

The Post-COVID Environmental Ramifications and a Quest for an Eco-Friendly Legal Hegemony

Nadia Islam Nody^{1*} and Mehenaj Binte Amin²

¹Department of Law, Bangladesh Army International University of Science and Technology, Syedpur, Cumilla, Bangladesh. Email: nadia.law@baiust.ac.bd

²Department of Law, Atish Dipankar University of Science and Technology, Uttara, Dhaka, Bangladesh. Email: mehenaj.binte.amin@gmail.com

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: During the COVID-19 pandemic, the world's industrial and developmental projects came to a halt leading some researchers to believe that COVID-19 was a pandemic that nature has sought for its own defense and restoration. Conversely, some of the conspiracy theorists termed it as a biological weapon used as part of a covert war strategy to undermine the economic structures of several states and creating a new world order based on trade and industry. Meanwhile, climate change being another critical issue since the booming of the industrial revolution resurfaced into the discussion of further deterioration. Climate change has been addressed by many international conventions such as the Paris Agreement, Rio Declaration, Stockholm Declaration, and the WTO Treaty. The different parts of United Nations bodies such as the UNEP, UNDP, UNFCCC, and other bodies constantly call for actions to combat climate change by developing further actionable policies and implementation through domestic activism. Due to the policies having a lesser effect than the domestic laws in most of the dualist states, implementation fails to produce the intended result. Even the monist states decline these conventions keeping their reservations and special privileges. Thus, it is high time for a new legal order to be addressed to combat the post-COVID environmental challenges by creating a stricter rule of environmental laws. This paper critically examines the loops in the existing legal system and advocates for a hegemony of Environmental Rule of Law. The analytical approach identifies the inconsistencies within the international and domestic laws to find the probable bridge between science and legal consensus to generate a stricter formulation for an eco-friendly legal hegemony. The paper concludes with the idea that law itself shall govern every nook and corners of the sustainability idea to mitigate the post pandemic hazards.

Keywords: Environment, pollution, post-COVID, sustainability, climate

1. Introduction

COVID-19, a pandemic that had brought the world to a standstill for about two years also prompted new perspectives on the global order. While the masses kept themselves quarantined and got accustomed with the new norms of lifestyle to stop the virus's spreading (Statista, 2020), the scientific community urged the world leaders to take

measures for planetary preservation. Though the pandemic is now a part of the history, controversies about its origin continue to resurface due to newer, albeit weaker, variants emerge from time to time (WHO, 2025). During the initial stages of the outbreak, the naturalist theorists claimed that COVID-19 evolved as a natural phenomenon (Das & Choudhuri, 2020), as it was thought to be a new family member of the SARS virus whose genesis, evolution, and virulence were all influenced by nature, (Hussain, 2020). Against such scientific belief was a few objections raised by conspiracy theorists who believed it to be a lab produced bio-weapon created to cause chaos in the world as reported in newspapers and broad stream medias such as the newspaper called *Taipei Times* reported- 'Virus Outbreak: COVID-19 likely synthetic: Researchers say to claim that it is a man-made biological weapon' (Hetherington, 2020). Similar news publication influenced the conspiracy theorists to prove it as a biological weapon alleging COVID-19 being produced in a high-level biological warfare laboratory, and that it was meant to spread swiftly being an efficient killer of its origin as a contemporary biological weapon (Bell, 2021). According to the findings of PEW Research many western populations believed that the virus was a lab generated one, reportedly- "about three-in-ten Americans believed that COVID-19 was manufactured in a lab, either intentionally or accidentally"; in particular, 23% of the surveyed population believed that it was created on purpose, and only 6% believed it to have happened by chance (Schaeffer, 2020).

Regardless of the virus's origin, it has been found that "the pandemic has harmed the environment more than it was thought, resulting in a negative environmental impact" (Bernoville, 2020). While the question about the origin may persist but the pandemic being a long-standing suffering has brought a new world order as it not only disrupted international trade but also raised critical concerns about sanitation and hygiene in global trade practices, and the vaccination business implications have also put a transitioning point for the geopolitical power players (Komesaroff & Dwyer, 2023).

