

Environmental Challenges in the 21st Century

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Abstracts

Environmental challenges are universal. Many of them are harmful for us and also for the future generations. This article describes the major environmental challenges that we are facing today and the challenges that we are likely to face later in this century. This article addresses the global environmental challenges with a greater focus on the developing countries.

Keywords: *Population, pollution, natural resources, urbanization.*

Introduction

The environment has a profound effect on all the living creatures. When we consider a time span of 50 years, 10 years, or even one year, what we can observe is that there is a staggering pressure on global resources. The world population is constantly rising. Over the years the world's forest shrank by a considerable amount. Continuous pollution of air and water endangers our health and our future. Countless species of animals and plants have been wiped out from earth, many of them had potential for agriculture and medicine. Greenhouse gases released around the globe by power plants, automobiles and burning forests affect our health and our climate, potentially causing many billions of dollars in damage from rising sea levels and changing storm patterns. Dangerous chemicals such as PCBs and DDT that are banned in certain countries, but still used in many others, travel long distances through the air and water. Over fishing of the world's oceans has put thousand of people out of work. This paper focuses on some of the major factors affecting the environment and some of the solutions available to reduce some of the environmental problems.

Root Causes of Environmental Crisis

Religious Root

Some scholars think that early Christian teaching shaped many people's attitudes towards nature, which in turn fostered the creation of exploitive systems of science and technology that are largely responsible for the destruction of environment.

Cultural Root

Other scholars believe that the spread of democracy, which put landowner ship and wealth in the hands of many, and the industrial revolution, which made mass production of goods possible and spread wealth throughout society, are roots of the environmental crisis.

Biological and Evolutionary Roots

Human populations, like those of other organisms, expand if there are adequate supplies of resources and no other controls. For humans, technology has greatly facilitated population growth and greatly increased our environmental impact.

Psychological and Economic Root

Human attitudes and beliefs are also responsible for many unsustainable practices. Daniel, apathy, inability to respond to suitable threats, greed, acquisitiveness, and others influence our economic systems, laws, and way of life in profound ways. In short, they worsen our biological imperialist tendencies.