

SCIENCE AGAINST ENVIRONMENT

The topic of this presentation is to form a study in the context of environment, human society and science which are the touchstones of environmental deterioration and pollution.

INTRODUCTION:

The intensive use of technology in production coincides with the industrial revolution and its sequel. While this case facilitates human life, it also accommodates potentials for destruction of mankind as a whole, if not controlled by national and international authorities.

Thus, deterioration of environment and appearance of environmental problems begin with corruption of nature's balance.

DESCRIPTION OF CONCEPTS:

The environment existed with the first living things, and it is the physical, biological, social, economical and cultural media in which mankind and other living things maintain and keep mutual interaction throughout life.

At this point, a simple definition of science is “The process of methodical research and gathering knowledge directed towards certain targets”.

Although the starting point of science is curiosity or avoidance of fear, the roots of seeking knowledge remains to be man's concealed wish for being dominant over the nature for more recognition and comfort. Although it may seem like the mankind is in struggle with nature, in fact, with the help of science, the intended effort is to live together peacefully.

Who is to be blamed on in polluting the nature? Although industrial activities and manufacturers are perceived as the main source of the pollution, as the “Supply” side, the consumers themselves can also be blamed on as the “Demand” side.. Every car owner, every mobile phone owner and every child who plays with battery-driven toys contributes to the pollution of the nature.

The problems on;

- * Pollution of air, water and land
- * Especially metropolitan and industrial areas becoming uninhabitable
- * Destructions on the ozone layer
- * Gradual warming of the earth
- * Noticable inceases in cancer and similar diseases
- * Serious depletion of natural resources,

reveals the fact that environmental issues are to be regarded as global rather than regional or national issues.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL REGULATIONS, PRINCIPLES AND THE KYOTO PROTOCOL:

a. INTERNATIONAL STUDIES:

First studies at the international level is the Bern Conference held in 1913, followed by the conferences held at Paris and London in 1923. In 1970, The European Conference on Protection of Nature was organized. The environmental rights were first expressed internationally at The United Nations Environment and Mankind Conference. (Stockholm 1972). Stockholm Conference is a turning point for seeking policy for environmental problems. It possesses a special importance by adoption of the notice in which the "The mankind has the basic right to freedom, equality and living a better and honorable life in sufficient conditions of a well-qualified environment" principle (m.1) took place. Following this conference, progress on redefining environmental rights concept in international platforms (e.g. European Union, European Council) was observed.

By the applications of economic media in the field of environmental policy by EU countries, many EU countries raised the taxes on capital and labor on economic activities detrimental to the environment, because of "Ecological Tax Reform" which became increasingly important in recent years. Thus the countries while reducing the detrimental activity levels aiming to conserve the environment, at the same time, preferred to encourage the economical growth by reducing taxes on labor and capital which can be considered as an obstacle to economical growth.

b. THE SITUATION IN TURKEY:

In Turkey, initial developments concerning environmental rights were described in 1982 Constitution. 56. article of our constitution declares: "Everyone has the right to live in a healthy and balanced environment. It is the duty of the government and the citizens to protect and develop the environment and the environmental health, and to prevent pollution." Heavy enforcements were put in effect by the environmental law (No.2872, 09.08.1983) for associations, institutions and enterprises causing pollution. Only administrative sanctions were proposed for environmental crimes in the law 2872, but it has taken a different dimension with the Turkish Criminal Law (5237) to come into force.

A FIRST IN THE WORLD: In the Turkish Criminal Law, it is indicated that one of the aims of law is to protect environment, for the first time in the world.

TCK Art. 1 : The aim of the Criminal Law is; to protect personal rights and freedoms, public order and safety, state law, public health environment and public peace, and to prevent crime.

TCK No.5237 Art.181, deliberate polluting; Art.182 faulty polluting; levies fines and imprisonment.

Also, TCK ordered to take action for the public workers in negligence in environmental matters to be held legally responsible.

Everyone has the right to apply to authorities about pollution. This right is repeated with the rule "Everyone can ask for measures taken for an action of polluting if damaged by or be aware of it, by contacting the appropriate authorities."

There is no environmental tax except the "Environment Cleanliness Tax" in our country.

