Chapter 7
Environmental Pollution

ABSTRACT

Environmental ethics is the part of ethics that inspects questions of moral right and wrong relating to the management, defense, or endangerment of the natural resources available to us. Environmental ethics falls under the universal ethics theory. It does not seem fair to people from the future that we are consuming the world's resources now and leaving just a little to them, and that we're leaving the world polluted and in a situation worse than it once was. This can be explained through three different perspectives: the utilitarian perspective, the deontological perspective, and our duties to others based on our rights. This chapter explores environmental ethics.

INTRODUCTION

Pollution is the introduction of the impurities into a natural environment that causes uncertainty, harm, or distress to the ecosystem i.e. physical systems or living organisms. The major forms of pollution are visual pollution, air pollution, noise pollution, soil contamination, radioactive contamination, thermal pollution, light pollution, and littering. Noise pollution is extreme displeasing human, animal, or machine-created environmental noise that disturbs the activity or balance of human or animal life, it can cause problems in both health and behavior. Soil contamination is caused by the existence of human-made chemicals or other modification in the natural soil environment. At adequate dosages a big number of soil impurities

can cause many chronic illnesses and even death. A common assumption in business is that businesses only have duties towards people and that nonhuman units aren't worth moral deliberation, but nature can have intrinsic value; this is called "naturalistic ethic". The main causes behind industrial pollution are: unregistered small scale units, lack of pollution control systems, and lack of awareness. Various solutions are suggested solutions to decrease industrial pollution:

1. Country wide studies need to be done throughout the country;
2. Institutional policies and legislations need to be developed; and
3. Greenpeace and NGOs are needed and should be heard.

BACKGROUND

For the most part, environmental pollution is the byproduct of human activity, industrial or other. Pollution can take on many forms, and these forms are categorized into two main group: Chemical Substances, and Energy. Examples of chemical substance pollution include air pollution, soil contamination, water pollution etc… In contrast, energy pollution encompasses light pollution (over-illumination which could sometimes be harmful to nearby eco-systems), noise pollution (caused by operating heavy machinery such as planes), visual pollution (the over-abundance of materials and objects that influence the integrity of the landscape, such as billboards, scarred landforms, power lines etc…). Pollutants are the actual waste materials that cause pollution and the degree of perniciousness of the pollutants depends on their chemical composition, concentration, as well as their persistence. Some examples of pollutants include pesticides, noxious gases such as sulfur dioxide and chlorofluorocarbons, as well as heavy metals that cause soil contamination. Pollution, although harmful to the environment and to the living creatures that inhabit it, is a necessary consequence of economic growth. In 2012 Ahmed et al. tested the relationship between environmental pollution and economic growth of the Maldives using the Environmental Kuznets Curve and the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method. The analysis of the empirical data retrieved from the study revealed "a strong positive relationship between environmental pollution and economic growth" (Ahmed et al, 2012).

Businesses don't deliberately set out to damage the environment. Yet, some factors create an ill-fated situation, which in many cases is poorer than it needs to be like disregarding natural resources that are held in common and seem abundant. Businesses are driven by the motive of making a profit. Businesses believe that they do not have a responsibility to protect the environment out of what the law necessitates, and that environmental responsibility rests with consumers. Environmental responsibility of a business can be shown by three different theories. The anthropocentric theory that says all environmental responsibility is derived from human interest alone. The animal rights view states that higher animals qualify as morally significant creatures. The eco-centrism theory states that we have direct responsibilities to environmental collections as we have direct responsibilities to humans.

Consequentialist ethical theories stem from utilitarianism. It regards the intrinsic "good or bad", "value or disvalue", as more important than the "right or wrong". Right or wrong is determined as whether the consequences of a certain action are good or bad. Environmental ethics, calls for weighing out the consequences of each decision to be made by the direct effects it will have on the environment; the environment being not only that of the natural area but also of all living things in the surroundings.

DEFINITION OF POLLUTION

Pollution is the introduction of the impurities into a natural environment that causes uncertainty, harm, or distress to the ecosystem i.e. physical systems or living organisms. Pollution can take the form of chemical substances or energy, such as noise, heat or light. Pollutants, the components of pollution, can be either foreign substances/energies or naturally occurring contaminants. Pollution is often classified as point source or nonpoint source pollution.

Environmental pollution poses a serious threat to the environment as well to human beings in that it "affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, and displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life" (Youngblood Coleman, 2013). Different countries and regions are affected by pollution to varying

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