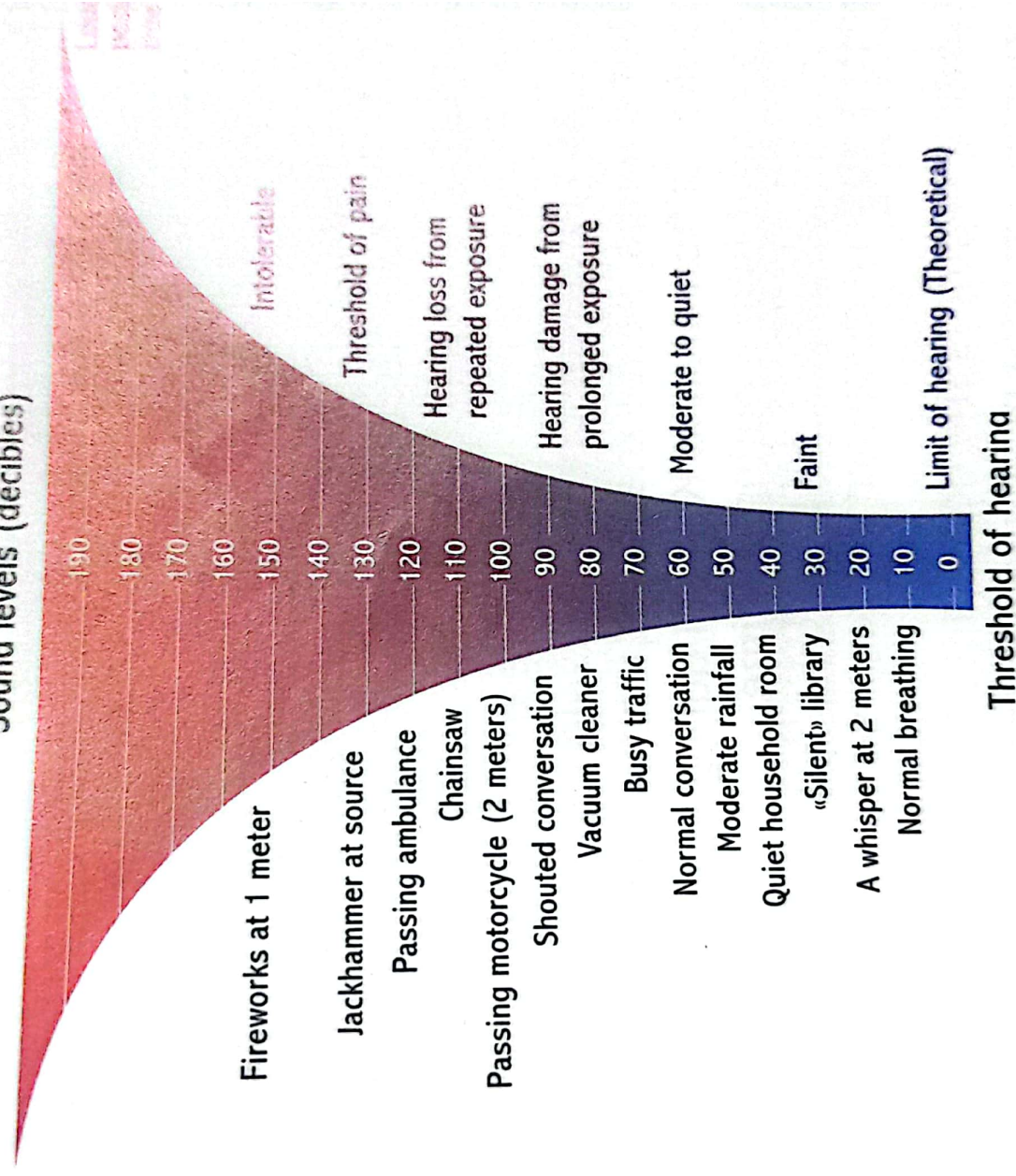


Environmental Pollution: A

UNIT 3 ENVIRONMENTAL POL

Sound levels (decibels)



A noise level chart

dB.

ution and health problems, including stress, high blood pressure, and possible links to higher rates of heart disease.

Noise pollution

Noise pollution is any excessive noise that produces discomfort or is harmful. High levels of noise can disrupt sleep, conversation, and the ability to concentrate, and can cause physical damage to the eardrums of humans and other animals. Noise is measured in decibels (dB). The WHO sets outdoor night noise limits at 40 dB, while the limit of sound in industrial, commercial, and traffic areas should not exceed 70 dB.

CAUSES

Most excessive noise is caused by machines, transport such as planes, trains, and motor vehicles, and outdoor festivals and concerts. In the large cities of Pakistan, traffic noise in public areas is regularly about 100 dB, with extensive use of car and motorbike horns at around 90 dB, horns of buses and trucks at about 120–130 dB, advertising through loudspeakers at 100 dB, and the noise from ceremonies and festivals at 150 dB.

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EFFECTS

Research shows direct links between noise pollution and health problems, including stress, high blood pressure, sleep disturbance, and hearing loss, and possible links to higher rates of heart disease. In Pakistan, it has been reckoned that hearing impairment due to excessive environmental noise in Karachi affects 33% of rickshaw drivers, 57% of shopkeepers in busy areas, and 83% of traffic police. Animals are also affected by noise. Noise can make animal habitats unsuitable and background noise can make animals less alert to the sounds of their prey when they are hunting. It has been shown that sonar from submarines can upset the navigation system of whales.

Impact of pollution on climate change