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Review Article

ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION AND IMPROVEMENT

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Abstract

Environmental preservation is the protection of the beauty of nature and the environment. The practice of keeping the integrity, stability and the beauty of both the biotic and abiotic components of the environment is called environmental improvement. The two broad categories of environmental degradation chiefly come from natural and anthropogenic causes. The natural causes include Earthquakes and Erosions while the anthropogenic causes are deforestation, ruinous Agricultural practices, among others. Earthquakes damage Florae and faunae, displace populations of human and non-human organisms. Erosion is a major ecological threat in South Eastern states of Nigeria. Landslides silt water bodies and destroy forest cover. The pyroclastic ash of volcanic eruption can travel great distances, threatening ecosystems by smothering plants and animals, cutting off their oxygen supply. Deforestation is a major contributor to climate change all over the world. Noxious gases from automobiles make urban roads of cities a nightmare to commuters and expose all of us to respiratory disorders. Effluents from petroleum and chemical industries harm aquatic ecosystem. By being mindful of conservation, we can minimize environmental damage. By being environment-friendly, modifying our life styles and minimizing the use of harmful inorganic chemicals, we daily contribute to environmental improvement cause. Additionally, we would be encouraging Environment bodies/agencies like NESREA, FEPA, NEST and others in their effort to curb environment-related problems. Lastly, curtailment of environmental destruction is possible through an articulated mitigation measures such as reforestation of deforested areas, surveillance of our protected natural reserves and active participation by the government.

Keywords: Environmental preservation, Improvement, Environmental degradation, Anthropogenic agents, Agencies.

Introduction

We all depend on the natural world for our survival. So every environmental issue concerns both human and non-human organisms. The survival of human race here on earth is to a much extent contingent on the responsible husbandry of natural resources. As a matter of fact, natural resources are key to the survival and functioning of the environment, including its plants and animals.

Efforts by environmental philosophers to draw a dividing line between humans and the rest of nature has slowed rather than advance environmental preservation and improvement mandates. Such a motivation has midwived a lopsided approach that has majorly resulted in an unhealthy attitude of choosing which aspects of the environment to preserve (Norton and Taylor, 1986).

Everyday anthropogenic impacts are enough evidence that such a distinction is not only unnecessary but should be jettisoned in our quest to entrench a world

where a balance between what we use and nurture or preserve will determine our future.

A responsible culture of preservation, conservation and improvement of our natural and environmental resources should not only become our bounden responsibility but, a pre-occupation.

Environmental Preservation

Environmental preservation is the protection of the beauty of nature and the environment. It is concerned with the maintenance of the present status quo condition of the areas of the earth that have not yet been touched by humans (Taylor, 1986). By preserving the environment, we create a better and healthy earth to live in. The act of environmental preservation involves intentionally setting aside earthly resources and thus preventing damage normally caused by contact with humans or by human activities e.g. logging, mining,

hunting and fishing. It then replaces these harmful human activities with new, environment-friendly activities such as tourism and recreation. Preservationist movements have gained momentum in our time due to the consumerist culture prevalent in modern societies. Against that backdrop, and in tandem with unabating encroachment by mankind onto the environment at rates that give wild landscapes to farming, industry, housing and other human developments, preservation efforts are directed towards protecting our natural endowments. Man is the primary beneficiary of the gains of environmental preservation, being at the center of the reason.

Certain environmentalists consider the aspects of the environment outside the sphere of human influence to be candidates for environmental preservation (Norton and Taylor, 1986). In this way they distinguished between what is wild as needing preservation. Neither the distinctions between man and the environment nor the influences of man should be the criteria for determining what to preserve. Humans do decide what to preserve based on values and the best means available for preserving them: Monuments, Antiquities, sites of historic and patriotic significance. The advent of automobiles in the 1920s in the United States of America sparked off the impetus for preservation of the above mentioned. Those became necessary with attendant road construction, biodiversity threat and mass demolition of structures.

