

International Journal of Innovative Research in Science, Engineering and Technology

(An ISO 3297: 2007 Certified Organization)

Website: www.ijirset.com

Vol. 6, Issue 5, May 2017

Scientific and Academic Studies on Changing Pattern and Factors on Environment Conditions and Socio-Economic Ethics

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ABSTRACT: The Prayer "Sarvatra Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve antu Niramayah," 'Let all be happy here and let all enjoy full health' of Vedic Sages echoed universal welfare. Industrial and technological development has provided us with material prosperity but has also created unique environmental threats to us and to future generations. As the twenty-first century begins, several well-established environmental trends are shaping the future of civilization-rising pollution, global warming, falling water tables, shrinking forests and the loss of plant and animal species. The extent of the environmental damage produced by present and projected industrial technology makes one wonder how long this kind of development would be sustainable. The issue of environmental ethics goes beyond the problems relating to protection of environment. Problems like Global Warming, Ozone depletion and disposal of hazardous wastes that concern the entire world. They require International cooperation and have to be tackled at the global level. Industries that are based on natural resources, like mineral timber, fibre and food stuff etc. have a special responsibility for : (1) adopting practices that have built - in environmental consideration, (2) Introducing processes that minimize the use of natural resources and energy, reduce waste, and prevent pollution; (3) Making product that are "Environment friendly", with minimum impact on people and ecosystem (4) Green accounting system. There is no doubt, that with the public opinion moving towards accountable Socio-economic structures, ethical and eco-friendly business practices would be standard corporate norms.

KEYWORDS: Sustainable development, Ecological Ethics, conservation, Natural Resources.

I. INTRODUCTION

"Once the last tree is cut and the last river poisoned, you will find you cannot eat your money." The Prayer "Sarvatra Sukhinah Santu Sarve Santu Niramayah," 'Let all be happy here and let all enjoy full health' of Vedic Sages echoed universal welfare. The earthly life constituted the central concern for the Vedic Aryans. The sacrificial tire-rites which were evolved during Vedic period had social welfare as its motto, the motive was to prepare the land for agriculture for abundance and welfare of human race.

II. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Concept of sustainable development was brought into focus by Brundtland Report, which stated that economic growth has to be environmentally sustainable. There is no economic growth without ecological costs. One must realize that increased development and higher GNP are related to environmental damage and resource depletion. Therefore, an element of resource regeneration and positive approach to environment has to be incorporated in developmental programmes. Literally sustainable development refers to maintaining development over time. Most widely cited definition of sustainable development is Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. A nation or society should satisfy its requirements - social, economic and others - without jeopardizing the interest of future generations.

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Pollution and Resource Depletion: Pollution refers to the undesirable and unintended contamination of the environment by the manufacture or use of commodities. Resource depletion refers to the consumption of finite or scarce resources. In a certain sense, pollution is also a type of resource depletion because contamination of air, water, or land diminishes their beneficial qualities.

Air Pollution: Air pollution has increased exponentially as industrialization expanded. The most prevalent forms of air pollution are the gases and particulates spewed out by autos and industrial processes, which affect the quality of the air we breathe. Air pollutants also affect vegetation decreasing agricultural yields, deteriorate exposed construction materials through corrosion, discoloration, and rot, are hazardous to health and life and threaten disastrous global damage in the form of global warming, destruction of the stratospheric ozone layer and acid rains.

