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Anthropogenic Dangers to the Environment and hindrances in the Way of its Conservation

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ABSTRACT

The interaction of human society with the environment is basically essential for the process of development. It has resulted in drastic deterioration of the quality of the environment. Utilization of resources has been developed on the lines of such a system which is not considerate to the availability and capacity of the resources, capabilities of the biosphere and immediate and far-reaching consequences of anthropogenic interaction. There is no generally adopted view on these aspects which is resulting in aggravating the crisis. The philosphy behind the development should have such inbuilt mechanism which should be in favour for the conservation of the environment. In the present era of scientific and technological revolution, it is not impossible to develop the technology imbibed with conservation measures. It has become essential to save the humanity from the disastrous consequences of ecological crisis. For this the purpose of education for common people is necessary because the crisis may be overcome successfully only if it becomes the part of the struggle for the social transformation. The crisis has developed due to illogical and lop-sided distribution of the utilization of the resources in the world. Change in this pattern needs social, political and economic reformation of the whole system.

1. Introduction

Interaction of the human society with nature is becoming day-by-day complex resulting in marked deterioration of the environment. It has now become urgent not only to maintain but improve the conditions of our habitat. This unfavourable ecological situation requires multi-facet remedial measures for the redressal of the problem of exploiting nature. As the problem is becoming complex so it is the need of the hour to strengthen the spirit of co-operation and confident e among the people to fight the evil-designed objectives of the counter-forces. The crisis has emerged out of the socio-economic system which has separated nature; worker and producer, where the producer just thinks that exploiting the natural bounties is his professional right without slightest consideration for the consequences and its conservation. It is not the unity of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence meir appropriation of nature, which requires explanation or is the result of a historic process but rather the separation between these inorganic conditions of human existence and this active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in relation of wage labour and capital (Marx . 1973 : p. 489).

This crisis has three basic aspects for consideration –

i. Physical resources of the globe are not unlimited;
ii. The ultimate capabilities of our biosphere for assimilating the consequences of existing anthropogenic activities are on the verge of exhaustion,
iii. It has become necessary to prevent the catastrophe in the biosphere which needs change in character and organisation of anthropogenic activities (Novik : 1981 ; p. 12)

First two aspects are universally accepted. Only the third aspect is disputed because of different type of socio-economic systems the world over. Various explanations have been developed to elaborate this aspect several models have also been put forward to solve the crisis from the "zero-growth model' to the "supressed industrial-growth idea" (Meadows & Mesaronic: 1975).

The development of a society at a particular time is the outcome of the technology and social philosophy behind it. Philosophy behind the developmet creates the technology which ultimately influences the environment in known and unknown ways depending upon the efficiency of the technology. The undesirable consequences of the modem technology based on the philosophy of exploitation are observable in the lithosphere, atmosphere and hydrosphere. Largely we depend upon the self-purification capacity of various systems of Nature itself. But technogenic pressure on this mechanism of self-purification is becoming so high that simply it can not cope. It has also resulted in the disturbances in various inter-connected processes in the biosphere. Technical capacity uncoordinated with nature's possibilities is termed into a kind of weakness. Urgent rational measures harmonising the inter-relations of technique and nature are really necessary in this field (Novik : p. 18). In the present era of scientific and technological developments man needs suitable natural conditions more than the primitive man who was weak in the face of the powerful nature. But now the character of inter-dependence of man and nature itself has altered qualitatively. The uncoordinated scientific and industrial revolution with nature, the consequences can cause irreparable breakdowns in the weakened mechanism of the natural processes. A mutually harmonious relationship between man and nature has thus become as necessary as fresh air in the modern times (Novik : p. 20). For achieving this objective purposeful development of

nature appropriate for the life of the modern man is required because scientifically reconstructed nature will further generate resources for our development. This transformation is quite contrary to the western industrialised society's slogan of production at any cost. This system has developed a production system in which only one to two percent of the exploited raw material is turned into the finished goods and the rest is discarded as waste material. According to the latest available data about 200 to 300 billion tons of waste is annually accumulating in the biosphere. Reconstruction of nature will require the reshaping of basic ideology of development which global humanity urgently requires Development of a model for the reconstructed nature will have to be based on the analysis of general characteristics of the biosphere as an inter-related and integrated system. Evaluation of the reaction of biosphere in the wake of the anthropogenic activities is also essential in this regard. Assessment of the biospheric reactions call not only for a high standard of general culture, morality and legal support but also for appropriate inspections and verification This requires the people with humanitarian knowledge and humanitarian frame of thinking with objectivity

The adverse technogenic change in the biosphere is leading, in fact, to a danger of gradual disruption of man's physical organisation. The existence of this danger, which has now attained alarming dimensions, is visible in the fact of the spread of a special kind of ecological diseases caused by the toxicants of industrial origin (Bhopal Gas Tragedy may be termed as one of the worst in the industrial history). Shifts are now even being discovered in the chemical composition of the human bodies. The skeleton of the primitive man contained just two milligram of lead, while that of modern man has a lead content 50 to 100 times higher (mainly from automobile exhausts) (Nikiforna : 1976 : p. 36). With this pressure of technologically caused hazards to the human organism a new form of the domination of material relations over the individual has appeared.