During the pandemic, several news kept surfacing regarding a new world order being plotted and reportedly the East and the West was at the center of such discussion. The renowned international daily, *The Telegraph* highlighted this perspective, stating that 'just as the Second World War set up a new global order, with the UN at its head, diplomats and academics are watching to see the effect of the coronavirus upheaval on the modern international structure' (Farmer, 2020). While the world was believed to have triggered a significant shift of the global economy, it also spurred some conflicts among the world's leading nations such as Beijing, clashing with India over its Himalayan border, Washington debating with Australia over the origins of the coronavirus, and with Canada over the detention of a Huawei executive (Farmer, 2020). Boris Johnson's decision to ban the telecoms firm from the UK's high-speed wireless network further established the conspiracy belief of conflict in world order with further evidence (Farmer, 2020).

Apart from the pandemic, massive environmental changes over the last few decades have constantly urged the need for robust frameworks of global environmental development and legislative measures to be strengthened. The constant warning by the environmental activists and scientists about the consequences of the over consumption of natural resources and the changes required for primary conservation have remained only as concerns only for the activists, as the world seems to evolve around the post-pandemic economic restoration only. The havoc caused by the plastic pollution from the widespread

use of fiber masks or the heavy air pollution from excessive industrial activities and the constant breaking of Antarctic Glaciers (Chow, 2021), concerns not only the Environmentalists, but it also the global community. It is imperative to frame a new legal system in which the global implementation of international environmental legislations is given a top priority through domestic activism.

In the aftermath of such prolonged suffering, the world requires an eco-centric approach to its legal structures, moving away from a trade- or anthropocentric focus. Thus, in this article the author argues as to why the environmental conservation is a priority and that the legal system must be structurally maintained over the capitalistic perception in the international legal order to sustain the forthcoming generations. The term 'legal hegemony' is used to showcase the urgency of establishing the environmental rule of law over any other international legal norms. The paper advocates for a restructuring of the legal system to accommodate the eco-centric approaches. Through a chronological study of the events in the pre, post, and COVID interim period the paper highlights the necessity an efficient and implementable legal system which will prepare societies for any future pandemic situation.

As regards the necessity of this research, the paper is a complementary addition to the advocacy of eco-friendly legal systems and it is in no way a quantitative remark rather is an analytical observation presented by the author for the legal fraternity to share the concerns of the mankind. The ideas presented in the subsequent sections are a cumulative discussion and the paper is limited with the arguments only in favor of an eco-centric international legal regime in the post-pandemic era, thus, an all-inclusive discussion of sustainability, global commons, climate change impacts over any specific country or of specific domestic and regional implementation does not include an exhaustive discussion and it remains as a limitation of this paper.

2. Concerns and Consequences of Environmental Degradation

Whenever one thinks of any environmental concern from individual perception, air, water and health hazards from pollution are the most urgent one that comes to the mind. Therefore, the common discussion regarding the environmental degradation and its impacts surrounds the observation of the impacts on these sectors of a human life.

2.1 Air Pollution and Health Risks

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that about 4.2 to 7 million people die each year due to air pollution and nine out of ten people breathe air containing dangerously high levels of pollutants and hazardous particles ("Air Pollution Note – Data You Need to Know", n.d.). These High quantities of contaminants are present in the air we breathe, with low and middle-income nations being the most affected. Additionally, the environment is responsible for 23% of world mortality, which is higher than traffic-related mortality or malaria (Bernoville, 2020). According to UNICEF, outdoor air pollution killed about 2,58,000 persons in Africa in the year 2017, which is an escalation from 1,64,000 from the year 1990 (Rees et al., 2019). The reports of the WHO also indicate that the global

population is inhaling nothing less than cigarettes in the name of fresh air (Muller & Muller, 2015) and is swiftly approaching the day when there will be many asthma patients than healthy ones in every house.

