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THE EARTH DOES NOT BELONG TO US: WE BELONG TO EARTH

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ABSTRACT:

“संरक्षेद्दूषितो न स्याल्लोकः मानवजीवनम्। “Meaning to safeguard our own lives; let us not pollute the world.¹ Starting with this very quote from the Atharvaveda which tends to state a connection between mother nature and us (humans), setting a very deep precedent for how we should be treating our fellow earthlings, I would like to start my article on our environmental issue in India.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENT:

The environment, or the natural world, includes all naturally occurring living and non-living things. The term is most often used for the Earth or some part of the Earth. This environment includes the interaction of all living species, climate, weather, and natural resources that affect human survival and economic activity. India's environmental problems are becoming more serious day by day, earth is turning into a bit of a mess on this front.² The recent boom in the industries with little or no environmental education, and infrastructure almost exploding points out, not to mention the ongoing massive deforestation, indeed there is no shortage of protective government legislation, but unfortunately, it is never implemented due to the crudeness abuse of power, corruption and scarcity of resources.³ One of the critical ecological problems is global warming, which causes large emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere from cars, airplanes and fabrics around the world are the one who majorly add on to the reason for the environment pollution.

5 Biggest Environmental Issues in India in 2024:

¹ archive.kuow.org, <https://archive.kuow.org/news/2017-12-12/how-chief-seattle-mistakenly-inspired-an-environmental-movement>, (Last visited Mar. 6, 2024). B55

² teresas, <https://terasas.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/CHAPTER-1-7-MULTIDISCIPLINARY-NATURE-OF-ENVIRONMENTAL-STUDIES.pdf>, (Last visited Mar. 6, 2024).

³ Alok Yadav, An Empirical Study on Environmental Issues in India, V. 9, Global Journal of Management and Business Studies, pp. 949-954, https://www.ripublication.com/gjmb_spl/gjmbv3n9_03.pdf

1) AIR POLLUTION Air pollution in India is a serious environmental issue.⁴ According to the 2021 World Air Quality Report, India is domestic to 63 of the 100 maximum polluted cities, with New Delhi named the capital with the worst air first-class inside the world. Now take a look at additionally observed PM2. Five concentrations – tiny debris inside the air which can be 2.5 micrometers were also found in the study. The main causes of air pollution in India tend to be Fuel and biomass burning, Fuel adulteration, Traffic congestion, Greenhouse gas emissions, and smoke from cooking. The country's dependence on coal, oil, and fuelling because of rampant electrification makes it the world's third-biggest polluter, contributing over 2.60 five billion metric tonnes of carbon to the environment each year.⁵

MEASURES:

National Clean Air Program (NCAP):

The NCAP was released with the aid of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in 2019 with the goal of addressing air pollutants in a complete and time-sure manner.⁶ It makes a specialty of a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and area-primarily based totally technique to enhance air first-rate throughout the country.

Regulation of Industrial Emissions:

Stringent emission norms and requirements should be set for industries to govern and screen their air emissions. Regular inspections and strict enforcement of those requirements are essential.

Promotion of Cleaner Fuels:

Encouraging using purifier fuels, which include Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) for automobiles and purifier business fuels, can drastically lessen air pollutants. There were efforts to transition from diesel and petrol to purifier alternatives.

⁴ earth.org, <https://earth.org/environmental-issues-in-india/>, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024).

⁵ Nancy Harris and David Gibbs, Forests Absorb Twice As Much Carbon As They Emit Each Year, wri.org, (Feb. 01, 2024, 4:19 PM), <https://www.wri.org/insights/forests-absorb-twice-much-carbon-they-emit-each-year>

⁶ pib.gov, <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=187400&>, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024)

Vehicle Emission Standards:

The implementation of Bharat Stage (BS) emission requirements for automobiles is vital. Regular updates and strict enforcement of those requirements assist in decreasing the emission of pollution from automobiles

Crop Residue Management:

In agricultural regions, the burning of crop residues is a substantial contributor to air pollutants. Encouraging farmers to undertake opportunity techniques for crop residue management, which include plowing the residues returned into the field, can assist mitigate this issue.

