

Labour and Environment in Global Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

Labour and the environment have long been perceived as concept vested with highly conflicting issues. Most of the world population depends on natural resources and the environment for survival. Many laborers share the fear that planned environmental policies will lead to job losses. But, protecting our environment will actually contribute to protecting employment and fighting poverty. In 2004, there were more than 4.5 million "green power" consumers in the western world. They purchased power voluntarily at the retail level or used renewable energy. Direct jobs world-wide from renewable energy manufacturing, operations and maintenance increased 1.7 million in the same year.

The natural resources like earth, wind, water, trees are the basis of human life. For the bright future of mankind, it is essential to use these resources with great care. 'Environment' means the physical, chemical and biological surroundings in which an organism exists. Thus, environment is the gift of nature. Prior to the 20th century, there was no major evidence of human influence on environment. Environmental degradation up to this period was mainly due to natural disasters, like cyclone, earthquake, etc. Up to that period, natural resources were not used beyond their regenerative capacities. So, what was used was regenerated. But after the population explosion in the world, the situation started changing. Gradually, this led to serious environmental degradation behind which the need and greed of mankind is responsible. Ever-increasing pollution, demolition of forests and bio-diversity, increase in global temperature, etc. have alarmed us towards awareness of environmental protection. Worldwide environmental awareness was started during the 1960s. The main impetus came from the publication of a book, 'Silent Spring' by Rachel Carson in 1962. This book revealed the risk of pesticides and their bad effects on human life, thereby

showing the necessity for the protection of earth. The world summit held at Rio-de-Janero in 1992 at focused attention towards environmental problems. Economists also started looking afresh at the central economic problem of resource scarcity in relation to its possible uses. After 1970, many economists started arguing that development can be made sustainable only with efficient and judicious use of natural resources. In this paper, I have described various factors responsible for environmental hazards and have suggested our duties regarding the protection of the earth.

Environmental Imbalance and Health Hazard

The world had to accept two very serious problems as unwanted gifts in the 20th century: first is population explosion and environmental imbalance. The problem of population explosion is limited to Asia, Africa and Latin America, while the problem of pollution or environmental hazards has spread worldwide. In this context, necessity to protect the earth should be the first priority. The proper combination and balance between the natural resources and human population is called environment, and environment is a part of the earth. When excessive use of natural resources due to unlimited human wants takes place, the earth becomes unsafe, i.e., it creates imbalance in the environment. Before the two human generations, the wants of our elders were very limited, so, the earth was safe and protected. But with ever an increasing population along with the ever-increasing demand for the materialistic consumption; it is very difficult for human beings to live on this earth. Since the beginning of the 20th century, there has been rapid industrial development in various countries of the world. The production of necessities and prodigal goods has increased manifold. In the 2nd World War, atom bombs were dropped on Japan, and, thereafter, many countries have been experimenting with atomic energy privately or publicly, for destructive purposes. The problem of pollution has increased seriously with the process of national economic development. In India, at least 86,400-ton insecticides are used annually, which creates air pollution as well as soil-degradation. In urban areas, heavy industrialization and increasing number of vehicles are the major responsible factors in generating air, water, and sound pollution. Eighty and a half percent of the

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total vehicles in our country are in Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. Carbon Monoxide mixed in the air, in 2001: 470 T.P.D. in Mumbai, 810 T.P.D. in Delhi and 1887 T.P.D. in Kolkata, but, due to the use of CNG, this volume has decreased a little now. Carter Brandun and Christan Homan have observed that every year at least 40,000 people die in India due to pollution. Industries like aluminum, cement, chemical, colour, plastic, rubber, pharmaceutical, pesticides, fertilizers, thermal power etc. pollute the atmosphere with carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, and hydrocarbons. The temperature has been rising due to pollution. Undue changes are affecting the climate. The rivers, ponds, lakes and oceans have become means to dispose the industrial waste which increase health problems inhuman and animals health. T.B., cancer, skin diseases, bronchitis, cold cough, fever, tiredness, diarrhea, headache, hair loss, chest pain, eye problems, swelling of hands and legs, mental problems etc. are the outcome of pollution. The polluted water gets absorbed in the cultivation land and creates serious problems in the fertility lands. Though forests are very useful for environment, in our country only 23% land is forest land; in Gujarat only 8% land is forest land. Every year, 13 lakh hectare forest land decreases due to cutting of trees and land encroachments. Floods, land erosion, construction of dams are also responsible for deforestation.

Considering the whole narration, we can say that there is a serious environmental crisis and ecological degradation in this century. The labourers and workers get dangerous diseases from their work place due to environmental imbalance. Their absence and decreasing efficiency due to any type of sickness may decrease the national output. It is certain that time has come to think of plans and actions regarding the protection of earth. It is not certain that India would be super power of the world, but it is certain that India is and would be one of the most polluted countries in the world. We are not able to breathe pure air, not able to eat pure food, and not able to drink pure water, and efficient work output by laborers can happen, in a good environment.

Duties for providing pure environment

For the protection of the earth and for providing clean environment, economists, scientists, engineers, environmentalists, government and the people should think of some concrete policies.

- i. Environmental policy is essential for solving environmental hazards. It may be defined as a set of legal, administrative, governmental and social plans and policies to control pollution and to protect the earth. In India, we have also formulated such policies, but the implementation

be implemented strictly by the administration.