Germane reasons for preserving the environment

Extracting resources in an environmentally prudent manner and with a preservationist instinct that encourages conservation and protection of natural resources from wanton exploitative consumption should not be the philosophy of a few, but all. A major weak environmental oversight is our consumption in sheer disdain to the attendant consequences. This entrenches a greater global environmental degradation. Therefore, environmental policy needs to reconsider the global distribution of natural resource extraction and its incidental repercussions.

So, what relevant reasons exist for us to preserve the environment? An appropriate answer to the above question will pep up our motivation to strenuously pursue a lifestyle of environmental preservation.

i. It reflects our personality: The way we treat people strongly reveals who we are. Accordingly, treating the earth and its natural resources responsibly unequivocally portrays us as responsible people.

ii. It is a way to give to our generation. It's much happier to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Preserving the environment is much the same because it answers to the fact that we are increasing our chances of living in a chaos-free earth!

iii. It is a way of leaving a worthy legacy to the future generation. We are here on earth as stewards and not lords! We have been entrusted with the earth and its natural resources to look after, use and leave for a succeeding generation. We do ourselves a lot of good to pursue that objective.

iv. It is a way of giving back to the planet: We can only live by consuming resources provided by the planet earth. For example food, water and so forth are necessary for our healthful and continued existence. By endeavouring to stave off practices detrimental to the good of the earth, we would indirectly be ensuring the continued supply of these resources and hence, life!

v. It saves us from the “doomsday” scenario. Just thinking about the likely impact of global abuse of the environment is enough reason to make someone in their right minds to strive against all forms of environmental degradation. The overall collateral impact of our mismanagement of the earth is already tilting the equilibrium. Imagine a continued inattention to the crying need to salvage the earth! The entire earth could self-destruct someday unless we entrench caution in the way and manner we live and use resources.

Other reasons for the preservation of the environment include:

The preservation of the land areas for outdoor recreation by, or the education of, the general public.

a)The protection of a relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, or plants, or similar ecosystems.

b)The preservation of open space (including farmland and forest land) for;

i.The scenic enjoyment of the general public

ii.Pursuant to a clearly delineated federal, state or local governmental conservation policy and will yield a significant public benefit.

iii.The preservation of a historically important area or a certified historic structure.

The need to preserve the environment

“The health of our planet can have a powerful effect on the health of our people” (ecologist Christopher Golden). We know by instinct that a sick earth can't support a healthy population. Apart from the ethical and philosophical reasons, our good should be the primary objective for which we need to protect the environment from degradation. Human actions have resulted in the destruction of the environment from times immemorial. Man has destroyed natural scenic world, increased selection pressure on niche construction causing ancestors of sea mammals to move to the ocean. Human-constructed environment affect human fitness in various ways (Clark, 1997). There is virtually any

environment that human influence has not touched upon (Sterelny, 2003).

Humans are supposedly the most intelligent beings on the planet earth. It therefore behoves us to discharge our moral obligation of preserving other species. In this view, preserving the environment becomes a necessity laid upon us in order to sustain our current population. If we recklessly downplay the importance of “safeguarding” our God-given natural resources, certain undesirable demographic consequences may result. Human health is maintained and boosted by food and medicine and we owe it as a duty to future generations to preserve the natural resources due to their potentials of providing cure for diseases yet to be discovered.

The environment provides our air, water and food. If we wantonly destroy the environment, we would have invariably and essentially destroyed ourselves!

Ecological interactions are very delicate and intricately interdependent events. Additionally, energy transfer and inter-conversions are not 100% efficient because it decays along transformation path (2nd law of thermodynamic). The survival and maintenance of the ecosystem are closely connected to the survival of man and any break in this complex chain of events can result in the death of dependent species.

In order to mitigate the harmful consequences of global warming and climate change, we need to steward wisely environmental resources of our bounteous earth. Because trees that supply us oxygen don't recycle, like water, we need to eschew acts of flagrant destruction of forest through bush burning, clear-cutting and illegal logging.

