



Over population : Social & Environmental Concern

Dr. Rajbala Vashishtha
Head of the Department, Sociology Department
Janki Devi Bajaj Government Girls P.G. College, Kota

Abstract: *Overpopulation is an undesirable condition where the number of existing human population exceeds the carrying capacity of Earth. Number of factors that include reduced mortality rate, better medical facilities, illiteracy, and inaccessibility of health and family planning services causes overpopulation. There is no doubt that overpopulation contributed in social and environmental degradation. When a country becomes overpopulated, it gives rise to unemployment as there fewer jobs to support large number of people. Rise in unemployment gives rise to crime. Unemployment forced the people towards the glamour of the cities that is known as urbanization. Urbanization shrunk the rural setting and created urban villages that effected badly to the environment. The effects of overpopulation are quite severe. The first of these is the depletion of resources. The Earth can only produce a limited amount of water and food, which is falling short of the current needs.*

This paper examines the environmental and social problems in context of overpopulation. However, the overpopulation is not solely responsible for these problems but it is certainly a root cause. Due to being a second largest populated country, India is facing a number of social problems that affects our environmental.

The paper also suggests some solution and measures to control over the problems like better education, family planning services and sex education, environmental education, integrating policy and plans.

Keywords: *Overpopulation, Environmental degradation, Urbanization, Sex Education*

Introduction

One of the biggest environmental problems, we face today is overpopulation. The human population of the planet is estimated to now have passed 6 billion people. Human population is growing like never before. We are now adding one billion people to the planet every 12 years. That's about 220,000 per day. The current population will continue to use the Earth's resources, decimating the land and wreaking havoc on the natural biodiversity of the Earth. Not only we are draining the Earth's freshwater supplies, we are eradicating many species of plant life, as well as completely filling landfills with toxic waste. We are expanding at such a rapid rate that farmers (whose fields are getting smaller) cannot maintain enough crops to feed the population we currently have. There simply aren't enough resources on this Earth to continue to sustain overpopulation. Overpopulation affected environment in many ways. Some serious impacts are being discussed here in this paper.

Biodiversity & Over population

The continued increase in human population is having negative effect on our planet's biodiversity. The equation is pretty simple - more people need more space to build houses and industries and this means reduced habitats for many plant and animal species. There is uneven distribution of biodiversity on Earth. Without biodiversity there would be no food for humans. About 80 percent of our food supply comes from just 20 kinds of plants. Humans compellingly use at least 40,000 species of plants and animals a day. There are many factors that contribute to the loss of biodiversity: overpopulation, deforestation, pollution (air pollution, water pollution, and soil contamination) and global warming or climate change which are all driven by human activity. These all are resulting from overpopulation and as humans we are the ones causing it. According to overpopulation.org researchers found that since 1970 we have reduced animal populations by 30%, the area of mangroves and sea grasses by 20% and the coverage of living corals by 40%. Between 1970 and 2004 species in the high Arctic have declined by 26%. There are many more surprising facts about the biodiversity loss due to overpopulation. 25% of the earth's bird species have been driven to extinction by humans.

Depletion of Resources

The effects of overpopulation are quite severe. Another major effect of these is the depletion of resources. The Earth can only produce a limited amount of water and food, which is falling short of the current needs. Humans have historically exploited plant and animal species in order to maximize short-term profit, at the expense of sustainability of the species or population. This exploitation follows a predictable pattern: initially, a species harvested from the wild can turn a substantial profit, encouraging more people to get involved in its extraction. This increased competition encourages the development of more large-scale and efficient methods of extraction, which inevitably deplete the resource. Eventually, quota systems are applied, leading to more competition, decreased earning and the need for government subsidies to support the extraction industry.



Degradation of Environment

The overuse of coal, oil and natural gas has started producing some serious effects on our environment. Rise in the number of vehicles and industries have badly affected the quality of air. Rise in amount of CO₂ emissions leads to global warming. Melting of polar ice caps, changing climate patterns, rise in sea level are few of the consequences that we might have to face due to environment pollution

Solutions to prevent Overpopulation

Better Education: One of the first measures is to implement policies reflecting social change. Educating the masses helps them understand the need to have small family. Family planning and efficient birth control can help men & women in making their own reproductive choices. Open dialogue on abortion and voluntary sterilization should be seen when talking about overpopulation. Raising awareness among people regarding family planning and letting them know about serious after effects of overpopulation can help curb population growth. One of the best ways is to let them know about various safe sex techniques and contraceptives methods available to avoid any unwanted pregnancy. Imparting sex education to young generation at elementary level should be must. It is important for parents and teachers to shed their old inhibitions and make their kids or students aware of solid sex education.

References

1. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://wotfigo.tumblr.com/post/25490127915/overpopulation-destroying-biodiversity>
2. *Crowded Planet*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 13, 2014, from www.crowdedplanet.net: <http://crowdedplanetbiodiversityloss.weebly.com/>
3. Flostro. (n.d.). *Planetsave*. Retrieved March 13, 2014, from <http://planetsave.com>: <http://planetsave.com/2012/05/27/over-population-the-most-serious-environmental-problem-for-science/>
4. Overpopulation: Causes, Effects and Solutions - Conserve Energy Future : retrieved March 16, 2014 <http://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-effects-solutions-of-overpopulation.php> 6/9