



Critical Analysis of Human Role in Environmental Degradations

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Abstract:

Environmental Education (EE) refers to organized efforts to teach how natural environments function, and particularly, how human beings can manage behaviour and ecosystems to live sustainably. The natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity called environment. Environmental degradation is the disintegration of the earth or deterioration of the environment through consumption of unplanned natural resources, for example, air, water and soil; the destruction of environments and the eradication of wildlife.

The environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution. Environmental degradation is one of the largest threats that are being looked at in the world today. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction characterizes environmental degradation as the lessening of the limit of the earth to meet social and environmental destinations, and needs. Improper land use planning and development is the unplanned conversion of lands into urban settings, mining areas, housing development projects, office spaces, shopping malls, industrial sites, parking areas, road networks. Pollution, in whatever form, whether it is air, water, land or noise is harmful for the environment, landfills loss of biodiversity, natural disaster. loss of biodiversity ozone layer depletion impact on human health loss for tourism industry economic impact. If we are not careful, we can contribute to the environmental degradation that is occurring all around the world.

Keywords: *Environmental Education, Environmental degradation, Pollution, landfills, Human role*

1. Introduction

Environmental Education (EE) refers to organized efforts to teach how natural environments function, and particularly, how human beings can manage behaviour and ecosystems to live sustainably. It is a multi-disciplinary field integrating disciplines such as biology, chemistry, physics, ecology, earth science, atmospheric science, mathematics, and geography. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) states that EE is vital in imparting an inherent respect for nature amongst society and in enhancing public environmental awareness.

The Wisconsin Environmental Education Board defines environmental education as “a lifelong learning process that leads to an informed and involved citizenry having the creative problem-solving skills, scientific and social literacy, ethical awareness and sensitivity for the relationship between humans and the environment, and commitment to engage in responsible individual and cooperative actions. By these actions, environmentally literate citizens will help ensure an ecologically and economically sustainable environment.”

The natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity called environment. The surroundings or conditions in which a person, an Environmental degradation is a process through which the natural environment is compromised in some way, reducing

biological diversity and the general health of the environment. This process can be entirely natural in origin, or it can be accelerated or caused by human activities, animal, or plants live or operate.

Environmental degradation is the disintegration of the earth or deterioration of the environment through consumption of unplanned natural resources, for example, air, water and soil; the destruction of environments and the eradication of wildlife. It is characterized as any change or aggravation to nature's turf seen to be pernicious or undesirable. Ecological effect or degradation is created by the consolidation of an effectively substantial and expanding human populace, constantly expanding monetary development or per capita fortune and the application of asset exhausting and polluting technology. It occurs when earth's natural resources are depleted and environment is compromised in the form of extinction of species, pollution in air, water and soil, and rapid growth in population.

Environmental degradation is one of the largest threats that are being looked at in the world today. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction characterizes environmental degradation as the lessening of the limit of the earth to meet social and environmental destinations, and needs. Environmental degradation can happen in a number of ways. At the point when environments are wrecked or common assets are exhausted, the environment is considered to be corrupted and harmed. There are a number of different techniques that are being used to prevent this, including environmental resource protection and general protection efforts.

Environment Issues can be seen by long term ecological effects, some of which can demolish whole environments. An environment is a unique unit and incorporates all the living and non-living components that live inside it. Plants and creatures are evident parts of the environment, but it also includes the things on which they depend on, for example, streams, lakes, and soils.

Environmental surroundings get to be divided when technological advancement splits up areas of land. Some examples of this can include streets which may slice through woods or even trails which wind through prairies. While it may not sound all terrible on the surface, there are bad results. The biggest of these results are felt by particular animal and plant groups, the vast majority of which are specific for their bio-region or need a large area in order to make sure that their genetic lines are kept intact.

UNESCO's involvement in environmental awareness and education goes back to the very beginnings of the Organization, with the creation in 1948 of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature, now the World Conservation Union), the first major NGO mandated to help preserve the natural environment. UNESCO was also closely involved in convening the UN International Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden in 1972, which led to the setting up of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Subsequently, for two decades, UNESCO and UNEP led the International Environmental Education Programme (1975-1995), which set out a vision for, and gave practical guidance on how to mobilize education for environmental awareness. In 1976, UNESCO launched an environmental education newsletter 'Connect' as the official organ of the UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP). It served as a clearinghouse to exchange information on Environmental Education (EE) in general and to promote the aims and activities of the IEEP in particular, as well as being a network for institutions and individuals interested and active in environment education until 2007.

2. Causes of Environmental Degradation

Environmental degradation is the deterioration of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil; the destruction of ecosystems; habitat destruction; the extinction of wildlife; and pollution. When natural habitats are destroyed or natural resources are depleted, the environment is degraded.

Some environmental life species require substantial areas to help provide food, living space, and other different assets. These creatures are called area specific. At the point when the biome is divided, the vast patches of living space don't exist anymore. It gets to be more troublesome for the wildlife to get the assets they need in order to survive. The environment goes on, even though the animals and plant life are not there to help sustain it properly.

2.1 Improper Land use Planning and Development

The unplanned conversion of lands into urban settings, mining areas, housing development projects, office spaces, shopping malls, industrial sites, parking areas, road networks, and so on leads to environmental pollution and degradation of natural habitats and ecosystems. Mining and oil exploration, for instance, renders land unusable for habitation and causes other forms of environmental degradation by releasing toxic materials into the environment. Improper land use has led to the loss and destruction of millions of acres of natural environments across the globe.

