

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT IN INDIA

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## Abstract

With the wide spread misuse and exploitation of natural resources resulting in ecological disturbances, the world has woken up to the environmental problems it faces in the advent of globalization. However, this realization has come late to our nation which has resulted in socio-economic stress and disruption of the environmental harmony all over the country. This has brought about a need for environmental planning and management to prevent over-exploitation and for optimum use of the limited natural resources available to us. It is also necessary towards the process of development and to provide a healthy environment to live in. balanced regional development is of utmost importance with special emphasis on development oriented planning in both the rural and urban sectors of our economy. This will help to keep the goal of environmental protection and conservation and the global objective of sustainable development at hand. However, poverty is rampant in our economy since pre-independence and has been a major challenge towards achieving environmental quality. Innovations and effective implementation of the regulations and policies that govern environmental issues in our country is one way to tackle these problems. The other option is environmental resource management by which, we refer to, efficient use of natural resources such as land, water and forests which are of primary importance to the employment industry, providing raw materials to the dependent industries and also act as a means of livelihood for 26.1 per cent of the population in India that lives below the poverty line. After independence, the structure of resource management had not changed, but extended. Where colonialism ended, the slogan of economic development stepped in. The only difference is that in Indian's context, it is a matter of survival whereas for the developed nations, it is the matter of the quality of life. However, the magnitude of ecological destruction has an equal and far reaching effect in the present day. Today, we have not only to preserve and manage but also to sustain and restore our environment, because it is threatening our very existence. The need for environmental management is stressed by land degradation resulting from soil erosion by water and wind, salinization and alkalization, water logging, depletion of plant nutrients, organic matter, deterioration of soil structure and pollution. Efficient management has therefore become an necessity to avoid the over-use and abuse of the natural resources of the country. Environmental management is also essential for the minimization of the impact of human activities on the ecological environment.

**Key words:** Exploitation of natural resources, ecological disturbances, environmental planning, natural resources, environmental quality, etc.

## 1. Introduction

Earth is the only planet, so far known, to have an environment that can sustain life. It has all the physical conditions necessary for the origin and survival of human beings, animals and plants. The environment provides us food, clothing, shelter, medicine, raw materials and all other human needs including aesthetic pleasures and a livable atmosphere. Natural resources, both renewable and non-renewable, form the basis of our very existence on this terrestrial globe. It is an undisputable fact that natural resources form the basis of all our scientific advancements technological progress,

genetic engineering, improvement in agricultural advancement. Human beings have been essentially designed as creatures looking for ways and means to constantly improve their lives. From the moment the caveman stuck pieces of flint together to make the first fire, development started and since then, there has been on looking back. Development may be viewed as a drug holding the answer to fulfilling human needs. But lately the side effects of this wonder drug have become painfully obvious; the focus of which has mainly rested on the environment. Development has both positive and negative effects on the environment and herein lays the kernel of the debate. Advancements in sciences, technology and transport system helped realize the human wants and in turn, led to the exploitation of environmental resources.

With the wide spread misuse and exploitation of natural resources resulting in ecological disturbances, the world has woken up to the environmental problems it faces in the advent of globalization. However, this realization has come late to our nation which has resulted in socio-economic stress and disruption of the environmental harmony all over the country. We are now faced with deforestation, various types of pollution, salinization, water logging and loss in agriculture productivity. This has brought about a need for environmental planning and management to prevent over-exploitation and for optimum use of the limited natural resources available to us. It is also necessary towards the process of development and to provide a healthy environment to live in. Balanced regional development is of utmost importance with special emphasis on development oriented planning in both the rural and urban sectors of our economy. This will help to keep the goal of environmental protection and conservation and the global objective of sustainable development at hand. However, poverty is rampant in our economy since pre-independence and has been a major challenge towards achieving environmental quality. The problems in this regard are multifaceted of social, legal and financial aspects which must be tackled by the government and various environmental groups and organizations that function towards the development of our nation. Innovations and effective implementation of the regulations and policies that govern environmental issues in our country is one way to tackle these problems. The other option is environmental resource management by which, we refer to, efficient use of natural resources such as land, water and forests which are of primary importance to the employment industry, providing raw materials to the dependent industries and also act as a means of livelihood for 26.1 per cent of the population in India that lives below the poverty line. After independence, the structure of resource management had not changed, but extended. Where colonialism ended, the slogan of economic development stepped in. The development in the last four decades has been described in the following two ways: Development is concerned with the use of natural resources for commodity production and capital accumulation, and introduction of short-term profit maximizing technologies.

