

# Historical Contribution of Social Organisations in The Field of Environmental Protection In Uttar Pradesh

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## Abstract

*The existence and survival of humanity are currently being threatened by environmental issues and difficulties. Policymakers, planners, administrators, academics, social activists, and the general public in India are all very concerned about this issue. A number of issues, including malnutrition, health risks, poor sanitation, an increase in slums, air, water, and noise pollution, hazardous and biomedical waste, and a general decline in quality of life, have been brought on by Uttar Pradesh's inadequate development, poverty, and population stress.*

*The current study examines the state's environmental issues and difficulties as well as the mindset and function of the Directorate of Environment, one of the most important organizations for environmental governance in Uttar Pradesh. An empirical study of Uttar Pradesh's environmental politics and the function of enforcement agencies served as the basis for the research paper.*

**Keywords:** Key Institutions, Water Pollution, Environmental Protection, Loss of biodiversity, Directorate of Environment.

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## I. Introduction

There are 75 districts and 18 commissionaires in the state of Uttar Pradesh, which is the most populous in India. The state is located in northern India and is made up of 52029 Gram Panchayats and 628 urban local bodies. Because of its large population and strategic position, the state has been a key player in the formation of central governments. Compared to the other Indian states, Uttar Pradesh has the largest share of the nation's political authority, with the most Lok Sabha seats (80).

## Environmental challenges of Uttar Pradesh

People's life in Uttar Pradesh were negatively impacted by the state's declining land, rivers, biodiversity, groundwater, deforestation, toxic air, and intolerable noise. The state is confronted with serious environmental problems as a result of the loss of agriculture, water scarcity, brutal droughts, soil degradation, and detrimental effects on forests and wildlife. Large amounts of biomedical and hazardous waste are produced in Uttar Pradesh. To check for significant health and lasting environmental harm, all of these need to be correctly adjusted. The state is reportedly the country's top producer of greenhouse gases.

According to the Environment Ministry's 2010 report, Uttar Pradesh accounts for 14% of the nation's total greenhouse gas emissions. The primary offenders in this respect are the districts of Sonbhadra, Raibareilly, and Gautam Bhuddha Nagar. The survey also noted that 66% of the greenhouse gases emitted in Uttar Pradesh are carbon dioxide, 26% are methane, and 8% are nitrous oxide. This persistent issue is mostly caused by petroleum products (Report: 2010).

Uttar Pradesh's environmental condition has deteriorated to a concerning degree. Nearly 22 districts, both large and small, have been designated as "environmental hotspots" in the state, according to several studies and publications, and other districts are also dealing with serious environmental issues. The political dynamics of the state's eco-politics shed light on the fact that there are a number of significant issues that affect the implementation of environmental policies, such as the politicization of environmental issues in cases where different political parties control the state and the center, the lack of environmental sensitization within political parties (Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Bhartiya Janta Party, and Congress operating at the state level), environmental bureaucracy, poor governance, gaps in environmental provisions, the Ministry of Environment and Forest's ineffective role both at the state and at the federal level, and the ineffective role of the State Pollution Control Board, Jal Nigam, and other state enforcement agencies. The state's environmental disaster is caused by a number of socioeconomic problems, including poverty, population growth, and a dormant civil society, in addition to the governmental and administrative machinery's careless attitude.

The state's Directorate of Environment and the World Bank collaborated to develop a study that highlighted the environmental deterioration of Uttar Pradesh. The paper was presented to the 13th Finance Commission in an attempt to increase funding for environmental management in the state. The research specifically highlighted environmental hazards to Uttar Pradesh, such as surface water's BOD load, fluoride nitrate, or groundwater's iron content, which exceeds WHO drinking water guidelines. According to the research, the state generated 600 tons of municipal solid garbage annually, more than 500 tons of hazardous waste, and more than 9% of land was degraded (<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/13financecommissionfullreport.pdf>).

In addition to excessive groundwater extraction, the state's environmental situation has been compounded by the lack of an efficient system to control contamination of surface and ground water, dispose of hazardous and municipal solid waste, and contain land deterioration.

