Preface

In a recent article "Noise can ruin your life" published in "The Tribune" in April, 1989, The Belle Vue Hospital (New York) brain specialist, Dr. Anne Tannahill's work has been reported. She showed the detrimental effect of sound on the mind, whereby bursting a blown-up paper bag raised the pressure on the brain of one patient higher than either morphine or nitroglycerine—the two most powerful drugs for increasing brain pressure.

The words of Dr. Samuel Rosen of the New York Mt. Sinai Hospital, USA, are worth remembering: "You may learn to ignore noise, but your body will never forgive you".

A person exposed to unnecessarily loud sound over an extended period may develop internal problems; he may become stressed with resultant personality maladjustment and inter-personal problems; his productivity and thought activities are likely to become disrupted. All or any of these untoward problems are potential after-effects of distressing noise exposure.

According to Schmidt, Head of the Sound Technology Division of a large German Corporation, "Technology can be civilized only if people are prepared to pay the proper price. Failing this, people will pay for technical progress with their health and there will be one day more people wearing hearing aids than there are today wearing spectacles'
Knowing that hearing aids in no way restore normal, natural hearing, one shudders at Schmidt's speculation.

In India, we have to keep our doors and windows open most of the year with the result that the level of noise inside the house is almost as high as it is outside. This is because sound behaves somewhat like gas in a balloon; even the tiniest opening in the enclosure reduces the enclosure's effectiveness as a barrier.

The Acoustics Division of National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, has found that average noise levels of our cities are quite high. In Delhi, the average is 90 dB and in Bombay 75 dB, which seem small when compared to Rio de Janeiro where noise levels often hit 130 dB.

The earlier studies in this field have yielded contradictory results. Some studies have showed the detrimental effects of working in noise while others have not been able to prove any such thing. Rather some of them proved that working in noise actually improves the performance of the subjects!

So, keeping in view the results of the earlier studies, the present study was designed to study the cost that working in noise has upon the mental output of the Ss. In the present work care was taken to equate the Ss on the noise sensitivity level since it could be one of the important causes of the contradictory results in earlier
studies. The Hindi adaptation of Weinstein's Noise Sensitivity Scale (1989) was used for this purpose.

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The author also takes pleasure in thanking all the persons who participated in the present study as subjects.

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Rohtak

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