

Air Pollution and its Consequences for Human Life in District Faisalabad

Asma Ali, Saira Akhtar, Samina Kausar Saqi, Nabia Anwar

Department of Rural Sociology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad

Abstract

Here in reported efforts were made to investigate the extent to which the individuals were aware about the sources of air pollution and its significance to human life. The data were collected from two polluted urban areas of Faisalabad i.e. Rehmanpura at Sargodha Road and Railway Housing Colony (near AM-TEX square) at canal road. A sample of 75 houses from one area was drawn by using systematic random sampling technique from every fifth house. From the data it was concluded that 68.8% individuals were aware about the effects of air pollution on human health. Consequently the individuals were agreeing with the statement that untreated garbage is a major source of air pollution. While 77.3% individuals agreed that their health is affected by polluted air and 72.6 % individuals viewed that air pollution affects their nervous system.

Key Words: Air Pollution, Consequences

Introduction

Air is a big source of life. The entire creatures on earth breathe in air. Air pollution has become very sensitive issue of our environment and human health. Planners and different communities are creating awareness among people about this serious issue. Polluted air affects the health of human beings and their daily life by affecting their activities and damaging their natural beauty. Environmental pollution specifically air pollution has become a worldwide crisis and has attracted the attention of UNO. On the instruction of United Nations, June 5 is observed as environment day every year and attention is being focused on the danger being faced by the world ecology on account of environmental pollution. The environmental pollution has emerged as a big problem where industrialization has taken place without prior planning (FDA, 1986).

Polluted air effects human health in many ways. Short time pollution episodes have numerous acute effects including discomforts, burning eyes and throat, colds, coughs, heart attacks and deaths in extreme cases. Children and patients with heart and lungs diseases are particularly susceptible. Chronic effects are also possible (Khan, 1992). Chemical pollution, whatever its origin may be is one of the most serious aspects of environmental pollution because substances can enter the natural cycle and can affect the health of man, animals and plants very badly (Ashraf, 1992). Nearly six millions chemical compounds, out of which fifty thousands are marketed internationally, are hazardous and toxic and playing havoc with environmental conditions and causing chronic problems. On human life harmful effects range from minor irritation to total diseases like lung cancer and brain damage (Amjad, 1992). Pakistan is facing environmental pollution, threat of depletion of ozone layer, global warming and natural resources degradation problems. Pakistan generates over 50,000 tons of solid waste per day, out of which only 20 to 25 percent is not disposed off in proper manner causing serious air, water and land pollutions and ultimately health hazards. During last few years, traffic in urban areas has increased tremendously due to increasing trend in single occupancy and private transport. The level of air pollution in our cities is as high as three times the acceptable limits. According to an estimate, the country is losing 25 percent of its potential crop production (Afzal, 2002). The present study was designed to check the level of awareness, effects of air pollution, determinants and consequences of air pollution for human life and providing some guidelines to protect human life from the ill effects of air pollution.

Materials and Methods

The micro-level study was based on primary data collected through field survey. A sample of 75 individuals from each area i.e. Rehmanpura at Sargodha Road, and Railway Housing Colony (near AM-TEX square) at canal road Faisalabad were selected. To explore study objectives, interviewing schedule was prepared. Data thus collected was analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics have been employed to draw the conclusions.

Corresponding author: Asma Ali,
Department of Rural Sociology,
University of Agriculture, Faisalabad-Pakistan

Results and Discussion

The present study focused on the air pollution and its consequences for human life. A pollution hazard is due to release of toxic substances into the environment, which subsequently damage the life process. A major proportion of the respondents (68.6 %) were aware about the effects of air pollution on human health. According to the opinion of the respondents untreated garbage, burning polythene bags, cigarettes, offensive smell of wastewater and domestic use of fuel are major sources of air pollution (Figure 1).

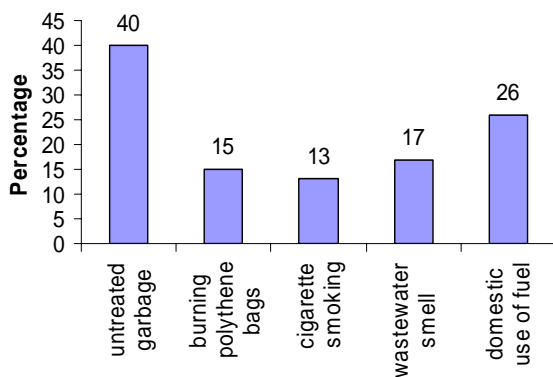


Figure 1: Causes of Air Pollution

A large proportion of the respondents (77.3 %) were of the view that their health is affected by polluted air. Majority of the respondents mentioned that dust, automobile and industrialization are big sources of air pollution, whereas (72.6 %) of the respondents viewed that air pollution affects their nervous system. Respondents are facing different types of diseases as throat, eyes, lung and heart diseases (Figure 2).

