
**OUR URBAN PRESENT MAY BE MORE DESTRUCTIVE OF NATURE
THAN OUR RURAL PAST BUT OUR RURAL FUTURE COULD BE EVEN
MORE DESTRUCTIVE**

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ABSTRACT

Worldwide, we are becoming an increasingly urbanised species. This is because economic development leads to urbanisation. There is a rapid growth of huge metropolitan areas with more than 10 million residents. Most of the world's largest cities are now in Asia, not in Europe and northern America. Urban landscape has experienced contiguous degradation due to anti ecological activity for last two centuries. The city as a system maintains a flow of energy, provided necessary material resources, and transportation and communication with outlying areas, which transform rural landscape from environmentally sound to destructive one.

Keywords: *Eco-centric, Green revolution, Industrialisation, Landscape, Ozone, Population, Urbanisation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The above statement can be justified from physical environment quality and social stability, instability and bondage. With the progress or so called development of civilization we have experienced degradation of physical environment and also instability in the social relation, defacement of social space due to faulty planning, haphazard economic development and massive use and misuse of technology. All sorts of economic development and massive use and misuse of modern technology are being used and introduced at the urban center. So, rapid degradation of physical environment and debasement of society occurred in the urban center. But the rapid development of transport and communication and increasing rate of rural-urban and urban-rural migration has accelerated the diffusion of urban culture into the rural areas. As a result, the remote corners of the even third world countries are continuously imitating the advanced form of urban life. So, social destabilisation is taking place in the remote villages in the form of decreasing social bondage, increasing divorce and breaking of larger families into nuclear family. Apart from this, the cleaner air, pure water and fertile agriculture land and even

the virgin forest coverage and green pasture are continuously degraded and depleted due to continuously promotion of advanced techno agriculture. By such process the rural prosperity is at stake making the rural future more destruction than the even present urban degradation.

2. ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION OF THE PRESENT URBAN LANDSCAPE

Urban landscape has experienced contiguous degradation due to anti ecological activity for last two centuries. Industrialization due to advancement in science and technology started in England around the beginning of 19th century and soon spread over Western Europe and North America. No doubt rapid rate of industrial development has given economic prosperity to human society, has given new dimension to socio economic structure and has provide material comfort to the people of urban centers but it has also created many environmental problems. In the beginning, several countries of the western world blindly followed the race of industrialization and did not care its adverse impact of on their natural environment. Undesired output from the factories, such as industrial wastes, polluted water, toxic grasses, chemical pesticides, aerosols, assess, smoke etc. which pollute water, air, land, soil etc. Global warming, green house effect, ozone depletion, rise of sea level are the ill effects of this industrial pollution.

The rapid rates of industrialisations are mainly responsible for present urbanisation. Increasing concentration of population in urban centers and origin and expansion of new urban centers due to industrial development are responsible for rapid rate of exploitation of natural resource and several types of environmental degradation and pollution in the developed countries as well as in the developing countries. The level of urbanisation in the developed countries of the world has already reached its peak. The accumulation of wealth and availability of more economic and job opportunities in the urban centers has resulted into the concentration of population in the congested metropolitan areas and thus the formation of and growth of big slum areas. The basic services such as water supply and sanitation remain inaccessible to the urban poor. The lack of these services along malnourishment and disease like diarrhea and tuberculosis etc. keep them in ill health.

Infect, increasing urbanisation means phenomenal increase in the concentration of human population in limited space which result in the increase of building, roads, streets, sewage and storm drains, *pucca* surface area, vehicles, number of factories, urban waste, aerosols, smokes and dusts, sewage waters etc. which cause several environmental, economic, social problems. Cities after became dump yards of garbage and industrial waste. For example, increasing population in the urban centers uses enormous amount of water for various purposes. The wastewater like sewage water, if untreated pollutes the streams and lakes because the urban effluents are allowed to be drained into them.

3. RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND FUTURE DEGRADATION OF RURAL LANDSCAPE

Early human societies were dependent on nature. Eco-centric people of the river valley civilization, with abundant of natural resources, have their own pragmatic utilitarian conservation policies and bio-centric, moral and aesthetic nature preservation philosophy-that resource should be used *for the greatest good, for the greatest number, for the longest time*. Rural environment is almost clean and green at present, if we denote the present, the time before 1970s or 1980s. Where there were no trace of advance agriculture and less use of modern technology in the rural environment. But after 1980s the situation changed rapidly due to introduction of modern technology in the rural areas as well as ill effects of modern agricultural practices. Together with urbanisation, it effected the environment negatively. The growing pace of industrialisation, the impact of human activities on the environment underwent a drastic change in the past two centuries and reduced human dependence with nature, harmony with their environment.

Agricultural Development and Its Impact:

Agriculture has undergone dramatic change since the end of World War II largely confined to the developed countries, had meant positive effects and reduced risks in farming but their social and economic cost were very high. The green revolution unshared in the 1960s and 70s changed the national food production status but new more productive methods have been found to have detrimental effects on the environment, for example:

- Soil erosion for every ton of grain produced, approximately 20 tons of topsoil is utilised.
- Lowering of the water table, as more crops are planted than the land can sustain and new seeds varieties often need large amounts of water.
- The salinisation and alkalinisation of soils through excessive irrigation and removal of trees.
- Residues of pesticides and herbicides are found in other living beings, in water supplies and various food items.
- Farm subsidies in industrialised nation effects the terms of trade in the third world countries.
- Heavy use of pesticides has had adverse effects on the health of the farmers as well as the consumers.
- Many farmers became dependent on the chemical industries that supply agro-inputs.
- Excessive use of artificial fertilisers and pesticides has harmed the water quality in many areas and has contributed to land degradation.

- The increase proportion of new crops has some time taken place at the expense of crops traditionally grown and consumed by the poor.

Agricultural development in terms of expansion of agricultural land, increase in agricultural productivity and net agricultural production due to development of modern scientific techniques, advanced technology, use of fertilisers, expansion in irrigational facilities, cultivation of high yielding varieties of seeds etc. has solved the problem of growing demand of food due to ever-increasing world population on the one hand. Mechanised farming is most efficient on large farms. This has led to many small farms and holding being subsumed into larger farms, displacing tenant farmers and share croppers and resulting to the increased landlessness. It has also created or is creating hazardous environmental problems of serious concern on the other hand. Though the pace of agriculture development has to be maintained if we do not want to let the teeming millions die of hunger but environmental degradation should also not be allowed to continue due to agricultural development because it would also irreparable damage to human society. Thus the modern '*economic*' and '*technological man*' is at the cross road of dangers in all directions. If population goes on increasing we have to go for agricultural development so that the production is increased due to the population through in doing so we would be preparing a time bomb for our own destruction.

Impact of environmental pollution due to chemical intensive agriculture on health is another area that need intervention .the health impact of the green revolution has been very little studied. In Denmark it was found that male sperm counts was twice as high in consumers of organic produce compare with the rest of the population and declining sperm counts is a feature of industrial society. This is now been replicated in the UK. Research has shown that species diversity is greater on organic than non-organic farms in the developing countries. Bird life, insects and plant diversity are significantly greater. Not surprisingly since the organic farmers attempts to live with nature rather than control it to a greater extent than the conventional farmer. However the health and environmental benefits of non Green revolution agriculture would be much easier to substantiate in the development countries where careful comparisons can be made between regions where chemicals are widely used and those where their use is insignificant. This is a key area in which research need to be funded.

The replacement of forest by fruit orchard also degrades the environment of forest biome. Though the conversion of temperate grassland of Soviet '*Steppe*', North American '*Prairies*', South American '*Pampas*', South African '*Veld*', New Zealandan '*Downs*' etc. has done grate service to humanity by solving the immediate problem of food supply, because they have now become the granaries of the world but this process has also disturbed the ecological balance of the said regions because mono cultural system has been responsible for the dispersal of a large

number of animal species as well as extinction of many animal species. Similarly the conversion of virgin Mediterranean Woodlands into vineyards, horticulture farms and pasture has destroyed natural vegetation on a large scale has caused loss of soil due to accelerated rate of soil erosion.

