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“URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT”

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Abstract:

Environment is a great matter of concern to the present generation. Almost all the countries in the world are facing the grave problem of environmental degradation caused by the economic development. There is a debate on whether economic development and environment are contradictory or complementary to each other. The present research paper tries to explore the inter relationship between urban development and environment. In the initial part this paper takes note of the process of urban development and its consequences on the environment. For this purpose the linkages between industrialisation, consumption, population growth with environmental degradation has been shown. The later part of the paper deals with the sustainable development.

KEYWORDS:

Industrialisation, Population growth, Consumption pattern, Environmental degradation, Sustainable development

INTRODUCTION:

Environment is a great matter of concern to the present generation. Almost all the countries in the world are facing the grave problem of environmental degradation caused by the process of economic development. There is a debate on whether economic development and environment are contradictory or complementary to each other. Environmental Economics deals with inter relationship between environment and economic development. The interaction between these two is so multi dimensional that it covers all the branches between welfare economics and growth theories.

Some of the researchers argued that environmental degradation is an effect of the process of economic development. The root cause of environmental degradation is the technologies we have used over the past hundred years, have been ecologically harmful. Unplanned, rapid industrialisation, unlimited exploitation of the natural resources, ever expanding consumption puts strain on the environment. On the other hand some of the researchers and writers are having optimistic approach regarding the linkages between economic development and environment. According to them economic development and environment are not contradictory to each other rather they are complementary. Environment and economic development are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. According to them we can manage a healthy and conducive interaction between environment and economic development by adopting some technological changes which are eco-friendly. In this way environment protection has been operationalised into the concept of sustainable development which implies meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generation.

Title : “URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT”
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The present research paper tries to explore inter relationship between urban development and environment. Environment may be defined as total planetary inheritance and totality of all the resources. Earth is the only planet so far known to have an environment that can sustain life. Every organism is depending on the environment but man's dependence on the environment is of greater significance than that of others. The relationship between human being with environment is complementary to each other. The equilibrium between these two must maintain at all cost. During the last centuries however, man's relationship with his environment has drastically changed due to a vast increase in his expectations and activities. Rapidly growing population, changing consumption pattern, changing life styles, urbanization, industrialisation, unlimited exploitation of natural resources these are the various factors which lead to urban development and better standard of living on the one hand and causes environmental degradation on the other hand. Therefore the development process should need to be examined from different angles.

Economic development has two sides

- 1) Quantitative side - Which leads to economic well being in terms of physical development
- 2) Qualitative side - Which reveals sustainable development in terms of overall development of human being such as physical, social, political, cultural, psychological etc. over a period of time.

The process of urban development brings in itself urbanisation, industrialisation, increasing population which leads to rise in the density of population exerting heavy pressure on urban area. Migration of the unemployed from the near by villages, ever expanding consumption, exploitation of natural resources, increasing number of vehicles, sanitation etc. all these factors pollute urban environment. Land, water, air and soil are getting polluted day by day. Environmental degradation associated with urban development is visible in many cities. The change in the quality of land, air and water as well as loss of flora and fauna raises concern about such cost of development. Such environmental losses are not justified on any ground and are indicative of carelessness and negligence.

INDUSTRIALISATION AND POLLUTION:

Industrialisation is one of the prominent causes of environmental pollution. Pollution is a by-product of rapid and unplanned industrial growth. Higher the level of industrialisation greater is the concern for environment. With the growing demand for goods and services industrial expansion becomes inevitable. But the way in which industries are establishing, functioning and locating is a matter of great concern. The quality of raw material used, location of industry, technique of production, discharge of waste and absence of its recycling are the various factors which affect the environment. Industrialisation is not only affecting the health conditions of the people but it is also affecting socio-economic welfare of the people too. The technology which we are using in our industries is causing ecological imbalance to a large extent.

