

SARASWATI

The Research Journal

Special Issue
Global and Internal Politics: Issues and Areas



**SBES College of Arts and Commerce,
Aurangabad, Maharashtra**

101.	COVID-19 And India's Foreign Policy	Dr. Vandana Mahure	470
102.	Covid – 19 & India's Foreign Policy	Dr.Vinay Raut	474
103.	Internal And Global Politics : Issues And Areas Covid 19 And Global Political Economy	Dr.Megha Pathak	477
104.	Impact of COVID-19 on Global Environmentalism	Dr.R. K. Kale	483
105.	Covid - 19 from a physical illness to a social illness	Prof. Riteshkumar Patel	487
106.	India's Strategic Foreign policy: Balancing USA and Russia	Prof. T. A. Inamdar	490
107.	India-ASEAN Relations: An Approach for Free and Open Indo-Pacific	Dr.Tanmay Paithankar Aniket Shinde	496

Impact of COVID-19 on Global Environmentalism

Dr. R. K. Kale

Introduction:

In the current context, we see the impact of covid-19 pandemic on all areas of the world. The epidemic has affected not only all social, economic, political, cultural and human-like factors, but also some invisible factors. The effect of Covid-19 on a similar component is immediately felt. But the effect of the invisible element is felt over time and the most important of these is the environment around us. The first of the two major problems facing the world is terrorism and the second is environmentalism. The number of new cases and deaths is increasing at an alarming rate with no signs of control yet, making the estimates of its economic and other impacts uncertain. Depending on the level of COVID-19 impact in each country, as well as country-specific situations and capacity, the world's Governments are adopting different levels of interventions, including travel restrictions and lockdown to contain the spread of the highly contagious virus. December 2019 in Wuhan city, in China, an unusual pneumonia was noticed with a link to an animal market that sells poultry and other animals to the public. This event was soon reported to the World Health Organization (WHO). The causal microorganism had been identifying end as a novel corona virus that was named COVID-19. COVID-19 soon spread to other parts of the world. The World Health Organization has declared the situation a pandemic. In this research paper, the researcher has tried to explain the impact of covid-19 on global environmentalism by explaining the changes in the environment in India.

Environmental Changes in India during lock down period:

The corona virus pandemic has caused a global reduction in economic activity and although this is major cause for concern, the ramping down of human activity appears to have had a positive impact on the environment. Industrial and transport emissions and effluents have reduced, and measurable data supports the clearing of pollutants in the atmosphere, soil and water. This effect is also in contrast to carbon emissions, which shot up by 5 percent after the global financial crash over a decade ago, as a result of stimulus spending on fossil fuel use to kick start the global economy.

The economic shutdown under the Covid-19 pandemic has had two monumental impacts on our environment. It has improved our air and water quality dramatically, and slashed our material consumption, water usage and waste production. Concentration of particulate matter (PM) and Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) and Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) emissions reduced significantly in the lockdown period enforced to curb the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, according to a Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) analysis of 115 Indian cities. The CPCB monitored the cities between March 16 and April 15, 2020. The air quality index (AQI) of 78 % cities was 'good' and 'satisfactory' during lockdown as compared to 44% cities in the pre-lockdown phase. "The drop could be attributed to, restricted vehicle movement, halt on construction activities, less road dust resuspension and curb on industrial activities," according to CPCB.

Data from the CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) and the UPPCB (Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board) shows that the Ganga's water along its most polluted stretch in Uttar Pradesh is carrying more dissolved oxygen and less nitrates. These conditions are conducive to survival of aquatic life. Its biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) has correspondingly fallen, along with the concentration of total coli form, which is a testament to improved water quality. Similar positive developments have been reported for the Yamuna. There are several reports of the Dhauladhar range in Himachal Pradesh again being.

Visible from Jalandhar, which is 200 km away. Citizens have also seen Mt. Kanchenjunga from Siliguri and Mt. Everest from parts of Bihar during the lockdown. That this has happened after 30 years highlights just how long we have battled severe air pollution. Most remarkably, the nation-wide lockdown has considerably reduced municipal Solid Waste Water (MSW) generation. Pune's daily tonnage of MSW has fallen by 29 %, while Chennai's and Nagpur's have dropped by 28 % and 25 %, respectively. Even in cities like Delhi and Mumbai, one can expect a similar drop owing to a shift in consumer demand and behavioral changes towards sustainable consumption.

The month of May, which usually records peak carbon emissions due to the decomposition of leaves, has recorded what might be the lowest levels of pollutants in the air since the 2008 financial crisis. China and Northern Italy have also recorded significant reductions in their nitrogen dioxide levels.

Further, sources suggest that there has been a 25% drop in energy use and emissions in China over two weeks which is likely to decrease the overall annual carbon emissions of the country by 1 percent.

In India March 22 was the 'Janata Curfew', following which, a significant dip in air pollution levels was measured across the country. Cities like Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata and Lucknow saw their average Air Quality Index (AQI) staying within two digits.

Another example of cleaner air was seen when, on April 3rd, residents of Jalandhar, a city in Punjab state, woke up to a view of the Dhauladhar mountain range, a rare feat in normal times, considering the distance between the two places- lying nearly 213 kilometers apart from each other and have not been visible from the city in recent memory.

