**Environment and climate change-issues-1**

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The environment sustains life, supports our physical and mental health and provides psychic enjoyment. Environmental insecurities and climate change present rapidly growing threats to human development and security in Pakistan. The contribution of environmental resources to wellbeing is broad ranging. It has both instrumental and constitutive features. In both ways, we are enriched by its existence. Environmental issues in Pakistan include biodiversity, air pollution, water pollution, improper sanitation, land pollution, waste management, ozone layer depletion, noise pollution, climate change & global warming, pesticide misuse, soil erosion, natural disasters, oceans and fisheries , desertification & deforestation and flooding. According to the latest global environment performance index (EPI) ranking, Pakistan is in the list of countries which suffer from poor air quality. The climatic changes and global warming are most alarming issues risking millions of lives across the country. The major reasons of these environmental issues are carbon emission, increasing populations, and deforestation. These are serious environmental problems that Pakistan is facing, and they are getting worse as the country’s economy expands and the population grows. Although NGOs and government departments have taken initiatives to stop environmental degradation, Pakistan’s environmental issues remain. The megacities of Pakistan, such as Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Rawalpindi, face the issue of noise pollution. The main source of this pollution is the traffic noise caused by buses, cars, trucks, rickshaws and water tankers.

According to one estimate, the average annual cost of environmental degradation and natural resource damage in the country is about US$ 1 billion a day. Both natural and man-made factors contribute to these problems. They include a rapidly growing population, industrialization, urbanization, the unsustainable harvesting of resources and inadequate, poorly implemented state policies. The consequences can be seen in the form of severe health hazards, food and livelihood insecurity and the increasing vulnerability of marginalized communities that are heavily dependent on natural resources. The severity of the situation necessitates immediate actions to assess the causes and extent of damage and recommend practical measures to safeguard natural life support systems from further damage. Looking at Pakistan as a whole, in 2019 a considerable improvement however still not enough to take its world ranking down, coming in at 2nd most polluted country in the world and still in the unhealthy group bracket.

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Pakistan is a country located in south Asia, bordering on other highly prominent countries such as India, China, Iran and Afghanistan, all of which have sizeable pollution problems of their own. The economic giants that are India and China have many of their cities taking the top spots for some of the most polluted in the world, and Pakistan does not find much exception from this. Pakistan is with a massive population of some more than 200 million inhabitants, making it the 5th most populous country in the entire world. In terms of its pollution levels, Pakistan has shown numbers that have come in very poorly in the past, with many of its megacities creating vast amounts of smoke, haze and deadly smog that permeates the air, causing a multitude of issues for its inhabitants. Pakistan is indeed a polluted country, with some of the worst levels of pollution found in the world as of 2019.There are numerous causes of pollution across the major cities of Pakistan, with some of them being more of a year-round constant, such as the pollution put out by vehicles and factories, and others being seasonal such as the stubble burning taking place in the winter months, compounded by the cold air being trapped on ground level unable to disperse. Cities such as Lahore, once known as the city of gardens, suffers terribly from pollution caused by vehicles, and in the year 2020 with the covid-19 induced lockdowns, it became apparent how much of an effect this vehicular pollution has on the overall air quality. With mass lockdowns in effect after March, pollution levels began to gradually clear, but as soon as they were lifted, the smog quickly crept back to permeate the atmosphere and affect the citizens especially in large cities. This is just an example of how badly vehicles can alter the level of pollution, with a great increase in air quality during lockdown quickly returning to its awful pre-lockdown levels, being indicative of how badly Pakistan is affected by its numerous cars, motorbikes, trucks and buses on the road. Many of them would also be utilizing heavily outdated and unsafe engines, running on lower quality fuel, which when compounded together the result is pollution that are unfortunately seen on many roads across Asia. Other sources would include the infamous brick kilns seen countrywide, a phenomenon also seen in Bangladesh, with many large-scale operations as well as small family run businesses churning out bricks in the millions.

Other operations that emit large volumes of pollution would be the countries steel mills, which once again rely on fossil fuels such as coal to provide energy. The burning of fossil fuel leads to large amount of highly dangerous pollutants. The emissions from these factories are often unregulated as well, leading to manufacturing and companies plants running their operations with no regards to the environment, which can have catastrophic effects to not only air pollution, but also to the surrounding wildlife and water areas, with large amounts of industrial effluence making their way into bodies of water and damaging ecosystems and thus damaging on the environment. The open burning of fires on streets can add an additional level of toxic pollution, with a number of materials such as wood, garbage, synthetic and man-made materials such as plastic all being burnt and releasing poisonous fumes. The main sources, starting with the most prominent, are vehicular pollution and factory emissions, followed by open burning sources, and other miscellaneous additions levels such as poorly maintained construction sites, which can give off large amounts of finely ground rock, gravel and silica, adding to the levels of fine particulate matter in the air. With the majority of its smoke, haze and pollution coming from vehicles, naturally a large amount of the gases, compounds and fine particulate matter would arise from the burning of fuels taking place inside car engines.

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