



Precautionary Principle Versus Agriculture and Water Resources Management

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Wealth discriminates people as “Rich and Poor”; but pollution has no such barriers. Rich to poor eat polluted food, drink polluted water and breathe polluted air. Stan Cox’s “Sick Planet: Corporate Food and Medicine”, argues that corporate food and medicine industries are destroying environments and ruining living conditions across the world. According to UNICEF every year about 600,000 Indian children die because of diarrhea or pneumonia, often caused by toxic water and poor hygiene. Half of the water supply in rural areas, wherein around 70% of India’s population live, is routinely contaminated with toxic bacteria.

Unplanned urbanization, population explosion, agriculture and uncontrolled sewage discharge in to rivers and lakes/tanks are primary reason behind the rise in surface water pollution. The surface polluted water also polluting groundwater. In urban areas the other major contributors of water pollution are industries. We rarely look at precautionary principle; instead of prevention measures, we try controlling measures with which we rarely achieve the stated goals. Also, with isolated control measures, the scenario is not changing.

Just before Paris Climate Summit in December 2015, Pope Francis released a provocative encyclical on the environment- “Laudato Si”. He emphasized that destroying the environment was a sin. He further noted that humans were turning the planet into wasteland of debris, desolation and filth, and called for urgent action. Pope Francis further emphasized that, “We must not be indifferent to the loss of biodiversity and destruction of ecosystems, often caused by our irresponsible and selfish behaviour”. The same was emphasized by the UN and US President just before Paris meet. But these were not reflected in Paris Agreement Document. A report of UNDP warns about the raising water pollution in three continents, namely Asia, Africa and Latin America, placing

hundreds of millions of people at risk of contracting life threatening diseases and putting aquatic flora and fauna under extinction threat. It observed that, “The increasing amount of wastewater being dumped in to our surface waters is deeply troubling”.

Many a times Nobel Prize legitimizing the bad research that serves the vested interests. Here it is pertinent to note what Mahatma Gandhi said “India has enough resources to fulfil everyone’s need but it can’t fulfil one person’s greed”. Science has empowered humankind with the knowledge and secrets of universe and the role human beings can play towards ensuring sustainable planet, the “Earth” and ensuring a healthy and happy life within one’s life span and transferring the pro-planet growth systems and strategies to the future generation. Playing with the nature is like scratching the head with the fire. Yet we need development to meet the needs of non-linearly increasing population under the new lifestyles. But, this development must meet the basic needs of people today without ruining the chances of future generations to do the same that comes under sustainable development. Though, now UN, Pope Francis, US President and Indian Government talk at the same wavelength, but the actions proposed goes against sustainable development. This system wants to benefit few who use maximum resources at the cost of the remaining. Agriculture is the backbone of any nation’s economy/development. Unfortunately, misguided researchers around the world are affecting the agriculture. This is primarily under the disguise of climate change, used it as de-facto global warming and carbon credits that carry billions of dollars of green fund to share. This is clearly evident from the 2015 Paris Agreement Document. Access to quality water and air are essential for human health and human development. Both are at risk if we fail to stop the pollution. Here we must remember the fact that carbon dioxide is not pollution.

The words sustainability and resilient are widely in use similar to the word climate change in a casual manner or as an adjective in agriculture. Under unsustainable system, resilient has no relevance. Under the resilient production system, to the ability of a system to prevent disasters and crises as well as to anticipate, absorb, accommodate or recover from them in a timely, efficient and sustainable manner. Theoretically it looks to be sound but in practice it is rarely achievable. The sustainable issue automatically mosque the resilient under sustainable system. The sustainable food system is a food system that ensures food security and nutrition for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases to generate food security and nutrition of future generations and not compromised. Under polluted water this is rarely achieved!!!

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