Water bodies have also been clearing and the rivers Yamuna and Ganga have seen significant improvement since the enforcement of a nationwide lockdown. According to the real-time water monitoring data of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the average water quality of 27 points of the Ganga seen in recent days, is suitable for bathing and propagation of wildlife and fisheries.

COVID-19 and its Impacts on the Environmentalism:

Due to the COVID-19, almost every big and small city and village in the affected countries like China, Taiwan, Italy, USA, France, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Germany, S Korea, U.K, India, Australia and many more, is under partial or total lockdown for a long period of time ranging from a few weeks up to a few months. The major sectors contributing to air pollution are transport, industries, power plants, construction activities, biomass burning, road dust resuspension and residential activities. In addition, certain activities such as operation of DG sets, restaurant, landfill fires, etc. also contribute to air pollution. Under the nationwide lockdown, all

transport services, road, air and rail were suspended with exceptions for essential services. Educational institutions, industrial establishments and hospitality services were also suspended. As a result, air quality improvement has been noted in many towns and cities across the world. Due to non-functioning of industries, industrial waste emission has decreased to a large extent. Vehicles are hardly found on the roads resulting in almost zero emission of green-house gases and toxic tiny suspended particles to the environment. Due to lesser demand of power in industries, use of fossil fuels or conventional energy sources have been lowered considerably. Ecosystems are being greatly recovered. In many big cities, the inhabitants are experiencing a clear sky for the first time in their lives. The pollution level in tourist spots such as forests, sea beaches, hill areas, etc. is also shrinking largely. Ozone layer has been found to have revived to some extent. The pandemic has displayed its contrasting consequence on human civilization, in the sense that, on one hand, it has caused worldwide panic situation, but created a very positive impact on the world environment on the other.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the environment raised attention from the very beginning of the crisis, consisting of (a) observations and analysis of the immediate effects and (b) estimations related to long-term changes. Qualitative assumptions prevail, while consistent quantitative research must wait for relevant data sets and additional knowledge. Most facets of the environmental impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have not directly resulted from the virus itself. The consequence of abruptly limiting or closing economic sectors, such as heavy industry, transport, or hospitality businesses, has affected the environment directly. Moreover, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on socio-ecological systems may be highly variable, from radical changes in individual lifestyle, society and international affairs, to simply facilitating a faster change than would normally have emerged. From an anthropocentric perspective, the pandemic may lead to a more sustainable future, including increased resilience of the socio-ecological systems or shorter supply chains, which is a positive development.

However, it is still possible that some nations will opt for less sustainability by pursuing rapid economic growth and focusing less concern on the environment. While negative impacts on the economy and society in general are probably huge, it is very likely that the global-scale reduction of economic activities due to the COVID-19 crisis triggers a lot of sensible improvements in environmental quality and climatic systems. However, not all the environmental consequences of the crisis have been or will be positive. This includes an increased volume of non-recyclable waste, the generation of large quantities of organic waste due to diminished agricultural and fishery export levels and difficulties in maintenance and monitoring of natural ecosystems. The temporal resolution of the corona virus impact ranges from immediate (days to weeks), short-term (months) and long-term (years), and different examples are provided in a matrix. While the first impacts are divided between rapid environmental improvements, such as urban air and water quality, and pollution episodes, such as the ones caused by the sanitary disposals, the estimated short- and long-term impacts are mainly positive.

Conclusion

This global crisis has convincingly demonstrated that the disaster research, climate change diplomacy and ecosystem services must reconsider their strategic and integrated development considering even the most unlikely events. Eventually, the COVID-19 pandemic will determine profound changes of the social and economic behavior at the planetary scale, and this study highlights the environmental dimension of the consequent impacts resulting from the emerging pandemic.

The takeaway from this is that once nations come to grips with the corona virus, better implementation of the environmental, transport and industry regulations should be considered a priority to ease the detrimental impacts of human activity on the environment. The international community, as it fights to regain an accepted normal, ought to take into consideration, the enlightening results of this pandemic. The environment, for one, bounced back faster than we thought it could. And it would be downright irresponsible to let that knowledge take a backseat once social distancing and nationwide lockdowns are no longer required.

Covid-19 and its associated lockdown have given us a rare opportunity to step back and assess our impact on the environment. We are witnessing clean air, water and live able cities that we have demanded for so long precisely because we have been shut away. Thus, before we resume life as usual, we should make commitment to instill the principles of sustainable development in our social behavior, life style and public policy making to make our environment clean and sustainable.

References:

1. Impact of lockdown on air quality, CPCB, M/o Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India.
2. <http://www.indiaenvironmentportal.org.in/files/file/Impact-Of-Lockdown-On-AirQuality.pdf>
3. Nations, U. The recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must lead to a different economy. Available online: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/launch-report-socio-economic-impacts-covid-19> (accessed on 11 May 2020).
4. Haass, R. The Pandemic Will Accelerate History Rather Than Reshape It. Available online: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-04-07/pandemic-will-accelerate-history-rather-reshape-it>(accessed on 15 April 2020).
5. UNCTAD NewsDetails. Available online: <https://unctad.org/en/pages/newsdetails.aspx?OriginalVersionID> (accessed on 11 May 2020)
6. Website of World Health Organization(<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>)
7. The Indian Express, dated 08 May, 2020
8. <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/web-edits/rediscovering-sustainabledevelopment-through-a-covid-19-lockdown-lens-6399986/>
