



Witnessing The Environmental Degradation Created By BCPL Industry

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Abstract

The process of industrialisation begun in the 1760s in Britain. As we all know, the world had developed a lot since the ages of industrialisation and it marked with a change in the social and economic phenomena but at the same time new problems are arising with the industrial growth such as rising greenhouse gas, emissions, air pollution and water pollution, desertification and chemicals pollution, the erosion of the top soil had led to extreme pressure on the environment and impoverishes the population by destroying its natural resource base. Industrialisation in Assam dates back with the establishment of tea, coal, oil refineries and plywood industries leading to economic growth and development of the state. BCPL plant was set up in Dibrugarh district and came as a part of the historic Assam Accord signed on 15th August, 1985 with the motive of overall socio-economic development of the region, but with the operation of BCPL plant there have also been some negative effect arising such as environmental pollution and various types of difficulties and problems are faced by the people residing in nearby BCPL plant areas. The main objective of this paper is to look over/evaluate the negative effects of environmental degradation which are faced by the workers and nearby villagers due to the setting up of this plant.

Keywords

BCPL, Industrialisation, Environmental degradation, Socio-economic development.

Introduction:

Industrialisation has always appeared to be the deep pockets of wealth and better living but in reality it's just the reverse case, it has been shown that although development of industries leads to large scale of production of goods which are sold to consumers at an affordable prices, promotes mass employment, an engine for the development of technology, generates income that feeds to so many industries etc. With industrialisation come opportunities as well as challenges. The challenges like it contributes to negative externalities such as air pollution, air emissions, water pollution, noise pollution, agro-chemical pollution, global warming, climatic

changes, degradation of land quality, generation of hazardous waste, loss of biodiversity, radiation exposure etc. Due to these challenges industrialisation must be more responsible towards building a greener and more sustainable economy. Therefore, this study examines the different factors and causes of environmental degradation created by BCPL industry.

Literature Review:

Pathak C. et al. (2012) conducted a study on “Petroleum Industries: Environmental Pollution Effects, Management and Treatment Methods”. The study aims to assemble all the relevant information directed at minimizing the impact of petroleum operations on environment. The study also covers different aspects of drilling and production related impacts as well as management of toxic materials.¹

Das B. (2019) conducted a study entitled “Impact of Petrochemical Industry on the Environment of Dibrugarh: A Study of BCPL, Assam”. The study aims to investigate the impact of BCPL on the environment of the nearby villages of Dibrugarh. The study brings into light various toxic and deleterious substances posing threat to health and environment. The study concludes negative externalities outweigh positive externalities, as a result of operation of BCPL.²

Objectives of the study:

- To evaluate the different important factors of environmental degradation generated by BCPL industry.
- To understand the causes of environmental degradation created by BCPL industry in nearby areas.

Significance of the study:

In order to accelerate economic growth, Industrialisation has always served as a boon for any country. With Industrialisation bringing in economic prosperity, there have also been ill effects on the environment sustainability. The present study by exploring the reasons behind degradation of the quality of environment in the area has made an attempt to find ways which will drive to a surge in economic growth, but at the same time, contribute towards a greener – pollution free environment.

Hence, the present study will be a significant contribution to the existing body of knowledge and thereby, be of much help to the academicians, policy makers, strategists apart from a host of other stakeholders. Besides, it will be also helpful for other researchers who will be interested in doing advance work on the same area.

Scope of the study:

The study is confined only to the insights collected from the respondents residing nearby as well as working in Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited (BCPL) in Dibrugarh District and therefore cannot be generalized. The study mainly focuses on the factors contributing towards degradation of environment, as result of BCPL

coming into operation in the area. The study, however, lacks in providing detailed insights to the various opportunities/privileges enjoyed by the residents in neighboring areas, as it does not cover under its purview.

Methodology of the study:

The nature of the study needs the collection and analysis of primary and secondary data on environmental degradation, and also the various aspects of industrial pollution of BCPL industry. Hence, to acquire first hand information, it needed face to face interactions with the local people and workers who are residing in nearby BCPL industry areas. However, for collection of primary data purpose, a sample size of 100 respondents were invited from surrounding areas to participate in this research study and a schedule has been drafted contained certain important questions for the proper fulfillment of the research study. Secondary data were collected from journals, websites and books. For analysing the data it was carried out with the help of a schedule which were tabulated and analysed with the help of simple statistical tools like percentage.

Major findings of the study:

1. As per the responses of the people, majority of them i.e. 88% are suffering from various types of diseases like blood pressure, skin disease, heart disease, breathing problems like asthma and are negatively affecting the health of the people both physically and mentally leading into anxiety, restlessness, lack of motivation or focus, irritability or anger, sadness or depression.
2. The people residing in nearby areas have complained that the water of Sessa river is polluted by BCPL, the fish of this river has become tasteless and toxicated, it's also causes water borne diseases like diarrhoea, cholera, dysentery, typhoid, stomach pain etc. Moreover, the drinking water is also becoming unfit for drinking.
3. As opined by the respondents, there has been overall deteriorating effect on the water bodies, land and air of the nearby areas. As a result, fish consumed or milk extracted from cattle doesn't have the prior taste and nutritional value, thereby leading to health problems.
4. As opined by the respondents, tea plantation in the nearby areas have been severely affected due to the abnormal rise in the temperature and release of excess harmful gases into the atmosphere, with the advent of BCPL in the area.
5. The tea leaves get spoiled and turn into yellowish colour in a short span of time as compared to earlier times. Thus, making it unfit for consumption and trading.

6. As opined by the respondents, although there has been generation of employment opportunities, but the negative externalities outweigh the positive ones; as whatever additional riches is earned, are consumed in treatment of diseases due to degrading environment.

Suggestions:

1. As mentioned in the Article 48 of Directive Principles of State Policy states that the State to take steps to organise agriculture and animal husbandry on modern and scientific lines. Again Article 48-A states that the State to take steps to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country and it also gave direction to Central and State Governments and various local bodies and Boards to take appropriate steps for the prevention and control of pollution of water. Last but not the least Article 51-A states that it is the duty of each and every Indian citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers, and wildlife and to have humanity for living. All the mentioned articles are about Environment and Indian Constitution. However, the individuals, State and BCPL industry should understand the responsibilities towards our community, state, and country.³
2. Multiple approaches for waste management may be suitable depending on local needs and availability of resources and where it is not practical to rely on existing waste management facility, it would be appropriate to design on-site and off-site waste management facility.

Limitations of the study:

1. The present study has taken into consideration only the factors leading to environmental degradation created by BCPL and hence the insights collected thereof cannot be generalized.
2. Hesitation of the respondents while declaring out the genuine information also served as a limitation.

Conclusions:

Industries are needful for the prosperousness of the people of every country for the reason that industry together with agriculture helps the country in achieving its economic growth and development. Though BCPL industry lends a hand to in bringing about the employment opportunities for the people and therefore it can be said to be livelihood of numerous families. Moreover a flourishing BCPL industrial environment is good for the State because State Government acquire income in the form of taxes from the industry, which in turn used by the government for the welfare of the people. However, there are always two sides of a coin. The greatest downside of BCPL industry is that it leads to rising in air pollution releasing poisonous gases have come out to be the main causes of various health, water borne, heart diseases etc. Overall controlling various types of pollution coming out of BCPL industry is a very challenging task. So each and every individuals, state

government and BCPL staff should come and stand together and promise to take certain preventive steps against environmental degradation and make a place with human dignity and all other aspects which made life meaningful, complete and worthwhile.

References

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