

ANALYSIS OF CAUSAL FACTORS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Environmental management has emerged as an important area of scholarly investigation. There are increasing pressures being put on firms, from a number of different sources, such as governmental regulation, community participation and market demand, to engage firms in environmental initiatives. These factors play different roles at various development periods. Government regulation was the major pressure, initially. However, community participation and market demand have become more and more important. Thus a better understanding of the determinant factors that play a role in engaging firms to take environmental management initiatives may help policy makers develop more effective environmental policies. An effective implementation of any environmental management programme depends on the full support of local actors, which depends on a certain level of education, community participation, public private partnerships, raising awareness and training in the relevant areas. Environmental management involves the practices that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges as well as develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges. The present is an empirical approach to study the major determinants of environmental problems and the endeavor of the study is to provide valuable recommendations to protect and manage the environment in a better through better means.

Keywords: Community Participation, Environmental Problems, Governmental and Non-Governmental Organizations, Public-Private Partnership

INTRODUCTION

In the present state of affairs, environment management has emerged as a significant area of scholarly investigation. Environment commonly implies surroundings invested with physical, chemical and biological factors exercising a decisive influence on all living organisms including humans and the stability and well-being of life and living on this planet. The present day era of post modernist reflexivity has projected an intimate and close link between man and the nature. Diverse interacting and often competing interests of different stakeholders also determines the environmental matrix. Managing and balancing environment in a healthy and productive manner, hinges to a larger extent upon a proper understanding and judicious use of natural resources in order to combat eroding factors that cause irreversible damages to the eco-system. Environmental discipline these days has acquired global attention not merely to redress ecological ravages but to help evolve a proactive response from the business and civil society, keeping in view challenges and task of restoration of healthy ecological frame on this earth. In no conceivable manner should

management of environment impede or come in conflict with economic growth as it impinges upon the development of technology and participation of common masses to formulate a collective and effective response mechanism to meet material needs of the people across the planet. Conserving scarce natural resources and protecting both the external and internal environments in recent times has acquired phenomenal priority of different nations which can be clearly understood from declarations of world body like United Nations. Policies for environment protection has to be planned on regional, national and international levels enabling people to take harness advantage of modern science and technology and enjoy the benefits of natural resources available, while at the same time estimating the social costs which are likely to occur through shortages, pollution, and social conflicts. To the industrialists environmental management means ensuring that business decisions are taken which give due cognizance to the environmental issues keeping in view the fact that now Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become the magna-carta for adhering to the green business practices. This means that individual business entities have to understand the consequences of decisions that impact environment and are ready adopt eco-friendly business strategies.

Environmental management is a mixture of science, policy, and socioeconomic applications. It focuses on the solution of the practical problems that humans encounter in cohabitation with nature, exploitation of resources, and production of waste. In a purely anthropocentric sense, the central problem is how to permit technology to evolve continuously while limiting the degree to which this process alters natural ecosystems. Environmental management is thus intimately intertwined with questions regarding limiting economic growth, ensuring an equitable distribution of consumable goods, and conserving resources for future generations. Environmental management is a response to the increasing seriousness of the human impact on natural ecosystems. With a smaller global population base and a less pervasive use of technology, the environment might be able to recuperate on its own from human misuse, but it is now widely recognized that in many cases positive intervention is necessary if the environment is to recover.

Core elements of Environmental Management

- Commitment of top management and defined responsibilities;
- Identifying environmental impacts;
- Communicating an environmental policy;
- Setting environmental objectives and programmes/plans; and
- Regular audit and review cycle.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Many management scholars have been influenced by Elinor Ostrom's path breaking work on self-regulation of commonly held water, forests, and fishery resources (Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom, Garner, and Walker, 1994). Yet, the common pool resource problems Ostrom studies are not immediately apparent in many modern industrial settings (c.f. Khanna, 2001). Some authors have tried to explain the emergence of self-regulatory institutions in industries that do not share a common physical resource by arguing that common problems can arise from interaction with other institutions or institutional actors. Other scholars have suggested that self-regulation might be a response to market inefficiencies caused by asymmetric

