



## ENVIRONMENT ISSUES IN UTTARA KANNADA Need for Preservation of Environment

### KEYWORDS

Forest, Deforestation, Conservation, Forest Degradation, Environment Issues.

**M.R.NAYAK**

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science,  
S.D.M. College Honnavar.

**Dr.B.M.Ratnakar**

Department of Political Science Karnatak University  
Dharwad

**ABSTRACT** *Uncontrolled growth of urbanization and industrialization, expansion and massive intensification of agriculture, and the destruction of forests have contributed for the environment disaster. The Environmental issues in India are huge. The dropping water tables, mass deforestation, land degradation or river contamination, etc are on a massive scale and nearly 30% of India's gross agricultural output is lost every year due to soil degradation, poor land management and counter productive irrigation. The wetlands and lakes are also being hit hard. Nearly half of the world's original forest cover has been lost, and each year another 16 million hectares are cut, bulldozed, or burned.*

### Recently

there was an SMS saying "Many wants to park their vehicles under shade but no one wants to plant a tree'. This was an alarm to all of us and this SMS really made us to think on the necessity of environment protection. Today the environment is in acute danger. (As a matter of fact the environment is not in danger but the human beings who are living are in Danger !!). Forests play an important role in the socio-economic scenario of any State. Forests and trees help in maintaining a stable environment conducive to sustained development of agriculture. Unless the forest ecosystem is maintained in a sustainable and productive state, the future of agriculture itself is at stake.

Uncontrolled growth of urbanization and industrialization, expansion and massive intensification of agriculture, and the destruction of forests have contributed for the environment disaster. The Environmental issues in India are huge. The dropping water tables, mass deforestation, land degradation or river contamination, etc are on a massive scale and nearly 30% of India's gross agricultural output is lost every year due to soil degradation, poor land management and counter productive irrigation. The wetlands and lakes are also being hit hard. Nearly half of the world's original forest cover has been lost, and each year another 16 million hectares are cut, bulldozed, or burned. The earth's surface is warming due to greenhouse gas emissions, largely from burning fossil fuels. If the global temperature rises as projected, sea levels would rise by several meters, causing widespread flooding. Global warming also could cause droughts and disrupt agriculture. The global leaders and the policy makers are running around the nations to carve a design to protect the environment. Due to global needs, urbanization and modernization the human needs have increased and they have posed a great threat to the mother earth.

This being the reality of the nation and the world at large the state of Karnataka and specially the Uttar Kannada district is also not exceptional to these kinds of devastating activities. Uttara Kannada is one of the few districts in the State affected by environmental problems. Uttara Kannada is the only district in Karnataka, which has a forested area of about 80% and falls in the region of the Western Ghats It is considered to be very resourceful in terms of

abundant natural resources and constitutes an important district in Karnataka. The forest resources of the district are under pressure as a large portion of the forested area has been converted to non-forestry activities since independence owing to the increased demands from human and animal population resulting in degradation of the forest ecosystem. In the national context the forests of Uttara Kannada represent one of the major suppliers of tropical timber and the teak from the deciduous forest regions of Dandeli in the district is famous for its excellent quality timber.

The major environmental issues in Uttara Kannada district are Environment Degradation, Deforestation, Floods, River Pollution, Climate change, Extinction of animals, Nuclear Hazards Coastal erosion etc. These are all found due to industrial activities, population increase, farm mechanization, urbanization and mega development projects etc.

The Uttara Kannada Region has undergone major transformations over the last century in its forest cover. A variety of anthropogenic disturbances, particularly those caused by infrastructure development such as mining, townships, hydel project, highways and power plants, have highly altered its vegetation mosaic.

The dominant developmental thrust in Uttara Kannada has moved to achieve industrial development and in order to invite the industrial houses to set up their units all resources of forest, land, water was offered essentially free of cost. Some infrastructure developments include the paper mills, the caustic soda factory, the Kali and Sharavathi Hydel projects, the manganese and limestone mining, establishment of a nuclear plant at Kaiga, establishment of a naval base at Karwar, have really affected the ecological set up causing heavy environmental disturbances. Forests play an important role in the socio-economic scenario of any State. This role is all the more pronounced in a State like Karnataka, which has a predominantly agriculture-based rural economy. Forests and trees help in maintaining a stable environment conducive to sustained development of agriculture. Unless the forest ecosystem is maintained in a sustainable and productive state, the future of agriculture itself is at stake.

