

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

HARSHA G*

Department of Environmental science, Barkatullah University, Bhopal, India

(Received 03 August, 2021; Accepted 17 SAugust, 2021)

DESCRIPTION

Since 1949, China's environmental laws and regulations have seen tremendous improvement and development. Between 1949 and 2016, China's environmental policies and advances on water quality might be described in the following stages.

Extensive Construction Development Without Environmental Consideration

From the 1950s to the 1960s, there were several government laws in place for water and soil conservation, forestry, and clean drinking water. However, because the focus was on the development of reservoirs, big and medium irrigation districts, and water diversion projects, there were no particular environmental legislation. Because of increased human activity, poor understanding of the consequences of environmental deterioration, and a lack of regulation and action to safeguard the environment, environmental harm rises as the economy expands. As a result, environmental damage is severe and environmental quality is low at this level.

Basic Legal Framework For Environment Protection

China began to recognise the dangers of environmental pollution in the early 1970s; at the time, virtually all of the major rivers were polluted; many large towns were engulfed in haze; and industrial wastes had become highly significant issues. In view of the foregoing facts, the government took the first steps to safeguard the environment and began taking efforts to combat pollution.

As a result, China organised its first national conference on environmental protection in 1973, with the goal of dealing with factory wastes as well as residential wastewater. The issue of "The Environmental Protection Law of the People's Republic of China," which began as a trial in 1979 and was legally enacted in 1989, was one of the major successes of the time. The legislation was enacted to address environmental concerns such as soil, groundwater, and agricultural products

pollution, human health, and environmental protection. Furthermore, in 1984, a specific legislation called "The Law of Prevention and Control of Water Pollution" was passed for both surface and groundwater management.

The major focus at this point is on environmental protection, with a concentration on pollution control and prevention. The issue did not improve despite the formation of two laws for environmental protection and water pollution since these laws were broad and lacked rules and specified measures. Numerous water projects were pushed through without respecting environmental laws, resulting in severe environmental consequences. Water pollution was evolving from traditional conventional pollution to compound types of pollution created by industrial pollution-dominant, sewage pollution-dominant, and agriculture pollution-dominant because the general focus was on the development of large projects based on quantities rather than conservation or efficiency. As a result, total water pollutants discharge was increasing, and water pollution was evolving from traditional conventional pollution to compound types of pollution created by industrial pollution-dominant, sewage pollution-dominant, and agriculture pollution-dominant.

Establishment of Standards, Specifications and Guidelines

Many events marked the performance of environmental protection policies in the 1990s, including the modification of the People's Republic of China's Environmental Protection Law in 1996, which introduced guidelines and specifications, and the implementation of a programme in key catchments and regions to contribute to environmental quality improvement in high-polluted areas.

Following the flood of 1998, environmental policies prioritised ecological restoration in major development programmes, and the following policies were implemented: prohibiting logging of natural forests in the upper and middle reaches; prioritising ecological restoration in major development programmes; and converting steep arable land to forests and grassland. Many attempts were made by policymakers in China at various levels to draught legislative details, and by the year 2000, the situation was as follows:

- Six environmental legislation and twelve resource laws were enacted by the government.
- The State Council approved 28 environmental administrative regulations.
- The State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) has developed 427 environmental regulations
- More than 900 local environmental legislation and regulations were drafted by the provincial government.

These laws and regulations aided in the formation of China's environmental legal framework, which includes

pollution control, pollutant tax policy, and energy policy (replacing coal with gas and electricity). In terms of institutional structures, the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), which was upgraded to the State Environmental Protection Administration (SEPA) at the ministerial level in 1998, was in charge of supervising and monitoring environmental policies. Following the establishment of an environmental legislative framework and institutions during this time, the stage of gaining a deeper knowledge of the pollution issue began. During the years 1996-2000, water quality in the major river basins was atrocious.