

# Environmental Issues and Wellbeing

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**Abstract:** *Environmental well-being includes trying to live in harmony with the Earth by understanding the impact of your interaction with nature and your personal environment, and taking action to protect the world around you. Protecting yourself from environmental hazards and minimizing the negative impact of your behavior on the environment are also central elements. Sustainability is the key to prevent or reduce the effect of environmental issues. For humans to live sustainably, the Earth's resources must be used at a rate at which they can be replenished. Concerns for the environment have prompted the formation of Green parties. Local authorities are responsible for maintaining and improving local environments. We've provided guidance on their legal powers and duties. To reduce the risk of harm to the environment and human health, we make and maintain regulations to control industrial emissions.*

**Keywords:** Environmental well-being, Environmental Issues, Sustainability, Ecology

## 1. Introduction

Environmental issues are harmful effects of human activity on the biophysical environment. Environmentalism, a social and environmental movement, addresses environmental issues through advocacy, education and activism.

Destructive sudden heavy rains, intense tropical storms, repeated flooding and droughts are likely to increase, as will the vulnerability of local communities in the absence of strong concerted action. (OCHA) "Climate change is not just a distant future threat. It is the main driver behind rising humanitarian needs and we are seeing its impact. The number of people affected and the damages inflicted by extreme weather has been unprecedented".

Major current environmental issues may include climate change, pollution, environmental degradation and resource depletion etc. The conservation movement lobbies for protection of endangered species and protection of any ecologically valuable natural areas.

**The following environmental factors impact health in multiple ways:**

### 1) Indoor air quality

- a) Mold and dust can exacerbate and contribute to the development of chronic conditions like asthma and allergies.
  - b) Secondhand smoke in homes and workplaces poses a significant risk; in fact, the National Cancer Institute states that of the chemicals identified in secondhand smoke, more than 50 have been found to cause cancer.
  - c) Poorly ventilated fireplaces and stoves contribute to your pulmonary disease risk.
- 2) Common construction materials such as polyvinyl chloride (PVC) can cause asthma, and formaldehyde (also employed in homebuilding) can cause eye, nose, and throat irritation; wheezing and coughing; fatigue; skin rash; severe allergic reactions, and possibly cancer.

### 3) Water quality

- a) Water containing lead, often caused by the lead pipes used in older construction, can cause serious damage to the brain, kidneys, nervous system, and red blood cells.
- b) groundwater contamination occurs when man-made products such as gasoline, oil, road salts, and chemicals get into the groundwater and cause it to become unsafe and unfit for human use.
- c) Bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical often used in plastic water bottles, appears to mimic the effects of estrogen and may interfere with hormone levels and increase human risk for reproductive disorders.

### 4) Electromagnetic field exposure (EMF)

In 2011, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a component of the World Health Organization, classified radiofrequency fields as "possibly carcinogenic to humans," based on limited evidence from human studies. American organizations and governmental agencies, such as the National Institute of Environment Health Sciences and the National Cancer Institute, generally take the position that the current scientific evidence has not conclusively linked radiofrequency fields--such as cell phones--with any adverse health problems, but that but more research is needed.

### 5) Sights and sounds

- a) Our home and work environments affect our emotional as well as our physical health.
- b) Among other things, research reveals that our physical surroundings can increase or reduce our stress, which in turn impacts our bodies in multiple ways.
- c) Noise can increase stress, which over the long term can lead to disorders as serious as heart disease, high blood pressure, and stroke.
- d) Visual "noise" increases stress. A cluttered, dirty, or confusing environment can cause us to feel worried, sad, or helpless.
- e) By contrast, a "healing environment" can make us feel safe, pleasantly stimulated, and relaxed.
- f) Worksite noise exposure is a leading cause of hearing loss.