The Modi Operandi of Environmental Preservation

Having seen the need to preserve the environment, that knowledge is not necessarily adequate on itself but we also know how to go about applying it in a practical sense. How exactly should we preserve our environment from decay and dilapidation? If we are going to be active in the fight against the onslaught of environmental abuse, we must imbibe conservation-consciousness which consists in sustainable use and management of natural resources (renewable and non-renewable) including wildlife, water, air and earth deposits. Consider the following recommendations:

i). Curtailment of indiscriminate waste disposal: The spate of disposing household refuse, wrappings and packaging of goods and consumables should be checkmated. On an individual level, everyone should be aware of the unpleasant consequences of this and consciously use designated dumping sites for refuse disposal. Refuse and wastes disfigure the beauty of the environment and may spread diseases.

ii). Make use of dustbins or trash cans: This point, like the first, requires discipline on the part of everyone. Sometimes, it's mere moral laxity or even a lackadaisical attitude that prevents us from locating and using trash cans especially in public places like schools, markets, parks, etc.

iii). Take off roads, rickety vehicles: Alongside this, effect repairs of exhaust pipes of automobiles that give vent to cloudy smoke contaminated with dangerous gases to the atmosphere. Some short distances can be trekked/padded.

iv). Government should enact stringent environmental regulatory laws and impose stiff punitive measures on defaulters. The various state environmental protection agencies should be proactive and enforce the law to deter people from damaging the environment.

v). National and international organizations should engage in projects that protect the environment as part of their corporate social responsibilities.

vi). Manufacturers should engage in active waste recycling and cut back on producing non-biodegradable goods. Many other things can be done to preserve the environment but the points I have explained are just a few.

Concomitant consequences of Environmental Abuse and Over-Exploitation of Natural Resources

Our earth and its inhabitants are guided by certain inherent laws and principles the violation of which results in some dire catastrophes. Environmental abuse negates the goal of conservation and preservation. The idea of abuse refers to the practice of harvesting of renewable resources to the point of diminishing returns. Sustained over-exploitation will inevitably lead to the destruction of the resource: wild Medicinal plants, grazing pastures, games animals, fish stocks and water aquifers.

Indiscriminate forest destruction displaces wild animals species that use the forest as home, hastens the onset of soil damage by erosion, shifts the hydrological cycle and disrupts age-long seasonal rhythms. Socio-economic structures exert a tremendous effect on the ecosystem so much so because poverty or greed is at the arrowhead of environmental abuse. The biological community is consensual in its belief that humanity is currently extirpating a significant proportion of the earth's species such that habitat loss has become the single greatest threat to biodiversity followed by the spread of alien species. These two, alongside over-exploitation, habitat destruction, pollution (a form of habitat destruction) and spread of diseases by the alien species have been described as “the mindless horsemen of the environmental apocalypse”. (Wilson, 1992).

Major categories of environmental abuse come through agricultural practices and land conversions. Human influence through direct felling of trees for timber or in the use of insecticides for the purpose of agriculture interferes with preservation efforts e.g. environmental restoration and active habitat management. Kats thus believes that there is no part of the natural world that has not been touched by our pollution and technology (Kats, 1997). Excess fertilizers and agro-chemicals poison water bodies and may even occasion eutrophication and biomagnification. Species extinction or decimation may follow!

Land conversion for urban development is an express road to sack microorganisms from their homes. This sometimes results in decimating a species confined to that region.

Logging has a very negative impact on forest management practices. It renders certain climbing animal species homeless, exposes the soil to excessive solar radiation and can induce desertification if continued unabated.

Mining for metals and steel destroys the evenness and compact nature of the soil. Oil prospecting and exploration has completely destroyed farm lands, forests and water bodies in parts of Bayelsa State of Nigeria.

Over-exploitation coupled with industrial revolution has increased demand for natural raw materials e.g. ores. This has significantly impacted mining. Resultantly, there is an increase in energy demand e.g. fossil fuel such as coal, petroleum and natural gas with attendant pollution problems. Manufacture and industrial processes have affected ozone layer and caused deforestation. Explosion in world population has encouraged over-exploitation: more lands have been cleared and cultivated. Irrigation facilities have been constructed and dams built. All these activities disturb the environment with attendant undesirable consequences.