2.2 Impact of Air Pollution on Biodiversity

Biodiversity has also been severely impacted by chronic air pollution. According to Robinson, the sixth mass extinction of animals on Earth is accelerating (Robinson, 2023). About 500 animal species are enlisted as under the risk of extinction and expected to be lost over the next two decades; and about the same number have been lost over the past century (Carrington, 2021). The WWF research has found that, between 1970 and 2016, the population sizes of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and amphibians declined by an average rate of 68 percent ("68% Decline in Species Population Sizes Since 1970-WWF", 2020). Thus, the 21st Century is characterized as the century of an "alarming rate of biodiversity extinction," which has resulted in ecosystem imbalance (Bernoville, 2020). With the current extinction rate being continued, many existing species will become a myth for future generations such as invertebrates that have already been impaired due to Air pollution (Ryalls, et al., 2024). Addressing this biodiversity crisis requires urgent and responsible action.

2.3 Shift in the Pollution Cycle and Impact on Biodiversity

Along with air pollution, the WWF report attributed biodiversity loss to a variety of other factors, including excessive land-use change, which includes the conversion of natural habitats such as forests, grasslands, and mangroves to agricultural systems, industrial zones, and high-polluting manufacturing areas. These drastic transformations of the terrain and environment have a significant negative impact on ecosystem balance and produces minor alterations in the natural cycle of biodiversity. These changes are not solely caused by land mass changes; with deeper examination, it becomes clear that another crucial component of environmental deterioration exists, known as deforestation. Researchers discovered that every minute, forests equivalent to the size of twenty football fields are cut down (Mulhern, 2023). By 2030, just 10% of the world's woods may remain, and if deforestation continues, they may all be gone in less than 100 years (Mulhern, 2023).

This deforestation crisis exacerbates the depletion of the ozone layer due to oxygen scarcity and rising greenhouse gas emissions, triggering catastrophic global disasters. Record-breaking bushfire season in Australia (Wheeling, 2020); locusts swarming and decimating crops in Africa, the Middle East, and Asia (Ahmed, 2020); and above 20 degrees temperature rise in Antarctica's heatwave (Delgado, 2023) are just a few examples of these dreadful events. Scientists have warned that the planet has reached a series of tipping points, citing this incident and the discovery of microplastics for the first time in Antarctic ice (Delgado, 2023). With the world's growing population and fulfilling their demands, it is nearly impossible to reduce the deforestation and the time for corrective efforts is no longer a solution rather restrictive and preventive actions must be sought to reduce the deteriorating impacts of such environmental degradations.

2.4 Plastic Pollutions and Unchecked Impacts

In just a century since its invention, plastic has become one of the greatest contributors to environmental degradation, particularly by 2021 and continuing through 2024, due to the massive use in the surgical masks, bottled products, and other packaging uses. According to a survey published in *Science Nature Magazine*, around 11 million tons of plastic enter the seas each year, affecting ecological habitats and the water-bed species (Robinson, 2024). According to the same study report scientists are warning against plastic pollution saying, if no step is taken, the pollution level will increase to 29 million metric tons each year by 2040 (Robinson, 2024).

If microplastics are included, the total amount of plastic in the ocean might be 600 million tons by 2040, and seas and other water bodies will contain more plastics by weight than fish by 2050. In a parallel scenario, the scientists also estimated that sea levels will increase by six meters if the whole Greenland ice sheet melts (Robinson, 2024). So, the day is not far behind when, as a result of global warming and the melting of the north ice pole, low-lying country residents will perish in floods and be unable to swim owing to millions of pieces of plastic floating together in the water. The overflow of the plastic will end up forming severe water quality degradation causing further unprecedented health risks.

3. COVID-19 and the Environmental Impacts

In the pandemic period links between the virus's origin and the environmental degradation have been marked. Naturalist theorists shared the idea that the spread of COVID-19 was another dreadful consequence of the adverse effects of climate change (Chen & Prettnner, 2021). The reported events of that time also showed an undeniable connection between the two remarking the hypothesis that it was nature's revenge against humanity. Reported events such as China's worst floods in decades ("China Braces for Summer Floods", 2021), rising highest methane levels (Deaton, 2024), Canada's last intact ice shelf collapse (Earth.Org, 2020), 13 percent of deaths in the EU due to pollution ("13% of Deaths in EU Linked to Pollution- Study", 2020), have been linked to various forms of pollution urging the world to rethink the global activism surrounding trade and consumption habits.

