

GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS IN THE DEVELOPING AND CHANGING WORLD

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Abstract

The world has been very rapidly developing and changing. It is particularly apparent in the western countries, the effects of which on developing and especially on underdeveloped countries are gradually increasing. In the name of modernization, powerful countries have not only taken their problems with themselves wherever they go but also become the main source of some other problems in countries they have travelled to. Besides, they have made considerable contributions to these countries; in other words, western society has created the setting for civilization.

As is known, modernization and its outcomes result from positive philosophy. This process takes man as its focal point. Man is present in its each and every phase. Superior power of man is evident on the axis of modernization and positive philosophy. On one side, this superior power of man's intelligence makes possible development and change of any kind. On the other, it brings harm to the environment by various means, which eventually causes global environment problems. From this perspective, destruction, disruption and pollution of the environment should be a matter of discussion.

Keywords: World, Development, Change, Globalization, Environment

Development and Environment

Western and other developed countries may take different paths to modernization and advancement. However, one comes to see that they adopt similar approaches and take similar steps for a common purpose. No matter how different their regimes and approaches are, their look at natural environment has always been the same when exploiting is the case. The corruption of natural environment does not matter for colonists. What really matters is to be able to exploit these countries away from their homes as much as possible. Western communities focusing on change and development in every phase of their lives are working in every field. These works are persistently conducted at the expense of natural life. Environment and natural resources are vital for humans and these are regarded as the most valuable resources humans can use everywhere. Developed countries holding natural and human resources of the Earth in their possessions also hold complete control over the environment. Doubtlessly, this control is totally for their own good. Especially in the regions which they exploit, they regard environment as a commodity. Because their citizens do not live in these areas, protection and sustainability of the environment are not important for them. Forests, natural resources, agricultural fields they use or do not use (outside the plantations) are completely manipulated in their own interests. This mindset is considered

indispensable for their interests. Rapid population growth, urbanization, metropolitanization, technological advances, industrialization and increasing quantity and improved quality of vehicles play a major role in the aggravation of environmental problems. (Doğan Sertkaya, 2014:1) Western and industrialized countries discharge or dispose their wastes in Asian and African countries where they make production and they carry out nuclear tests in these countries. According to the report of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) 5 years ago, “increase in the wastes of such electronic devices as television and mobile phone is at an alarming level. The USA and China produce 3 and 2.3 million tons of electronic waste, respectively. It is estimated that e-waste created by mobile phones by 2020 will be seven times greater in China and 18 times greater in India than in 2007. In China children are made to work in the disposal of wastes in defiance of radiation hazard. The UNEP expressed that it will be appropriate to transfer some of the waste from underdeveloped countries to developed ones” (NTV, February 2010). These processes contaminate arable lands, ground and surface waters, seas and oceans, in other words the natural environment.

It is clear that developed countries follow some principles that will adversely affect the nature because of their exploitation policies for the sake of economic empowerment and growth. Today, capitalist mindset is the most evident example of this. Capitalist projects have always been successful and prevalent in the global political and economic order. In capitalist system, exploiting countries have been successfully conducting their businesses even in very distant countries. At present, the best practitioners of this model are the USA, England, France and Germany. Capitalism is very powerful and free of boundaries. In very faraway countries, it comes into play for economic reasons but later on expands its radius of influence over political, military, social and cultural milieus.

Another influential order is socialism. Even though it seems acceptable, it is not that different from capitalism in terms of exploitation. Agents of any kind clustered under the title of underlying economic issues both exploit the society and overlook the damage to the environment.

As is seen, in both of these systems, natural resources come to the fore in their economic interests, and survival and environmental matters are overlooked. In both, people are uneasy and unhappy, society’s expectations are not fulfilled, and the environment in which people live is disrupted. Developments under the pretext of modern practices produced by western countries denote the corruption of society and environment.

Changes in the exploited countries destroy the natural world and corrupt the environment. Besides, over time the society is sucked into a modernization process. Both western and other developed countries of the world have urged the exploited people to change by the help of the life style they have imposed. This change is not a clear-cut transition but stretched over time. It has penetrated and therefore is evident in every stratum of a society. Eventually, exploited people have become insensitive to any exploitation. Some strata of the society start to think and even act like a colonist country. They give up their stance against modern life and their protective environment consciousness, and carelessly use natural resources. Thus, it seems that environmental consciousness weakens and vanishes in such societies.

However, some sensitive parts of the society rise against the corruption of the environment. Another societal stratum emphasizing the importance of development claims that economic development is possible without destroying the environment. It stresses that environmental protection should be attached more importance to along with developments of any kind. It is advocated that economic development credited as the initiator of modernization and overall development is possible thanks to what natural environment offers. This is a real and acceptable view.

