NAME: AKWIDO EWOMAZINO MERCY

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According to Barry Commoner, *“Environmental pollution is an incurable disease. It can* *only be prevented*”. It has been in the society for as long as man existed and till today, it still affects us negatively. The fact that it has negative effects does not prevent the people from carrying out these harmful activities that lead to environmental. Before further discussion can take place, I would like to give a brief description of what environmental pollution is. ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION can be said to be the contamination of physical and biological components of the earth/atmosphere system to such an extent that normal environmental processes are adversely affected. As you can see, the definition above has said it all but we need to dig deeper and find out what these contaminations that are said to occur.

As we all know, there are different types of environmental pollution and some of them are; Air pollution, Water pollution, Soil/Land pollution, Noise pollution, Radioactive pollution and Thermal pollution. Out of all these, there are three main types of environmental pollution which are air pollution, water pollution and soil/land pollution. Among all these types of pollution, air pollution is the main type of pollution threatening the environment, humans, plants, and all living organisms.

Air pollution is basically the release of pollutants into the air that are detrimental to human health and the planet as a whole. Sometimes, air pollution can be visible (e.g. a dark smoke from the exhaust pipes of large trucks or factories) and sometimes, air pollution can be invisible.

Water pollution occurs when harmful substances-often chemicals or microorganisms-contaminate a stream, river, lake, ocean, aquifer, or other body of water, degrading water quality and rendering it toxic to humans or the environment. Toxic substances from farms, towns, and factories readily dissolve into and mix with it, causing water pollution.

Soil/Land pollution refers to the deterioration of the earth’s land surface. Furthermore, it occurs mainly due to the indirect and direct effects of human activities. Similarly, when we misuse the land, land pollution occurs.

Now, we’re going to talk about the causes of the environmental pollution. So far, there have been cases of industries polluting the environment especially since the beginning of the industrial revolution notably due to the increasing use of fossil fuels. In the 19th century and for a significant part of the 20th century, coal has been used to make machines work faster, replacing human force. Though pollution by industries mainly causes air pollution, soil and water contamination can also occur.

Transportation has also been a cause of this environmental pollution. Ever since men abandoned animal power to travel, pollution of the environment has become higher and higher. Similarly to industries, pollution caused by transport can mainly be attributed to fossil fuels. As traffic is increasing every day, pollution is also increasing. Also, transportation of energy used in industries (e.g. petrol) through pipelines is harmful. If there’s a leakage in the pipe, the soil will be polluted and if rain should fall, erosion will take place leading to the washing of this harmful substance into the water body. At the same time, if the tanker transporting the petrol from its production plant to the place where it will be consumed leaks or sinks, the water will get contaminated/ polluted.

As we said before in the explanation of water pollution, agricultural activities also lead to environmental pollution (mainly soil and water pollution). This is caused by the increased use of pesticides. As we know, almost all pesticides are made from chemical substances and are meant to keep diseases and threatening animals away from the crops but by keeping these forms of life away, the harm is almost always made to the surrounding environment as well. Also, some plants used to make oil require a lot of space so deforestation is carried out. As we know, trees give out oxygen to the environment as they serve as wind breakers and they help to reduce the rate of erosion but when they are removed without replacement, the land is left bare and exposed to all these harmful actions.

Our everyday life cannot take place without trading being included. There is always exchange of goods and services. But in the case of trading, people always package their goods either with plastic made from fossil fuels or with cartons made from papers. Some people usually litter the environment with all these packages and they don’t decompose so either they get washed into the water bodies or they remain in the soil and all these are also things that pollute the environment.

Finally, residential areas provide their fair share of pollution as well. How? you may ask but this contributes a lot to the rate of pollutants released to the environment. Using my residential area as an example, I would like to talk about one landlord that built his house a long time ago. I think he wasn’t really provided with enough space or money so he didn’t have the chance to put good toilet facilities. Well, skipping to the main part, he releases the waste (i.e. urine and faeces) into the gutter/drainage and this usually goes to the river. This is basically land and water pollution. Also, some people are very ignorant to the harmful effects so they do whatever seems to please them. They litter the area with plastics, biscuit rappers, and other things. Also, when houses need to be built, the natural resources (i.e. trees, plants) are removed and these trees and plants are needed to provide oxygen and many other things needed by man.

The effects of this environmental pollution have been briefly stated while giving out the explanations on the causes but they still need to be explained further to put more light into it. The environmental pollution affects not only the humans but also the animals, plants and the ecosystem.

On humans, it doesn’t affect us only physically but also in the case of our health. We breath in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide on a daily basis and any harmful substance in the air is taken into the body. This can lead to all sort of diseases which could be deadly. It could lead to respiratory infections, allergies, asthma, irritation to the eyes and nasal passages and many other diseases known or possibly unknown to man. Also, environmental pollution has been proven to be a major factor in the development of cancer.

On animals, it affects them by causing harm to their living environment, making it toxic for them to live in. Some chemicals (e.g. petrol, pesticides etc.) are so toxic that when released into the environment, they make it an unacceptable place to live in. For the water bodies, these chemicals can kill the animals that reside in the water bodies and they can also destroy the plants that are found in the water bodies and these plants could be helpful in one way or another. In the soil, some microorganisms could be destroyed which could have a great effect in killing the first layers of the primary food chain.

On plants, especially trees, they could e destroyed by acid rain and this would also affect animals as well as their natural environment will be modified. Ozone layer in the lower atmosphere block the plant respiration, and harmful pollutants could be absorbed from the soil or water.

On the ecosystem, layers of the ecosystem are destroyed crucially and this would more negative effect on the upper layers.

For everything that has a cause or effect, there will always be a way to prevent or control it. That is what we’re going to deal with in this last part. There are a lot of actions that we as humans could carry out that could help reduce the rate of environmental pollution bit by bit.

Reusable bags should be used when purchasing goods in order to reduce the number of disposed paper/plastic bags. Water should be used sparingly by installing water-efficient shower heads and faucets, and install energy-efficient appliances. Forest fires and smokes should be drastically reduced in order to prevent the destruction of our natural habitats. House owners should ensure to have good toilet facilities to prevent their waste from being released into the drainage. Also, laws should be made against people who paly large roles in polluting the environment. Cars that release dark/black smoke should be banned from being used by drivers as it is a pollutant. The public should ensure to adhere to the ‘NO SMOKING’ sign at all times or they should stop smoking altogether to make it safer for themselves and the environment. The 3Rs of solid waste management should be adopted: reduce, reuse and recycle. Everyone should have a proper waste disposal system especially for toxic wastes. As for the industries, they should ensure to make use of fuel with lower Sulphur content. The very thing that should be carried out is that the public should be enlightened on the dangers of polluting the environment since not everyone is educated enough to know the dangers of environmental pollution.

We carry out our everyday lives by making use of the natural resources given to us by God. From the air we breathe in to the water we drink to the soil we walk on. We should ensure to preserve all these and stop polluting the environment because when pollution occurs, we are preventing ourselves from enjoying the things which we are meant to enjoy.