

ISSUES AND POLICIES OF ENVIRONMENT IN INDIA : A STUDY

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1.0 Introduction :

Today environmental issue has become an intimate and worrying matter of concern at all over the world. The concept of environment encompasses varied and all inclusive aspects of life because every creature has equal right to live and retain its existence on this earth. Main factors such as land, water, plants and air are rapidly eroding which adversely causes environmental imbalance.⁽¹⁾

Water pollution, air pollution, sound pollution, erosion of fertile land and excessive wastage of food products is increasing on large scale. Moreover, in every one or the other country traumas of earthquakes, tsunami, flood, draughts are being experienced which ultimately generates adverse living conditions for all creatures on earth.⁽²⁾

In all, owing to development of information and technology, today human beings have become advanced but at the cost of neglecting Nature. Nature has its own system to control and maintain itself but in recent times there has been increasing intrusion in nature's activities.. If fact man has detained nature to fulfill his insatiable demands due to which nature is in danger and harmful effects threatens existence of not only man but also entire living beings. So to put control over such adversative impacts every country should execute corrective legal measurements, policies and awareness programmes. India also trying to protect the environment since independence.⁽³⁾

2.0 Necessity of Environment Policy :

In case of environmental imbalance, up till now living beings have survived five devastating calamities on earth; at present the world seems to be confronting same for sixth time. For instance, if this tenor of rising temperature continues till 2050, whole of the Antarctica ice will melt down engulfing island such as Holland, Bangladesh and Lakshadweep. On increasing sea level up to one meter, it has been estimated that in India 5,75,400 hectares land will be submerged into water. This will again exterminate numerous living beings and plants. According to 'Indira Gandhi Development Research, Mumbai the speed of global warming is on rise, on account it will be much more hostile to Indian economy and GDP (Gross Domestic Product). For instance, just a 7% decrease in rainfall and 2 % increase in temperature will cut down the agricultural produce by 12.3% besides causing loss of 12.5 crore tones crops, 15 to 43 % rice, 3 to 4 % due to inadequate rainfall; ultimately lowering down the GDP rate at 1.8% to 3.4 %.⁽⁴⁾ Apart from this as per Asian Development Bank's (ADB) report over 71 lakh people shall be displaced; India will have to bear the loss of 360 crores for endangered situation of 'Balasor situated- in Odisha coastal region and destroying 7,32% fertile-land- in Goa state. In this way global warming will shade huge impact affecting unity and diversity of India. Therefore, India will have to design and implement efficient environmental policies to achieve and maintain balanced environment.⁽⁵⁾

According to policy makers in India, major objectives in front of Indian public are to promote development process and eliminate poverty. Similarly India is capable to lessen down the temperature in environment and lower down the effects caused by changing climate. But it is not in condition to curb the emission of greenhouse gases due to technology used during implementation of poverty elimination programme.⁽⁶⁾

2.1 Environment Policy in Independent India :

Indian Environment policy is based and implemented keeping in view the Five Years Plans, recommendations from International Conferences, Protocols etc. The policy can be classified into four parts namely:

- (1) Environment policy during first two decades after adoption of Constitution.

- (2) Policy after two decades of Seminar on Human Environment.
- (3) Environment Policy in 1990s.
- (4) Environment Policy after the 1990s decade to till date.

2.2 Environment policy during first ten years :

In this period environment improvement measures such as hygiene, public healthcare facilities, nutrition, water supply and residential issues were considered. But environmental protection did not received overall approval, except emphasis on soil conservation and forest developments. In 1952 the National Forest Policy was framed which included following points:

- (1) To stop erosion of soil in forest;
- (2) To classify forests on the basis of fundamental needs;
- (3) To put control on extra-pasture lands in order to reduce overload of grazing in forest;
- (4) To increase productivity of soil and take necessary action to reduce the erosion of soil
- (5) To put ban on using the forest land for agriculture purpose.

3.0 This National Forest aimed to achieve our objectives :

- (1) To cover 1/3 of total geographical area under forests which shall include 60% hill area and 20% plane area.
- (2) To classify the forests into to two as: National Forests and Rural Forests.
- (3) To protect national interest at all levels.
- (4) To put control on frantic extension of agricultural land.

In the First Five year Plan 0.49% that is 9.7 crores of funds were allocated to control deforestation practices. Apart from this a forestation programme was implemented to cover 52000 hectares of land.

Similarly, the Second Five year Plan approved covering 164000 hectares of land under plantation. The plan also permitted research institutes to experiment aiming at development of forests; plantation schemes for river and hilly areas were approved in addition to protect wild animals. For the purpose rupees 19.3 crores were utilized.