Kanpur city became the most polluting city in Uttar Pradesh, according to the data that was given to the Thirteen Finance Commission. Additionally, there were severe environmental risks in eight districts of Uttar Pradesh, including Sonbhadra, Budaun, Bulandshahar, Ghaziabad, Mathura, Meerut, Moradabad, and Saharanpur. The names of additional districts with significant environmental pressure were also highlighted in the study. Jhansi, Rai Bareilly, Unnao, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Allahabad, Rampur, Lucknow, Bareilly, Auraiya, Aligarh, Agra, and Kanpur Dehat (<http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/13financecommissionfullreport.pdf>).

### **Loss of Bio-diversity and Wild life in UP**

According to several studies on the subject of water contamination in the state, 38.5% of the population has water-related issues. The major problems in Uttar Pradesh are the lack of sewage and sanitation, as well as the availability of safe and sufficient drinking water. Cities such as Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi, Mathura, Aligarh, and Ghaziabad are experiencing poor water quality and fast ground water depletion. In 2008, the government and UNICEF performed a survey that revealed concerning information about arsenic mixing in ground water in 20 areas of Uttar Pradesh. It was found to be higher than the permissible level of 0.05 mg/liter. Santkabir Nagar, Balrampur, Chanduli, Gazipur, Unnao, Bareilly, Moradabad, Basti, Siddhartnagar, Bahriach, and Gorakhpur were the principal districts where ground water was found to contain arsenic. In addition, seven districts—Raibareilly, Mirzapur, Bijnor, Meerut, Sant Ravidasnagar, Shahjahanpur, and Gonda—were noted as being somewhat impacted. The Mayawati government at the time pledged to take all necessary measures to get out of this perilous scenario. Members of the Central Ground Water Board, UP Jal Nigam, UNICEF, and IIT sector specialists from the Institutes of Kanpur and Lucknow formed a task group to address this issue (*The Indian Express*, March 06th, 2008).

But in the years that followed, this state government attempt failed to produce fruitful outcomes, and the issue grew more serious. The Minor Irrigation and Ground Water Department also carried out a research in 2010 that found significant levels of arsenic in the ground water of 49 Uttar Pradesh districts. Unfortunately, a sizable portion of the population in Uttar Pradesh depends on water for sustenance, which is contaminated with lead, nitrates, arsenic, fluoride, and cadmium. Numerous studies have found that excessive use of pesticides for agricultural reasons and an inadequate system for disposing of industrial and municipal waste are the primary causes of ground water contamination. The majority of the districts in western Uttar Pradesh, including Meerut, Agra, Bijnore, Saharanpur, Badaun, Bareilly, Moradabad, Baghpat, Gautam Buddh Nagar, and Muzaffarnagar, have traces of arsenic in their ground water, according to a concerning report that was submitted to the state government on June 10, 2010. Ballia has the highest levels of arsenic in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Urban Development Minister Nakul Dubey stated that the government has identified hazardous levels of arsenic in ground water based on this research and that, as a precaution, handpumps were marked in red (*The Pioneer*, July 09th, 2010).

One of the main issues facing Uttar Pradesh is the inadequate and contaminated water supply in both urban and rural regions. Because to the usage of contaminated water and unhygienic circumstances, serious water-borne illnesses are occurring in many sections of the state.

Uttar Pradesh's waterways have long been gravely contaminated. In this regard, the central government's river policies to prevent and manage river pollution have had some successes. Sewage waste, industrial waste, and rural waste water contaminated with pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals that run straight into rivers and disturb their flow are the main sources of river pollution. Even though twelve sewage treatment plants with a capacity of 274 MLD were built under Ganga Action Plan I, which was put into effect in 1985, and Ganga Action Plan II, which was initiated in 1993, built sewage treatment plants in 22 towns and checked sewage and industrial effluents (<http://jn.upsdc.gov.in/page/en/ganga-plan-i>), these government initiatives may be seen as insufficient given the scope of the issue in subsequent years. The central government's execution of the Yamuna Action Plan's first and second phases as well as the Gomti Action Plan's first and

second phases essentially reenacted the same narrative of policy failure for a variety of administrative, political, and socioeconomic reasons.

