

ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Man is a discovering specie. Economic man has always been concerned with his environment. Until recently, environment was seen as a boundless cornucopia, to be enjoyed, plundered and rearranged for profit. Today, many thoughtful people see it as a limited resource. The relationship between modern man and his environment is a major and growing problem. The very survival of man as a specie depends upon intelligent and moral human action with respect to these problems. A useful study of environmental problems requires a deep and comprehensive understanding of the economic and social worlds and their relationship with environment. This article aims to concentrate on the pressure of development on environment. What happens when the size of the economic system expands in population and economic activity as it has done in the past, and will do so in the future. Not only the size, but also the nature and ecology of the system change very fast. There is environmental damage from many economic activities resulting in non-degradable synthetics, pesticides, chemicals, deforestation, industrial smoke, heat and waste, transport dangers, radioactive contaminations, garbage and junk yards, etc. causing air, water, land, sound and space pollution.

Keywords- Environment, Development, Population, Deforestation, Pollution.

RELATED AREA OF STUDY

This paper is in the Indian context. The study of the economy and its relationship with ecology can be done in the following main sectors and sections: (1) Population, (2) Agriculture and allied activities, (3) Industry, (4) Mining, (5) Transport and communication, (6) Housing,

(7) Urbanization, and (8) Public health. This study tries to find out the relationship between these above sectors and environment in the Indian context. In the end, the paper also studies the measures to control pollution.

(1) Population and Environment

Great efforts are necessary now to preserve and protect the natural environment threatened by overpopulation and misguided technology. There can be no doubt that men and their governments must be concerned with the wise management of their future size if it is to be tolerable. Typically, man's relationship with environment has centered on his struggle to secure more food, goods, fuel and shelter necessary for the growing population.

(2) Agriculture and Allied Activities and Environment

It has been estimated that in the past twenty years alone, humanity has damaged 30 to 50% of the earth's oceans. Twenty-five percent of all the D.D.T. produced is already in the oceans. The lakes, rivers, oceans and other water sources in several parts of the world are loaded with thousands of contaminants like bacteria, viruses, detergents, pesticides, weed killers, phosphorus, nitrogen compounds, trace amounts of metals, acids and so on, making the water unfit for biological, agricultural and industrial use. Vegetation in several parts of the world has been destroyed by hitherto unknown causes.

(3) Industry and Environment

Industrialization is the cause and effect of economic development. Though industrialization results in many benefits and prosperity, it also gives birth to a number of problems and a few unwanted side effects. On the one hand, it may cause reckless exploitation of natural resources resulting in ecological imbalances and on the other hand, its affluent may cause environmental pollution. In India the major industries are the chemicals, fertilizers, insecticides, antibiotics, drugs, oil refineries, textiles, jute, tanneries, sugar, distilleries, paper, metallurgy, etc. These add very dangerous pollutants of air and water because they discharge many toxic organic and inorganic contaminants.

(4) Mining and Environment

There is no doubt in the fact that the availability of rich mineral resources makes the economy development of a country easier. But, on the other hand, the excavation and processing of minerals directly lead to environmental pollution and degradation of the concerned areas by way of polluting water and air and adversely affecting land productivity.

(5) Transport and Environment

A survey carried out by the Central Public Health Engineers Research Institute (CPHERI), Nagpur shows that although the number of vehicles in Indian cities is less than the number of vehicles in Western cities, the intensity of pollution caused by them is apparently the same or even more. This is attributed to the poor engine performance of the old vehicles which throw out large amount of smoke and make loud noise. It has been estimated that the exhaust gas of a three year old Indian Car contains 10% carbon monoxide. Besides, the condition of roads in the country is not good, leading to heavy dust clouds behind the vehicles.

(6) Housing and Environment

Increasing population demands increasing number of houses and increasing area of land for constructing houses. Cities are expanding at a very fast rate. The previous agricultural land is being converted into land for house construction and the once upon a time forests are converted into agricultural land. The expanding nature of the city is putting more and more land under residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. The increasing number of houses also causes air pollution in urban areas

(7) Urbanization and Environment

Economic growth leads to urbanization which further leads to environmental pollution. Economic activities expand with urbanization making the problems of pollution. Absence or inadequacy of proper drainage and sewerage systems in cities lead to environmental and pollution problems. While open drains have posed a big threat to most of the urban dwellings, the entire absence of a drainage system itself has aggravated the situation. In bigger cities and towns, the expanding slums and growing emigration are mostly the cause and effects of deteriorating drainage condition leading to serious health hazards.

(8) Public Health and Environment

In India the physical effects of water pollution, air pollution and pesticide residual are quite prevalent and the economic loss incurred by them must be great. According to the World Health Organization, 80% of the world diseases are traceable to water pollution. Added to this the health hazards caused by other types of pollution, especially air pollution, long exposure to polluted air can cause a number of diseases, including lung cancer, pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma and common cold. The excess sulphur dioxide present in the air can affect eyes, nose, throat and lungs.

Measures to Control Pollution

The total expenditure on pollution control is estimated to be about two percent of the Gross Domestic Product in different countries. Though the cost of pollution control is very high, still environmental pollution is a serious threat to humanity. It is necessary to take effective measures to control it. There can be two types of economic measures to combat pollution, short-term measures and long-term measures.

Short term Measures

(a) Direct regulation:—By which laws regarding maximum level of pollutants that may be legally discharged, types of pollutants that may be discharged, type of production process to be employed, quality of inputs to be used, pollution control device to be adopted, type of energy to be used, place of installation of industry, etc. should be regulated, and certain polluting activities should even be banned. The defaulter should be fined.

(b) Subsidization: - Under this approach the demand for pollution control devices is sort to be increased by lowering their prices through subsidies.

Long-term Measures

(a) Population Control:—Increase in population necessitates large scale production and consumption, and pollution is a bi-product of production and consumption activities. Hence, it is necessary to control population to combat pollution.

(b) Development of refined technology:—Many industrial and transport technologies are highly polluting in their nature. Economic assistance for development of pollution free or low pollution technologies is, therefore, essential.

(c) Decentralization of Industrial activities:—Concentration of industries in limited areas and thickly populated areas make the pollution problem more serious. The nature of environment is capable of cleaning itself to a certain extent. So the concentration of industries should not be beyond this extent.

(d) Restructuring tastes and preferences:—Life styles and preferences should be changed to restructure the consumption pattern so that the use of goods and services, whose production causes serious environmental problems, is reduced as far as possible.

Conclusion:

If effective course of action is not taken to combat environmental deterioration, economic development may become self-defeating instead of becoming self-sustaining. Mary Gregory defines the major problem of environmental economics as the selection of that strategy for the management of environment which best promotes the welfare of society. The environment may be regarded as a reservoir of natural resources, some renewable but many non-renewable. Pollution may be defined as: any direct alteration of the physical, thermal, biological or radioactive properties of any part of the environment by discharging, emitting or depositing wastes or substances so as to affect any beneficial use adversely to cause a condition which is hazardous to public health, safety or welfare of the animals, birds, wildlife, fish or aquatic life or to plants.

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