

DEADLY TOXINS INJURING EDUCATION OF THE LEARNERS IN PAKISTAN: A STUDY AND A SUGGESTED MODEL

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INTRODUCTION

With developments in the industrial sector in Pakistan, garbage is piling up everywhere, in Hyderabad, in Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, in Gujranwala, in almost all the big cities of Pakistan. The masses sigh whenever they take out their trash, which gets hauled off to the dump several times each week. It has posed a gigantic problem in all walks of life: for children, for the masses, for the social organizations for the public recreational places, for the meadows, in short, in the living modes of life in the big cities, the major living abodes. The question is how many of the denizens realize that our lifestyle, which produces so many wastes, is a very recent invention? The purpose of this paper is to bring this devastating problem to the forefront of those at the helm of affairs in Pakistan, especially the corporations, the universities, the district governments, and the health sectors for remedies and solutions.

PROJECT VISUALIZATION

A project to investigate the intensity of the deadly toxins was visualized. The purpose of this project was:

- to locate the dumps of the garbage
- to identify the nature of the toxins found in these dumps
- to determine the ill effects of these toxins
- to pinpoint the agencies to be involved for the remedies thereof

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- to provide thought-provoking ideas to the policy makers
- to hype up the need of environment education
- to demarcate the toxic levels
- suggest a model for professional development to promote quality education among the student cartel

RESEARCH DESIGN

The following design was adopted for this study:

Sampling

Randomly the cities of Karachi, Jungshahi, Kotri, Hyderabad, Sukkur, Khanpur, Multan, Raiwind, Lahore, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, Faisalabad, and Gujranwala were selected for this study.

Ten people-five persons living in each of the vicinity of these areas of garbage dumping and that of metropolis areas were selected for interview.

Modus Operandi

Some philanthropists were appealed to sponsor this project. Its rationale was given to them. They agreed to finance the travel and lab charges.

The samples were collected, sealed, and procured for lab analysis. The Municipalities and the Corporations assisted in this process. These agencies also helped to get the samples analyzed from the labs these agencies could approach. They were asked to determine the life spoiling ingredients in these samples.

Interview method was used for the sample population. This interview was focused on the garbage dumping variables pertaining to the ill effects, socio-educational implications, health hazards, schooling of the children, and the agencies that can assist in determining the minimum biological test values that the human can absorb.

Open-ended questionnaire was used for this type of interview. Notes were taken at the time of interview. Since the project was for the munificence of the population, the interviewees did neither conceal any information, nor did object to this jotting down the notes of their conversation.

Analysis

The biological test values were used against the standard kit values for their ill effects.

Tight check listing was done for the interviewees' responses and conclusions were drawn from the info. The mode of the study was kept illuminative. No rigorous statistical treatment was given to the info.

FINDINGS

The treatment facilities of these garbage dumps produce:

- Black clouds of dioxin, toxin chemicals and hazardous waste from leaky garbage dumps and clandestine toxic-waste sites to tube-trolling ways adopted for incineration belching dioxin, one of the deadliest known to man.
- Clouds of Furan, Hydrogen Sulfide in plant waste water and Creosol used to protect nearby trees, causing residents' illnesses
- Poisoning of the fields with Cadmium and other heavy metals
- Lead fumes coming out from the smoke of un-burnt petrol used in the engines of various vehicles, causing chest and arthritis ailments

The present tube-trolling ways of disposal of these garbage dumps pollute the soil and the environment alike. Their deadly effects are:

- Painful breast swelling vulnerable to cancer – may be speeding its growth, if not the real cause
- Shoot up level of testosterone i.e. the hormone-disrupting chemicals are reducing the sperms, setting in motion a process

that will end in the elimination of our robust and healthy – body and mind – progeny

- Spouting of whiskers on chin (especially of ladies)
- Positive hair tests for arsenic, lead and mercury, causing numerous ills
- Slurring of words when talking – this phenomenon is visible at school level in suburbs and cities alike
- Feeling as if standing in the middle of a mist (Just visit any psychoneurotic centre)
- Allergies causing many ilks of ills like flue, cough, skin diseases etc.
- People are dying a slow death – the hospital records may be used to confirm this incidence
- Burning of the plastics are linked to cancer – this has also become a global issue today
- Falling ill of the people with asthma and other respiratory diseases especially with mercury in fish, the fish caught are badly contaminated
- Afflicting the masses with skin diseases – we are all amassing poisons in our bodies

DISCUSSION

These are but a few of the ill effects that this study could arrive at. The reality is that Dioxin contamination is a global issue. Nerve-damaged children at school level are the victims of the threat of mercury pollution. A short exhaust vent that juts up into the air through spews no smoke, causes a backlash to the imperatives of economic growth.

