

Environmental Challenges : Public Health and Sustainable Development in India

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Abstract: *India's economic growth over the past few years has raised the prospect of eliminating extensive poverty within a generation. But this growth has been clouded by a degrading physical environment and the growing scarcity of natural resources that are essential for sustaining further growth and eliminating poverty. It is no coincidence that the poorest areas of the country are also the most environmentally-stressed regions, with eroded soils, polluted waterways, and degraded forests. Simultaneously, rapid growth has unleashed greater public awareness and an unprecedented demand for the sound management of natural resources including air, water, forests, and biodiversity. Environmental sustainability is rapidly emerging as the next major development and policy challenge for the country, and will be central to the 12th Five Year Plan which is currently under preparation. Indian environment has been deteriorated remarkably in the past 50 years due to rapid decline in natural resources and severe increase in pollution level. Depletion of forests, population growth, vehicular emissions, use of hazardous chemicals and various other undesirable human activities are mainly responsible for this degraded scenario of environmental health in India. It is, in fact, rendering considerable economic loss to the country and warrants serious attention of policymakers, administrators, scientists and people altogether to save the environment and humanity and to provide generational equity. The present paper deals with the threat of environmental degradation and suggests some possible remedial measures for eco-conservation in India. Now it is essentially advisable to become protector, producer and caretaker of natural Resources and not the predator, polluter and consumer of earth.*

Keywords: Environment, Pollution, Pesticides, Environmental Challenges, Public health, Climate changes, forest degradation