The record-breaking wildfires in California, Australia, and Brazil that had blocked out the sun (Gecker, 2020), the melting of the Arctic as well as the Greenland Ice Sheet poses the most significant risk for rising sea levels and spreading of unknown viruses into the water bodies. The world's giant iceberg, the floating mass of which is more extensive than Rhode Island covering an area over 70 times the size of Manhattan reportedly broke off in 2021 during the peak of pandemic, which shall contribute to the already rising sea level crisis (Turner, 2024). These are the signs that urges the instant need of action from the global community as well as the stakeholders.

Not all that have happened were reportedly adverse, there were also positive signs. On the eve of World Environment Day, 2021, the halt of human mobility was shown to have slightly benefitted the flora and fauna allowing them to grow freely in the fresh air (Bates, 2021). A Nilgai was found wandering freely on the streets of Noida in March 2020 ("Civet on Kerala Road", 2020), while two monkeys were seen enjoying a pool party in a posh neighborhood in Mumbai ("Watch: Monkeys Enjoy a "Pool Party" in Mumbai", 2020). Astonishing footage of a massive flock of flamingos moving to Mumbai also filled social media ("After Cleaner Ganga, Large Flock of Flamingos Paints Mumbai "Pink" in Lockdown", 2020). Forest officials attributed the event to "less contaminated water and climate," as well as "improved algae content," which is the flamingos' principal food source (Basak & Basak, 2020). Similarly, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) conducted a study on the impact of the 'Janata Curfew' on air quality, discovering that a decrease in the number of on-road vehicles resulted in up to a 51% reduction in nitrogen oxide (NO_x) levels and a 32% reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels between 22–23 March and 21 March 2020 (PTI, 2020). Those helpful initiatives failed, as "the pandemic has reportedly harmed the environment more than it was imagined, resulting in a severe negative environmental impact" (Bernoville, 2020). Even though 2019 was the worst year for deforestation in more than a decade, satellite data from the space research agency INPE showed that in April 2020, 64 percent more cropland was cleared than in April 2019 (Gardiner, 2020).

According to several epidemiologists, air pollution has influenced the pandemic in three ways: by enhancing transmission, raising vulnerability, and exacerbating the severity of the virus (Srivastava, 2021). By studying PM 2.5 microparticles, Biologists discovered that inhaling them for many years increases the chance of contracting the virus (Garcia & Gioda, 2023), these harms were also predicted by Beth Gardiner published on the official webpage of National Geography in June 2020 (Gardiner, 2020).

Furthermore, contrary to common perception, the pandemic led to the use of 129 billion face masks and 65 billion gloves per month worldwide (Bernoville, 2020). In absence of any recycling technique the used gloves and masks ended up in rivers and seas, reportedly covering the seas with about the size of an entire landmass of Switzerland (Yang, et al., 2022). This have worsened the life-cycle of the turtles and other aquatic creatures as these creatures confused masks with their favorite food, jellyfish. The reasons in increasing use of plastic have been associated with the low-cost availability and user-friendly nature of the plastic items. Throughout the quarantine period, the rise in take-out orders also took an adverse impact as the packaging industries in the food chains have heavily depended upon single-use plastic. It was calculated in the year 2020 that there a 30% more garbage in that year than in 2019, which has added not only to the air pollution but also caused frequent acid rains destroying crop production and causing more health hazards for both humans and animals (Shams, et al., 2021).

4. Long-Term Impact of the Incidental Environmental Changes

4.1 Sea Level Rise and Relocation

The impact of environmental changes has never been a new issue of discussion among scientists and conservationists. Air and water pollution have long been major threats to health and causes of mortality. A careful examination of the pre-COVID and COVID periods reveals that the emergence of one problem causes the escalation of additional concerns, similar to a nuclear chain reaction. Although global warming seemed manageable until 2019, it has resulted in an unprecedented tragedy (Buis, 2020). Far from the North Pole, geologists believe that the glacier's melting point has reached a point where it will never fully recover, permanently boosting sea levels (Bernoville, 2020).

