

Human Rights Approach towards Pollution free Environment

In the long evolution of the human race on this planet, a stage has been reached when, through the rapid acceleration of science and technology, we have acquired the power to transform our environment in countless ways and on an unprecedented scale. Humanity's capacity to transform its surroundings, if used wisely and with respect to the ways of nature, can bring to all communities the opportunity to enhance the quality of life. Wrongly or heedlessly applied, or applied in iniquitous ways, the same power can do incalculable harm to human beings and their environment. We see around us growing evidence of human-caused harm in many regions of the earth the dangerous levels of pollution in water, air, earth and living beings; destruction and depletion of irreplaceable life forms and natural resources; major and undesirable disturbances in the earth's climate and protective layers; gross deficiencies, harmful to physical, mental and social health, in the living and working environments of humans, especially in cities and industrial complexes.

Environment and life are interrelated. The existence of life on earth depends on the harmonious relationship between ecosystem and environment. Especially homo-sapiens have very close interaction with nature. Human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development and that they are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature. Life, livelihoods, culture and society, are fundamental aspects of human existence - hence their maintenance and enhancement is a fundamental human right. Destruction of environment and thereby of the natural resources, is therefore, a violation or leads to the violation of human rights - directly by undermining the above aspects of human existence, or indirectly by leading to other violations of human rights, for example through social disruption, conflicts and even war. Conversely, human rights violations of other kinds can lead to environmental destruction, for instance, displacement by social strife/war can cause environmental damage in areas of relocation; or breakdown in sustainable common property management. The manifestations of such violations present themselves through a loss of access to clean air and water; loss of access to productive land; loss of energy sources and biomass; loss of food and health security; social and economic marginalization; and physical displacement. Several hundred million people have been increasingly forced to live far below the minimum levels required for a decent human existence, deprived of adequate water, food, clothing, shelter and education, health and sanitation. Development, which was supposed to alleviate such problems, has often increased them, especially by allowing the powerful sections of society to appropriate the natural resources of poor and resource-dependent people.

Over the years, the international community has increased its awareness on the relationship between environmental degradation and human rights abuses. It is clear that, poverty situations and human rights abuses are worsened by environmental degradation. This is due to the exhaustion of natural resources leads to unemployment and emigration to cities which affects the enjoyment and exercise of basic human rights. Thus human rights approach towards pollution free environment has been discussed in this paper.