Application of fertilizer to increase crop production and the use of agro-chemicals both contribute in disturbing food chains, creating imbalances and resulting in bioaccumulation of chemicals in the bodies of living things. Global warming has increased with rise in Green House Gases (GHGs) and this has resulted in typhoons, hurricanes, severe and frequent droughts. The United Nations international strategy for disaster Reduction (ISDR) warns that typhoons and hurricanes increase following an increase in ocean temperature. It wants governments to implement the 2005 Hyogo Framework for action to reduce risks of disasters caused by climate-related hazards.

Abusing the environment is synonymous with biting the hand that feeds us. Environmental scientists at the 2008 Stockholm workshop 27 of which were from the

Stockholm environment Institute cited 9 kinds of biophysical boundaries (thresholds) that man was already exceeding! (Rocstrom *et al.*, 2010): climate change, ocean acidity, the ozone layer, fresh water use, the movement of nitrogen and phosphorus, the amount of land used for crops, aerosols (Haze and other particles), biodiversity and chemical pollution. They warned that man had already exceeded safe boundaries in the use of three: movement of nitrogen, loss of biodiversity and climate changes and catastrophes might be imminent.

In view of the rapid loss of biodiversity, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) with the support of the United Nations was launched in 2001. It reported in 2005 that man was degrading his natural resources and blamed growing demand for food, fuel, fresh water, timber and fibre as contributing factors. Currently, between 10-30% of mammal, bird and amphibian species on earth are threatened with extinction following human actions. Over-population, pollution (air, water and soil contamination), deforestation and global warming are human-driven factors of biodiversity loss. We have drastically reduced the population of fish. Whales are hunted to the verge of extinction

Combustion, mining, factories, power plants, farming, fires and automobiles are all potential agents of air pollution that threaten the safety and health of the environment. Carbon (ii) oxide constitutes 65% while nitrogen is 15% of air pollutants. These gases can accumulate and cause chronic diseases. Beijing, China battles with smog with the possibility of chronic illness.

Marine pollution mainly starts on land as non-point pollution. Septic tank, sewage sludge, car oil leaks make up this category. Although water constitutes ¾(75%) of the earth, only 1% is safe for drinking! Human is poisoning the water ways. Trash pieces make their way into the food chain of marine life. Small marine animals ingest these plastics and die. Plastic bags and nets sometimes entangle marine organisms. This way, man is destroying aquatic creatures some of which we know little or nothing about. Recycling and reuse should become a perpetual practice of our time coupled with the avoidance of ocean dumping.

Climate change is the rise in temperature and changes in weather patterns on a global scale due to certain emissions and combustion of fossil fuel. Within a period of over 100 years ago, average temperature has risen by 1.4°C. A continued increase will be disastrous. Changes in climate patterns could produce unexpected weather phenomena and natural disasters including drought, forest fires, hurricanes, typhoons, heat waves, devastating snow storms and tornadoes. These changes could threaten agriculture, fishing and tourism industries.

Reliance on fossil fuels e.g. crude oil, coal and natural gas which are non-renewable portends a bad omen.

Man needs to develop alternate forms of energy: solar, wind and water. Green energy is the future and we can bring that future!

Growing population comes with problems. The effects of a burgeoning population are both environmental and economic in nature and the UN estimates that the world population in 2024 would hit 8 billion! Population growth is due to innovation in medicine, decreased infant mortality rate and longer life span. As world population plateaus, we can expect following adverse environmental effects: deforestation which further propels climate change by increasing GHGs, extinction of endangered species, decreased standard of living, faster depletion of resources, e.g. water, food, fossil fuel, increase in carbon emission following increased demand for fossil fuel, more trash and so forth. Trash level is directly proportionate to population. Dumping space becomes a critical issue and ocean dumping increases destruction of marine life, thus leading to biodiversity loss.

Acts and Practices That Endanger the Environment

Environmental degradation is the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives and needs (The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction). It involves the deterioration of the environment through depletion of natural resources such as air, water and soil; destruction of ecosystem and the extinction of wildlife.

It is no longer news that human greed for money sabotages environmental preservation efforts. Countless conventions have not been able to stop illegal hunting (poaching) and felling of trees by loggers which continue to drive to near extinction critically endangered species e.g. the bluefin tuna in Australia, Italy, US earns over \$400m annually!