This constant sea level rise is gradually submerging low-lying countries and coastal areas, leading to millions of relocations and migration to the higher ground. As a result, urban overpopulation increases, as do consumption rates and rationing mechanisms. The territorial disputes in the Philippines, the South China Seas, Central Asia, and the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict highlight how violent land-sharing conflicts can be for people who have nowhere to go. Furthermore, hatred toward immigrants by locals is a natural innate tendency. Thus, relocating millions of people from low-lying countries to high-land states will only exacerbate global instability. According to the social conflict hypothesis, violent disputes would surely occur at a micro level, even if not on a macro scale.

4.2 Population Growth and Food Scarcity

With the world's population predicted to reach 9 billion by mid-century, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) forecasts a 70% rise in global food demand by 2050. This will cause a severe scarcity. Environmental changes, such as frequent natural catastrophes, will also exacerbate food scarcity. According to UN Secretary-General António Guterres, "Unless immediate action is taken, it is increasingly clear that there is an impending global food security emergency that could have long-term impacts on hundreds of millions of adults and children" (Robinson, 2024).

He urged governments to reassess their food systems and adopt more ecologically friendly farming practices (Robinson, 2024). However, it is unclear whether this advice will extend to publications, television channels, and research conferences, or if it will be adopted by country leaders. Without some modest directives, no substantial actions have been taken to address potential food shortages, and the matter remains in the air. Furthermore, in most underdeveloped and developed countries, farmers are unaware of environmentally friendly farming techniques, and their primary preoccupation with making money or profit from farming is hurting the soil, polluting the air with N₂O gas (Chrobak, 2022), and constantly polluting water.

Water pollution causes a scarcity of drinkable water because just 3% of the world's water is fresh and consumable, with the other two-thirds trapped in frozen glaciers and unfit for human use (Chrobak, 2022). Approximately 1.1 billion people globally do not have access to safe drinking water, and 2.7 billion experience water scarcity at least once a year (Brown, 2018). It is anticipated that two-thirds of the world's population would encounter water scarcity by 2025, and by 2050, the entire world will face a serious survival problem owing to contaminated air, water, and food scarcity.

4.3 Deforestation and Eco-system Collapse

The degradation of the world's biggest rainforest increased by 9.5 percent to 4,280 square miles in 2020, compared to 2019. In addition, compared to the previous year, fires in Brazil's Amazon surged by 13% in the first nine months of 2020 (Beuchle, et al., 2022). The rapid forest fires and constant destruction of the Amazon (a forest that absorbs massive amounts of CO₂ and functions as a big oxygen factory for the entire world) have been referred to as Earth's liver cancer. Uncontrolled industrial operations in the Amazon are directly causing ozone depletion, rising temperatures, and flooding (Gardiner, 2020). The Amazon has already become a global hotspot for illness, as excessive smoke causes a surge in heart and lung diseases in addition to that COVID-19 has also disproportionately affected the Amazonian indigenous people (Gardiner, 2020).

Researchers have discovered a link between biodiversity loss, viral fire outbreaks and the spreading of pandemic like unknown viruses (Tollefson, 2020). When biodiversity is lost, a few species replace the many others, and these species usually harbour fatal viruses. Due to the loss of habitats, animals come into close contact with people increasing the risk of virus infections and disease. In Uganda, direct contact between humans and monkeys in 2020 further increased the danger of disease exposure and the frequency of other viral pandemics (Johnson et al., 2020). These encounters increase the danger of disease exposure and the frequency of other viral pandemics. Biodiversity is crucial for human survival and the proper maintenance of the ecosystem, but the current International Environmental Legal Regime is incapable of supplementing the needs of the nature.

5. Legal Lacuna and Feasible Measures

5.1 Lack of Environment-Friendly Legal System and absence of Environmental Rule of Law

The essence of Environmental Rule of Law requires accountability, action and implementation. As the world leaders and business entities remain indifferent to the concerns and allow the polluters to pollute more in the name of development, they fail to uphold existing legal mechanisms. The International Rule of Law expert, Thomas Carothers sadly opined that the Primary obstacles to the Rule of Law reform are not technical or financial but political and humane (Carothers, 1998). Being on the verge of extinction, discussions relating to the Rule of Law and the policies make it seem like

industrialization has just happened, and pollution can be a casual by-product of development ideas.

