

MASS MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS: ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

During the past 50 years, our planet has undergone dramatic changes in pollution, population and the pressures that humanity puts on its natural resources. Our environmental problems are largely traceable to rapid population growth which is putting severe stress on the earth's natural resources. This is compounded by scientific and technological development coupled with industrial growth. Many parts of the global system are at the perils of myriad of environmental problems - a situation that is increasingly becoming more challenging to human continued survival. In Africa, the problems of drought, ecology and the environment have had a very deleterious effect on people, thus making acute an already delicate situation. It is estimated that in sub-Saharan Africa alone, close to 156 million people will be adversely affected by famine, for example, in 2015 if a serious intervention on environmental problems is not engineered. This paper examines the problems of environment and ecological deterioration from an Islamic mass media of communication perspective. It argues that the Universe, with all that is in it - the stars and planets, sun and moon, the light and darkness, water and earth, plants, animals and human beings - are created by Allah/God. It is, therefore, imperative that they are treated with the respect that is due to Allah's creatures. The destruction of these things, the paper insists, constitutes a confrontation with the Divine purpose and a wicked act of oppression, for all the creatures and products of the natural world have their own share of, and input into, the universal whole and the ecological beauty and balance. The question of environmental misgovernance, insecurity, degradation, conservation and management has gradually come to dominate the centre-stage in development fora during the four decades after the United Nations Conference on the human environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972. The paper notes that the visible consequences of human activity on the environment have made it evident that continued environmental welfare can no longer be taken for granted. The paper analyses the solutions provided by Islamic Religion and way of life to make the environment more secure, better, safer, cleaner and greener. It also submits that deliberate and concrete action needs to be taken to conserve, renew and maintain a healthy environment which ensures sustainable development and is suitable for human existence. The paper concludes that protecting the environment is not an option for the government and the governed, but it is an imperative that must be placed at the centre of economic and political-decision making. If we fail to protect the environment properly, we could at best make life unbearable for millions of people and other species, and at worst terminate our existence.