

Environmental Issues and Challenges in India

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Environmental Concerns

Environmental challenges are universal in scope, and as each nation has jurisdiction over its own territory and is responsible for its own environment, it should exercise control over, monitor, and establish legislation to protect that environment. India is also affected by this.

Major environmental issues that India is now dealing with include:

- Air pollution from industrial effluents and vehicle emissions.
- Energy-related environmental problems such as, chemical and oil pollution and Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions [1].
- The nation-wide scarcity of portable water and the water contamination caused by untreated sewage.
- India continues to face challenges with municipal solid waste management (MSWM) as a result of its growing population and related infrastructure requirements [2].
- Over-population and its stress on natural resources and
- Agriculture-related factors include runoff of pesticides, overgrazing, short farming cycles, slash-and-burn techniques, destructive logging methods, and deforestation of timber reserves for fuel all work together to wreak havoc on the subcontinent's environmental system [1].

Population Growth and Pollution

Over the past few decades, the impact of population growth on the environment has gotten much worse. The population increased from 34 million in 1947 to 86 million at the time of independence, and is expected to reach 100 million by the turn of the century and more than 200 crore by 2035 [3].

Unbelievably, Australia is being added to India every year due to its population boom. There is a growing concentration of people in existing polluted urban areas. Economic necessities are so tight that they have completely ignored environmental concerns. The water supply in our major cities, where there is a high concentration of people, is severely contaminated by toilet paper, trash, and washing soap waste. Despite all-out attempts to stop it, the rise persists almost unabatedly due to socio-religious factors.

India is at the centre of this trend; it came in at number 14 on the most recent United Nations global climate risk index and came in at number two in terms of casualties from extreme weather in 2017. According to the 2018 World Health Organization (WHO) global ambient air quality database, 11 of the 12 cities with the highest levels of small particulate, or PM2.5, are in India. As a result, the air quality in Indian cities is rapidly deteriorating and is currently worse than the situation in China.

Poverty and air pollution are closely related; in 2016, an estimated 790 million people (nearly 60% of the Indian population) still used biomass as a source of energy for cooking. Additional problems of concern include waste management, water contamination, clean water shortages, and deforestation.

Environmental Initiatives

The union government is in charge of overall regulatory oversight and supervision of the Indian environment, and the states only have a limited amount of independence in this area. However, authorities are now taking the issue of climate change seriously. Until recently (the India Greens Party), there was little political discussion of environmental issues in the election process. The first national climate change plan (NAPCC), which was published in 2008 by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change (PMCCC), outlined eight "national missions" for the years up to 2017. State action plans on climate change required to be submitted by each state. In 2017, there were three more missions added. India's performance in the 2019 climate change performance index (CCPI) has improved since the 2018 index (from 14th to 11th place).

India established the National Green Tribunal in 2010 to handle matters involving environmental protection and natural resource preservation.

In accordance with the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, India committed to increasing the share of non-fossil fuels in installed power capacity to 40% by 2030, reducing the GDP's intensity of greenhouse gas emissions by 33-55% from 2005 levels by 2030, and increasing the amount of forest cover by that year in order to add 2.5-3 billion tonnes of additional carbon sink capacity.

The poor and hazardous environmental conditions brought on by India's rapid economic expansion are having an impact not just on the population of India but also on the rest of the world. The high population density and growth rates in India make this situation much worse. Despite the fact that the current environmental laws address a wide range of environmental issues, they appear to be ineffectual due to a lack of enforcement, a lack of resources, and the technological difficulties that many Indian businesses, particularly SMEs, confront. To maintain its possibilities for long-term economic growth, India must take some sustainable measures to address the various problems it is currently confronting, including environmental deterioration [4].

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