

Environmentalism of the Poor

The effect of development on the environment and the poor

Nehru stated that we may be suffering from “The disease of gigantism”. In many countries thinking of having gigantic skyscrapers or mega dams that would give the country power and a good reputation on the global scene. (Nixon, 2011) Some countries build huge but do not think of the side effect on the environment and people. People who own land and live on producing food get affected from these projects. Some would be migrates to safer places and others die from hunger because these contractors who build these some do not necessarily give compensation. For example, World Bank estimated the Sardar Sarovar project would displace 33,000 million people, 8 years later the Bank estimated that it will displace 320,000. Imagine how money people are going to be effected from this Megadam. People are left in the dark and the ecosystem are at the risk of collapsing. During the Gulf War, American troops fired weapons containing 340 tons of depleted uranium. According to Dr.Malcolm, this contributed significantly to making the Gulf War “the most toxic war in Western military history”. (Nixon, 2016)

Although there are hundreds of thousands of victims from the depleted uranium, the Pentagon loves it, because it ensures improved “kill range” so it helps U.S troops be out of harm way. Britain Atomic Energy Authority warned that, in the Gulf War, depleted uranium could enter the food chain and cause a half million premature iraqi and Kuwaiti deaths. So, it is important to notice that war aftermath affect people for period in the future and the soil is full of chemicals waste from the war. Moreover, “Cluster bomb” is another crucial issue, hundreds of bombs were fired in Iraq and some 550 coalition bombs failed to explode. Causing a threat for future because if each bomb explodes it will hail sharp metal shards that might kill or injure people up to 150 yards aways. (P.223) According to Human Rights Watch, a minimum of 100,000 bomblets failed to explode on impact. (Nixon, 2011)

The Maldives is at the risk of becoming the first nation where the entire population would be climate refugees. In 2010 Cancun climate talks 43 islands nations announced that they face “the end of history” if powerful countries do not act these islands will be under water and there people migrate or face death.

How unethical corporation use power to control natural resources

“Shell is by far the largest foreign stakeholder in the Nigerian economy. Owning 47 percent of the oil industry”. (Nixon, 2011) Corporations like (Shell) take the advantage of going to countries that are controlled by autocratic leaders giving the person in power money and at the same time control a big amount of the natural resources for themselves specifically in Africa. Moreover, Chevron and Shell helped the Nigerian forces to quell uprisings. Shell imported arms for the Nigerian forces and all of this is to censor people and stop the protests against these corporations. According to Nixon military and police forces killed 2,000 Ogoni. So for some poor countries living under a dictatorship or corrupt individuals can lead the whole country into mass destruction. The people of Nigeria suffered from poisoned gas and oil spills that reached their water and food system. They have affected the local farmers and the environment in a big scale and the people do not have a place to go to. (P.107) “ We can no longer breathe natural oxygen rather we inhale lethal and ghastly gases” So people are suffering from the outcomes that are caused by these unethical corporations. On the other hand, Shell, and Chevron got \$30 billion worth of oil from Ogoni and none of it was shared with people of that land. Noticeably, the people are suffering from basic commodities they living without electricity, housing, and many other things. (P.108) Shockingly Shell alone controls 70 percent of the global trade. The issue here is not only the people who are suffering, but the environment these issue of drilling and gas being spread in the air with acid rain. The caused problems for future generations who will live in this land, poisoned soil, and water for long period and the people are left with little compensation or none. In the mid-90s Nigerian oil fields pumped near 12 million tons of methane and it was being argued by people that this was a contributor to climate change world wide. (P.113)

Unfortunately, Ogoni people protests is met with violence by Shell in 1993, the police entreated 27 villages, hundreds of people died and more than 79,000 were displaced. The point here is to show how these people died in a war that started not by them or by their leader but a foreign company that sucked their resources without paying attention to the community living their. Almost everywhere you go you would find the footprint of Shell. After fourteen years long case against Shell, Ogoni people got a refund of \$15.5 million trust fund, so far Shell profited \$30 billion, so a compensation of \$15.5 million is nothing, many people died and hundreds of thousands flee from the destruction and became unlivable place. (Nixon, 2011)

In other part of Africa a movement began to fight colonization and corrupted government and it took time but succeeded the Green Belt Movement. It began by Maathai in Nairobi her approach was to start environmental conversation, and community development. Three strategic plans were put in place. First, tree planting as a response to attritional environmental and create political resistance. More importantly, the movement was able to articulate violence discourse to their land and how their land is being stolen. Also, getting connected with other civil rights campaigns gave them more power for greater political transparency. “Green Belt Movement stood as a tangible, biological image of steady, sustainable growth.” The people who worked in this movement wanted to be independent because food security was poor, and they would not

necessarily know how feed themselves while deforestation is happening around them. Maathai saw that culture of tree planting is crucial way of interrupting the cycle of poverty. "Poverty is both a cause and a symptom of environmental degradation." (P.137)

Colonial authorities did not acknowledge women as cultivators and this refusal had the effect of diminishing adaptable knowledge ecological and agricultural. Maathai succeeded in the transformation of her people in many ways. The campaigns reached to release Kenya's political prisoners to debt forgiveness for impoverished nations. Not only that but a major change in 2002, democratic election began in Kenya. (P.140)

Rob Nixon vision on slow violence as it occurs gradually and out of sight, "violence delayed destruction that dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all." Nixon emphasis that violence does not need to be an explosive or an event that causes a tragedy at one time with much innocent death but rather slow without noticing that it is causing death and destruction to the people and environment. For example, climate change, toxic drift, radioactive aftermaths of wars and many other catastrophes that lead to slow violence. Nixon also highlights that calamities that are slow and long lasting are not purview in corporate media, the chemical and radiological violence are in the bodies of the of the poor and it is undiagnosed and untreated. On the other hand, how it political figures view it as sees or treat environmental as critical yet not urgent, so this shows that it is not a current issue that needs to be solved. Politician adds to the pileup of catastrophe without giving a robust solution. Michael Crichton's argued that we needed twenty more years of data gathering on climate change before any policy decisions could be a risk. (Nixon, 2011) It illustrates the idea that the issue will be solved, but it needs many years to gather data to counter the problem.