The massive genocide and deaths of World War II, by nuclear bombing to kill 200,000 people in a momentum (Rummel, 1997), made the world leaders sit together and ban the use of nuclear weapon; while the death of 258,000 people in Africa due to air pollution (Rees, et al., 2019), remains only a concern for the activists. The harm caused by the atom bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Rummel, 1997) and the harm caused by the Nuclear Power Plant explosion in Chornobyl (IAEA, 2008) still haunt people, but deaths due to environmental degradation do not receive the required attention.

Many third-world country legal scholars believe that the birth and development of international laws is nothing but a tool to benefit the developed states and their allies (Singh, 2019). In recent times the global community have started to take the concerns of the majority of nations. The Paris Agreement, Kyoto Protocol, and SDG milestones show that the global conscience exists in the international regime but is realistically dead in its implementation (Nody, 2018). The UNFCCC, UNEP, WHO, and other UN entities continue to raise global awareness about climate change and carbon emissions, but the growth of industries and the substitution of manufacturing sectors in developing nations by industrialized ones demonstrate state leaders' purposeful ignorance. During the pandemic season a significant scarcity and price hike in nurseries for food-producing plants and seedlings was witnessed (Fratello, 2021).

Successive debate surrounds the adaptability of sustainable development concepts, commitments of Rio Declaration, decisions adopted in COP gatherings, as these conferences and conventions prove that the world is concerned, to the extent of discussing and raising awareness but not to the extent of creating any binding laws. The approaches in the global implementation of environmental law remains very rarely applied through a few principles such the *no harm/transboundary harm prevention principle*, *polluter pays principle* and some other *co-operative principles* regarding global and regional co-operation. Although these are the foundational principles of environmental law and the basis for environmental rule of law, they remain at bay as the domestic businessmen remain at the core of legislative formations keeping the door wide open for more industrialization. The environmental Rule of Law is incapable of imposing strict legal pressure through punishment policies as the top perpetrators of environmental crimes are the ones who holds the major decision-making powers in the UN. The vulnerability of underdeveloped states is another factor that keeps the accountability practices out of application. Domestic laws in developing nations are susceptible to pollution control due to competing interests and economic stability. The COVID-19 pandemic highlights the world's failure to manage transboundary harm.

5.2 Legal Feasibility and Global Conscience

Paris Agreement remains the hope of many environmentalists for mitigating the environmental issues. While the pretentious commitments (of reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions) by the polluters remain in place, the activists and environmental organizations face the hurdle of raising their voices due to the policy-level stances of many polluting

nations in the disguise of development activism. China, being the highest greenhouse gas emitters, signed the agreement to reduce its carbon emissions by 20.9% in 2016 only to have a profound increase of 26% to a 30% in 2021, just five years after the agreement (Myllyvirta, 2021).

This indicates that nations fail miserably to maintain their environmental commitments. Furthermore, in 2018 China was shown to take the new 'ultra-low carbon emission' policy, only to fail and continue increasing the GHG emissions (O'Grady, 2019). So, the main question is: even after ratification of the Paris Agreement, how legally bound the countries are to implement the agreement policies? The answer lies in the fact that the developing countries are still allowed to emit more until they develop the technologies to emit less leaving a situation of '*Bucket with a cleft*', where one can pour as much water as he wants, only to be all in vain at the days end.

The world now seems to realize the consequences of decades of ignorance towards environmental issues after facing record-breaking events such as the constant heatwaves in different parts of the world, rapidly changing climate patterns, shifts in the tectonic plates, and ongoing droughts.

6. Framework of the New Legal Hegemony

The environmental legal hegemony calls not only for the formulation of strict laws but also for the prioritization of this law over any other laws. To ensure such sanctity of the international environmental law, there must be a mechanism to reassess and re-structure the existing mechanisms as well as revive the concepts of rule of law or more specifically the Environmental rule of law.

