

Reducing The Health Impact Of Environmental Activities

Though the environment is beneficial to the continuous survival of the human race, it has been linked to many health impacts. This is mainly due to incessant human activities in over-exploiting the natural environment, a situation which has destroyed not just the natural environment but has also led to many health impacts on biodiversity.

In Ghana, many unsustainable activities in the most productive sectors of the economy can be linked to serious health hazards for humans and animals. For example, since the discovery of large oil reserves, despite the economic benefits, the activity possesses high environmental costs, both in terms of oil spills and degradation of the local environment, and greenhouse gas emissions. Figures show that in 2018, CO₂ emissions per capita was 0.68 metric tons compared to the 0.60 metric tons recorded in 2014 with an average annual rate of 3.64% (Knoema, 2020). A persistent environmental challenge in rural areas is the effects of illegal mining, which has been a major source of environmental degradation, with severe consequences in terms of soil and water contamination. Poor management of domestic, municipal agricultural and industrial wastes have also led to problems of pollution and contamination of soil, and water bodies posing serious health impacts. Working conditions in the forestry sector present risks and are characterized by relatively high rates of accidents and serious health problems related to high physical workloads, exposure to climatic extremes, noise and vibration.

It is therefore important for the country to implement policies and interventions that will ensure that the activities of human in the environment do not harm biodiversity. At the same time, there is significant potential for the sectors to adopt sustainable methods and materials, and contribute to climate change adaptation, while holding potential to generate green jobs, provided that decent working conditions, including health and safety are ensured.

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