

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN INDIA

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Introduction

Environmental awareness is to understand the fragility of our environment and the importance of its protection. Promoting environmental awareness is an easy way to become an environmental steward and participate in creating a brighter future for our children. Environment is the surrounding of living and operating of all livings and non livings. We live in it and (mis)use it for our requirements. In the process of meeting our never ending needs and demands we keep on putting pressure on the environment. But when these pressure exaggerate the holding capacity of our environment it shows drastic changes making life suffer to greater extent. Thus to avoid any disastrous happening to the mankind awareness regarding environment should be made. This, issue is taking into consideration all over the world along with India and thus every citizen to make efforts to stop the environmental degradation.

The condition of the environment is a worldwide issue. Air and water pollution do not recognize borders; poor soil conditions in one nation may reduce another country's food supply. At the same time, different regions do face different problems. One key distinction is between the environmental threats faced by developed nations, and developing nations, The environmental problems faced by developed nations are largely the result of their economic strength and higher standards of living. In contrast, the environmental crises faced by developing nations are the result of poverty. For example, Third World countries often lack the resources and sanitation facilities to provide the public with clean water. Tropical deforestation, caused by the slash-and-burn techniques of poor farmers, is another dilemma.

Third World nations may consume vastly less than America and Europe, but their population growth rates are much higher. These nations lack the natural resources and social services that will be needed in order to provide their burgeoning populations with adequate food, shelter, and employment in the coming years. Environmental issues in India are many. Air pollution, water pollution, garbage pollution and wildlife natural habitat

pollution challenge India. The situation was worse between 1947 through 1995. According to data collection and environment assessment studies of World Bank experts, between 1995 through 2010, India has made one of the fastest progress in the world, in addressing its environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. India's growing population is the primary cause of India's environmental degradation. Environmental pollution is one of the serious problems faced by the people in the country. Rapid population growth, industrialization and urbanization in the country are adversely affecting the environment.

The present paper is an attempt to examine population growth, increasing urbanization and its influence on the environment and health of the people. In India, the rapid increase of human numbers combines with desperate poverty to deplete and pollute local resource bases on which the livelihood of present and future generations depends. Large number of people live exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution, without clean water and without sanitation. Population impacts on the environment primarily through the use of natural resources and production of wastes and is associated with environmental stresses like biodiversity, air and water pollution and increased pressure on arable land. India is the world's sixth

Largest and second-fastest growing producer of green house gases. Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai are three of the world's ten most populated cities. India is one of the most degraded environment countries in the world and it is paying a heavy health and economical price for it. The lack of services such as water supply, sanitation, drainage of storm water, treatment and disposal of waste water, management of solid and hazardous wastes, supply of safe food, water and housing are all unable to keep pace with urban growth. All these in turn lead to an increase in the pollution levels. Also the unplanned location of industries in

Urban and sub-urban areas followed by traffic congestion, poor housing, poor drainage and garbage accumulation causes serious pollution problems. However, all these factors together not only lead to deteriorating environmental conditions but also have adverse effects on the health of people. The peoples in environment polluted areas are infected by pollution related diseases. Due to air pollution the incidence of respiratory diseases leads to increase and water pollution triggers the number of patients suffering from acute water - borne diseases.

India is the second most populous country in the world after China. The phenomenal increase in the population during the last fifty years has led to rapid industrialization and high rate of urbanization which have created tremendous pressure on natural resources like land, air and water. The urban growth lead to an increase in the pollution levels and exposes population to serious environmental health hazards. Environmental pollution in urban areas is associated with excessive morbidity and mortality. Overcrowding and inadequate housing contribute to pollution related diseases such as respiratory diseases, acute water

borne diseases, tuberculosis, meningitis and various other diseases.

Lack of opportunities for gainful employment in villages and the ecological stresses is leading to an ever increasing movement of poor families to towns. Megacities are emerging and urban slums are expanding. Such rapid and unplanned expansion of cities has resulted in degradation of urban environment. It has widened the gap between demand and supply of infrastructure services such as energy, housing, transport, communication, education, water supply and sewerage and recreational activities, thus depleted the precious scarce environmental

resource base of the cities. The result is the growing trend in air and water quality, generation of wastes, and the proliferation of slums and undesirable land use changes, all of which contribute to urban poverty. The

deterioration of natural resources and unsafe living conditions affects the environment and health of the poor people.

Environmental pollution

The term Environmental Pollution refers to ways by which people pollute their surroundings, air with gases and smoke, poison the water with chemicals and other substances, and damage the soil with too many fertilizers and pesticides. Also pollute the surroundings in various other ways. Environmental degradation is a result of the dynamic interplay of socio-economic, institutional and technological activities. Environmental changes may be driven by many factors including economic growth, population growth, urbanization, intensification of agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. Poverty still remains a problem at the root of several environmental problems.