Humane education – shifting emphasis from solving environmental problem by not adopting an either/or approach is our veritable tool in salvaging the environment. Pitting environmental concerns against human rights puts us at a distance from a workable solution that would benefit man and the natural world. For instance, asking people to choose between loggers and owls insidiously suggests that we can't protect both jobs and species.

There is almost global knowledge that starvation, preventable diseases both of which stem from corruption, ignorance, global climate change, diminished resources and human overpopulation claim lives in millions annually.

There are two broad categories of acts and practices that put the environment at risk:

Natural agents of environmental destruction not only affect the environment but also the livelihoods of humans that depends on it. Tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, and volcanic eruption can wipe out a whole town or city, leaving countless number of people homeless in its wake. Besides destruction of houses, the environment is heavily impacted. Trees and plants are killed leading to shortage in food supply.

i). Earthquakes: They result in the damage of florae and faunae by their shock and shifts in land surfaces, as well as alterations in local hydrological systems. The Nepal earthquake of 24th August 2014 was of the magnitude of 6.0 on the Richter scale (the New York Times, August, 24, 2014) and amounted to less than 1% GDP in losses.

ii). The Chilean quake of 2010 on the magnitude of 8.8 displaced over 80% of the population, triggered a tsunami that wreaked havoc on the coastal communities, killed over 500 people, injured over 12,000 and destroyed at least 370,000 houses. The sandy beaches experienced significant changes with inter-tidal organisms mostly being at the receiving end.

The Gujarat quake (2001): The quake of this Western Indian city was of 7.7 magnitude. It killed over 20,000 people and rendered over 600,000 others homeless. Besides the horrendous waste brought on by earthquakes, seismologists face the problem of not knowing when even though they may be able to accurately predict where a quake could occur.

iii). Volcanic Eruptions: Volcanic ash travels at 200km/h and has the potential of destroying plants and animals it comes in contact with. This pyroclastic flow can also threaten ecosystems because plants smothered by dust and debris die due to inability to get sunlight and oxygen.

Soil living microorganisms are in danger. The ash carries toxic chemicals with dangerous levels of acidity making it impossible for plants to survive under the ash. Animals develop skin and eye irritations while insects develop respiratory problems. The ash can poison food and water.

iv). Landslides: Landslides affect the topography of the earth's surface, the character and quality of rivers, streams, and underground flow, the forest that covers much of the earth and the habitats of natural wildlife that exist on the earth surface including its rivers, lakes and oceans. Large amount of organic materials enter streams following landslide which thus reduces, potability of water and quality of habitat for fish and wildlife. Forest cover has been destroyed by landslides.

v). Erosion: Erosion is a major cause of environmental degradation according to Nigeria Environmental Study Team (NEST, 1991). Anthropogenic agents can also

cause erosion. NEST identified five principal types of soil erosion in Nigeria namely, sheet, rill, gully, coastal, and wind erosions, each impacting the environment variably. It observed that gully erosion is the most documented and frightful. The ecosystem of five states in the southern part of the country is under threat of serious gully erosion. About 2500 sites are already known. According to National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA) director General, Dr. Ngeri S. Benebo. The states are Anambra (700), Enugu (600), Imo (450), Abia (300), and Ebonyi (250) (Daily Trust Newspaper, 14 May, 2014). Indiscriminate destruction of the environment by man was blamed.

Other natural cataclysmic events that impact negatively on the environment include hurricane and tropical storms which destroy ecological structures by damaging trees and under bushes in the path of the storm. Drought usually damages ecosystem and yields little of offsetting benefits. The damages caused by flood may be gradual but they usually stem primarily from the inability of different plant and animal species to get water they need to survive.

Tsunamis and tornadoes leave horrendous amount of destruction in their wake. Major floods have varied effects on river flood plain ecosystem.