Global Warming: Greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons, occur naturally in the atmosphere to absorb and hold heat from the sun, preventing it from escaping back into space, to keep the earth's temperature about 33°C warmer than it would otherwise be, so that life can evolve and flourish. However, industrial, and other human activities during the last 50 years have released substantially more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, particularly by the burning of fossil fuels such as oil and coal rising the levels of greenhouse gases and resulting in increasing amounts of heat, raising temperatures around the globe. Average global temperatures are now at least 1°C higher than in 1900 and are expected to rise by upto 4.5°C during this century. This rising heat will expand the world's deserts; melt the polar ice caps, causing sea levels to rise; make several species plants and animals extinct; disrupt farming; and increase the distribution and severity of diseases. Bodies of water such as lakes and oceans will warm, and this will dramatically shift the geographical distribution of fish and other marine species and increase the frequency and magnitude of droughts. The increase in levels of greenhouse gases would require reducing current emissions of greenhouse gases by 60 to 70 percent-an amount that would seriously damage the economies of both developed and developing nations.

Water Pollution: In 1985, about 11,000 oil spills, involving about 24 million gallons of oil, were recorded in and around U.S. In the past, the oceans have been used as disposal sites for intermediate and low-level radioactive wastes. Oceanographers have found traces of plutonium, cesium, and other radioactive materials in seawater that have apparently leaked from the sealed drums in which radioactive wastes are disposed.

Land Pollution: Solid Wastes: Each year people living in cities produce tons of solid wastes every year. City garbage dumps are significant sources of pollution, containing toxic substances such as cadmium (from rechargeable batteries), mercury, lead (from car batteries and TV picture tubes), vanadium, copper, zinc.

Ecological Ethics: Ecological ethics is based on the idea that the environment should be protected not only for the sake of human beings but also for its own sake. The issue of environmental ethics goes beyond the problems relating to protection of environment or nature in terms of pollution, resource utilization or waste disposal. It is the issues of exploitive human nature and attitudes that should be addressed in a rational way. Problems like Global warming, Ozone depletion and disposal of hazardous wastes that concern the entire world. They require International cooperation and have to be tackled at the global level.

Conservation of Natural Resources: Conservation refers to the saving or rationing of natural resources for later uses. Conservation, therefore, looks primarily to the future: to the need to limit consumption now to have resources available for tomorrow. In a sense, pollution control is a form of conservation. Pollution "consumes" pure air and water, and pollution control "conserves" them for the future. Consequently, our concern over the depletion of resources is primarily a concern for future generations. Conservation, therefore, is the only way of ensuring a supply for tomorrow's generations.

Developments in India: The Chipko movement in India is a proof of people's concern about balance in ecosystem when in 1973 they embraced the trees to prevent their felling by the government. In India especially the big cities are having the problem of air pollution on account of concentration of industries and power plants. Also the automobiles are proving to be the greatest challenge for abatement of air pollution. In pursuant to the Stockholm Conference, India passed the Air (Control and Prevention of Pollution) Act 1981, the Factories Act, 1948 as amended by the Act of 1987 contains provisions for preventing pollution.

Under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and Rules framed there under stringent measures are stipulated to prevent air pollution, earlier also air-pollution measures were enacted through:

1. The Factories Act, 1948.

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2. The Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951.

3. Mines and Minerals (Regulation and Development) Act, 1957.

Industries that are based on natural resources, like minerals, timber, fibre, and foodstuffs, etc. have a special responsibility for:

1. Adopting practices that have built-in environmental consideration.
2. Introducing processes that minimize the use of natural resources and energy, reduce waste, and prevent pollution;
3. Making products that are “environment-friendly”, with minimum impact on people and ecosystem.
4. Green accounting systems: Conventional accounts may result in policy decisions which are non-sustainable for the country. Green accounting on the other hand is, focused on addressing such deficiencies in conventional accounts with respect to the environment. If the environmental costs are properly reflected in the prices paid for goods and services then companies and ultimately the consumer would adjust market behavior in a way that would reduce damage to environment, pollution and waste production. Price signal will also influence behavior to avoid exploitation or excessive utilization of natural resources. Such measures would facilitate the approach of “Polluter Pay Principle”. Removing subsidies that encourage environmental damage is another measure.

There no doubt, that with the public opinion moving towards accountable socio-economic structures, ethical and eco-friendly business practices would be standard corporate norms.

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