- ii. Government alone cannot solve the environmental problems. There should be coordination of government action with NGOs, pollution affected people, and the polluters. People participation is essential in all stages of environmental protection. In our Indian culture, we worship natural resources / environment, so, without involvement of people this great task cannot be done. People with some social movement can protect the earth. The 'Chipko Movement', 'Narmada River Movement', 'Samaj Parivartan Samuday's Movement, 'Silent Valley and Dun Valley Movement' are good examples.
- iii. Various industries should actively control pollution. Industries like textiles, cement, chemicals, drugs, plastic, petro-chemicals should be established at least 15 kms. away from the residential areas of cities and villages.
- iv. Tree plantation is the best way to protect the earth. Trees absorb polluted air and give out clean air. Tree plantation should be followed by maintaining them in a proper way. Students can accelerate this work with the help of N.S.S., N.C.C., and Scout-Guide activities.
- v. Gandhiji wanted ruralisation instead of urbanization, as he knew the dangerous outcome of urbanization and industrialization. In this context, cottage, rural, and small-scale industries should be motivated by the government. These industries create less pollution. Prof. Schumacher also agrees about the usefulness of Gandhian thoughts for solving environmental problems. Less pollution will not seriously unpact the overall health of the laborers.
- vi. The new buzzword in the international industrial circle is clean technology. The ultimate aim of clean technology or 'technology to ensure clean production' is to reduce the generation of waste and toxic emissions. It is a creative way of thinking about products and processes that help in reducing pollution at source and enhance profitability. Organic farming is also useful for the protection of earth, since it does not require chemical fertilizers and pesticides.
- vii. We should harness natural energies like solar energy, wind energy, water energy, ocean energy, bio-gas energy etc. The use of CNG in automobiles is also useful in reducing the pollution. Some substitution of ethanol must be

mixed in petrol / diesel to reduce air pollution. The use of an alternate energy will create more jobs too.

viii. Our Indian culture devotes special days / dates festivals and celebrations. We should celebrate the following days so that the work of earth protection can become speedy:

a. February 2 – World Wetland Day – Wetlands are very important part of our biodiversity and it is necessary to see that they are well protected.

b. February 28 – National Science Day – It is necessary to highlight the contribution of science in the protection of the environment.

c. March 21 – World Forestry Day – Planting the trees and highlighting the urgency to increase the green cover.

d. March 22 – World Water Day – The decision to celebrate this day has been taken recently as drinking water is fast depleting.

e. March 23 – World Meteorological Day – Just to remind everybody that weather is an integral part of the environment.

f. April 7 – World Health Day – WHO was established on this day in 1948. In the changing environment, health is an important issue.

g. April 18 – World Heritage Day – Just to give equal respect to human beings.

h. April 22 – Earth Day – Since 22/4/1970, this day has been celebrated all over the world as Earth Day.

i. May 31 – Anti Tobacco Day – We can take up an anti-smoking campaign in our society or in our office.

j. June 5 – World Environment Day – On June 5, 1972, the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment was held in Sweden. Tree plantation should be done on this day.

k. July 11 – World Population Day – Increasing population is a serious problem and this message should be spread.

l. September 16 – World Ozone Day – The United Nations declared this day as the International Day for the prevention of the Ozone Layer.

m. September 28 – Green Consumer Day – Awareness building on the importance of recycling and reusing goods should be taken up seriously.

n. October 3 – World Habitat Day – Increasing human activities is threatening the habitat of other living things.

o. October 1-7 – World Wildlife Week – Celebrate this week by creating awareness on the importance of preservation of our wildlife.

p. October 13 – International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction – Efforts should be taken to reduce the natural disasters.

q. November 14 – Children's Day in India – Children can work together for a better future by improving the environment around them.

r. December 2 – Bhopal Tragedy Day – Mark this occasion by our best efforts to prevent such a tragedy from occurring again.

We humbly hope that by the above mentioned efforts, we can make our earth clean and green. It is after all, a planet and when we leave behind this property for our children, let it not feel like a burning cauldron of waste, all in the name of convenience.

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Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. PS. 41:1

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Vision

The vision of the trust is to help. With a base in the city and an establishment in a village we intend to bridge a gap. The situation is ideal. We have watched many paraplegics. It wrenches one's heart to see intelligent human beings moving around with so less dignity. Because many of them are unaware or unable to change. Dignity will encourage them to stand up and prove themselves. There is so much to be done. To turn this vision into reality we need support.

We carry out project work in the following villages

Village Madanpur Khader Centre, New Delhi-76

This is a resettlement colony formed by the Juggi's relocated from seven areas. Totally 50,000 people reside in the village.

Village Jasola Centre, New Delhi-25

This village has been inhabited by the SC/ST from Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

A total of 25,000 people live in this village

The goal of the Trust is to be a channel of blessing for the weaker section of the society through projects focusing on areas such as Balwadi, Cutting and Tailoring, Computer Operator Courses. Health Care, Day Care and Musician Course. Soon, we will start the mobile repairing course.

Sponsor a Child Today!

We invite you to participate in your own special way to work with us to serve severely impoverished or at-risk children in developing nations throughout the world.

God has called IMMANUEL ASSEMBLY FOUNDATION TRUST in partnership with people like you to meet the physical, educational, emotional and spiritual needs of orphaned and neglected children. This holistic approach not only ensures that each child receives food for life here on earth, but eternal food for life in heaven. Jesus said in Luke 4:4 that, "Man does not live on bread alone."

To accomplish our objective, the following three needs are met on a regular basis from the time a child enters our program until High School graduation:

Spiritual Discipleship: Each child will be loved and be taught God's Word.

Educational Development: Each child will enroll in school and receive tutoring.

Health Advancement: Each child will receive adequate nutrition, potable water and medical care.

Monthly sponsorship is just Rs.400/\$30 and every rupee/dollar you give goes to the Child Sponsorship Program to provide things like education, food, medical care, and spiritual nurturing for your sponsored child. Our general administrative and fund raising costs are covered through other donations.