## ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS CAUSES AND SOLUTIONS Editors Dr.S. V. Rankhamb Dr. V. B. Kulkarni

# Environmental Problems: Causes and Solutions

- Editors Dr. S. V. Rankhamb
Dr. V. B. Kulkarni

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## ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION CAUSES, ITS IMPACT AND CONTROL

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Introduction: Environment means anything that surrounds us. It can be living (biotic) or non-living (abiotic) things. It includes physical chemical and other natural forces. Living things live in their environment. They constantly interact with it and adapt themselves to conditions in their environment. In the environment there are different interactions between animals, plants, soil water and other living and non-living things. Pollution is the introduction of contaminants into environment that cause harm or discomfort to humans or other living organisms, or that damage the environment, which can come in the form of chemical substances, or energy such as noise, heat or light. Pollutants can be naturally occurring substances or energies, but are considered contaminants when inexcessofnaturallevels. Environment Pollution is the addition of contaminants into the natural environment that causes detrimental effects to nature, natural resources and mankind.

Any unnatural and negative changes in all the dimensions like chemical, physical and biological characteristics of any component of the ecosystem i.e. air, water or soil which can cause harmful effects on various forms of life and property is called environmental pollution.A substance which causes pollution is called Pollutant. The pollutants can be solid, liquid or gaseous substances. These can be degradable which rapidly break down by natural processes or non-degradable which remain in the environment in an unchanged form for many decades. The common examples of non-degradable pollutants are aluminum pieces, iron, phenolic compounds, plastic materials, heavy metals, many chemicals, nuclear waste etc. These either do not degrade or degrade very slowly or partially and thereby pollute the environment. Such pollutants are harmful even in low concentrations. These pollutants not only accumulate but are often biologically magnified because they move in biochemical cycles and along food chains. In general, pollutants are the substances made by us, used by us and even thrown by us as waste products which pollute the environment directly or indirectly in one way or other. Numerous studies have exposed that environmental particulate exposure has been linked to increased risk of morbidity and mortality from many diseases, organ disturbances, cancers, and other chronic diseases [1, 2]. Therefore it is time to take action and control the pollution. Otherwise, the waste products from consumption, heating, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, transportation, and other human activities will degrade the environment. [2]

### The materials that cause pollution are of two types:

**Persistent pollutants:** Those pollutants which remain consistent in the environment for a long period of time without any change in its original form are called persistent pollutants. For eg.pesticides, nuclear wastes, and plastics etc.

**Non-persistent pollutants:** These pollutants are the opposite of persistent pollutant and break down in the simple form. If this process of breaking down is done by living organisms, then such pollutants are referred to as biodegradable pollutants

### Types of pollution:

<u>Air pollution:</u> Mixture of solid particles and gases in the air. Air Pollution is the release of pollutants such as gases, particles, biological molecules, etc. into the air that is harmful to human health and the environment.

### Causes:

- 1. Most air pollution comes from energy use and production.
- 2. The Burning of Fossil Fuels.
- 3. Industrial Emission.
- 4. Indoor Air Pollution.
- 5. Wildfires.
- 6. Microbial Decaying Process.
- 7. Transportation.
- 8. Open Burning of Garbage Waste.
- 9. Construction and Demolition.

### Control measures:

- 1. Strict policies should be made by government regarding air pollution.
- 2. Modification of industrial process and selection of suitable fuels and its utilization.
- 3. Collection of pollutants and convert it into less toxic forms by different methods.
- 4. A very effective way of controlling air pollution is by diluting the air pollutants.

Water pollution: Addition of certain substances such as organic, inorganic, biological and radiological to the water, which degrades the water quality and makes it unhealthy for use. Water pollution is not only confined to surface water but also spread to groundwater, sea and ocean. Humans and all living species in the world are facing worst results of polluted water. [10]

### Causes:

- 1. Sewage or waste water from households, factories, or agricultural land gets discharged into rivers or lakes.
- 2. Dumping
- 3. Oil pollution
- 4. Acid rain
- 5. Industrial waste

### Control measures:

- 1. Usage of water should be minimized by changing the techniques involved.
- 2. Recycling and treatment of water should be used to the maximum extent possible.
- 3. The quantity of discharge of wastewater can be minimized.
- 4. Excessive use of pesticides and fertilizers should be avoided.
- 5. Organic farming and efficient use of animal residues as fertilizers.

<u>Soil pollution</u>: Addition of unwanted substances to the soil which negatively affects physical, chemical and biological properties of soil and reduces its productivity is called soil pollution. The factors which disturb the biological balance of the soil and deteriorate the quality, texture and mineral content are called soil pollutants. Use of fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, dumping of solid waste, deforestation and pollution due to

urbanization and other anthropogenic substances causes soil pollution. Soil eco-toxicology provides a theoretical basis for ecological risk assessment of contaminated soils and soil pollution control. [9]

### Causes:

- 1. Industrial and Mining Activities: Large numbers of Industries coming up since the dawn of industrial era without proper waste management systems are the biggest contributor to soil pollution.
- 2. Modern Agricultural Practices: To increase the yield from limited land area, in order to meet the increasing demand of food for ever increasing population, synthetic chemical pesticides and fertilizers are being used rampantly in last few decades leading to toxicity of the soil.
- 3. Lack of proper Waste Disposal: Modern lifestyle, urban as well as rural, produces huge amount of waste and lack of waste management procedures adds to the problem of soil pollution.
- 4. Radioactive Pollutants: Radioactive substances resulting from explosions of nuclear testing laboratories, radioactive fallout and industries giving rise to nuclear dust and radioactive wastes penetrate the soil and accumulate giving rise to soil pollution.
- 5. Accidental Oil Spills: Oil leaks can happen during storage and transport of chemicals. This can be seen at most of the fuel stations.
- 6. Acid Rain: Acid rain is caused when pollutants present in the air mixes up with the rain and fall back on the ground.

### **Control measures**

1. Afforestation, reforestation and use of organic farming.

- 2. Solid waste management and reduction of waste from the construction area.
- 3. Stop the use of plastic bags and use bags of degradable materials like paper and cloth.
- 4. Biomedical waste should be collected and incinerated in incinerators.
- 5. Proper management of industrial and agriculture waste.

### Impacts:

- 1. Reduction of local air quality affecting human health and vegetation growth, and causing damage to materials.
- 2. Acid deposition leads to degradation of the terrestrial environment.
- 3. Formation of secondary particles in atmosphere which impacts human health
- 4. Soil pollution can have a number of harmful effects on ecosystems and human, plants and animal health. The harmful effects of soil pollution may come from direct contact with polluted soil or from contact with other resources, such as water or food which has been grown on or come in direct contact with the polluted soil.[8]
- 5. The Earth's atmosphere contains a delicate balance of naturally occurring gases that trap some of the sun's heat near the Earth's surface. This "greenhouse effect" keeps the Earth's temperature stable.

### Conclusion:

Awareness regarding environmental pollution is very important today. It is the responsibility of every living person to protect the environment, and with the population ever increasing, pollution problems are only going to get worse unless we do something about it. Protecting the environment is a long and daunting task, requiring continuous planning, governmental policies, and public and industrial participation. By decreasing waste, implementing recycling policies, banning dangerous agricultural chemicals, and developing safe renewable energy we can significantly reduce the amount of pollution going into the environment annually and increase our quality of living. Everyone is entitled to clean air to breathe, water to drink, and public lands to enjoy. The problems are diverse and some are only being recognized but it is important to keep a close control over pollutants so that we can maintain the environment in an acceptable condition for future generations.

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### **Environmental Problems:**Causes and Solutions



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