The traffic, the industries and the modes of living at present are pouring Dioxin into the air at levels far above what most of the rest of the world considers safe. If this is the situation, the question is who will come forward for the rescue? This has prompted a few search questions into our minds.

SEARCH QUESTIONS

These search questions are:

1. Who will find out Dioxin – plagued communities in Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore, Faisalabad and Gujranwala to begin with?
2. Who will help passing a package of Dioxin Legislation, including a law much of the toxic chemicals setting a limit on how much of the chemical the people of those communities could safely ingest each day? – How much pictograms per Kg of body weight?
3. Who will determine Dioxin – like compounds, in the meat of species caught in the coastal waters of Karachi and Kotri Barrage and sent to the interior of Sindh for sale? And likewise in other cities of Pakistan.
4. Who will launch an environmental movement, to prepare experts, the toxic chemists, the pharmacists for spending hours poking around Sindh's landfills toxic-waste sites and Dioxin – spewing incinerator the common methods used for this disposal? And similarly in other big overpopulated cities of Pakistan?
5. Who will study the social, psychological and economic implications of trash dumps found here and there and the working efficiency of the people of these areas for combating the economic morass Pakistan is facing today?

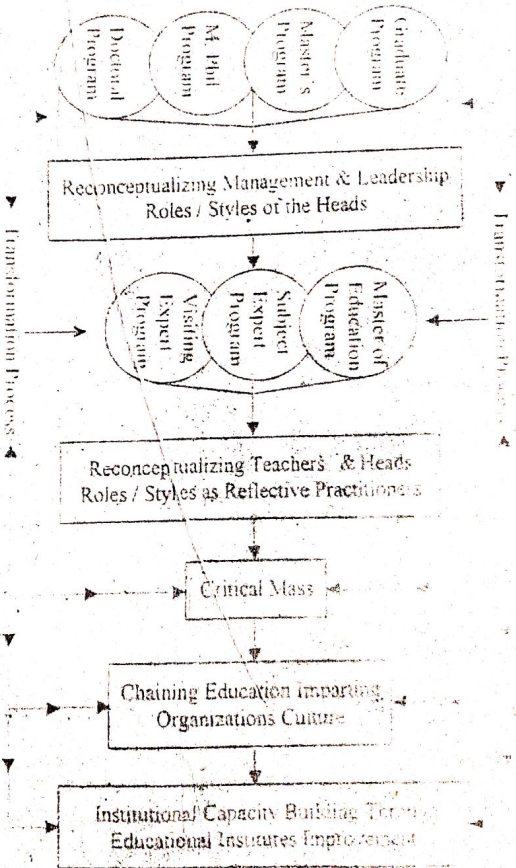
These are, like many others, the spontaneous questions that have popped up in our minds. The interviewees' view was that the universities could play a munificent role. Their Centers of Excellence in Analytical Chemistry, Institutes of Pharmacy and Chemistry, Departments of Chemistry, Biochemistry, Microbiology, Psychology, Economics, Institute of Education and

Faculty of Education. Pakistan Study Centres can work wonders through their research projects that may be undertaken at graduate, master's, M. Phil and Doctoral level. In this way the Universities can transform the society.

A SUGGESTED MODEL OF TRANSFORMATION

For the education of the learners at all levels of education, a model of transformation process is suggested on next page. It will help to transform social change in the light of these findings for promoting quality education in Pakistan.

Linkage Model of Professional Development for Promoting Learners Education



Model of Trans-Formation

A CONCLUDING PARABLE

Here we recall Buddhist parable: a rich man contributes 10,000 Oil Lamps to a temple, while an old woman whose reverence for the Buddha is matched only by her poverty, offers a single lamp, all her mean will allow. One night, fierce wind blows through the temple, extinguishing all the lanterns the rich man provided. Only one light continues to illuminate the Buddha, that from the lamp offered by the old woman, who had contributed through the depths of her heart.

This parable speaks to our situation today. Is it not our role at this juncture of time today! If nothing is done to tackle this future – whichever way it goes – is grim. But the other side of failure is success.

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