Anthropogenic agents of environment degradation

By anthropogenic agents are meant all the human and human aided causes of environmental dilapidation. Below are some:

i. Deforestation: According to the Nature Conservancy, forests give us shade and shelter, refuge and refreshment, clean air and water. We know that indiscriminate felling of trees for firewood, timber, other forest resource and land clearing for cultivation all over the world is decimating world forests. Deforestation decreases the number of trees which clean the environment (via absorption of CO₂), provide oxygen and affect rainfall patterns.

ii. High quantity of exhaust gases: Exorbitant amount of gases are released into the environment by various industries. Prime among these *noxious gases* are CO₂, SO₂ and NH₃, and these three are alleged for involvement in creating Ozone holes and global warming.

iii. High number of industries: Mining pollutes the environment by releasing *respiratory particulate matters* (RPM) which find their way into the lungs and may harm the entire respiratory system. Black carbon (soot) not only contributes to health problems but also to climate change (European Environment Agency, 2012).

Petroleum industries and chemical manufacturing industries desecrate streams when their effluents are discharged into them. They thus, cause pollution of water bodies and harm aquatic faunae.

iv. Unprecedented spate of construction: *Urban heat island* is an effect caused due to trapping of solar radiation by concrete and cement. Explosion in construction activities removes vegetation cover that permits better heat exchange. Heat island effects cause constricted circulation of air which traps pollutants released in urban areas, preventing air mixing and decreasing air quality.

v. Secondary pollutants: These are pollutants created from reactions between non-burnt hydrocarbons and nitrous oxides. The sites for the reactions are the stratospheric clouds. These pollutants cause Ozone holes. Heavy vehicular transport in countries like China, Brazil and India causes *Point Pollution* that directly affects man. The nuisance of smog results from this. The hydrocarbons released cause lower levels of ozone that is harmful to humans.

vi. Ruinous agricultural policies: Overloading of the land with fertilizers, overgrazing and shifting agriculture all degrade land, and create soil erosion that in turn leads to silting in major rivers and reservoirs. The cycle eventually leads to desertification and decrease in land quality by permitting the direct action of erosion on cultivable land.

Environmental Improvement

Environmental improvement entails the practice of keeping the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community with their abiotic components. The monumental impact of environmental degradation around us predicates the yearly conferences that are held from which new tools e.g. Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and carbon credits are being created to prevent further damage and encourage the protection of the environment. Unlike preservation and conservation, improvement assumes the need for behavioural and philosophical modifications is critical to stop destruction and start remedying what patchy resources are struggling to recover from the impacts of degradation. This, thus, presupposes action on the part of all of us. The goal of Environmental improvement is to increase the *aesthetical values* of the environment, save human lives that are dependent on the survival of the earth, grow the economy by encouraging tourism, conserve energy by decreasing waste, preserve our rich cultural heritage and advance bio- archaeology.

Because human culture is dye-hard, recognizing both anthropogenic and abiotic extincting events in the environment will equip us to cooperate with our earth. In view of the fact that culture is dynamic, we can use its ancillary features to enhance our effort in improving the lots of our environment. This can be through transfer of information through books, oral communication and practical examples (Ridley, 1993). Environmental improvement calls for action from all of us. Some of the

agencies/bodies involved in environmental preservation include:

Agencies/Bodies Involved In Environment Preservation

National Environmental Standards and Regulations Enforcement Agency (NESREA)
Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA).
Nigeria Conservation Foundation (NCF)
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
Intergovernmental Panel For Climate Change (IPCC)
Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
Nigerian Environment Study Team (NEST)

Improving the environment---enhancing our wellbeing

Environmental phenomena are sending a clarion call to all and sundry to think future in our actions. Every action has a collateral effect and very unfortunately, it is mostly a negative one on the environment that sustains us. How can we help and save our earth and its rich diversities from decimation? What practical steps can we take in cooperation with nature so as to improve our sustaining environment?