Air Quality Monitoring:

Establishing and preserving a sturdy air first-rate tracking community is vital for assessing pollutant tiers and imposing focused interventions. Real-time statistics can assist in issuing well-timed warnings and taking corrective actions.⁷

2)Water Pollution:

Water pollutants are a first-rate environmental trouble in India. The biggest supply of water pollutants in India is untreated sewage. Other reasserts of pollutants encompass agricultural runoff and unregulated small-scale enterprises. Most rivers, lakes, and floor water in India are polluted because of industries, untreated sewage, and strong wastes. Although the common annual precipitation in India is 4000 billion cubic meters, the handiest approximately 1122 billion cubic meters of water sources are for usage Much of this water is unsafe, due to the fact pollutants degrade water quality.⁸ Water pollutants significantly limit the quantity of water to be had by Indian consumers, enterprises, and agriculture.

MEASURES:**Adherence and enforcement of water quality standards:**

Governments should establish and enforce strict water quality standards for pollutants, ensuring that industry, agriculture, and municipalities comply with these standards.

⁷ cpcb,

<https://cpceb.nic.in/openpdf.php?id=UmVwb3J0RmlsZXMvTmV3SXRIbV8xNjRfRU1JU1NJT05fUkVHVUxBVElPTlNfUEFSVF8yLnBkZg==>, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024).

⁸ ikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_pollution_in_India, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024).

Monitor and regulate industrial discharge:

Establish and monitor regulations that require industries to treat their wastewater before discharging it into water bodies. Regular monitoring and inspection is essential.

Promotes sustainable agriculture:

Encourages farmers to adopt sustainable and environmentally friendly agriculture practices such as precision agriculture, agroecology, and use of organic fertilizers. This reduces the flow of pollutants into water bodies.

Awareness:

Conduct public education campaigns to educate communities about the effects of water pollution and the importance of responsible water use.

Advanced Water Treatment Technologies:

Invest in and implement advanced water treatment technologies to effectively remove contaminants from wastewater.

Strict enforcement of environmental legislation:

Enforcement of existing environmental laws and regulations related to water quality must be strengthened. To prevent pollution, penalties are imposed for non-compliance.

Invest in research:

support research and innovation to develop new technologies and methods to prevent and treat water pollution.

3) Food and Water Shortages

Climate change is the cause of increasing food and water shortages worldwide. The planet we live on must remain healthy for us to live here, and it must be able to provide all the resources necessary for life. Our greenhouse gases are throwing the entire biosphere out of balance, affecting food and water supplies around the world. World starvation is already a drastic problem across the world. The main reasons for the same are increasing food shortage,

decreasing crop yield and increasing food scarcity, glaciers, and ice caps melting resulting in depletion of freshwater resources, growing population, and lack of media attention on shortage and scarcity of water and food.

MEASURES:

Water resources construction projects:

In India, many NGOs are involved in building water harvesting structures in rural areas. For example, in Pavle Budruk near Ahmednagar, villagers have developed a watershed covering 1,435 hectares - more than 80% of the land available with UNICEF support. The system consists of 3 dams, 20 channel pans, two small percolation tanks connected to the main tank, and 19 village ponds. The water in the percolation is for domestic use only. Piped water is delivered in the morning for one hour a day, during which families are expected to fill up water for drinking and cooking.⁹

Collection of rain Rainwater harvesting:

It is an innovative way to collect rainwater for groundwater recharge. Many houses have built rainwater collection structures for self-management. Many government startups, such as Nee Rain, also offer ways to harvest rainwater to recharge underground water tanks.

Government efforts:

In the last three years, the Indian government has reformed several of its departments and launched several water management projects to meet the country's growing need for water. The reforms include the creation of a new Ministry of Water, known as the Jal Shakti Ministry. The government has also launched several projects in major rivers and groundwater sources. The Indian government claimed that the new ministry and projects could increase the country's overall water efficiency by 20%, while also increasing the carrying capacity of water resources and protecting currently overexploited land.

Modern Agricultural Techniques:

Promote the adoption of modern and sustainable agricultural practices, including precision agriculture, organic farming, and agroecological approaches.

⁹ *Id.*, at 1429.

Access to technology:

Provide farmers with access to technology such as improved seeds, irrigation systems, and machinery to increase productivity and yield.

Crop diversification:

Encourage crop diversification to reduce dependence on a few staple crops and improve resilience to climate change.

Minimum Support Price (MSP):

Ensure that MSP for important crops is fair and ensures reliable income to farmers.

Farmers and Training Programs:

Organize training programs to educate farmers on best practices, sustainable agriculture, and the use of modern technologies.