The environmental Rule of Law which ensures accountability, transparency in activism and implementation of the laws, must be introduced on a global scale with a strict guideline to ensure survival of the human race. The necessity of check and balance through an international monitoring body apart from the existing NGOs and root-level civic organizations must be framed with a transparent and firm structure. The body must establish the norms for states to comply with and fulfil their obligations under the international environmental conventions and it shall also work to guarantee the compliance of each state in their commitment to the carbon emission reduction goals by directly monitoring their large-scale domestic activities rather than publishing reports received from the concerned states.

The first step of implementing the rule of law is to establish domestic divisions as the root-level monitors for consistent report submissions on the present policies, activities, and plans to reach the carbon emission target will help to manage the local actors into compliance and so reduce other pollutants. This reporting mechanism shall be one of a public nature and have a transparent repository system for the mass population to gain enough knowledge and awareness regarding their state's action for their health

and environment. The domestic body may also set up a call center and a mailbox to receive news and complaints from local people relating to environmental issues without any taxation.

The following step must be to hold the polluters accountable under the "Polluters Pay Principle" in accordance with customary international law. However, the process of paying will not be a considerable statutory amount for category pollutants. Instead, for causing any type of pollution or damage to the environment, polluters must pay the exact amount that will ensure the total mitigation of that problem as compensation, as well as an additional amount charged as a fine that will be used in the betterment of the environment, such as conservation of a new area. Furthermore, polluting the same amount or more as before should be considered a crime. In that instance, every recurrence will result in a fine double. So, the polluters must lessen the pollution to pay lesser amount of fine.

A major step in the formulation of strict legal system for the international environmental law shall be through the regular application of the customary norm- *sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*', regarding the transboundary pollution, which was first introduced in the Stockholm Declaration and also in the Aerial Incident Case of Ecuador v. Colombia (*Ecuador v. Colombia*, 2018). Using this principle will lead to stricter environmental regulation as countries causing transboundary pollution would be fined and will be forced to reduce their pollution level. In that regard a rule stating that dumping of waste by the coastal countries shall also be regarded as transboundary harm and damages to the common heritage of mankind would also deter them from polluting their sea or water. A grace period may be allowed to make a planned sewerage system.

The most crucial step to create a legal hegemony for environment would be to introduce a new Justice system of customary international Law apart from the ICJ. A single court dealing with all the issues relevant to the environment and transboundary issues is a necessity as the other existing international courts only provide complementary jurisdiction. The creation of a World Environmental Court with exclusive supplementary jurisdiction would compel the countries to follow and regard the environmental law with sanctity and respect it deserves for the sustainability of human species.

7. Conclusion

Industrialization ushered in a new era of knowledge and a call to end overconsumption, aiming to save humanity and the planet from destruction. A sustainable green economy and a new social science are required to address the systemic regulation of nature and civilization. A new renaissance is needed, and countries such as Switzerland and Iceland are taking it seriously. A new legal system should prioritize human needs and environmental restoration, revising the Rule of Law in all aspects of life and activities. The paper intended to portray the connection between pandemic situations and environmental degradations, which are the major threat for human

extinction. The primary concerns are that the current legal systems apart from a few countries such as Switzerland, Iceland who are leading by positive examples most of the states have disregarded the impacts of environmental damages and degradation. The legal systems regarding the international environmental law remain as a soft law system, severely inadequate to deal with any forthcoming pandemic or massive destructive natural disastrous situation. Thus, the world leaders must accumulate all other the resources to formulate a binding legal system giving the implementation of the environmental rules and laws the highest priority. With the decline of the natural resources and other causes of degradation the world population is yet to understand the nature and consequences of their activities, for which the urge is to not neglecting the burning issues of the environment with observation approach rather, it is a must for the global community to eradicate any scope for degradation. To erase the scope, legal systems must take the lead and stay at the top priority with no lacuna in their body text. The judicial bodies must also come forward as stated in the paper to create compliance among the most disobeying states. This can only be done if the environmental legal system is turned into a hegemony of not the states but the law and compliance with the rules of law.

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