information. *Mark S. Reed (2007)* in his paper titled “*Stakeholder participation for Environmental management*” highlights the complex and dynamic nature of environmental problems and suggests flexible and transparent decision-making that embraces a diversity of knowledge and values. For this reason, stakeholder participation in environmental decision-making has been increasingly sought and embedded into national and international policy. It draws together the typologies that have been developed to understand the basis for stakeholder participation. It is argued that to be successful, such a process needs to be underpinned by an appropriate philosophy, and to consider how to engage relevant stakeholders at the appropriate time and in a manner that will enable them to fairly and effectively shape environmental decisions. *De Moore, P. & De Beelde, I. (2006)* in their paper titled “*Environmental Auditing and the Role of the Accountancy Profession*” emphasizes on environmental auditing and the potential role of accountants distinguishing between compliance audits and audits of the environmental management system. This review focuses on the similarities and differences between an environmental audit and a financial statement audit. Except that environmental audits are largely unregulated, the general approach to both types of audits is similar. Both audits place an emphasis on the evaluation of control systems, which is an argument in favor of external auditors playing a role in environmental audits. Another argument for including external accountants, is their code of ethics. It is argued that this reluctance is because of a lack of generally accepted principles for conducting environmental audits. Rather than treating these audits as totally different, it is proposed that there be a move towards integrated, or even universal, audits. *Desirée Cullen (2001)* in his paper titled “*Environmental Management Accounting: A State of Play*” provides a framework of the existing EMA perspectives. Accounting, economics, science, and philosophy may need to come together to debate the decision making framework and changes to the role of business, government, and social agendas that will be required to ensure the achievement of sustainability in our current economic environment. The authors also question the value of the burgeoning body of literature on environmental external reporting if no attempt is made to integrate this with EMA. A targeted study of the EMA practices of firms currently engaged in external financial reporting might add depth to the triple bottom line agenda and further legitimize the importance of the EMA agenda. It is also of paramount importance that research focus on further developing an EMA framework through a comprehensive investigation of its applicability and relevance as a business tool in a wide range of decision making contexts and environments. *Schreck, Sarah C. (2001)* in her paper titled “*Role of Non-governmental Organizations in International Environmental Law*” admits that NGO participation in international environmental activities is a rapidly increasing, yet informal practice. Despite their increase in activity and influence, requirements on NGO participation have remained minimal. As NGO involvement continues, the need for formal rules relating to participation, accountability, and legitimacy is becoming apparent. The current structure allows NGOs to make significant contributions to the international forum, but the lack of rules could potentially curb their credibility and ability to participate in the future. The international community needs NGO participation. Whether their role expands or stays the same, a system of accountability will protect the beneficiaries of NGO actions, the sovereign nations, and the NGOs themselves. The contributions of NGOs are too valuable to leave unattended without regulations and protections. *Ramin Maysami, Lei Yalin and Zhang Long (1999)* in their paper titled “*Research trends in resource and Environmental management*” examines that the Environmental and resource management have often been at odds with industrialisation and

rapid economic growth and this is apparent when reviewing the cases of growing economies of China and India. This article reviews the literature and concludes that not only promoting effective natural resource management contributes to price stability, availability of products and long-term employment, but also that it is socially desirable in terms of poverty reduction and reducing the burden on public health systems. The article further proposes that a key step in alleviating the clash between the national desire to grow and its potential adverse effects on the environment and natural resources is the enhancement of academic research on sustainable resource and environmental management among the intellectual community.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Keeping in view the issues highlighted in the existing literature, the endeavor of present study would be to examine deeply the nature and causes of environmental degradation witnessed in the state of J&K. This appears to be essential in sense that the ground realities influencing the environment of specific area needs to be identified with a fair amount of realism for identifying legitimate role of the non-governmental agencies in supporting proper management of the environment of different regions of Jammu. Hence the broad objectives of study are:-