### **Air & Noise Pollution – Biggest Challenges of UP**

In Uttar Pradesh, air pollution has gotten to a concerning level. Agra, Varanasi, Ghaziabad, Lucknow, and Kanpur emerged as the state's top five cities for air pollution. In response to a query posed by Varanasi MLA Shyam Dev Rai Choudhary in 2010, then-environment minister Nakul Dubey provided this information in the Vidhan Sabha (Hindustan, November 17th, 2010).

The state's primary sources of air pollution were found to be encroachment, traffic congestion, and vehicle emissions. The state could promote CNG, LPG-based cooking, and planting efforts as potential solutions. Noise pollution also affects the state of Uttar Pradesh. Under Yogi Adityanath's leadership, the U.P. government outlawed the unlawful use of public address systems and loudspeakers in public and religious locations throughout the state. The move was taken in response to the January 4, 2018, rulings in this case by the Allahabad High Court (DainikJagran). January 4, 2018 Given the severity of noise pollution, it is imperative that noise pollution guidelines in sensitive locations be rigorously enforced.

Pressure horns and noisy generators should be banned.

### **Other Major Problems of Environmental Pollution in UP**

In the state, biodiversity and wild life are also having a lot of problems. Due to factors including water quality, climate change, and the extinction of several species, Uttar Pradesh's five biodiversity zones are under extreme strain. In this regard, the Government of Uttar Pradesh established the UP Biodiversity Board to promote the preservation of bio-diversity. The Chairman of the Board is Forests, the Principal Secretary (Report:2010:101).

Uttar Pradesh's land resources turned into a problematic issue. Over the past 35 to 40 years, UP has seen an upsurge in the use of agricultural land for non-agricultural activities. Furthermore, the state's soil health has been negatively impacted by excessive fertilizer and pesticide usage, soil erosion, and inadequate water management.

In Uttar Pradesh, the condition of the soil is a serious issue that has a significant impact on agriculture. Nearly 3.8 million hectares of land in Uttar Pradesh saw degradation, according to the State Environment Report 2010. A sizable portion of Uttar Pradesh's forest and green space broke away from the state when Uttarakhand was created. It is evident that this issue subsequently became more serious. The state government has been implementing a number of social forestry initiatives to address this issue, but these have not been enough to improve the situation. Significant funding was approved by the government for social forestry initiatives (report: 2010:95).

### **UP's Ineffective Solid Waste Management**

The largest issue in Uttar Pradesh may possibly be the production of solid waste and its poor management. Even if the law has been enforced in this case, the problem has been made worse by the bad habits that are common among the state's huge population. Solid waste management is not successfully handled by the government apparatus. The state was negatively impacted in numerous ways by the industrial pollution of leather, sugar, power projects, and other sources. The state is regarded as the nation's major producer of sugar, accounting for over 70% of total production. The primary industrial zones include Bulandshahar, Raebareilly, Kaushambi, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, and Kanpur (Report:2010:177). Uttar Pradesh faces natural calamities frequently. Due to this problem, the state witnesses loss of public lives, property and erosion of fertile land. The state needs proper disaster management. The existing management system has given partial results.

### **An Analysis of the Uttar Pradesh Government's Directorate of Environment**

A State Board of Environment and Ecology was established in February 1976 in response to directives from the country's then-prime minister to the state government to establish an environmental committee or board to investigate environmental pollution issues. Additionally, the central government instructed the Uttar Pradesh government to require consent before submitting proposals to the Indian government. In accordance with the directives of the central government, the Uttar Pradesh government likewise issued instructions in 1985 stating that no plan will be submitted to the central government without the Directorate of Environment's permission ([http://upenviis.nic.in/Content/institute\\_137.aspx](http://upenviis.nic.in/Content/institute_137.aspx)).

In 1976, the Directorate of Environment was constituted in Uttar Pradesh. In 1976 the apex post was designated as the Director, Environment and Ecology. The head office was situated in Lucknow. The Directorate has two regional offices located in Varanasi and Meerut. The Directorate, at grass root level works with the help of the regional centres of UPPCB located in 24 cities of the state. The Forest Department also helps the Directorate in the accomplishments of its functions (Report:2010:29).