In the Third Five years Plan focus was laid on increasing utility of wood by adopting technology. Apart from increase in productivity and pursuing the needs aroused for industrial use, the plantation of fastest growing trees were promoted. Under this scheme about 280000 hectares of land was brought under plantation. In the year 1965 with special assistance from United Nations Fund and Food Organization (FAO) government of India conducted survey of forest resources. For the purpose 51.4 crores amount was sanctioned. Under the Third Five Year Plan this objective wasn't achieved since out of expected 280000 hectare land only 31.7 crores were utilized to cover 180000 hectares land. **Environmental Policy in the 1990s decade :**

As noted in the fourth chapter entitled 'Environment and Forest,' the Eighth Five Years Plan exposed following 8 points that will enable to face the problems of degradation of environment:

- (1) Protect natural environment;
- (2) Re-generate and re-establish the unequal ecological systems and by increasing productivity manage the same;
- (3) De-centralize the procedure of controlling Nature and natural resources;
- (4) Update the information regarding Nature and natural resources besides determine its share;
- (5) Design the framework keeping in view the national policy and construct an appropriate institutional and legal plan;
- (6) Monitoring the experiments undertaken for sustainable Nature and natural resources and determine governmental action plan thereabout;
- (7) Prohibit the Individuals and institutions from violating norms of environmental protection and generate sense of responsibility amongst general public;
- (8) Control the environmental conditions.

The plan also illustrated schemes and various factors that affected environmental protection such as: generate an extensive report pointing out the emergence of different pollutions, create an equal report about domestic and agricultural pollutions, strengthen the powers conferred to Center and State level boards and increase the transparency in execution, determine extensive and appropriate standards to observe the causes of degradation of environment, enhance the contribution and participation of general public and NGOs in the programmes for alleviation of pollutions, encourage by rewarding general public to hold discussion about forests, wild life and concerned issues related to environment.

4.0 Policy statement for Abatement of Pollution-1992 :

The primary objective of this policy was to participate in all level of decision making process regarding all issues. The policy has underlined some instructions as follows:

- (1) Curb the origin of pollution;
- (2) Encourage or implement the best technical devices or plans;
- (3) Determine, control and manage the tasks of pollution control;
- (4) Determine the focal point of pollution such as river or coastal region;

(5) Increase participation of general public in decision making process.⁽⁷⁾

5.0 The National Conservation Strategy and Policy statement on Environment and Development-1992 :

The policy was framed by Central Government in the month of June 1992 which considered sustainable development as means of living and welfare society. These points were considered in the form of components of social and economic process as well as it was determined that the needs of the next generation should not be more than its requirements. Accordingly guidelines were framed out to imbibe the environmental consideration as part of national living standard and development process. The primary aim of this policy was to re-execute the scientific knowledge with traditional ethos and thereby re-establish well being of life. For the purpose following policy points were implemented:

(1) To determine the sustainable and equitable experiments without harming the environment in order to meet the fundamental needs of the present and future generation;

(2) To protect and secure future priorities;

(3) To re-establish the areas of ecological degradation and implement environmental improvement programmes in cities.

(4) Implement development scheme keeping in view lower loss of environmental resources;

(5) Protect the ecological condition near by coastal regions;

(6) Preserve and conserve the rich natural resources.⁽⁸⁾

6.0 Summary :

Efforts have been undertaken to implement the concepts/policies discussed above. On the basis of plants and zoological survey in 1993-94 a list of 123 endangered species have been identified and enlisted in 'Red Book of India'. With assistance from United Nations Development Programme the NFAP that is National Forest Scheme had been regulated since 1993. On the same level for preservation of wild life 21 tiger and elephant schemes are being operated. The scheme was implemented to protect land and soil. Similarly, through an extensive National River Scheme cleaning of river water of about 18 rivers is undertaken. To control air pollution standards have been designed to check the vehicle emission. Wide national campaign is initiated to spread environmental awareness among general public. And finally alike ISI marks on consumable ECO marks are being put on products.

7.0 Conclusion of Research :

(1) Many plants and living creatures are endangered and some of them are on extinct due to Global warming at world level affecting bio-diversity.

(2) There seems sharp division on the issue of emission of greenhouse gases and concerned environmental issues. The developing countries say that there are lagging in development and because they haven't made use of opportunity hence they should not be banned for emission of greenhouse gases. On the other hand the developed countries resist stopping industrialization. Owing to such differences in opinion of countries all over the world, there cannot exist a determinate policy against environment pollution.

(3) The world is moving after luxurious life.. This begets more and more industrialization, urbanization and infrastructural development, but meanwhile all this is causing hugging loss to environment. Finally nature will play its devastating role. For instance - Tsunami, Earthquakes and cyclones are frequent now-a-days. Even then every country is neglecting these alarming situations.

(4) Indian environment policy is framed on the basis of issues undertake for discussion in International conferences, summits etc.

(5) There had been recommendations to get indulged the general public as necessary part of measurements to stop pollution, but very few people seems to be participating in programmes, reasons being want of awareness about environment and schemes in public.

(6) Prior to independence there were no such Acts to promote awareness among general public and whatsoever was recommended that too was on the administrative level. This caused continual degradation of environment

(7) While framing the environmental policy no such programmes are designed that can last long for a certain period. As part of afforestation programme plantations schemes are implemented in which only rapidly growing plants that can reach up to 15 to 20 fit are planted. But the traditional plants like- peepul, banyan Umbar trees are not recommended for plantation.

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