Since the onset of industrialization, natural resources have not been efficiently used and environmental issues have not been discussed. Thanks to improving transportation,

environments in distant parts of the world have been damaged due to exploitation activities. On the other hand, environmental issues and natural life have become more important thanks to louder and bolder voices supporting the idea that financial development by protecting the environment is more significant. Even though capitalist and socialist countries have been late to understand this, they have come to see that power of environment should be preserved. Capitalist countries in particular have started with their environmental issues. But it has taken a long time for such an understanding to emerge in colonies, but as an unserious protective drive. Countries conducting their economic activities within capitalism have turned sensitive to environment over time. They have started to compensate for their damages to the environment and to spend their financial means they have acquired by exploiting to protect the nature. So lately an economic mindset protecting nature has been born and become successful. Western countries and Japan are very successful in doing so. Political, military, social, cultural and economic groups across the world have developed various policies on environment protection. They have been enforcing rigid rules upon its members, and severely punishing the violators. Thus, economic activities have been conducted under the title of environmentalist or in other words ecological development.

Environment was completely out of discussion in the first years of industrialization. "There is an equivalency between environmental protection and industrialization, and there is no need to abandon one for the sake of the other. Reconciliation is possible on a reasonable ground" (Toprak, 1993: 35). This was not the case then. However, industrialized countries have come to realize in the end that environmental protection and industrialization are two faces of a coin.

Although late, western and other developed countries preserving the nature and using natural resources more efficiently have been trying to make the world a better place to live in. Countries introducing environmental consciousness in every action have turned environmental issues into global matters.

Today, ex-colony countries are not that conscious about environmental protection. It is not likely in the near future that these countries will join the environmental protection initiatives unless they complete their economic development. Only when environmental consciousness emerges in these countries and other underdeveloped countries support this development is it possible to achieve a global understanding of what environment and its protection are.

Developed countries are carrying out research in every field. Scientific studies are in progress so that people can avail of them. As science develops, new practices are introduced. "Natural disasters as the leading global problems do not only result from natural conditions. Man plays a significant part in the appearance of these instances" (Özey, 2011: 4). Man is the only living organism that recklessly corrupts the place where it has been born and brought up. Humans are required to act with an environmental consciousness. "As known, the radii of nuclear power plants are very wide. Therefore, establishment of nuclear plants should be closely monitored by neighboring countries because an unfortunate incident at these plants will have severe aftermaths in the surrounding countries" (Doğan, 2011: 46). Hence, developments, trials and practices likely to cause adverse impacts should be monitored. Nuclear tests cause severe damages to humans and environment. Outcomes of such research might be destructive. Technological advances determine the future of societies. Research and tests that will possibly result in environmental catastrophes might pose irredeemable problems. While humankind does research to develop and change on one side, balance depending on human activities (industry, agriculture, transportation and tourism) is being disrupted on the other.

Global climate is changing, atmosphere is being damaged, natural water sources are disappearing, and glaciers are melting down thus causing floods; on the other hand, people are suffering from drought, natural flora is being destroyed, creatures are facing extinction, and accordingly nutritional problems are emerging. Undoubtedly, the factor underlying all

these incidents is “global climate change”. “Gaseous or particle pollutants bring harm to humans, animals, climate and abiotic medium.” (Garipağaoğlu, 2011: 19). The level of air pollutants is alarming and their negative effects are undeniable.

Human activities continue to harm natural balance. Relatedly, air is polluted, which consequently changes climates and depletes ozone layer. This problem has been known to man for a long time and has always been hotly debated. Introduction of chlorine and bromine into the stratosphere and their reaction damages ozone layer.

As a consequence, UV rays easily pass through the depleted ozone and pose danger. Moreover, hydrocarbon gases given off as a result of fossil fuel consumption cause damage to the world, too. There damages are as follows:

- Decreasing agricultural production
- Diminishing animal and sea creature number
- Increasing cases of skin diseases
- Rays harming our eyes
- Increasing skin burn incidents
- Damaged immune system

The Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was agreed on 16 September 1987 in Canada to reduce the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances. Over 150 countries having gained awareness of these substances have become a party to the Protocol. Turkey signed this protocol on 19 December 1991.

Conclusion

As is seen, humans play a decisive part in the disruption and pollution of the environment and the extinction of animals. Global population is growing rapidly. Accordingly, it is in the near future that people and other creatures will face malnutrition and starvation. Atmospheric structure is getting deteriorated. Due to overpollution and climate change, world might come to a stage where it cannot provide for man. Therefore, humans should act in a way that the environment will not get affected.

Economic activities should be considered and evaluated from an ecological perspective. Modernization which is regarded as a novelty should be limited to policies which are protective, non-corruptive, redeemable, forward-looking, sincere and humble. Moreover, political, economical and environmental efforts should be sustainable.

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