Environmental education, training, and environmental awareness have been provided throughout the state by the Directorate of Environment, UP. The Directorate of Environment's most important responsibilities include

monitoring areas affected by chronic pollution, promoting environmental impact assessments, managing solid and hazardous waste, obtaining EIA clearances, monitoring the state's biodiversity, documenting data and reports, preparing drafts on environmental protection, and promoting research in important environmental areas (Report:2010:29).

The Directorate of Environment also draws the attention of the government on the severe issues of environmental degradation and suggests remedial measures in order to solve the problems. The Directorate covers multi-dimensional tasks such as- administration of boards and institutions working to check and monitor air and water pollution, mapping of environmental sensitive areas, conservation of wildlife, forest and wetlands, adopting new strategies and models to combat challenges of pollution, looking after the management of river basins and other water resources, using of alternative energies sources and participation in the programmes run by the United National Environmental Programme etc ([http://upenvis.nic.in/Content/institute\\_137.aspx](http://upenvis.nic.in/Content/institute_137.aspx)).

The National Environment Policy of 2006 guaranteed the State's action points with the aim of conserving natural resources. The Indian government created the Environmental Information System (ENVIS) earlier in December 1982 with the idea that information is power. The Directorate of Environment in Uttar Pradesh is home to the Environmental Information System (ENVIS) ([http://upenvis.nic.in/Content/Focal\\_Point\\_496.aspx](http://upenvis.nic.in/Content/Focal_Point_496.aspx)).

### **Requisite of Strengthening of Directorate of Environment Uttar Pradesh**

Given the extensive and diverse roles the Directorate of Environment plays in protecting Uttar Pradesh's environment, the current study's findings primarily reflect the need for change in the Directorate's organizational structure and operational procedures. To sum up, it can be said that organizational, structural, and budgetary strengthening is essential for the Directorate to operate more effectively and responsibly.

The Uttar Pradesh government's Directorate of Environment is currently involved in a wide range of environmental projects. The current research notes that the Directorate of Environment created the State Environment Policy draft in 2002, however it is still in draft form as of 2018. It is true that the Directorate of Environment drafts environmental policy, but for it to take shape, coordination between several government agencies is required. The Environment Department, Transportation Department, Public Works Department, and others are among the departments whose consent is needed in this situation. Regrettably, these departments appear to lack coordination. The Directorate of Environment's other issues might be interpreted as a result of its financial deficit. The primary duties of the Directorate of Environment are to develop and carry out environmental policies and raise public awareness of environmental sustainability; nevertheless, the Directorate of Environment is unable to operate effectively owing to a shortage of personnel and resources.

The Directorate of Environment must undergo structural transformation as a result. If not, it will just continue to fulfill quorum. Here, it is recommended that accountability be guaranteed at all levels of the Directorate of Environment. Additionally, it is noted that the Directorate of Environment's regional centers are not operating. Political pressure has been observed to move employees from the regional center to the main center in Lucknow.

In an interview conducted in the present study, Yashpal Singh, former Director, Directorate of Environment Uttar Pradesh, presently, expert, Appraisal Committee, Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India suggested that there is fundamental requirement to make the Directorate of Environment more powerful, responsible, efficient and more effective.

## **II. Conclusion**

To sum up, it can be stated that in order to enhance the state's Directorate of Environment's operations, a number of critical actions must be made, primarily because:

- a) the Directorate of Environment, UP, lacks effective, active, and competent leadership and requires visionary and dynamic leadership.
- b) The Directorate must have a pleasant, proactive, professional, and vivacious atmosphere. It will foster innovation and happiness among the Directorate's employees.
- c) The Directorate's bureaucratic manner of operation has to be examined.
- d) The development of the Directorate as an empowered organization that will aid in the enforcement of environmental legislation is more important than ever.
- e) To boost the Directorate's effectiveness, additional money and employees are needed.
- f) The Directorate shall effectively coordinate with the Department of Environment and other relevant departments.
- g) The Principal Secretary and the state government must give careful consideration to the Director's recommendations. Uttar Pradesh's environmental governance will undoubtedly be improved by the Directorate of Environment's overall reorganization and reform.

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