

## **THE POSITIVE SIDE OF COVID- 19 ON THE ENVIRONMENT**

Earlier the human civilization had experienced pandemics like H1N1, Polio, Ebola, Zika. Now we are experiencing COVID-19 which is causing much human suffering. Countries around the world implemented lockdown to contain the virus. In a very short span of time we have seen horrific deaths. As the pandemic has a negative impact on human civilisation it also displayed it's contrasting consequence on the world environment.

### **Improved air quality**

Due to lockdown, the industries are shut, vehicles are hardly visible on the roads, use of fossil fuels have been lowered. All these activities led to decrease in the air pollution and the emission of greenhouse gases have fallen across the countries.

The nationwide curfew in India on March 22, 2020 resulted in the lowest one- day traffic pollution levels.



Delhi, India's metropolitan capital territory, experiences high levels of air pollution. As a consequence of the lockdown, there is a fall in average concentrations of PM 2.5 by almost 71% within the first week of lockdown. The air quality of Delhi dropped to satisfactory. The impact is also being experienced by Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bangalore. The cities are breathing easily.

In New York, pollution has been reduced by nearly 50% because of the measures taken to contain the virus.

In Northern Italy, satellite images shown the diminishment of Nitrogen dioxide emissions.

The **DHAULADHAR MOUNTAIN RANGE** of Himachal Pradesh is now visible from Jalandhar, after 30 years as the lockdown eases air pollution.



### **Clean and clear water**

The major cause of water pollution is the release of pollutants from the industries. As the industrial activities are halted there is a dramatic decrease in the water pollution.

The water in Yamuna River looked cleaner than before as there is no flow of pollutants from the industries.

The Ganga River has seen significant improvement in water quality. As the industries are shut, there is no discharge of effluents into the Ganga. The ghats in Haridwar are also closed and as a result there are no people taking dips in the water as well as throwing waste into the water is not observed. This resulted in cleaner water and fishes can be seen in the waters.



Metropolitan city of Venice, in Italy has seen clearer water in the city's canals. Venice is one of the Italy's tourist place with high traffic on the canals. The traffic doesn't allow the sediment to stay at the bottom. Now, there is less traffic and swans are being spotted.

### **Animal liberation**

Along with human beings the life for animals has also been changed during this lockdown. The wild animals appeared on the streets and roads deserted by humans. Many wild animals are sneaking into the cities, which were their habitats previously.



Shenzhen, has become the China's first city to prohibit the sale and consumption of dog and cat meat. According to Humane Society International, thirty million dogs a year are killed for meat across Asia.

Pangolin is one of the most heavily trafficked mammal in the world and is endangered. They are illegally hunted for their meat and scales, which are used in Chinese traditional medicine. COVID- 19 led the Chinese government

to put a temporary ban on the trading and eating of pangolins, including wild animals like snakes, lizards.

Birds, the most commonly seen animals in the cities got a temporary break from the noise pollution as there is no traffic on the roads.



All these positive impacts of COVID- 19 on environment reminded us of the damage we caused to our environment. Air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, extinction of wildlife, habitat destruction, burning fossil fuels, greenhouse gas emissions may lead to irreversible damage of our planet. In the process of making ourselves civilized we ignored the fact that our civilization is causing damage to our habitat. It means, we are causing damage to our own future. Government of the countries over the world should bring up policies to stop this human induced damage to the environment.

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