2.2 Pollution

Pollution, in whatever form, whether it is air, water, land or noise is harmful for the environment. Air pollution pollutes the air that we breathe which causes health issues. Water pollution degrades the quality of water that we use for drinking purposes. Land pollution results in degradation of earth's surface as a result of human activities. Noise pollution can cause irreparable damage to our ears when exposed to continuous large sounds like honking of vehicles on a busy road or machines producing large noise in a factory or a mill.

2.3 Overpopulation

Rapid population growth puts strain on natural resources which results in degradation of our environment. Mortality rate has gone down due to better medical facilities which has resulted in increased lifespan. More population simply means more demand for food, clothes and shelter. You need more space to grow food and provide homes to millions of people. This results in deforestation which is another factor of environmental degradation.

2.4 Landfills

Landfills pollute the environment and destroy the beauty of the city. Landfills come within the city due the large amount of waste that gets generated by households, industries, factories and hospitals. Landfills pose a great risk to the health of the environment and the people who live there. Landfills produce foul smell when burned and cause huge environmental degradation. One of the calamitous effects of landfills is the destruction of nearby environmental health together with its ecosystems.

The landfills discharge various kinds of chemicals on the land adjacent to forest, various natural habitats, and water systems such as underground and surface water which makes the environment unappealing to the survival of trees, vegetations, animal and humans.

2.5 Deforestation & Loss of Biodiversity

Deforestation is the cutting down of trees to make way for more homes and industries. Rapid growth in population and urban sprawl are two of the major causes of deforestation. Apart from that, use of forest land for agriculture, animal grazing, harvest for fuel wood and logging are some of the other causes of deforestation. Deforestation contributes to global warming as decreased forest size puts carbon back into the environment.

Degradation of the environment has recorded a continued destruction of wild forests and the damage of natural ecosystems that has greatly contributed to the mass extinction of species. The number of threatened species persists to multiply worldwide whereas some have completely gone extinct. This is because of the human activities such as acidifying water systems, over-exploitation of natural resources, overpopulation, and the deliberate and indirect destruction of natural systems necessary for the survival

of different species. These anthropogenic activities simply alter the natural process combined, thus, destroying the natural ecosystems supporting biodiversity.

2.6 Natural Causes

Things like avalanches, quakes, tidal waves, storms, and wildfires can totally crush nearby animal and plant groups to the point where they can no longer survive in those areas. This can either come to fruition through physical demolition as the result of a specific disaster, or by the long term degradation of assets by the presentation of an obtrusive foreign species to the environment. The latter frequently happens after tidal waves, when reptiles and bugs are washed ashore.

Of course, humans aren't totally to blame for this whole thing. Earth itself causes ecological issues, as well. While environmental degradation is most normally connected with the things that people do, the truth of the matter is that the environment is always changing. With or without the effect of human exercises, a few biological systems degrade to the point where they can't help the life that is supposed to live there.

3. Effects of Environmental Degradation

3.1 Impact on Human Health

Human health might be at the receiving end as a result of the environmental degradation. Areas exposed to toxic air pollutants can cause respiratory problems like pneumonia and asthma. Degradation of air quality is responsible for more than 300,000 deaths annually and millions of chronic diseases.

3.2 Loss of Biodiversity

Biodiversity is important for maintaining balance of the ecosystem in the form of combating pollution, restoring nutrients, protecting water sources and stabilizing climate. Deforestation, global warming, overpopulation and pollution are few of the major causes for loss of biodiversity.

3.3 Ozone Layer Depletion

Ozone layer is responsible for protecting earth from harmful ultraviolet rays. The presence of chlorofluorocarbons, hydro chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere is causing the ozone layer to deplete. As it will deplete, it will emit harmful radiations back to the earth. Ozone's role in the enhancement of the greenhouse effect has been difficult to determine. Accurate measurements of past long-term (more than 25 years in the past) levels of this gas in the atmosphere are currently unavailable. Moreover, concentrations of ozone gas are found in two different regions of the Earth's atmosphere. The majority of the ozone (about 97%) found in the atmosphere is concentrated in the stratosphere at an altitude of 15 to 55 kilometers above the Earth's surface.

3.4 Loss for Tourism Industry

The deterioration of environment can be a huge setback for tourism industry that rely on tourists for their daily livelihood. Environmental damage in the form of loss of green cover, loss of biodiversity, huge landfills, increased air and water pollution can be a big turn off for most of the tourists.

3.5 Economic Impact

The huge cost that a country may have to borne due to environmental degradation can have big economic impact in terms of restoration of green cover, cleaning up of landfills and protection of endangered species. The economic impact can also be in terms of loss of tourism industry.

3.6 Global Warming

The human-caused increase in its concentration in the atmosphere has strengthened the greenhouse effect and has definitely contributed to global warming over the last 100 years. Carbon dioxide is also naturally exchanged between the atmosphere and life through the processes of photosynthesis and respiration. The globe is heating up. Both land and oceans are warmer now than record-keeping began in 1880, and temperatures are still ticking upward. This temperature rise, in a nutshell, is global warming.

Burning fossil fuels like coal and oil releases water vapour, carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄), ozone and nitrous oxide (N₂O) — the primary greenhouse gases. Carbon dioxide is the most common greenhouse gas. Between about 800,000 years ago and the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, its presence in the atmosphere amounted to about 280 parts per million (ppm).

As know that, there are a lot of things that can have an effect on the environment. If we are not careful, we can contribute to the environmental degradation that is occurring all around the world. We can, however, take action to stop it and take care of the world that we live in by providing environmental education to the people which will help them pick familiarity with their surroundings that will enable to take care of environmental concerns thus making it more useful and protected for our children and other future generations.

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