

Environment Preservation - Indispensable for Growth

What is the issue?

\n\n

\n

- Pollution is an inevitable challenge for developing countries that compromise their environmental regulations for achieving rapid economic growth.

\n

- As pollution has increased massively in recent years, it has started to adversely impact both the economy and people's health.

\n

\n\n

What is the larger pollution trend that is observed worldwide?

\n\n

\n

- Currently, pollution load in certain jurisdictions has increased considerably, sometimes beyond the carrying capacity of the environment.

\n

- **Environmental Kuznets Curve (EKC)** - This is a hypothesis that maps environmental impact and per capita income.

\n

- It suggests that environmental degradation increases with income growth initially, but reaches a maximum and then declines thereafter.

\n

- Its logic is that in the initial phases, the demand for resources will force aggressive extraction and also generate more waste and emissions.

\n

- But when a country has achieved a certain level of development, pollution reduces with greater technical advancements and better regulations.

\n

- **India** - India's developmental activities are over-exploiting the natural resources and indiscriminately discharging untreated waste into the open.

\n

- India can be clearly said to lie on the upward part of the EKC curve and it needs to move to the 2nd stage to for achieving sustainable development.

\n

- Considering the acrimonious impact that this trend of environmental apathy is already displaying, it is not prudent for India to simply wait for the 2nd stage.
\n
- India should embrace tighter environmental norms and devote focus to the production and promotion of energy efficient technologies to curtail pollution.
\n

\n\n

What is the current situation?

\n\n

- \n
- Though various measures have been adopted to manage pollution, significant progress has not been achieved in countries like India.
\n
- Before 1980, U.K. and the U.S. played a vital role in textile production and export, but now, countries like India and China dominate the sector.
\n
- Notably, in the last few decades, water-intensive and polluting industries like textiles and leather have shifted from developed to developing countries.
\n
- Sugar and paper industries that withdraw huge quantities of water and discharge effluents without adequate treatment are also getting concentrated in the developing world.
\n
- Hence, countries like India are now manufacturing products for the international markets at the cost of their domestic environment.
\n

\n\n

What is the economic cost of pollution?

\n\n

- \n
- The economic loss on account of pollution includes the cost of treatment, loss of man-hours and negative effects on nature based businesses like agriculture.
\n
- Pollution also tends to impacts the socially vulnerable and poor communities more due to their weak coping options.
\n

- For example, if traditional drinking water sources get polluted, then one will have to switched to packaged refined water sources, which is a paid for service.
\n
- While the better off could afford this transition, the poor would now have to pay a premium for what was freely available - which might strain them more.
\n
- Consequently, they might have little option but to use the traditional water sources (even after contamination), which could lead to health complications.
\n

\n\n

What is the way ahead?

\n\n

- \n
- Pollution is only a symptom of the larger malice of improper environmental regulations in place - which needs to be set right.
\n
- Notably, Environmental Quality Objectives and Uniform Standards have been imbibed by most western countries in their political agendas.
\n
- Such standards need to be emulated and strictly adhered to in the Indian context for the betterment of our environmental parameters.
\n
- People will have to be made scientifically aware and politically conscious of their right to a clean and safe surrounding.
\n
- Our policy makers need to give up their notion that environment needs to be bartered for economic growth.
\n
- Rather, an understanding that environmental preservation and development are indispensable for each other needs to evolve.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n\n

\n



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering