

Propagation of Sound

Sound is produced by vibrating objects. The matter or substance through which sound is transmitted is called a **medium**. It can be solid, liquid or gas. Sound moves through a medium from the point of generation to the listener. When an object vibrates, it sets the particles of the medium around it vibrating. The particles do not travel all the way from the vibrating object to the ear. A particle of the medium in contact with the vibrating object is first displaced from its equilibrium position. It then exerts a force on the adjacent particle. As a result of which the adjacent particle gets displaced from its position of rest. After displacing the adjacent particle the first particle comes back to its original position. This process continues in the medium till the sound reaches our ear. The disturbance created by a source of sound in the medium travels through the medium and not the particles of the medium.

A wave is a disturbance that moves through a medium when the particles of medium set neighbouring particles into motion. They in turn produce similar motion in others. The particles of the medium do not move forward themselves, but the disturbance is carried forward. This is what happens during propagation of sound in a medium, hence sound can be visualised as a wave. Sound waves are characterised