Economic Development and Environment

By Kanse

Economic development is designed to bring material prosperity to the people but it may lead to the over-exploitation of natural capacities and hence be self-destructive in the long run. The increasing population of the developing countries has combined with the excessive consumption of the affluent in the developed countries to use up the earth’s limited natural resources at an alarming rate. As a result of deforestation, desertification, soil erosion, and atmospheric pollution, the world is facing a critical environmental crisis. This situation requires an integrated approach to the management of natural resources, including the prevention of soil erosion, the control of atmospheric pollution, the reduction of deforestation, and the conservation of water. Expanding human enterprise is leading to the earth’s limits.

Over exploitation of Natural Resources

The world population which has doubled from 1950 to 1970 and is expected to increase further to 800 million by 2020. The increasing population has led to the over-exploitation of natural resources. The land resources are already at risk in many parts of the world. Overgrazing, deforestation, and soil erosion are problems in many countries. The water resources are also at risk due to pollution and overuse. The forests are being cut down at an alarming rate, and the oceans are being overfished.

While the world population, which has doubled since 1950 to 5.7 billion, is increasing rapidly, land available for human use is being gradually reduced. The destruction of forests, which are habitats for hundreds of species of plants and animals, and the overuse of land and water resources is threatening many species of plants and animals. The overuse of land and water resources is threatening many species of birds and mammals.

Air Pollution

The two greatest dangers to the atmosphere which contribute to global warming and to the formation of clouds are caused by emissions of industrial waste gases such as carbon dioxide and methane. Each day, more than 10 million tons of smoke and soot are released into the atmosphere. The main sources of these emissions are factories and power plants.

Growing Awareness

There is a growing awareness of the need to protect the world’s environment and to live in harmony with it. The United Nations has established several organizations to promote environmental conservation, such as the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the limited employment opportunities for the increasing population in industry has led to an acute pressure on the country’s land and water resources. This is illustrated by the gradual reduction of the country’s forest cover from about 30% in the mid-1900s to 20% in the 1990s. Sri Lanka has estimated that the country’s water resources are being depleted at the rate of 40,000 to 50,000 tons per day. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the country relies on rainwater for 80% of its water supply. To address this issue, Sri Lanka has implemented a number of measures, including the construction of dams and the implementation of water conservation practices.

Main issue

The main issue in the debate between economic development and environmental conservation is the balance between development and conservation. While development is necessary for economic growth and social progress, it can also lead to environmental degradation. Conservation efforts are necessary to protect the environment and ensure the sustainability of resources. The challenge is to find ways to balance development and conservation so that both can coexist.

The Sri Lanka government has taken several steps to address the issue of environmental conservation. These include the establishment of national parks and conservation areas, the promotion of sustainable agriculture, and the implementation of water conservation practices. The government has also set targets for reducing the country’s carbon emissions.

In conclusion, the debate between economic development and environmental conservation is complex and multifaceted. It requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the needs of both development and conservation. Sri Lanka, like many other countries, is facing the challenge of balancing these two objectives. The country has made significant progress in this area, but more needs to be done to ensure that development is sustainable and that the environment is protected.

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