Topic: Is having a clean environment too expensive?

Outline:

1. Introduction

Thesis Statement: A clean environment is the right of every human being and its achievement has sparked the debate on its adoptation cost. Many argue that it is inexpensive and cheap. However, ground realities show that having a clean environment is costly and expensive.

2. The cost of a clean environment: perceptions and realities

3. Having a clean environment is too expensive (Thesis)

a) Transpering from non-renewable energy resources to renewable needs hafty amount of investment

b) Decarbonizing industrial sector also needs huge amount of funds

c) The cost of forestation, reforestation and ~~afor~~ afforestation is gigantic

d) Adoptation of electric vehicles (EVs) also require funds for its survival

Date:

e) Building resilient infrastructure to sustain clean environment is also expensive

f) Integration of technology to ensure clean environment needs huge funds

g) Unifying the divide world - Global South and Global North - is morally expensive

4. Having a clean environment is inexpensive and cost-effective (Antithesis)

a) Ensuring a clean environment needs a small portion of budget

b) Clean environment is cost-friendly as it just needs practices not hafty funds

c) Having a clean environment is a matter of legislation and its enactment

5. Howeres, ground realities show that having a clean environment needs a lot of funds and investment (Syntheis)

a) Many countries are plaguing with social issues and environment is not their priority

social issues are result of enviredmental challenges

b) To ensure smooth practices, one needs to have public awareness campaigns and drives that are costly and expensive

Date:

c) Many legislations have already been done, the issue is of investment not of more legislation

6. Conclusion

Essay

In the month of July, 2022, the United Nations General Assemblay (UNGA) passed a resolution recognizing a clean, healthy and sustainable environment a basic right of every individual. Similarly, Pakistan, cusently, has passed the 26th amendment in which was incorporated Article 9A is incorporated in the constitution, making clean environment a fundamental right of citizens of Pakistan. These initiatives are commendable, howeves, their implementation is lacking practical measures. This lacking costs individual health issues and deprivation of a clean environment. In short, a clean environment is the right of every human being and its achievement has sparked the debate on its adoptation cost. Many argue that it is not expensive to

Date:

ensure a clean environment. However, ground realities show that having a clean environment is costly and expensive. To justify this claim, there are many arguments. These include the gigantic cost of forestation and the need of hafty amounts to decarbonize industrial sector. In addition to these, transitioning from non-renewable energy sources to renewable energy sources requires huge funds. Moreover, building resilient infrastructure to support clean environment is also expensive. Nevertheless, there are people who are of the view that having a clean environment is pocket friendly. To corrobate their claim, they say that ensuring clean environment needs a small portion of funds and requires incorporation of certain practices that do not require hafty funds. However, by looking at these arguments, one may say that they are not valid and are like making a mountain out of mole hill.

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The debate on the cost of a

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clean environment has sparked the stark differences in the opinion. On the one hand, people say that it is cost-friendly. As Lester R. Brown in his work 'Plan B 4.0: Mobilizing to save civilization' claims that saving the planet would be cheap; it might cost only one or two percent of the GDP... not saving it would be expensive. On the other hand, there are claims that it is expensive. As Bill Gates writes in his book 'How to avoid a climate disaster,' getting to net zero will be the most difficult thing humanity has ever done. It will require a fundamental transformation of the physical economy. These both references suggest an opposite story to each other. In reality, having a clean environment is indeed a daunting task and requires funds.

One of the chief arguments that validates the thesis is the transitional cost from non-renewable energy sources to renewable energy sources. Pronouncing the

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words that transitioning from non-renewable to renewable energy sources can sustain and garaunteee a clean environment is merely a thought. This transition needs hafty amount of funds which is economically burdensome for many countries. This transitions requires funds for logistics, mobility and installation of facilities to generate energy from renewable energy sources. The global cost of shifting to a clean energy system by 2050 will exceed $131 trillion, requiring an average of $4.4 trillion in investments per year (IRENA, World Energy Transition Outlook, 2021). Thus, it substantiates that transitioning from non-renewable to renewable energy sources to have a clean environment is costly and expensive.

The other argument that verifies the ~~thesis~~ is the cost that requires to decarbonize industrial sites and sector. Decarbonizing industrial sector is not an easy task, it needs gigantic amount of money. Industries such as steel, cement and chemicals are considered

Date:

hard to abate due to their energy intensity. Decarbonizing it to ensure clean environment requires a lion's share of global GDP. As per Energy Transitions Commission Report published in 2020, decarbonizing industrial sector will cost 0.5% of global GDP annually by 2050. Therefore, decarbonizing industrial sector to have a clean environment is costly.

Another key argument that upholds the stance that having a clean environment is too expensive is the magnamous cost of forestation - afforestation and reforestation. It is scientifically proven that clean environment can be achieved by putting carbon sinkers, and trees are one of the major carbon sinkers. However, cultivating trees in larger areas and maintaining them is beyond the pocket of economically stressed countries, it needs huge funds to maintain them. While exact global estimates vary, afforestation and reforestation initiatives can cost $1000 - $5000 per hectares (The cost of forestation,

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World Bank, 2019). Thereupon, countries planning to ensure clean environment through forestation must budget billions for this purpose.

