

## Sensitivity to Noise and Altruism among School Students

**Sadique Razaque**

Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribag, Jharkhand,

This study was conducted to measure the impact of residence on sensitivity to noise and altruism. Noise Sensitivity Scale and Altruism Scale were used on 60 students (30 rural and 30 urban). It was found that the rural and urban students did not vary on noise sensitivity, but varied on altruism. Several factors like exposure to noise, nature of reaction to noise, etc. were responsible behind this phenomenon.

The 20th century has been described as the century of noise. Noise has become very important stress factor in the environment of man. It is often defined as unwanted sound. But it is not correct because of the fact that one man's sound is another man's noise. So, noise is wrong sound in the wrong place at the wrong time. Human commonly experience subjectively identifiable negative emotional reactions to noise such as annoyance and dissatisfaction. It should be noted that although reaction is commonly measured simply as annoyance, human reaction to noise can be much more than annoyance (Hede, Ballen & Rose, 1979).

Noise sensitivity can make life unlivable. It is similar to phobia in the sense that a specific environmental trigger becomes wrongly linked to a strong emotional reaction which is usually irritation and anger rather than fear. Noise sensitivity occurs when part of brain involved in alerting emotional responses to sound becomes active in response to noise. For example, sounds like a scream or an explosion automatically mobilize strong emotional response in most people. But people with noise sensitivity have a strong emotional response linked to an everyday sound that would be seen insignificant to most of us.

Bhatia and Mohar (1986) reported that different persons are differentially affected by

the same noise. Noise sensitivity of an individual plays a vital role. It is to some extent similar to a personality trait and perhaps it is rooted in the person.

Social scientists have generally defined altruism as any behaviour to help others in needs. Aronfreed (1970) opined that for a behaviour to be called altruistic, it is necessary that the behaviour should not be compelled by the hope of benefits from others in return. Macaulay and Berkowitz (1970) have defined altruism "as behaviour carried out to benefit another without anticipation of reward from external sources. Generally social psychologists define altruism as an act which is carried out without any expectation of reward. However, Bryan and London (1970) have suggested that even through a person behaves purely to benefit another out of altruistic intentions, he is likely to have anticipation of some kind of reinforcement. According to them, altruistic behaviour refers to those behaviours intended to benefit another but which appears to have a high cost to the actor with little possibility of material or social reward. Several research findings have suggested that altruism is related with several variables – characteristics of benefactor (Sharma, 1988), recipient characteristics (Berkowitz, 1972), resource characteristics (Latane and Darley, 1970), cultural characteristics and situational

characteristics, However, the important source of influence on altruistic behaviour is that of environmental stress (Sharma, 1990).

Residence plays an important role in the development of an individual's personality. Several traits of an individual are influenced by the residence. It can be divided as rural and urban. This classification is based on occupational, demographic, ecological, social and cultural parameter. The term 'rural' refers empirically to a population living in area of low density and to a small settlement. Agriculture is a major occupation and the centering of the politico-economic system. As far India us concerned, there are certain criteria which demarcates urban. These criteria are a minimum population of 5000, nearly 75% of the population are engaged in non-agricultural pursuits and density of population must be 400 persons per square km. Individual living in rural and urban area are different in many respects – habits, orientation traits, etc. Considering above researches, it is felt that above researches had some weakness, so it is decided to measure the impact of residence on sensitivity to noise and altruism. This research work was done with the following objectives: (i) To measure the impact of residence on sensitivity of noise. (ii) To measure the impact of residence on altruism.

#### Hypotheses:

Considering above aims, following hypotheses were formulated.

- i. Rural students will be more sensitive to noise than urban students.
- ii. Rural students will have more altruism than urban students.

#### Method

#### Sample:

60 students studying in high schools of Hazaribag districts of Jharkhand were taken as sample. It was divided into two parts 30 rural and 30 urban students.

#### Tools:

*Shor Sanvedi Mapak* : This scale was used to measure the noise sensitivity of the sample and originally developed by Neil Weinstein. It was adopted in Hindi by Prabha Bhatia and unita Malhotra and Mohar. This is a likert type scale with five alternatives. It has 21 items. This test-retest reliability coefficient of this scale is .89 and validity coefficient of this scale is .79.

*Altruism Scale* : This scale was used to measure the altruism level of the sample. It has been developed by Rai and Singh. It has 48 items with three alternative items. The reliability coefficient (test-retest) is .92. It has considerable degree of intrinsic and extrinsic validity.

### Results and Discussion

**Table 1. Mean, SD and t value of rural and urban students on noise sensitivity scale**

Residence	N	Mean	SD	t value
Rural	30	71	6.36	1.75
Urban	30	67.63	8.24	

Pondering over Table 1, it is observed that the t-ratio between these two groups is not significant on any level. It means both groups do not vary on noise sensitivity level. It means rural and urban students do not differ on sensitivity to noise. Finding relation between residence and altruism is another aim of this research. For this the researcher administered altruism scale on the proposed sample and procured data was tabulated in Table 2.

**Table 2. Mean, SD and t of the sample on altruism scale**

Residence	N	Mean	SD	t value
Rural	30	40.73	6.09	4.05*
Urban	30	33	8.29	

\* p<.01

Considering Table 2, it is observed that the t-ratio between these two groups is significant on .01 level. It means both groups

vary on altruism scale. Rural subjects have more altruism than urban students.

It is observed that rural and urban students did not differ on sensitivity to noise, but differed on altruism. There are several factors behind this phenomena. Considering table I, It is found that there is no difference between rural and urban students on sensitivity to noise. Several factors are responsible behind this phenomenon. But in this contest, sensitivity to noise is nothing but sensitivity to annoyance. Needless to say, both types of sample-rural or urban annoyed equally by noise, because noise sensitivity refers to the internal status (be they psychological, physiological or related to life style or activities of any individual which increases their degree of reactivity to noise in general. The sensitivity to noise is related to physiological reactivity to stimulation, hearing activity, attitude to noise, belief about harmful effects, level of social support and all other available coping mechanism. These all factors equal in both rural and urban sample.

It is observed that both groups varied on altruism. Rural sample was higher on altruism than urban sample. It occurred due to several factors. Because altruism is the resultant of benefactor, recipient and resource characteristics. But the most important factors of altruism is environment surrounding of the individual (Sharma, 1990). Because, intense situation directly arouses psycho-physiological response to the individual. And there is much difference of environment between rural and urban students whether it is way of living, life style, exposure to stimulus and the like. Environmental stress affects the altruism.

There is much environment stress in urban boys than rural boys.

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**Sadique Razaque**, PhD, Head, Department of Psychology, Vinoba Bhave University, Hazaribag, Jharkhand,