In spite of EU's progress in using the economic and financial instruments in the field of environmental issues, usage of these instruments are limited in Turkey. In Turkey, taxes which can be considered as environmental tax are Fuel Consumption Tax, Motor Vehicle Tax, Environment Cleanliness Tax and Vehicle Purchase Tax.. However, implementation of these taxes for the protection of the environment seems to be inefficient in financial terms.

c. "THE POLLUTER PAYS" PRINCIPLE:

This principle was announced for the first time as a solution by OECD at the time when environmental problems was brought up intensively as an international measure.. At the meeting of OECD (26.05.1972), it was pointed out clearly that member countries should take into account this principle while determining policies and precautions concerning their environmental control matters. "The Polluter Pays" principle stated at OECD's recommendation means, "the polluter will bear the costs caused by the pollution and for preventing pollution and controlling measures determined by public authorities to ensure that the environment is back in an acceptable condition". Thus, the measures for the cost of fighting pollution determined by the authorities will be reflected upon the cost of goods or services during the production stages.

Polluter pays principle in our Environment Law (ch.1988) "It is mandatory that expenses made for preventing, limitation or fighting pollution will be paid by the polluter". In the same law it is also stated that "Polluter will pay for the expenses made by the public organizations if he does not take precautions to prevent pollution, according to the Law 6183". Emergency Response Funds are created in both national and international contracts.

d. THE KYOTO PROTOCOL:

The Kyoto Protocol is the only international framework for struggling against global warming and climate change, and it was signed at the United Nations Climate Change Convention. The countries signed this protocol committed themselves to reduce the emission of CO₂ and the other five gases causing greenhouse effect, or to increase their obligations. Organizations of 169 countries signed the contract in December 2006. Precautions taken by Kyoto Protocol require considerable investments. According to the protocol;

- * Heating with less energy and motor vehicles to consume less energy
- * Industrial measures to be taken for technological systems consuming less energy
- * Switching to alternative energy resources, e.g. biodiesel fuel to be used instead of fossil fuels
- * Waste treatment processes to be reorganized at businesses consuming high energy
- * Solar and nuclear energy having no carbon to be utilized
- * More taxes to be taken from more fuel consumption or carbon production

OUTCOME:

Thus, in a nutshell, environmental problems are caused by the technological processes and activities of all communities and the solution for these problems are not easily done as they are said or written. The applications and methods chosen in practice should not be affected by personal ambitions and individual interests. All human, legal, political and economic dimensions should be very seriously handled; without having any emotional, political or economical intentions. And, the methods determined must include multi-disciplines. In this context, pressing legal sanctions only, or taking economic or social measures only, do not resolve the problem in a favorable way, therefore all principles and instruments of science and technologies are needed. Mankind benefited from science while discovering nature since existence till today. He also needs science to eliminate the damage he gave to nature in the process of his development in discoveries. Man previously struggling with nature has now realized that he now has to live in peace with it. Both at the national and the international levels, this effort is being well observed. Our persistence in the improvement process, where the desirable destination is a clean and habitable environment for us, the first step will be to mobilize technology science towards regaining our losses. A decent environment depends on the extend of alternatives science and technologies offer. Activating the steps between science which is the first step of the pyramide with the habitable environment at the top point, is the science itself. Science will create environmentally friendly inventions, which will create demands on society by rendering media by civil service organizations, request will be created to that product in public, the government will encourage the production and use of the product while requiring the use of the invention found by science by reason of this response and demand, producer will invest in that field of market, and nature-friendly manufactured products will reach the consumer.

At this point, Lions, as a civil society foundation, while creating awareness in the society to demand and consume environmentally friendly products, it has to bear the mission of educating people to discern the right to live in a healthy and livable environment and to protect this right as individuals. As the man himself has to develop science for the formation of a habitable environment, Lions, whose basic service consideration is contribution to education and training, will continue to pursue these contributions today and tomorrow, as they did in the past. During this process, science will help to create a livable new world.

Thus, a more livable and healthy environment is only possible through the increase in societal consciousness in environmental matters and through individual demanding and defending of rights to live in a clean and healthy environment.

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