Equally compelling is the assertion that adoption of EVs to sustain clean environment calls for substantial sums. Clean environment cannot be achieved just by buying EVs. Even if someone buys it, he or she has to pay for charging expenditures and battery costs. Same is the case when a country adopts EVs, it has to install charging systems and battery production plants and these demand heavy funding. For example, the International Energy Agency estimates that $100 Billion in capital expenditures is required to achieve necessary battery manufacturing capacity. Similarly, Bloomberg NEF projects that global EV charging centers need $242 Billion investment between now and 2050. Hence, it corroborates that adaptation of EVs to ensure clean environment is not pocket-friendly.

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Besides the cost of adaptation of EVs, building resilient infrastructure for a clean environment charges major financial inputs. Resilient infrastructure is necessary to absorb the shocks of changing climate patterns and extreme weather events. Though it is necessary for a clean environment, it needs major financial inputs that make this way out costly for sustainable and clean environment. Therefore, building such an infrastructure is beyond the capacity of developing countries. The Global Commission on the Economy and climate projects that approximately $90 trillion will need to invested in sustainable infrastructure over the next 15 years to mitigate climate disaster effectively and ensure clean environment. Ergo, it shows that building resilient infrastructure for a clean environment is too expensive.

Along with building resilient infrastructure, integrating technology to

Date:

achieve a clean environment demands significant amount of funds and investment. The rapid expansion of technology has helped humanity in all courses, it is also highly likely that it will help in ensuring a clean and sustainable environment. To irony, this integration of technology to prepare climate resilient models and upgrading early warning system needs large amount of funds which upholds their having a clean environment is too expensive. For example, at COP 27, the UN unveiled the Early Warnings for All initiative, aiming to ensure that every person on Earth is protected by early warning system within five years. This plan calls for an initial investment of $ 3.1 Billion. In short, it certifies the theris that achieving a clean environment through technological integration is expensive.

Last but not least, the argument that defends the theris is that-

unifying the global divide on a clean environment is morally expensive. The world is divided into two factions— Global North and Global South, each having its own ideology on achieving clean environment. Both the factions blame ~~one another~~ each other on committing environment issues and now saying to take initiatives on own. For example, Global South claims that - achieving clean environment is utopic until Global North reduces emissions and issues funds signed under Paris Climate Agreement of 2015. and Global North says same about Global South. This highlights that unifying both the fronts is practically impossible and morally expensive.

Notwithstanding these claims, there are people who opine that having clean environment is not too expensive. To substantiate it, they say that ensuring a clean environment needs a small

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portion of budget. Achieving clean environment is not too expensive as it is mentioned and claimed earlier, it is all about sparing a small portion of budget consistently over time. Thus, this consistent sparing will help build and operate initiatives to achieve a clean environment. For instance, investing 1% of global GDP in green recovery efforts could reduce global CO_2 emissions by 6% to 8.5% by 2030 (WEF report, 2021). Hence, it verifies that having a clean environment is not too expensive if small portion of GDP is spared.

Moreover, having a clean environment is cost-effective as it just demands practices not hefty amounts. A small change in habits of individuals can ensure clean environment. There are multiple practices that reduce carbon footprints and help in achieving a clean environment. One of key practices is adopting 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Implementing the principles

Date:_____

of reducing consumption, reusing items and recycling materials can significantly reduce waste and pollution. Thus, it indicates that having a clean environment is not too expensive.

In the same way, having a clean environment is the matter of proper legislation not of investing huge funds. A country has every resources to pass legislation to ensure a clean environment and this does not require funds. Passing legislation over manadatory and compulsory fitness in industries and industrial sites can do a lot of work. Moreover, enacting these legislations through empowered institutions like Environmental Protection Agency and climate change ministries can also play a vital role in achieving a clean environment. Therefore, having a clean environment is not about investing huge funds, it is about passing required and necessary legislation.

Date:

Nonetheless, the claims made earlier by the opponents regarding sparing small portion of budget is not valid. It is due to the fact that there are many countries which are plagueing with serious social evils. Prioritizing environment on the expense of such issues is not only inappropriate but could also lead to serious issues and problems. As WEF, Sustainability Report, published in 2020, mentions that sparing 2%-3% of global GDP per year could divert resources from other development goals such as eliminating poverty and hunger etc. Hence, sparing such hefty amount is not feasible especially for developing countries fighting against social evils.

Similarly, the argument related to practices is not valid owing to the fact that smooth and sustainable practices need public awareness campaigns and drives that are too expensive. Healthy ~~practi~~ and sustainable practices need proper advertising ~~ca~~ campaigns

and drives that need funds. For example, a campaign by Australian Government named Environmental Protection Authority Campaign related to one component that is household waste cost $ 560,000. This illustrates that- public campaigns and drives also need huge funding.

At last, the point presented by the opponents related to legislation is not justified because many legislation have already been passed, but these yield no result. The issue is not of passing ~~legislation~~, it is of enacting legislations. If already passed legislations are enacted, they could achieve a clean environment. A simple example is of Environment- Impact- Assement Report(EIA) which is manadatory for every infrastructural project either residential or industrial. However, it is evident- that- EIA is either not carried out or subverted. This substantiates that- only passing legislations and hoarding bills cannot ensure a clean environment.

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To recapitulate the whole discussion, it has been verified through various arguments that having a clean environment is ~~not~~ too expensive. These arguments include the hefty cost of forestation, adaptation cost of EVs and the cost required to integrate technology to ensure a clean environment. However, the notion that having a clean environment is not too expensive as it requires a small portion of budgetary resources and incorporation of pr various practices. These arguments are proved to be void and baseless, nevertheless, achieving a clean environment at the expense of hefty amounts and funds is valuable and holds prime worth to sustain life on this blue planet.