4) Waste Management

Waste management includes the processes and activities required to manage waste from its generation to its final disposal.¹⁰ This includes the collection, transport, treatment, and disposal of waste, as well as the monitoring and regulation of the waste management process and waste laws, technologies, and economic mechanisms.¹¹ Waste can be solid, liquid, or gaseous, and each type has different disposal and treatment methods.¹² The goal of waste management is to reduce the hazardous impact of such waste on the environment and human health. Population growth, urbanization, lack of awareness, illegal dumping, and lack of regulatory enforcement are some of the issues related to waste management.

MEASURES:

Effective waste management involves a combination of strategies aimed at waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and proper disposal.

¹⁰ Wikipedia, *Supra* note 07, at 1430

¹¹ *Id.*, at 1430

¹² *Id.*, at 1430

Waste minimization:

Promotes the production and consumption of products with as little packaging as possible. This reduces the amount of waste generated at the source.

Separation of waste:

Encourage households and businesses to sort waste at source into categories such as organic, recyclable, and non-recyclable. This facilitates recycling and proper disposal.¹³

Mandatory Recycling Programs:

Establish and enforce recycling programs for certain materials at the community or city level

Encourage composting:

encourage composting of organic waste both in households and in industry to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills.

Landfill Regulations:

Enforce regulations for the establishment and management of landfills, including guidelines for waste disposal and environmental protection.

Landfill Recovery:

implement measures to recover and use methane gas produced in landfills to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. International cooperation: Collaborate for global solutions: Collaborate internationally to solve transboundary waste management challenges and share best practices.

5) Biodiversity Loss:

Finally on the list of India's environmental problems is the loss of biodiversity. The country has four main biodiversity hotspots, areas with significant numbers of animal and plant species threatened by human settlement: the Himalayas, the Western Ghats, Sunderland, and the Indo-Burmese region. According to a 2021 report published by the Centre for Science and

¹³ bria.com.ph, <https://www.bria.com.ph/articles/waste-management-what-is-it-and-what-can-i-do-about-it/>, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024).

Environment (CSE), India has already lost nearly 90 percent of its four habitats, with the latter being the worst affected.

MEASURES:

Protected areas and nature conservation:

Strengthening and expanding the network of protected areas, including national parks, nature reserves, and biosphere reserves, to protect key habitats and species.

Anti-poaching measures:

Implement strong anti-poaching measures, increase patrolling, and use modern technology to fight illegal wildlife trade.

Habitat protection and restoration:

Implement projects to restore degraded ecosystems and critical habitats, including wetlands, forests, and grasslands.

Create corridors:

Establish wildlife corridors to connect fragmented habitats and facilitate species movement.

Promotion of Sustainable Agricultural Practices:

Encourage sustainable agricultural practices such as organic farming, agroforestry, and integrated pest management to reduce the impact of agriculture.

Management of invasive species:

Implement measures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species and develop strategies to control and manage existing invasive species.

Nature conservation education and awareness:

Organize educational programs in schools and local communities to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the need to conserve it.

Media campaigns:

Use media campaigns to communicate biodiversity conservation messages to a wider audience.

Research and monitoring:

Invest in research to document and understand India's biodiversity including species distribution, population dynamics, and human impacts.

Monitoring programs:

Establish and maintain biodiversity monitoring programs to track changes over time and assess the success of conservation efforts in biological diversity.

Conservation of traditional crop varieties:

Supporting the conservation of traditional crop varieties and agricultural biodiversity.¹⁴

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, India faces many environmental challenges that require urgent attention and comprehensive solutions.¹⁵ Issues such as air pollution, water scarcity, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, and improper waste management contribute to the deterioration of land and ecosystems and pose a significant threat to public health and the well-being of citizens. Addressing these environmental challenges requires a multi-stakeholder approach involving government agencies, local communities, non-governmental organizations, industries, and the public. Finding a balance between economic development and environmental protection is crucial, emphasizing sustainable practices and responsible management of natural resources.

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¹⁴ He, X., Wang, D., Jiang, Y. *et al.* Heritable microbiome variation is correlated with source environment in locally adapted maize varieties. *Nat. Plants* (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41477-024-01654-7>

¹⁵ linkedin, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/indias-climate-change-challenges-closer-look-issues-pansuriya>, (last visited Feb. 01, 2024).

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