



Research Article

Environment Degradation and Sustainability

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Abstract

The present study explores the concept of sustainable development, focusing on its underlying objectives, issues, and challenges, particularly in the context of developing country. The concept of sustainable development emerged in 1980s emphasizing the balance between economic growth, environmental protection and social equity. Despite its global acceptance, many developing countries face significant challenges in implementing sustainable development practices due to poverty, inadequate infrastructure and environmental degradation. Now a days environment degradation is a very big problem. It harms sustainable development and human health badly. This study highlights many reasons of environmental degradation, such as pollution, natural disasters, deforestation and climate change. This study also examines the various results of the environment damage such as human health, fewer types of plants and animals, a warmer planet, loss of biodiversity, holes in the ozone layer and overuse or depletion of natural resources. Further-more it shows some solution to fight environment degradation and importance of sustainable development. It suggests adopting renewable energy sources (solar and wind energy), promoting waste management system, afforestation, enhance environmentally friendly policies. On all hands this study highlights that environmental protection is not only responsibility of government, it is also every-individuals responsibility.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today environmental degradation is disturbing the earth's ecosystem, and in India the situation is very serious. With the continuously increase population this problem is becoming more challenging. Delhi is the one of the most polluted capitals in the world. Environmental degradation happens when population growth, urbanization and industrialization increase and we start using natural resources more than necessary. It means the damage or destruction of air, water, land, wildlife and forest due to harm human activities and natural factors. In India, this problem is growing very fast because both urbanization and population are rising rapidly. As a result, natural resources are being overused in industries and agriculture. This is not only affect our health, economy and climate but also disturb the entire ecosystem.

There are many reasons for environmental degradation in India, but the main causes are rapid urbanization and heavy dependency on fossil fuels. A major cause of air pollution is electricity production from coal which generates around 70% of the country's power. Deforestation is another important reason. Forests in the western ghats and northeast are being cut down for mining and farming which is harming biodiversity. Climate change is also increase natural disaster like floods and drought, there are many examples in India including the Assam floods of 2023, in which more than two million people were affected.

Concept of Sustainability

Human activities have caused negative impacts on the environment, leading to several global issues such as Ozone layer depletion, marine pollution and global warming, acid rain and dwindling varieties of wildlife. In response to these concerns, a United Nations conference on the human environment was held in Stockholm in 1972. The conference aimed to address environmental problems caused by industrialization and population growth.

In simple words sustainability means protecting and maintaining the environment for a long time. It includes maintaining a balance between social equity, ecological protection and economic growth. It can also be called sustainable development, which ensure that natural resources preserved for future generation.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To identify cause and effect of environment degradation.
- To identify practical solutions for promoting sustainable development.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used secondary data, which is collected from various Govt. reports, journals, books, articles, and online resources related to environmental sustainability. These sources help to understand the cause of environment degradation and the important of sustainability.

Causes of Environmental Degradation

Environment degradation is caused by many interconnected factors that negatively affect the environment and disturb the balance of ecosystem. The big causes of environment

degradation include pollution, deforestation, overpopulation, waste from industries, soil erosion, mining, lack of literacy, poverty, urbanization, industrialization, natural cause, climate change, economic factors, land fill and vehicle emissions. These factors together destroy our ecosystem and losses the quality of natural resources.

Pollution is the most dangerous causes of environment degradation. Air and water pollution occur when harmful chemicals and gases are released from industries, vehicles, and other human activities. These pollutants contaminate natural resources and pose serious risks to human health and biodiversity. For instance, in many metropolitan cities such as Delhi, the air quality index (AQI) often rises above hazardous levels, sometimes exceeding 500+, which indicates extremely poor air quality.

Deforestation, is another significant factor that contribution to environment degradation. Large -scale cutting of forests for infrastructure development, agriculture, road construction and mining reduces biodiversity and disturb balance of ecosystem. Its also accelerates climate change and increase the risk of natural disasters such as floods and landslides.

Furthermore, rapid population growth places additional pressure on natural resources such as land, forests, and water. In many areas, population expansion has led to the growth of slum settlements, where waste management and sanitation system are often inadequate. As a result, pollution and waste disposal problems become more severe.

Lack of environmental awareness among people also contributes to environmental degradation. When individuals are not aware of sustainable practices, they often engage in activities such as burning plastic and improper waste disposal, which significantly increase air pollution and harm the environment. Therefore, addressing environmental degradation requires not only government policies and regulations but also public awareness and responsible behavior toward environmental protection.

Effects of Environmental Degradation

In today's time, the effects of environment degradation are very serious and visible across the world. Environmental pollution is leading to various type of diseases and health problems. At the same time pollution, various diseases are increasing, and biodiversity loss is causing ecological imbalance. Global warming is continuously raising and the earth's temperatures increase, which results leading to droughts, ozone layer depletion, skin cancer and negative impacts on crops. Natural resources are depleting, resulting in food shortages, rising temperatures and changing weather patterns reduce crop productivity and soil quality.

Furthermore, pollution is affecting tourist spots, as travelers tend to avoid polluted landscapes, which reducing tourism revenue. Overall, environmental degradation leads to economic impacts such as lost productivity and rising restoration costs, so sustainable practices are essential for good development.

Solutions to environmental degradation

Many methods can be adopted to stop environmental degradation. For example, planting a large number of trees can

prevent soil erosion and increase groundwater recharge. When we use chemical fertilizers and pesticides heavily, the soil gradually loses its fertility, so their use should be reduced. In India, single use plastic has caused serious pollution in rivers, drains, and soil. The government has taken several steps. It has banned single-use plastic and introduced Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) rules, which make companies responsible for collecting and recycling their own plastic waste. The use of cloth bags, steel bottles, and leaf-based plates can be encouraged.

Through schemes like PM-PRANAM and PM-KISAN, farmers are being encouraged to shift towards traditional and natural farming, so they become less dependent on chemical-based methods. In addition, water conservation can be improved by reviving rainwater harvesting, lakes, ponds, talabs, check dams, and other traditional water bodies. Using micro-irrigation systems like drip and sprinkle irrigation helps farmers increase water use efficiency and reduce wastage. By promoting rooftop solar panels, solar street lights, solar water heaters and community solar plants, the use of solar energy can be increased, which will reduce coal-based pollution.

At the same time, awareness campaigns and environment-friendly programs should be organized in villages, schools, and colleges. Rules alone are not enough, people must adopt an eco-friendly lifestyle. Citizens must understand how planting just one tree can make a positive difference to the environment, and how small individual actions can bring about big changes.

For the successful implementation of all these measures, Resident Welfare Association (RWAs), Gram panchayats and NGOs must play an active role. For example, cities such as Surat and Indore have become national-level role models in waste management and recycling. To turn India into a "Green India" important government schemes like Namami Gange, Swachh Bharat Mission, Jal Jeevan Mission, and other environmental related programs must also be supported by both rural and urban communities. For this, education, Community action, and public awareness are proving to be the most effective tools.

4. CONCLUSION

We have seen that human activities and other causes are causing significant damage to our environment. This is creating numerous challenges for future generation. For this, sustainable development is the only solution that can preserve natural resources well for the future generations. In India, due to poverty and development pressures, these problems are evident. Therefore, we must adopt responsible policies to strike a balance between environment and development so that both our environment and economy remain sustainable. In addition, collective efforts from individual, communities and governments are important to prevent the environment degradation only through sustainable practices and increased environmental awareness can we ensure healthy planet for future generations.

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