Urbanisation and Its Impact:

Relation between urbanisation and industrialisation is very close. The expansion of industrialisation has result in the expansion of cities, means expansion into rural land that grows food, nurture cattle, village forests and provides several form of occupation to the community in these areas. The spread of cities and industrial towns in one hand leads to the loss of agricultural land including forest resources and intense and unmanageable migration towards the cities on the other. The level of urbanisation in developing country like India has increased from 25.45 in 1970 to 33.6% in 1990 and is expected to rise to 57% by the year 2025.

The impact of urbanisation is that the cities consume raw materials from surrounding regions and generate waste and pollution. For example, fuel wood consume in Delhi comes from the forest of Madhya Pradesh. Thus the commercialization and demand of fuel wood on a city led to deforestation in a far of area. Untreated disposal of waste generated by the cities in to river water sources results in their contamination. This has serious repercussion on the aquatic life as well as downstream human settlements. The vegetation of the surrounding areas is also affected.

Further the proximity of rural settle to urban centers results in spin-offs or the rural economy. The migration of labors and entrepreneurial skills to the city and industrial towns and commercialisation of the land in these rural areas may have positive outcome in terms of employment but it also results the change of type of productive activity and even expulsion of farmers from their lands.

The water supply and sanitation sectors in rural areas face enormous challenges, which are bound to increase over the coming decades. Although the greatest increase in population is projected to occur in urban areas, the worst level of coverage at present is in rural areas. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, rural coverage for sanitation is less than one half of urban areas: just under 2 billion people in rural areas are without access to improve sanitation, and just under 1 billion are without access to safe and improve water supply.

Social Issues in Management of Common Goods:

There are new common goods as well as old genetic resources that were previously under the state's control but also from privately owned resource where ownership rights are becoming increasingly conditional. The new rural development agenda involves moving in from a

defensive to an aggressive position on common goods: exploiting opportunities to create new ones and recreating old ones, as well as defending existing common goods.

Paradoxically, while states were busy taking over functions to which they could not do justice, they also naively promoted community development. In many cases these turned out to mean the development of village elite favorable to the central power allowing a trickle of funds to enable them to patronize supporters in the village. Among other things, village elite use their influence to privatise village common land which was an important part of the survival kit of the rural poor.

The state controlled cooperative movements were another tool used in the same way. Infact, the dominant strain of rural development has consistently sought to develop new, supposed to perfect common goods institutions, community spirit and cooperative enterprise and frowned on individual enterprise and archaic (imperfect) institution. These institutions have usually led to development of the few the exclusion of many. Typically, the poor women and minority groups were excluded or benefited mass less. These (perfect) institutions were often too complex to ordinary members to understand, and assisted with external resources to grow rapidly. The generation of internal resources was neglected and external sponsors (usually governments) used the institutions to legitimise themselves and sometimes to enrich themselves.

Rural Diversification:

The rural people of the Asian countries principally rely on agriculture and related activities like fishing, forestry, horticulture etc. for their livelihoods. Rural transformation through urbanization, mechanisation of agriculture, information technology adaptation no doubt resulted occupational diversification means a shift in employment from subsistence agriculture sector to non subsistence, non agriculture sectors raises important questions:

- Can rural economy offer new jobs to replace those lost in agriculture?
- Will these jobs offer real opportunities for the poor?
- What will be the wider impacts of such diversification on rural society?
- What are the potential challenges of creating a pro-poor rural confirms economy?
- What measure needs to be taken? What options exists for intervention?
- If the ideology is agreed to where the political will?
- What are the effects of diversification on social well being?

4. CONCLUSION

In recent years, rural development has undergone a paradigm shift from economic growth to integrated rural development. In this new outlook, environmental considerations are interwoven into the various endowers of rural development. The critical thrust areas in rural environmental management include regeneration of ground water and forest cover, conservation of soil resources, sustainable agriculture and creation of sustainable rural industry and markets. Environmental planning for rural development also needs to address problems of drinking water, sanitation, health care and above all alleviation of poverty, as poverty is the greatest polluter.

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