Environmental issues are addressed at a regional, national or international level by government organizations. The

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largest international agency, set up in 1972, is the United Nations Environment Programme. The International Union for Conservation of Nature brings together 83 states, 108 government agencies, 766 Non-governmental organizations and 81 international organizations and about 10,000 experts and scientists from countries around the world. International non-governmental organizations include Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and World Wide Fund for Nature. Governments enact environmental policy and enforce environmental law and this is done to differing degrees around the world.

Air pollution, noise from traffic or neighbors, or litter and mess on the streets can affect people's quality of life. Air pollution, for example from road transport, harms our health and wellbeing. Air pollution also damages biodiversity, reduces crop yields and contributes to climate change.

The chemicals used in clothing, our homes and our food need to be regulated, as do industrial emissions, or they too have the potential to harm people and the environment.

### **Improving Air Quality**

We're working with local and national government, as well as internationally, to improve air quality by controlling: a) emissions of harmful pollutants. concentrations of harmful pollutants in the environment

### **Local Air Quality**

Local authorities are responsible for reviewing and assessing air quality, to check they meet national air quality objectives. If they are falling short, they must declare an Air Quality Management Area and produce an action plan showing what they are going to do to meet standards.

The Clean Air Act aims to reduce pollution from smoke, grit and dust. It gives local authorities powers to designate Smoke Control Areas, where it's an offence to emit smoke from a chimney unless using an approved fireplace or fuel.

### **Ozone-Depleting Substances and F-Gases**

Ozone-depleting substances (ODS) are gases which damage the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere. Fluorinated greenhouse gases (F-gases) are a group of chemicals containing fluorine. F-gases are powerful greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and contribute to global warming.

### **Noise and Nuisance**

Noise and other nuisances have a big impact on our quality of life, our health and the economy. All sorts of factors affect the noise we experience. These can include things like planning decisions about where we put new roads, railways and power stations, licensing for entertainment, or the quality of sound insulation in houses.

We set the policy and legislation to enable local authorities and others to manage noise and nuisance in the local environment, including:

- a) 'Environmental noise', which is noise mainly from transport sources, like road, rail and aviation
- b) Other noise and nuisances, like neighbour and neighbourhood noise, odours, smoke and artificial light

- c) 'Local environment quality' covers things like litter, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and fly-posting. These have an effect on quality of life and, if left unchecked, can lead to more serious crime.

Local authorities are responsible for maintaining and improving local environments. We've provided guidance on their legal powers and duties. To reduce the risk of harm to the environment and human health, we make and maintain regulations to control industrial emissions.

Sustainability is the key to prevent or reduce the effect of environmental issues. For humans to live sustainably, the Earth's resources must be used at a rate at which they can be replenished. Concerns for the environment have prompted the formation of Green parties.

Environmental well-being includes trying to live in harmony with the Earth by understanding the impact of your interaction with nature and your personal environment, and taking action to protect the world around you. Protecting yourself from environmental hazards and minimizing the negative impact of your behavior on the environment are also central elements.

Leading a lifestyle that is respectful to our environment and minimizes any harm done to it is a critical part of environmental wellness. Examples of environmental threats include air pollution, ultraviolet radiation in the sunlight, chemicals, noise, water pollution, and second-hand smoke.

## **2. Achieving Environmental Wellness**

Environmental wellness involves a number of different aspects of personal and societal responsibilities, including:

- a) Being aware of the earth's natural resources and their respective limit
- b) Living a life accountable to environmental needs, both in the present and in the long-term
- c) Realizing the effects of their daily habits on the world around them

Women play an essential role in the management of natural resources, including soil, water, forests and energy and often have a profound traditional and contemporary knowledge of the natural world around them. Whereas women were previously neglected or ignored, there was increasing attention paid to the impact of women on the natural environment and, in return, the effects the environment has on the health and well-being of women. The gender-environment relations have valuable ramifications in regard to the understanding of nature between men and women, the management and distribution of resources and responsibilities and the day-to-day life and wellbeing of people.

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