1. Eat more natural food: Every person will definitely not adopt a vegetarian lifestyle but eating and buying organic goods will to a large extent improve the lot of our environment because non-biodegradable containers and cans would be minimized plus an additional advantage of good health that will accrue to us.
2. Take short trips on foot, bicycle: Apart from reducing the amount of noxious gases released into the atmosphere by automobiles, you gain an added benefit of improving your heartbeat and overall health.
3. Think reusable when buying stuffs: Using stainless steel as kitchen utensils means limiting the presence of non-biodegradable metals and you also avoid the risk of metal poisoning.
4. Choose more natural fabrics or eco-friendly products: The World Wildlife Fund has warned that Perfluorinated Chemicals (PFCs) used in some clothes to help keep them wrinkle-free can be toxic to the environment even as this has been linked to health concerns including cancer. Using organic cotton maximizes your contribution to the environment and minimizes your exposure to potentially toxic chemicals.
5. Help to make the world a greener place by planting trees in your yard as a project. According to the Arbor Day Foundation, the health and environment-improving benefits of having trees around include reducing your air-conditioning cost by providing shade, raising the property value and resale appeal of your home, pulling carbon(IV) oxide out of the environment, creating O₂ and improving water quality.
6. Eat less meat: Meat production has a big impact on the environment. Pastures and land for crops to feed animals have taken the place of vast swaths of forests.

Consuming more vegetables has a significant way of lowering obesity, cholesterol level, with associated heart disease due to atherosclerosis. However, cutting back on meat consumption requires a makeup in your intake of protein-rich vegetables e.g. peanut butter, beans, soy foods and eggs.

7. Minimize the use of perchloroethylene: This has been listed by the International Agency for Research on cancer as a probable human carcinogen in cleaning clothes.

8. Grow organic vegetable gardens in your yard. This provides you a variety of fresh veggies and serves as a means of sustenance.

Mitigating the Impact of Environmental Destruction.

Admittedly, man and his activities have inflicted some “injuries” on the earth and its resources. These happen through ignorance or sometimes, outright carelessness. Through our collective abuse of the environment, we have hastened global climate change, rapidly decreasing biodiversity, growing extinction rates, dwindling resources and pollution.

Greed is the motivation for siting polluting industries in close proximity to poor neighbourhoods. Global consumption of fossil fuel is at an all times high and ironically, all these activities are impacting on our lives negatively, too. Working to palliate the degradation problem facing the earth should be everyone’s business. It’s my opinion that mitigating environmental dilapidation is possible through a concerted effort of everyone and must involve environmental protection and environmental resource management. Awareness that we are facing a real problem is one of the practical ways we can start with.

- a.Promote sound forest management and encourage reforestation of deforested areas. The importance of forests can hardly be over emphasized. Besides numerous medicinal plants housed by it, it has a way of preventing desertification and its attendant consequences. This will also curtail adverse environmental implications.
- b.Increase policing or surveillance of forested areas. This is important because illegal loggers gain ingress to dedicated/designated forests and rip off wooded trees for selfish reasons.
- c.Entrench the culture of conservation in the use of natural resources. This involves shunning all forms of exploitation which is not sustainable in nature.
- d.Curtail the use of agrochemicals such as weedicides, fertilizers, insecticides, etc. These chemicals often find their way into streams and other water bodies and build up in the bodies of aquatic organisms. Bioaccumulation is one of the major problems facing aquatic faunae. Eutrophication is another negative side effect of agrochemicals. All of these impact negatively on the aquatic and terrestrial environments.

e. Government participation is critical. There is need for public awareness. The general public should be educated on the aftermaths of gross abuse of the environment. The print and electronic media should be utilized to educate both the urban and rural settlers on the danger of environmental degradation.

Appropriate sanctions and commensurate punitive measures should be meted out to environmental defaulters. Fines should be imposed on dumping of industrial and household wastes at an unauthorized site.

Conclusions

The war against environmental degradation will continue for as long as man remains on earth. This reality ought to advise us not to degrade but rather to embrace environmental improvement options. As intractable and nonchalant as man has become with issues related to environmental safety and sanity, each one of us has a part to play in not only preserving the environment but even building improvement on existing structures.

Environmental issues are vast and I don't presume to have exhaustively treated the subject, in this brief seminar, all the same, what I said are legs on which further research can stand. Don't degrade the environment and don't encourage others to degrade it because on it lies our subsistence and future. We have no other earth to call home, therefore it is our bounden responsibility to safe guard our environment.

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