

## **Climate Change - Air Pollution**

I've chosen the issue of climate change specifically the area of air pollution as this is the main cause of global warming and has flow on effects to quite a few stakeholders including businesses, ecosystems, and ofcourse - us consumers. Humans are the main drivers of air pollution on a daily basis without considering the long term effects that this is actually doing to our own lives. This damages entire ecosystems taking away elements that are essential in our daily lives like water, soil, plants, and buildings. On the other hand, it also takes away healthy air which is vital not only for us humans but for animals and any living organism. The reason I'm passionate and chose this issue is because the mindset that i've shifted to over the last 3 years of thinking and doing everything for the long-term has made me strongly consider the fact that not many others do this and without realizing, their decisions right now will affect their future in some form. In terms of the issue of air pollution, this idea of thinking long-term is so important as we need to think about more than ourselves and the future generations that will occupy the environment to keep this world going for longer. Groups like the 'school strike for climate' and 'greenpeace' are very important in terms of combatting this issue as it holds us humans accountable for our actions which I hope will drive us to make those small changes in our lives which coincidentally are fairly simple but not desirable prompting us to be 'lazy' and this is what prompted me to choose the issue of air pollution.

Air pollution is the release of harmful chemicals into the air which is harmful to the physical health of humans, animals, and any living organisms including plants and ecosystems. This is usually caused by our production cycles and energy consumption causing the increased level of burned fossil fuels prompting the emitting of carbon dioxide and methane into the air which consequently promotes climate change by increasing earth's temperature. This is especially apparent in several asian countries like India, Singapore, and Thailand. As Asia holds most of the global production levels for businesses to import, there are several factories that operate every single day with tight timeframes to produce and export various products globally so oblivious to the carbon dioxide that's being emitted, this is producing the visible smog promoting health hazards. However this is only half the issue with transport, electricity use, and construction also contributing heavily to smog, apparent in an article referring to Bangkok "For weeks, Bangkok has not seen a clear sky" (**Yuda, 2019**). This points to not only businesses and their production targets but also consumers being so self-indulged in their everyday activities that they are oblivious and in complete denial as to how the smog gets there/climate change as a whole. I believe that these are the two most important stakeholders in this issue of air pollution and both have very adverse flow-on effects to each other which will negatively impact both in the future in terms of consumers' health deteriorating because of health conditions and then businesses shutting down because consumers can't work due to those health conditions. This is my future outlook on this situation if air pollution carries on as present.

With businesses and consumers being the two main stakeholders in this issue, the power that comes with both are significantly opposite. Businesses, being the main culprits of air pollution, are constantly promoting their unethical production process as owners are stuck with the "mistaken belief that the costs outweigh the benefits" (**Whelan & Fink, 2017**). Due to this, the power that a business owner has to make the decision not to use a sustainable manufacturing method is overrated in my opinion as they will always look at the money side

of things and never how the flow-on effects that this mentality is having on stakeholders like consumers and the environment. With this, as indicated on my business owner persona, businesses should have less power over a switch to more sustainable productivity and products. On the other hand, I believe consumers are having less power than they should have over this issue. Yes, consumers do contribute through transport however factors like car manufacturers constantly making more fueled cars than hybrids and costly switches to energy efficient plans are prompting consumers to keep using unsustainable methods and this is all due to business caring more about revenue than the environment. For this reason i think its important for consumers to have more power than they presently do especially when it comes to not only the environment they live in, but the future of their generations and businesses shouldnt have control over this. At the moment we see groups like the 'School Strike 4 Climate' and 'greenpeace' where people march in the streets demanding climate change and this is the only power they have to change the way things are going. Consumers should have the power to decide their futures especially when it comes to the nation as a whole and the future they want to leave for their kids.

If the power between businesses and consumers were more balanced the opportunities for a consumer to demand better production methodologies would increase as is already happening "As a result of increased pressure from consumers, companies are beginning to embrace sustainable, eco-friendly business practices" (**Thomas, 2020**). However this is only happening in a small area and needs to spread around the world especially to high manufacturing continents like asia. The balance of power would largely help mitigate the problem of air pollution as consumers can help businesses to be more sustainable in their productivity methods and in their physical products especially talking in terms of car manufacturing factories where consumers will then look to make the switch to hybrid cars. Consumers can then also look to decide/demand lower prices for more sustainable products like those hybrid cars and solar-powered energy so they can make their own personal improvements on the environment. If the consumer demand for alternative sustainable products increases then businesses will realise that it won't actually affect profit margins to create sustainable methods. The advantage to this is that businesses and consumers will work together and help each other to mitigate the issue of air pollution on the business and consumer sides and help each other to co-create a long-term improvement to combat climate change.

## **References**

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