. It is an underrated environmental problem because of the fact that we can't see, smell or taste it. Traffic noise pollution is one of the most common pollution. It is observed that most urban areas are affected heavily by noise pollution more during the evening hours when compared to morning hours. Most of the noise is generated only due to horns of vehicles like buses, wagons and trucks etc.

Noise is a very complex phenomenon in its physical aspects, as well as in its psychological and medical dimensions. In consequence, it is practically indispensable to measure predict or describe noise in a simplified way. The CPCB (Central pollution control Board) of India in its notification on Ambient Air Quality Standard for Noise, Which has been included as an air

pollutant under section 20 of Amended Air Act of 1987 and has laid down the ambient noise standards (ANS).

According to ANS the noise level at the boundary of the public place, where the effect of noise are seldom catastrophic and are often only transitory loudspeaker or public address system or any other noise source is being used shall not exceed 75 dB. In table.1, Intensity of some noise sources are shown. In fig. 1 noise pollution levels (dB) observed is a random is manner shown for different countries. It is observed that Hyderabad is a most polluted (noise) city in India.

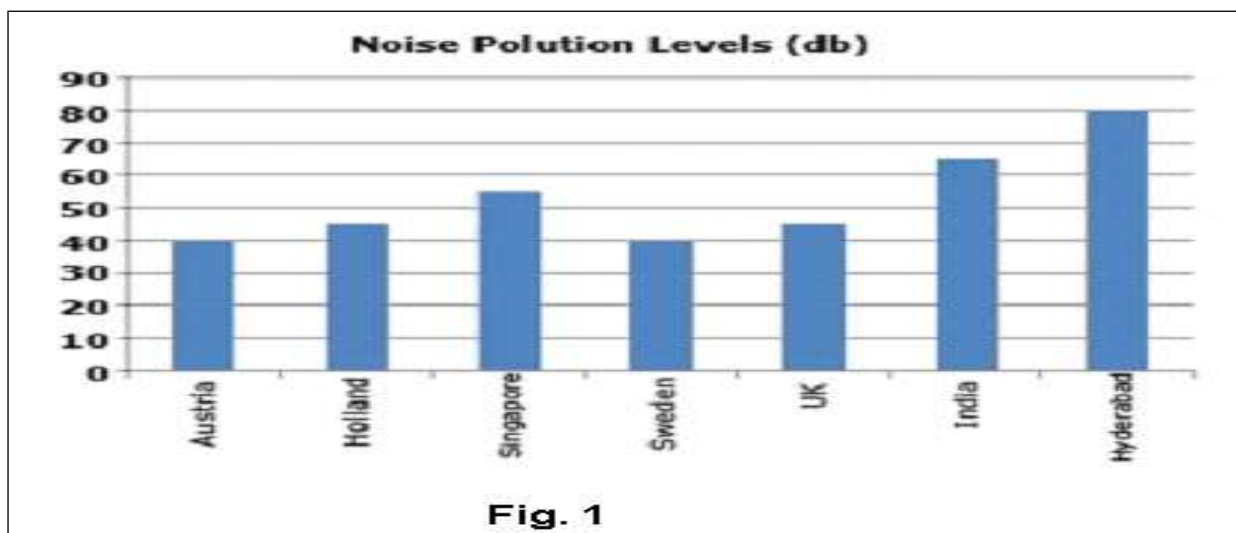


Table No. 1 Intensity of some noise sources

Source	Intensity (Db)	Source	Intensity (db)
Breathing	10	Truck	90
Broadcasting	20	Motor Cycle	105
Trickling Sound	30	Jet Fly(over 1000)	100-110
Library	30-35	Train Whistle	110
Low Volume Radio	35-40	Air Craft(prokeller driven)	110-120
Normal Conversation	35-60	Pneumatic drill	110-120
Telephone	60	Commercial Jet aircraft	120-140
Office Noise	60-80	Jet Takeoff	120
Alarm Clock	70-80	Sp. Rocket Launching	170-180

Traffic	70-110		
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The effects of noise are seldom catastrophic and are often only transitory, but adverse effects can be cumulative with prolonged or repeated exposure. Sleep disruption, the masking of speech and television and inability to enjoy leisure time impair the quality of life. In addition, noise can interfere with the teaching and learning process, disrupt the performance of certain tasks and increase the incident of antisocial behaviors.

CONCLUSION

The extent of environmental noise situation has also been highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO) with identifying the fact that impacts such as community annoyance, dissatisfaction, interference with communication, sleep disturbance, impaired task performance, auditory, Physiological and other health issues have resulted from this. Noise also has significant impact on the quality of life.

Considerable efforts have been made over many decades to reduce noise impacts from transportation sources such as road and rail traffic and aircrafts. But many of the benefits of these efforts have been lost due to increased traffic volumes (by all modes) for longer periods of the day and evening. Since the traffic noise is increasing more in the cities day by day so this has to be analyzed and controlled so that health hazards are avoided. Also road traffic noise is the big challenge for urban planners and environmental engineers to overcome road traffic noise in cities.

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