
Editorial

The Inexhaustible Spectrum of Silent Pollution

The current edition of Vidurava reviews six forms of Silent Environmental Pollution, some of which may be considered to be the consequences of advancements in scientific and technological developments. Nevertheless the range of environmental pollutants that have affected the quality of life of our people is exceedingly high.

Consider for instance, the consequences that had resulted from soil and water pollution caused through the continuous use of toxic agrochemicals, virtually from the turn of the 19th Century in Sri Lanka. The widespread occurrence of kidney disorders of people living in the North-Central Province is the main consequence of this type of pollution.

More recently, Sri Lanka had to face an unprecedented kind of pollution in the maritime provinces resulting from the discharges of spills of toxic petroleum products, as well as other waste from ship-wrecks, causing what may be considered to be 'beach-front or marine pollution'.

Nevertheless one of the commonest forms of environmental pollution that became a serious threat in the early years of the 21st Century, was air pollution caused by the increasing emissions of vehicular smoke. In fact in 2002, in response to concerns aired by all segments of our society, the then Ministry of Forestry and Environment, established under its purview the Air Quality Management Centre, in order to co-ordinate air pollution mitigation activities. Among

the early measures enacted by this Centre included the formulation of a National Policy on Air Quality Management. Additionally, regulations needed for a gas emission test and clearance for all motor vehicles before the issue of Revenue Licenses, which came into effect in November 2008, were indeed positive steps towards containing air pollution resulting from noxious emissions.

Noise and sound pollution resulting from sound frequencies that exceed human tolerance levels, have been a consistent concern of all segments of the populations. Such noise emitted by heavy machinery, industrial complexes, quarries, and the nuisance caused by horns of lorries and passenger transport vehicles, as well as intolerably loud music from transistor radios installed in busses have been the consistent grievance of the public.

Yet another time immemorial form of nauseating pollution is the wayside dumping of garbage, which apart from being an environment polluter, is also the breeding grounds of germs responsible for many infectious diseases.

Finally, it is not possible to forget the sensational disaster that resulted from the collapse of the Meethotamulla waste dump on the eve of the Sinhala and Hindu New Year of April 2017, taking in its fold the lives of several innocent people residing in that neighborhood.

M. Asoka T. De Silva