

ENVIRONMENT

Season to jump up and make noise

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THE numerous fetes all over the country are a loud signal that Carnival is less than ten days away, hence the season for noise pollution.

Now some people may be offended by this statement because how can music contribute to pollution. To fully understand why I say this, allow me introduce you to pollution and the types of noise pollution and the negative effects they have on humans and the environment, not only during celebrations but in everyday life.

The term pollution is an umbrella term used to describe

the practice of putting any substance into the environment either over the limit of tolerance or faster than it can be gotten rid of.

The word noise is derived from the Latin word "noxia" which translates to mean "hurt" or "injury". Hence noise pollution is capable of causing great damage to the environment and those organisms in it.

However, it is mildly defined as a sound either human or machine created that causes a disruption to the activities and balance of either human or animal life.

The most common form would be that generated from vehicles including airplanes, while other sources include music, or a loud conversation.

The sources of noise pollu-

tion can be permanent, temporary or both. Permanent sources can include construction work, vehicle repair shops and appliances, just to name a few. Temporary ones are plentiful, barking dogs, a loud conversation, and burglar alarms. Then there are those whose placement depends on their duration, for instance, a person selling music CDs will at the end of the day, wheel his huge speakers away so that the noise does not last for 24 hours but he is back the next day plying his trade.

Some may be thinking noise is everywhere people should just learn to deal with it. However, before rushing to agree, let us first examine some of the health impacts of noise pollution, the most obvious being damage to one's

sense of hearing. Noise causes disruption of sleep and rest which can affect a person's mental and physiological function which in turn can be a major influence in the performance of youths in school.

These effects may take the form of an increase in blood pressure, constriction of blood vessels, cardiac arrhythmia as well as changes in respiration.

It can also intensify or accelerate development of latent mental disorders. Constant loud noise can cause severe physiological and cardiovascular health. This may be the case for persons living close to industries, airports or noisy streets.

Persons most vulnerable to the ill effects of noise pollution include infants and the elderly, those recovering from illnesses, and the blind which may depend more heavily on their hearing to get around and function in their surroundings.

Animals are also affected by noise pollution since they have a heightened sense of hearing compared to humans, so that what may sound like a thud to us may sound like thunder to them.

This particularly affects pets as they are mostly confined within the boundaries of the house or yard so that they cannot move to escape the noise.

On the other hand wildlife may be perceived as having the freedom to move about and can distance themselves from the sources of noise pollution. However, this may not be the case for all species, as some are reluctant to cross gaps to get to another fragment of ideal habitat.

This is not just a psychological issue that the animal should overcome, if it is small like a termite it will take a very long time to cross a barrier, for example a road, when compared to a bird. Therefore, during the journey the animal may be injured or killed.

Even if it does migrate many factors may not work in its favour, such as lack of prey species or suitable mates at the new site. Frequent noise also disrupts the natural behaviour of wildlife. The noise is interpreted by the animals that a predator is nearby and it is not safe place to mate or deliver their offspring.

This behaviour if continued to go unchecked may result in populations of animals relocating their territories. Sometimes this relocation may be kilometres away or in extreme cases on another land mass.

The issue of noise pollution came to the forefront in this country around at the beginning of this decade, with the construction of

the new North Terminal of the Piarco International airport in Trinidad and its proximity to the nearby residential area of St. Helena.

However, if I were to go into detail into the Noise Pollution Control Rules for Trinidad and Tobago I would basically be transcribing them to you.

However, areas can fall into three main zones; industrial, environmentally sensitive areas and general, each with certain acceptable noise levels for both the day and night. But catching the culprit is not an easy task as some offenders are so mobile they are gone almost as fast as the noise they cause.

The Environmental Management Authority is responsible for enforcing regulation of noise levels at fetes and other events where an application needs to be lodged with them.

Acceptance of these applications leads to the placement of notices of time, place and duration in the daily newspapers. However, in most cases the local police have to be notified in instances with temporary noise pollution including noisy neighbours.

Of course Carnival is not the sole source of this type of pollution, as incidence of noise pollution spikes correlates with most celebrations. Some ways that the effects of this type of pollution can be avoided is by keeping pets in a closed area until the disturbance has passed, petitioning for stricter laws against offenders.

There should be a more efficient advanced notification system of noisy events in the area, which should not only include using the newspaper as a medium, but radio, television, in particular the news programmes. Also newspapers should have a certain section dedicated for these notices which would serve to highlight their importance; the same can be done on their websites.

This practice need not be a permanent fixture and can be implemented during the Carnival season. However, all of this will go in vain if people do not pay attention to these announcements, and put preparations in place so that there is minimum disruption to one's routine. But in general it is best to avoid where possible sources of noise pollution that you may come across everyday.

Therefore we see that noise pollution is not just a noisy neighbour playing their stereo late at night. This type of pollution affects the mental and physiological health of all ages, and the biodiversity of wildlife in this country.

J'n'J Homemade Ice Cream proudly introduces our new logo and image as part of a continuous improvement and brand strengthening exercise.

We have moved to a purpose built factory with rigorous food safety standards in force (ISO-22000/HACCP), and are about to unveil in supermarkets our new eco-friendly, recyclable containers that display a modern label and nutritional data. And as per tradition we will introduce new ice cream flavours, the highest honour being that our competitors have now copied several of our classical ones. We pledge to continue with the superior taste, quality and texture that has been the JnJ hallmark since 1983.

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The first fifteen persons to present an empty recyclable container to our **J'n'J on d'Esplanade** sales outlet will receive a free JnJ backpack (limit 1 per person). Offer valid until 15-Mar-09.

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