

Property Resources: My Property but Your Responsibility

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Have you ever Analyzed?!!

We often believe that we are entitled to our classroom and rush to occupy a clean and airy seat as soon as we get it BUT as we leave the room at the end of the day, we hardly bother to pick up the trash of paper and packets thrown by us on the floor thinking that it's the duty of others to clean as the classroom belongs to all, moreover it belongs to the institution and not to us individually. However, we fail to understand that others coming after us might also expect to use an equally clean classroom as we did.

This problem occurs in a multitude of situation in our day-to-day lives, especially when it comes to the natural or environmental resources as they are common to all the individuals. Let us understand this in a bit more detail.

What are Common Property Resources (CPR)?

In economics, "Goods" are classified in different ways. One of the popular classifications of goods is based on 2 characteristics: rivalry and excludability.

That means we categorize goods depending on whether people can be prevented from consuming them (excludability) and whether individuals can consume them without affecting their availability to other individuals (rivalrousness).

Based on this classification, the goods may be categorized into 4 types: **Private Goods, Public Goods, Club Goods and Common Property Resources.**

	Excludable	Non-excludable
Rival	<p>Private Goods</p> <p><i>e.g. ice cream, cheese, houses, cars</i></p>	<p>Common Resources</p> <p><i>e.g. fresh water, fish, timber, pasture</i></p>
Non-rival	<p>Club Goods</p> <p><i>e.g. cable television, cinemas, wifi, tollroads</i></p>	<p>Public Goods</p> <p><i>e.g. fresh air, knowledge, national defense</i></p>

Common resources are defined as products or resources that are non-excludable but rival. That means they can be used by virtually anyone. However, if one individual consumes common resources, their availability to other individuals is reduced. The combination of those two characteristics often results in an overuse of common resources (see also the tragedy of the commons). Examples of common resources include freshwater, fish, timber, pasture, etc.

Then What is the Problem???

As discussed, Common Property Resources or Common Resources can be apparently used by everyone, but when it comes to sustainability or taking responsibility for the loss, none are found standing. It basically gives rise to the problem of “**Free-Riding**”. Everyone wants to use it without paying for the consequences of over-use or depletion or damage of the resource that ultimately affects its availability to the others (mostly for the ones who are more in need of the same).

The environment around us provides us with innumerable services and resources that we benefit from. These are called the ecosystem services. Often these services are used by the human beings freely without accounting for them in monetary terms. This often leads to taking the services as granted and using them so unsustainably that the resources reach a critical level of availability or even get depleted at times. Most of the environmental goods

and resources come under the common property resources and in many-a-cases their mis-use leads to an imbalance in the ecology, economy and the society at large.

Let's take another example to understand this better.

Suppose there is a village pond having edible fish in it. Here the pond is a common resource which can be used by the entire village. None can be excluded from using it. When it comes to catching fish from the pond, a group of people come early in the morning and catch all the fish in the pond for their feast. Now, when the others try to come and catch a fish for their supper, there is no fish available for them. So, here neither can the needy blame the greedy nor can they take action against the unavailability. Rather they will have to starve for that day. Moreover, due to excessive fishing done by the first group, natural fish production in that pond is severely affected and the former group doesn't even bother to leave fresh fishlings for regenerating the fish production in that pond as they think that it is the village resource and it is not their responsibility to do so. There are so many other villagers who can take this initiative. **This is a perfect example Free-Riding- We want to use for free but not compensate for the consequence.**

What are the other issues in Common Property Resources?

There are nine equity issues that arise in common property resources. They may be enumerated as follows:

1. Income and employment system
2. Access to facilities and services
3. Access to natural resources
4. Fairness in competition
5. Natural resource exploitation
6. Negative externalities
7. Non-production function
8. Compensation to worse
9. Sustainability reinvestment



What is the Solution?

Basically, the issue with CPR is nothing but a moral issue that needs to be corrected at an individual level. Many of the individuals do not realize how the environment benefits the entire human race and that we can never be able to pay for the same services if created artificially. Also, it is important to understand sustainable and equitable use of the natural resources can only sustain this globe in the future. Overuse and insensitivity to others and to the nature specifically will definitely lead to the loss of life and biodiversity. Thus, it is important to educate the people about the concepts of environment, natural resources and mainly about the significance of their sustainable and equitable use, so that we can have a balanced sustenance for the times to come. Also, inculcating the sense of moral responsibility in using free goods will also help solve the purpose.

So, its time to shift from CPR: My Property and Your Responsibility to

“CPR: OUR Property and OUR Responsibility”.

References:

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