1. To identify the factors responsible for causing problems in the environment.
2. To provide valuable recommendations to prevent the environmental problems.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is empirical in nature. The scope of the study extends to the state of Jammu & Kashmir state. The primary data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The secondary data was collected from various sources like books, journals, published and unpublished thesis etc.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1. Over-Population

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	2.4
Neutral	23	9.2
Agree	145	58.0
Strongly agree	76	30.4
Total	250	100.0

The table 1 shows that 58% of the respondents agree that overpopulation is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 2. Lack of Awareness and Education

	Frequency	Percent
Neutral	60	24.0
Agree	120	48.0
Strongly agree	70	28.0
Total	250	100.0

The table 2 shows that 48% of the respondents agree that lack of awareness and education is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 3. Lack of Enforcement of Existing legislations

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	21	8.4
Neutral	28	11.2
Agree	108	43.2
Strongly agree	93	37.2
Total	250	100.0

The table 3 shows that 43% of the respondents agree that lack of enforcement of existing legislations is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 4. Lack of Alternative Source of Livelihood

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	15	6.0
Neutral	50	20.0
Agree	86	34.4
Strongly agree	99	39.6
Total	250	100.0

The table 4 shows that 39% of the respondents strongly agree that lack of alternative source of livelihood is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 5. Not Enough Land for Government to Distribute

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	4	1.6
Neutral	79	31.6
Agree	63	25.2
Strongly agree	104	41.6
Total	250	100.0

The table 5 shows that 41% of the respondents strongly agree that not enough land for government to distribute is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 6. Lack of Governmental Emphasis on Protection of Environment

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	6	2.4
Neutral	23	9.2
Agree	145	58.0
Strongly agree	76	30.4
Total	250	100.0

The table 6 shows that 58% of the respondents agree that not enough land for government to distribute is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 7. Business and Industries Setup

	Frequency	Percent
Neutral	60	24.0
Agree	120	48.0
Strongly agree	70	28.0
Total	250	100.0

The table 7 shows that 48% of the respondents agree that business and industries setup is a cause of environmental problem.

Table 8. Lack of Waste Management

	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	21	8.4
Neutral	28	11.2
Agree	108	43.2
Strongly agree	93	37.2
Total	250	100.0

The table 8 shows that 43% of the respondents agree that lack of waste management is a cause of environmental problem.

DISCUSSION, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

In recent past concerted efforts have been made by different countries for bringing about a harmonious relationship between the environment and growth processes and modes of economic development. In initial stages more especially in developing economics a keen desire and telling urgency about achieving rapid industrial and economic upliftment of the masses, forced governments to opt for such developmental strategies which often ignored the disastrous environmental consequences as a result there of. Thus by the beginning of 1980's a growing realization by various government and non-governmental agencies about the colossal damages caused to environment by the singular focus on economic benefits came under a serious review. Dangers of environmental degradation to the very existence of human life as of late has triggered massive destruction of life and property due to cyclones, de-forestation, earth quakes, forest fires and shrinking space for natural habitat for other animal species. Problem has been further compounded by green house effect, acid rains, air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution effect on the flora and fauna, growing incidence of cancer among the people in the polluted industrial environment, global warming, soil erosion and host of other alike factors.

From the analysis of the data, it was revealed that the factors understudied have a direct impact on environment.

In initial formation stages NGO's needs governmental resources and linkages for better organizational services for the needy people. In the later stages, when there is relative stability of funds and a sufficient pool of experience to draw upon, the NGO's priorities may change: it may be motivated to make larger scale impacts or inform public policy through its work. Secondly, the ideology and the quality of leadership strongly influence the motivation of the agency in working with the government.

Government agencies on the other hand should work with the NGO's to:-

- Enhance people's participation in their programmes.
- To extend coverage of programmes to areas and groups that are poorly served by government staff.
- To test and replicate innovative approaches.
- To achieve greater cost effectiveness.

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