The struggle against the pollution of the environment can succeed only if it becomes a part of the struggle for the social transformations (Laptev : 1979 : p. 34). The environment has shown the limited nature of its capacities above all against the background of the swift growth of changes linked with the scientific and technological revolution. But the radical changes which may resolve our current problems require greater efforts because the optimism prompted by the success of the scientific and technological development has begun increasingly to yield to anxiety at its unforeseen social, political and ecological consequences (Laptev : p. 36). About 20 percent of the World's population live in the industrially developed countries and consume 80 percent of the world's resources at the same time causing 90 percent devastation and pollution. This is the result of the western consumeristic culture which has to be faced by the entire humanity. In this situation the under-developed and developing parts of the globe have also to face the problem which are treated as their raw material and man-power supply bases by the developed nations. The idea of absurdity of the economic growth put forward by the developed nations as the consequences of the scientific and technological revolution completely ignores the needs of the developing nations. This absurd idea declares that some parts of the world (developed) should retain the right to continue the wreaking havoc in the world of nature, while the others (under-developed and developing) should continue to serve as the zone for the regeneration of environmental resources. Thus the idea is based on the sinister conspiracy to maintain Status Quo in the world economic order of today and to continue the deadly and painful gap between the rich and the poor nations (Laptev: p . 41).

The exploitation of the natural resources at any particular stage in the development of the productive forces has always been determined by no means solely by the demands and needs of the society, but also by the type of society and by the character of the social relations. Any change into the society and nature system can not but affect the fundamental bases of both material and spiritual life of mankind can not but influence the economic, political and cultural life alongwith social relations (Laptev : p. 121). Thus the significance of the present ecological problems extend far beyond the strict limit of the problems of utilization of natural resources. The ecological problems of the modern age consist in the deterioration of man's natural environment through industrialisation and urbanisation, exhaustion of the traditional (relatively easily accessible) energy and raw material resources, constant growth of the demographic pressure on nature and resources, disturbance of natural ecological equilibria, economic elimination of the individual species of animals and plants, negative genetic consequences of the pollution of nature by the wastes of man's economic activities, including the danger of genetic degeneration of the mankind itself (Ursual: 1983 : p. 6).

Anthropogenic activities have now become a geological factor in transforming the face of the planet. But now it has been universally accepted and recognised that more deeply and widely humanity encroach upon nature the more deeply and widely we began to recognise that we can not treat nature as an inexhaustible treasure-house of energy and raw- material resources, without caring how the biosphere is being altered in the course of this encroachment (Ursul : 1987 p7). The biosphere is a gigantic living super-organism and the bio-social organ-man, is its inseparable part. One sided anarchic disturbance by man in this system may be fatal for himself.

In producing material wealth, more and more non-renewable traditional natural resources are being exhausted but are also unconsciously breaking vitally important links between the separate components of the biosphere and disrupting the life support system and the channels' of the biospheral super-organisms life. Therefore, very close monitoring of anthropogenic impact on the environment has not only become necessary but also to know the consequences well in advance in order to prevent any unexpected and unfavourable changes in different systems of the biosphere. Because planning and optimising human interaction with the nature, and regulating it to create a maximally humanised habitat is becoming one of the most vital issues before the world community.

The ecological situation of the modern world is not uniform and there are differences in different countries due to the uneven economic social development, dissimilarity of the demographic factors, difference in multiplicity of the natural

resources and the pattern of the industrial setup. The multiplicity of the nature of the problem makes it essential to have multiplicity of the solution because there can not be any single effective, solution for the complex ecological problem. Our inability to foresee and forestall various negative ecological consequences of our production activities make the problem critical. Our inability to create effective social mechanisms against the menace of an ecological crisis is the weakness of our social system. It requires not only constitutional backing but also requires enthusiastic movement for ecological education of the masses. Conservancy activity should be made an inseparable part of the development process. Effective implementation of the principles of rational use of nature is possible only in certain social conditions oriented on satisfying the material, spiritual and ecological needs of the individual. (Ursul:p.29).

2. Conclusion

Solutions to the environmental problems should be sought through comprehensive analysis of what man has done over a long historical period and through actions aimed at remedying many previous errors- but applying new methods advanced by the modern science and technology (Ananichev: 1976: p.20).There are three basic aspects of the problem of the environment; pollution, disturbance of the ecological balance, and depletion of natural resources. Man's transforming activities (Such as utilization of resources, discharge of production and consumption waste products to natural environment, change in the landscape, and new man-made systems etc.) are increasingly conflicting with the process regulating the dynamic equilibrium in the ecosphere as a whole and at various levels of its organisation (Inozemtsev: 1984: p.223).

It has now become abundantly clear that nature conservation is a question requiring constant attention, the allocation of considerable funds and resources, and specific specialised work in all the related sectors of the national economy.

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