CONSUMPTION PATTERN AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

World consumption has expanded at an unprecedented pace over the 20th century with private and public consumption reaching 24 trillion \$ in 1998 which is twice the level in 1975 and six times greater than that of consumption in 1950. Today's consumption is undermining the environment resource base. Ever expanding consumption puts strain on the environment. The real issue is not the size of consumption but its changing pattern and the consequences of it on the environment. Poor people and poor countries bear greater cost of unequal consumption. The world's dominant consumers are overwhelmingly concentrated among the well off but the sufferers are from the poor class. The environmental damage because of world's consumption affects the poor people. It has been learnt that a child born in a developed country adds more to the consumption and pollution over his or her life time than the 30 to 50 children born in the developing countries do. Since 1950 industrial countries because of their high levels of income and consumption have accounted for well over half the increase in resource use. The 1/5th of the world's population in the highest income group countries account for 53% of carbon dioxide emission and the poorest 1/5th population in the lower income group countries for 3%. Therefore consumption pattern is also a threat to the environment.

POPULATION GROWTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

Rapidly growing population is a great matter of concern in India. Today Indian population has crossed the limit of 100 crs., which results in the decline of per capita availability of land. The area

requirements for rural and urban settlements, roads, transports, railways, water supply, industrial expansions would far exceed the present estimated area of 2.1 million hectares. Population growth causes very severe problems for economic growth, human development and the quality of environment. Population growth affects the environment to a greater extent. The higher rate of population growth in developing countries like India, where more than 30% of the population is living in miserable poverty, brings along other economic problems like unemployment, under nutrition, mal nutrition, and infant mortality. In India nearly 2 million children die before they complete their first year of life. Population not covered under sanitation and drinking water is up to the size of 54% and 16.2% respectively.

It is also important to note that huge population growth brings a heavy pressure on the existing urban centers in providing basic socio-economic amenities health, education, sanitation and housing along with the growth of slums. A further increase in the urban population which is larger in India, bound to increase the gap between demand and supply for goods and services, such as housing, education & health, transport, recreation facilities and other public services. In his way the increasing population is also causing deterioration of urban environment and becoming hurdle in the process of urban development.

Economic growth and development are thus no longer to be pursued independent of the ecological aspects rather the ecological implications should be taken seriously as they tend to limit the sustainability of economic activities. It is now clear that the conservation of the environment is of vital importance. Cost of pollution is long term in nature and the affected party may not be aware of the consequences of environmental degradation. The social consequences of the development are not less grave. The vast segment of our population is deprived of the development. Therefore it is very much essential to create awareness amongst the people about the conservation of the environment.

Now a day the awareness about the environmental problems is rising, which reveals the intensity of the problem. Economic development and environment are not necessarily contradictory to each other rather they are complementary. Development should have human face. The goal of development must also include making available to people increasing quantities and varieties of goods and services to enrich their lives physically, intellectually and culturally. In other words development should not mean only providing subsistence to the people but should provide rising standards and quality of life for all.

Environmental conservation is the need of the world which requires international cooperation. For protecting the environment, environmental regulations become inevitable. There is a debate regarding the environmental regulations. Some are of the view that environmental regulations may retard the process of economic development on the other hand there is a group of people who thinks that environmental protection and proper care of environment will encourage the process of economic development. According to David Gardiner, an officer from United States Institute of Environment Conservation, there is no reason for having contradiction between environment conservation and economic development; rather they are complementary and reinforcing to one another. With the proper technology we can achieve proper balance between environment and economic development. Environmental regulations didn't stifle growth rather it complemented the efforts of development in harmony with the nature.

A set of well designed environmental policies can be very effective in controlling industrial pollution. Reduction in pollution and expansion of industries can occur simultaneously. We have succeeded in developing eco-friendly technology. Gandhian economics helps a lot in this direction. Regarding the size of the urbanisation and the extent of environment pollution there exists a U shaped relationship. In the initial stage of urbanisation the pollution increases in the city area but later on it gets decline. Last decade has shown considerable reduction in the level of pollution in many developed countries. Population control and proper man power planning can also reduce tension of population growth. We can also put our efforts to change consumption pattern which is harmful for the environment. We should minimize our needs by cutting down unnecessary wants. Environmental degradation should not be viewed as a crisis but it should be treated as a challenge and we should fight collectively against it.

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