Environmental Education Benefits

1. Enthusiasm are heightened

Environmental Education is hands-on, interactive learning that sparks the imagination and unlocks creativity. When Environmental Education is integrated into the curriculum, students are more enthusiastic and engaged in learning, which raises student achievement in core academic areas.

2. Not only does Environmental Education offer opportunities for experiential learning outside of the classroom, it enables students to make connections and apply their learning in the real world. EE helps learners see the interconnectedness of social, ecological, economic, cultural, and political issues.

3. Creative thinking skills

Environmental Education encourages students to research, investigate how and why things happen, and make their own decisions about complex environmental issues. By developing and enhancing critical and creative thinking skills, Environmental Education helps foster a new generation of informed consumers, workers, as well as policy or decision makers.

4. Understanding are supported

Environmental Education encourages students to investigate varying sides of issues to understand the full picture. It promotes tolerance of different points of view and different cultures.

5. National learning multiple subjects

By incorporating EE practices into the curriculum, teachers can integrate science, math, language arts, history, and more into one rich lesson or activity, and still satisfy numerous state and national academic standards in all subject areas. Taking a class outside or bringing nature indoors provides an excellent backdrop or context for interdisciplinary learning.

6. Healthy

Environmental Education gets students outside and active, and helps address some of the health issues we are seeing in children today, such as obesity, attention deficit disorders, and depression. Good nutrition is often emphasized through EE and stress is reduced due to increased time spent in nature.

7. Communities are strengthened

Environmental Education promotes a sense of place and connection through community involvement. When students decide to learn more or take action to improve their environment, they reach out to community experts, donors, volunteers, and local facilities to help bring the community together to understand and address environmental issues impacting their neighborhood.

8. Students and teachers are empowered

Environmental Education promotes active learning, citizenship, and student leadership. It empowers youth to share their voice and make a difference at their school and in their communities. EE helps teachers build their own environmental knowledge and teaching skills. I hope these “top ten” benefits will give you the confidence and commitment to incorporate EE into your curriculum.

In India, the environmental awareness gained importance since 1970s after the UN sponsored conference on environment in Stockholm (1972). Indian government took many environment friendly activities. Ministry of environment and forest was established and laws were enacted on environment protection in 1986. The objective of India's National Environment policy, here, are worth stating.

- 1) Conserve and develop safe, healthy, productive, and aesthetically satisfying environment ;
- 2) Upgrade, develop and manage rural and urban settlement to enhance the quality of life ;
- 3) Plan development on sound ecological principles with environmental impact assessment and incorporating appropriate environmental safeguards ;
- 4) Promote environmental safety-technologies, recycling of resources and utilization of wastes
- 5) Conserve the biotic diversity in the country by creating nature reserves and sanctuaries for specific habitats such as mountains, rain forests, pastures, deserts, wet lands, lakes, beaches, mangroves, estuaries, lagoons and island ;
- 6) Safeguard the environment within the national maritime Exclusive Economic Zone
- 7) Evolve environmental norms and establish effective mechanism for monitoring surveillance and collection and dissemination of information
- 8) Preserve science landscapes, as well as historic and cultural monuments and their environs
- 9) Promote environmental education at all level and create public awareness ;

10) Develop adequate manpower within the country, of ecologists, environmental scientists, planners and managers of the highest quality and recognize their work as an important component of national development.

Summary and conclusions

Rapid population growth continues to be a matter of concern for the country as it has manifold effects, one of the most important being environment degradation. The outcomes of excessive population are industrialization and urbanization. The study reveals that rapid population growth has led to the overexploitation of natural resources. The deforestation has led to the shrinking of forest cover, which eventually affects human health. The considerable magnitude of air pollution in the country also pulls up the number of people suffering from respiratory diseases and many times leading to deaths and serious health hazards. The situation is also similar for water pollution, as both groundwater and surface water contamination leads to various water-borne diseases. From the various effects of environmental degradation on human beings, discussed in this paper, it appears that if human beings want to exist on earth, there is now high time to give top priority to control pollution of all types for a healthy living. There is a need to control population growth in the country. Special efforts should be made for educating the general mass and local leaders about the adverse effects of large population through Information, Education and Communication. In order to increase green cover and to preserve the existing forests, afforestation and social forestry programs should be implemented at the local level.

Further, measures to control air pollution should be intensified throughout the country. Wastewater treatment plants be established in accordance with the need of time and its usage should be encouraged. The heavy penalty should be imposed on industries disposing off the wastes into the river. Moreover, the landfills are to be properly managed to prevent ground water contamination. Since slums are one of the major sources of water pollution proper measures should be taken to facilitate the slums with water and sanitation facilities. More emphasis should be laid on compulsory environmental education at the school level in order to make people aware of the environment protection. The environment protection should not be a responsibility of government alone but mass and local leaders should be encouraged to make dedicated efforts to eradicate the environmental problems. It is the need of time to protect environment for the present and future generation.

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