The massive displacement that will occur for the people of the Maldives is essential have not heard of it and not shown in the media before. It showed how Approximately 400,000 would be refugees sooner than we think because the island of the Maldives will disappear with climate change and the rise of the sea. The president of the Maldives Nasheed calls for reducing the Co2 for the major polluting countries. He fought for his people and tried to convince many leaders who can help make a change. However, one can visualize that the islands did not disappear yet so this issue considered to be slow violence and as Nixon noted that the politicians or the people who hold power will not act for it because it is not causing displacement of refugees yet. Also, Nixon noted that were taught to deal with immediate emergencies first, then turn to the long-term. So the problem of the Maldives is considered to be long-term, and therefore leading countries will not act as if it is an emergency issue. We conclude that the issues of climate change that was raised by President Nasheed got attention the attention of the politician, but the leading countries do not want to stop their factories from working with its full capacity, so their economy does not get troubled. (Nixon, 2011)

Behemoth Documentary

Using human beings as machines for extracting coal in China without providing the basic equipment for them to work like masks and gloves. Also, the movie shows how they can't even shower, most of them got lung issues. On the other hand, new clean cities were built and now one is living in it. No equality. The documentary illustrates how everyday life of a Chinese working on coal mining and the effect on their health and how massive scale mining is affecting the environment. Large landscapes were under construction of trucks running all the time transporting coal, and the people who appear in the documentary are all covered with the black smoke in an unhealthy condition. Also, their skin pocked with the dust from the mining, not wearing gloves or masks to help reduce the effect from the coal smoke. Moreover, working day and night, caused lung cancers eventually with these poor conditions, having difficulty breathing and coughing constantly. Unethical corporations use human beings as machines or tools to gain as much as they can from these poor people, who do not have an option. These immigrant workers tried to seek help from the government, but unfortunately no compensation for them. They will be left out and die slowly. From the environmental side, green areas disappeared because of the explosion, sheep no longer exist trying to move elsewhere where they can live.

On the other side, paradise city is created, massive uninhabited cities with these construction that was created on the back of the poor. This shows how inequality exist in our nation, individuals who are responsible in corporations with their wealth undistributed, poverty exist, corruption, and war. This documentary was banned because of the government censorship in China.

Speaking about the crisis that is caused by corporations or government officials is life threatening in some countries. For example, if I speak about a company that extract natural resources in Saudi Arabia, most likely I will face jail time because there is no political participation at all, so it is difficult for some to speak up even if they see wrongful acts in front of them. Also, former director of Petroleum Tariki from Saudi Arabia he was forced into exile and revoked citizenship because he spoke about his opinions out loud (P.76)

Hundreds of people trying to escape a genocide that to be committed on them (Rohingya). Children, women, and old people who are afraid for their lives trying to escape to a safe place through mud and poor environment with the little things they are left with. This is showing how Rohingya people are being targeted and forcibly attacked from the Myanmar military for being peacefully living in their territory. They have been tortured, raped, and killed by the soldiers of Myanmar. One of the Rohingya victims said, "I am lucky that three men only raped me." This shows how brutal actions they are committing against Rohingya people. According to the Guardian, more than 310,000 people have fled to Bangladesh with, with more trapped on the border.

Shiva Who feeds the World

Shiva states that industrial agriculture mines and pollutes water, seventy percent of water on our planet is being depleted and polluted. Water is precious because in many poor country wars begin for the lack of clean water. But the people do not recognize that there are many things we do that causes water pollution. Also, she criticizes that the new way of farming has destroyed the ecological foundations of agriculture, devastated natural environments, and also resulted in food insecurity across the globe. (P.2) It is crucial to note that industrial farming is a massive contributor to climate change. Almost 25 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions, 60 percent of methane gas emissions, and 80 percent of nitrous oxide caused soil erosion and infertility, and water pollution. (P.8)

Shiva shows how crucial is the seed in sustaining the cycle of living seed, and to allow seed to turn into seed while also giving us food. She also calls for seed freedom so it evolves by nature and move freely from farmer to farmer. Moreover, Shiva advocates for Agroecology and that it is the alternative to the broken paradigm of industrial chemical agriculture and it destroyed biodiversity, depleted and pollutes water, and organic farming. (P.13) Today, 1.5 billion people in all parts of the world are affected by the loss of land through reduced income or food security. India is losing 6.6 billion metric tons of soil per year, China is losing 5.5 billion metric tons, massive soil is being lost at a very high rate which it can be replenished naturally. According to the current status of soil degradation, if we continue to destroy the living soil there will be 30 percent less food on the planet over the next twenty to fifty years. (Shiva, 2016)

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