**Deforestation in Uttara Kannada :**

Deforestation is considered to be one of the contributing factors to global climate change. Trees absorb greenhouse gases and carbon emissions. They produce oxygen and perpetuate the water cycle by releasing water vapor into the atmosphere. Without trees, forest lands can quickly become barren land. The problem of firewood removal from the forest is more severe in the forested districts like Shimoga, Uttara Kanara, Dakshina Kannada, etc due to low availability of agricultural wastes. The [deforestation](#) in the Western Ghats has already affected by the [hydroelectric dams](#), [reservoirs](#) and agriculture. Deforestation led to landslide in Karwar, says expert committee, headed by Dr T. V. Ramachandra, of Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, along with officials from the forest and mines departments found that a total of 21 landslides had occurred in Karwar including the killer landslide at Kadwad village due to antecedent rainfall. The landslide had resulted due to removal of deep-rooted vegetation besides lateral pressure due to swelling of oversaturated clay rich soil horizon.

The six major dams across the river, a nuclear power plant and the paper and sugar industries on its bank have already caused tremendous loss to the biodiversity of the region.

**Flyash pollution :**

Fly ash is the major particulate matter released into the air from coal based power plants. The surge in energy demand in south Asia, characterized by the region's dependence on coal (particularly in India), has manifest itself in major increases in airborne pollution. Urban air quality has deteriorated largely on account of growth in industrial activity, transportation needs, and energy production. Fly ash, combined with emissions from the increased use of coal, has emerged as a major environmental concern.

**Increased air temperature:**

All most all Power plants do release of enormous heat into the atmosphere. In Uttara Kannada too this problem is acute. In Uttara Kannada district it is found that there are just four months of heavy rainfall and two months of light rains. The evergreen-semi-evergreen forests of Uttara Kannada use the water stored in the soil for the rest of the year, and almost behave like a rain forest. In fact these forests are very sensitive to any temperature increase, as waterlessness could set in and chances increase of devastating forest fires. And this in turn leads to deforestation as per the experts. The six major dams across the river, a nuclear power plant and the paper and sugar industries on its bank have already caused tremendous loss to the biodiversity of the region.

**Coastal erosion:**

Due to the presence of a number of estuaries and several minor and major rivers and stream flowing through them, the coastal region is facing problems like beach erosion, silting of harbours and estuarine mouth. Further, the storm

waves and cyclones in monsoon increase the susceptibility to coastal erosion. Geologically the coast is of recent origin, still in an unconsolidated stage and is yet to reach stable condition. The narrow beaches and the shoreline cannot afford to combat the ferocity of the waves and tides occurring unceasingly. This causes erosion and sometimes the extent and damage caused is serious enough to harm the interests of the residents and is of permanent kind. In other words, lack of sufficient littoral material supply is the major cause for such erosion. The coast is subjected to severe erosion for substantial portion of its length during the southwest monsoon. The height of waves coupled with cyclonic storms and tidal overflow result in rise in water level inducing severe erosion and inundation of saltwater.

**Flood:**

The district in view of Western Ghats gets very good rainfall during southwest monsoon. As the draining area is short and narrow, most frequently the district witnesses floods. Also, two rivers kali and sharavati have dams constructed for storage of water for hydroelectric purposes. When the reservoirs are full during heavy rains, all the crest gates are opened during heavy rains thus increasing the flood rate that some times submerges number of villages along the banks and island in the down stream. The regularly affected villages are 34 It is necessary to make arrangements on the permanent basis to fight this disaster in view of high frequency of its occurrence.

In the light of the above mentioned environmental issues it is high time to look into these issues on priority as to save the environment. It is also to be kept in mind that the responsibility of preserving the environment lies more on the people rather than the government. The government may act as facilitator but we the people should come forward to save the mother earth. A glass of water a day to a plant, a shelter to the plant and care for the plant is enough for an individual to contribute for the preservation of the environment in and around the locality. Such plant when grow as a tree will enhance the beauty of the area with shade and will give fresh air for the public at large. A small initiative is expected from the general public towards the protection of environment.

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