As a result of years of ineffective environmental management of available limited resources, it has resulted in a severe depletion of the environment. Desertification as a result of deforestation and soil erosion aggravated by years of unchecked felling of trees and sand quarrying, several species of birds and animals being pushed to the brink of extinction as a result of poaching and loss of natural habitat, pollution of the land, water and air are some of the result of the ignorance of the significance of environmental planning in our history. Chemicalisation of agriculture and the new technology actually pulls out more nutrients from the soil than it puts back and is a major threat to rural economy. Even the high altitude lakes have not been spared. In some parts there is severe water logging. Rapid industrialization has also led to the increase in presence of dangerous chemicals released from effluents. Although several amendments have been made to the constitution about several irrelevant matters, environmental has been comfortably ignored. One must understand that economic activities have a direct bearing on the natural and environmental resources. Excessive and indiscriminate use of natural resources and energy leads to pollution. Activities involving processes like extraction, manufacture, transport, consumption and disposable add some stress to the environment and affect its assimilative capacity by adding wastes to it.

## **2. Importance of environmental management**

Environmental management is the most talked of subject all over the globe. The only difference is that in Indian's context, it is a matter of survival whereas for the developed nations, it is the matter of the quality of life. However, the magnitude of ecological destruction has an equal and far reaching effect in the present day. Today, we have not only to preserve and manage but also to sustain and restore our environment, because it is threatening our very existence. The need for environmental management is stressed by land degradation resulting from soil erosion by water and wind, salinization and alkalization, water logging, depletion of plant nutrients, organic matter, deterioration of soil structure and pollution. There has been a damaging impact of soil loss on agricultural productivity of our country. Therefore, soil conservation has to be one important aspect of environmental management.

## **3. Role of the government in environmental management**

The government is the supreme manager of environmental and it is the duty of the government to manage the security and sovereignty of air, water and land. Today, the magnitude of the pollution problems due to rapid growth of population, industrialization, urbanization and motorization, especially since 1960's prove to be serious that they require to be tackled only through public policies. Generally, there are two approaches available for pollution abatement policy: discouraging pollution through altering the market incentives; and through regulatory intervention, in the absence of market incentives. The regulatory intervention relates to the way of passing of pollution control regulations and to establish environmental standards. Some measures

that have been adopted by the government in environmental management and currently in operation all over India include:

**Effluent charges:** It is one of the fiscal tools which when used correctly will induce the firm to decrease output of effluents. It will help in removing the price criteria related to the producers who are associated in full utilization of our natural resources of our nation.

**Pollution fines:** It is an important strategy of environmental pollution control creates cost burdens on polluters and also serves as an incentive for adopting safety measures in the production activities over the country.

**Subsidies for better environmental quality:** The subsidies that can be offered by the government acts as an opportunity cost in terms of foregone revenue and also have the effect of internationalizing the social costs of waste discharges.

**Other regulatory and legal measures:** There is an increasing effort working to improve the legislation laws that protect our environment supported by well drafted regulations and enforcement systems and administrative machinery. The legislative scope covers a wide range of spheres including land-use, water rights, pollution control and abatement, forest protection, wildlife conservation, rural and urban planning, industrial licensing, development planning, use of toxic chemicals, disposal of solid wastes and effluents to name the most important few.

Hence, it is necessary for the government to increase its environmental expenditure in order to make environmental protection which helps in sustainable development in countries. Environmental management must also acknowledge the fact that the increasing population and poverty are mainly related to the over utilization and depletion of natural resources. Environmental education particularly relating to environmental impact assessment is necessary for better environmental management. Voluntary agencies and NGOs must be encouraged to help to solve the environmental problems. The environmental movement has been weak in India. This is so despite the pro-nature, pantheism in Indian culture and the Gandhian outlook to life. Though its antecedents are to be traced to its counterparts in the west and the developed countries elsewhere, like Japan, it came up in the seventies and assumed recognizable proportions during the eighties. Initially, after independence, the primary attention of the government and the people was riveted on development through a planned strategy. As the development plans preceded and development in some concentrated areas, regions and sectors took place, government and people started looking into environmental problems that arose in the population. Uprooting of agricultural landholders from the village in which they had settled for generations due to irrigation and hydroelectric projects, water logging and salinization of agricultural lands due to continuous use of fertilizers, irrigations and other related factors were some of the environmental problems which cropped up all over the country and engaged the attention of the planners and the people. Thus, the rise of

environmentalism in the country has been slow and belated to meet the advanced and pace of development in the country. Development planning by the government must be preceded by foreseeing of the environmental problems ahead of time, not trailing behind it. Environmental management on the one hand and development planning on the other, are interlinked as the former gives the solutions to make better surrounding and the latter provides the way for uplift way of standard of living.

#### 4. Conclusion

Environmental management and conservation must necessarily go hand in hand as they are almost complementary to one another and together help to attain the goals and laid down tasks. Environmental management plays a significant role for not just India but for the whole world to resolve environmental problems by encompassing issues ranging from religious attitudes to reforestation, from legal issues to the problems of natural resources. We have to plan the use of natural resources judiciously. True development oriented planning helps to always strike a balance between intermediate and long-term requirements. It is necessary to realize that economic growth cannot lead to development if it is destructive to the surrounding environment and the natural resources of our country. Thus, India cannot strive to become a developed country if it chooses to ignore the need for environmental management. Efficient management has therefore become necessity to avoid the over-use and abuse of the natural resources of the country. Environmental management is also essential for the minimization of the impact of human activities on the ecological environment.

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