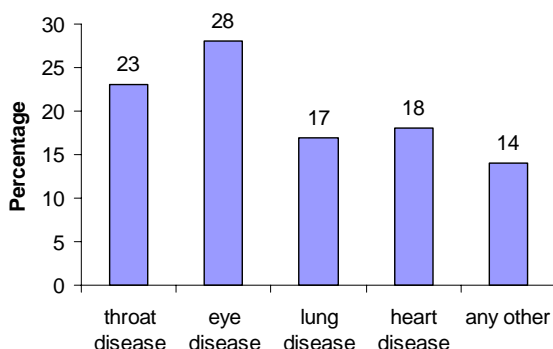


Figure 2: Types of Diseases

A large majority of the respondents (76 %) mentioned that gases and smell of factories is the real cause of Asthma. Respondents were facing different

kinds of nervous problems because of air pollution as continuous headache, tension, I.Q level and memory effects (Figure 3). Air pollution has also different types of effects in social behavior as exertion and tension, less mobilization and rude behavior (Figure 4). Out of total respondents (42.66 %) having age group 20-39 were directly affected by air pollution, whereas (54 %) of felt respondents considered that male members are directly affected by air pollution because of travel on roads, work in factories, living in smokers company and sensitivity.

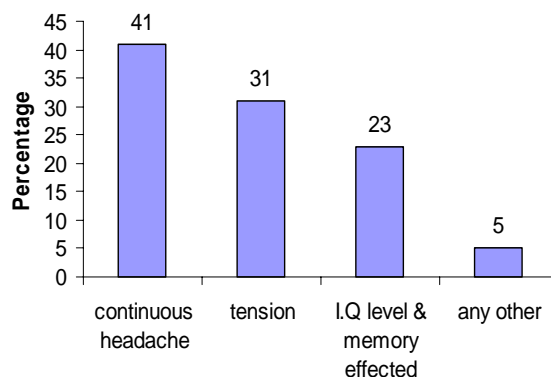


Figure 3: Kinds of Nervous Problems

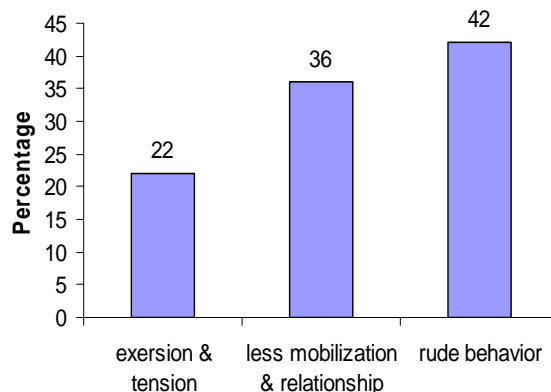


Figure 4: Types of Effects in Social Behavior

Conclusions and Recommendations

In the present days, people have become quite familiar with the term pollution, particularly because of its hazards to life activities. Pollution hazards due to release of toxic substances into the environment, subsequently damage the life process. Under these circumstances EPA (Environmental Protection Authority) should formulate vigilance laws and regulations, keeping in mind the present industrialization program, Environmental Ordinance 1983 should be made more effective by updating it and implementing it in its true spirit. Government

should also encourage all the functionaries involved in environmental protection. Media should be utilized to provide information to people about air pollution, its sources and harmful effects on the activities of human life. People should use safety mask on roads and open areas to save themselves from smoke, dust and other chemical pollutants. Factory workers should also apply safety measures to secure them from toxic chemicals that are injurious to human life. Cigarette smoking must be discouraged at individual and collective levels. Government should take stern measures to check deforestation and encourage the forestation around the cities. Government and people should participate in making organizations for protection of environment.

References

- Afzal, M. "Information Profile" Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Centre (PSTIC), 2002.
- Amjad, N.D. "Environmental Pollution and Safety" The Pakistan Times Magazine, Jan. 10, 1992.
- Ashraf, S.M. Environmental Problems in Urban Areas of the Punjab. Proceedings of the World Environmental Day, June 15, 1992. EPA, Lahore.
- F.D.A. Structural plan of Faisalabad. Faisalabad Development Structure Plan Book. 1986. pp: 5-7, 72-93 and 191-193.
- Khan, A. "The environment today and its decay" J. Rural Develop. Admin., 1992. 26(3): 114-172.