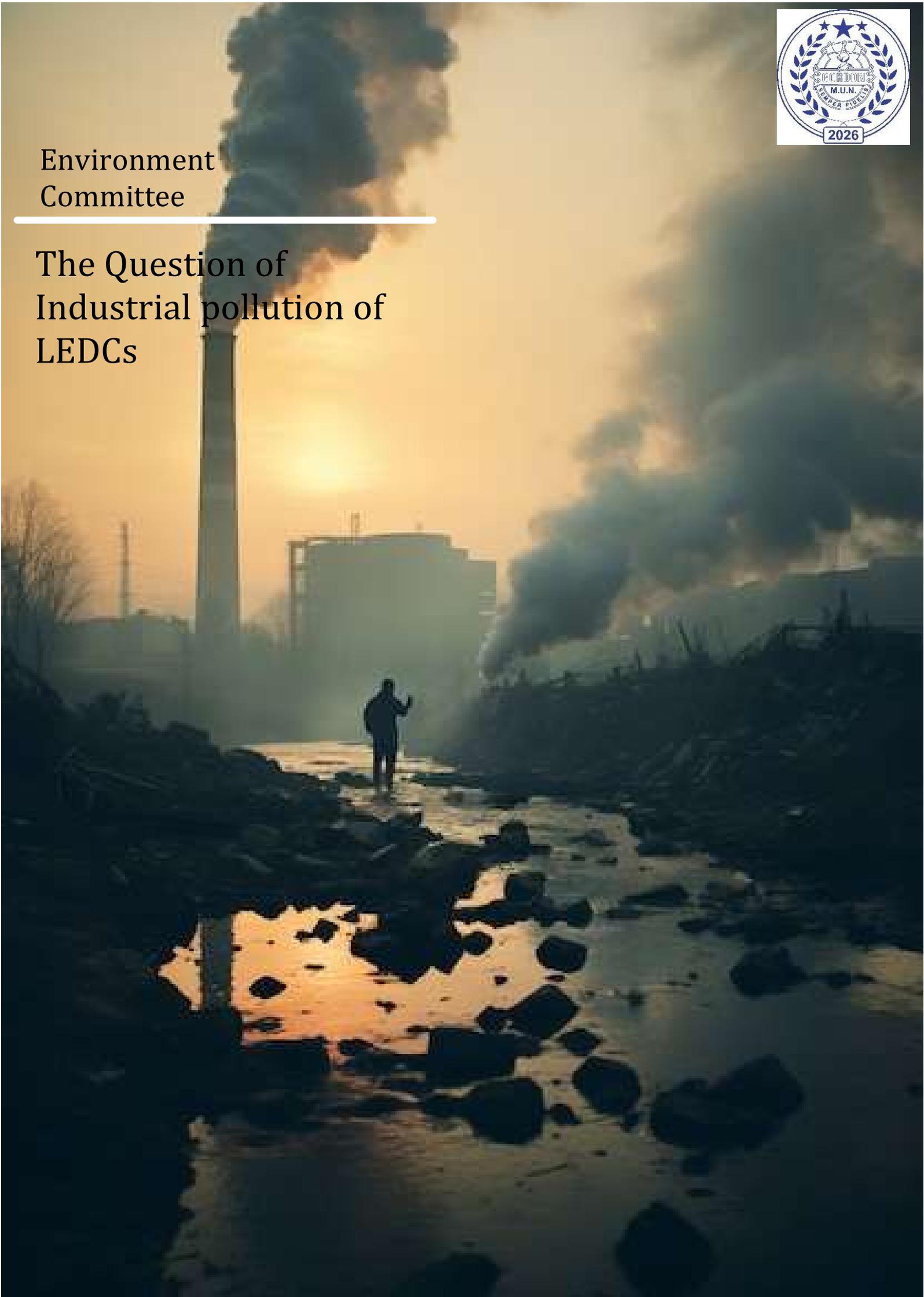




Environment
Committee

The Question of Industrial pollution of LEDCs



Committee: Environment Committee

Topic: The Question of Industrial pollution of LEDCs

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Summary:

Industrial pollution in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) refers to the contamination of air, water, and land caused by factories, manufacturing plants, and waste-producing industries. Many LEDCs experience rapid industrial growth but often lack strong environmental regulations, modern technology, or proper waste-management systems. As a result, pollution levels can rise quickly, affecting local ecosystems and population health.



A major issue is that multinational corporations from wealthier countries relocate production facilities to LEDCs because regulations are weaker and operating costs are lower due to cheap labour. In some cases, hazardous waste from wealthier nations has even been discarded in LEDCs, creating serious environmental and health risks, such as how toxic waste has been shipped to countries such as Haiti, Ghana, and Nigeria, despite international agreements meant to prevent this.

Industrial pollution in LEDCs includes air pollution from factories, contaminated rivers from industrial wastewater, and increasing amounts of solid waste. These problems are made worse by rapid urbanisation, overcrowded cities, and limited government resources. Furthermore, air pollution alone kills thousands of people every day in developing countries, especially in urban areas.

Origins:

- Industrial pollution increased sharply during the global rise of manufacturing and industrialisation, which can be traced back to the European industrial revolution, but has seen sustained significant increases since the mid-late 20th century.

- As **MEDCs** (More Economically Developed Countries) strengthened their environmental laws, their industries moved operations to LEDCs where regulations were less strict.
- International waste dumping became a major issue in the late 20th century; with several scandals involving toxic waste being shipped to poorer countries / LICs.
- Globalisation accelerated the movement of polluting industries into LEDCs, making the issue more widespread.

Why the topic is important:

Industrial pollution in LEDCs is important because it affects human health, the environment, and a nation's long-term development. Polluted air and water lead to respiratory illnesses, contaminated food supplies, as well as unsafe living conditions. Ecosystems are damaged by toxic chemicals, harming wildlife and rapidly reducing biodiversity. Economically, pollution can slow development by damaging farmland, reducing worker health, and increasing healthcare costs and putting pressure on the healthcare industry. The issue also raises questions of fairness, as LEDCs often suffer the worst impacts despite **contributing the least to global pollution**.



Who the Topic affects:

- Local communities living near factories or polluted rivers. These communities often rely on local water sources for drinking, farming, and fishing, meaning pollution immediately threatens their health, livelihoods, and food security.
- Children, who are more vulnerable to toxic chemicals and air pollution. Their vulnerability to these dangerous chemicals can cause long-term health problems that limit their future opportunities
- Workers in unsafe industrial environments. Many factories in LEDCs lack proper safety regulations, so employees are exposed to hazardous substances every day, often without



protective equipment. This might create a cycle where people must choose between unsafe work and **no income at all**.

- Governments of LEDCs, who struggle to balance economic growth with environmental protection. Limited funding, weak enforcement systems, as well as competing national priorities make it difficult for them to regulate the pollution effectively. This places LEDCs in a challenging position globally, especially when wealthier nations have historically contributed more to global pollution
- Ecosystems, including rivers, forests, and coastal areas affected by industrial waste. They absorb toxic waste, leading to the loss of biodiversity and the collapse of natural systems that communities depend on. Once these ecosystems are damaged, recovery can take many decades
- Future generations and the international community who will inherit long-term environmental damage. The environmental damage in LEDCs contributes to global climate change, ocean contamination, and the spread of hazardous waste. Future generations everywhere will suffer the consequences of today's industrial practices in nations such as China, US, and India

Previous attempts to fix the problem:

Several international agreements and national policies have tried to reduce industrial pollution in LEDCs:

- The Basel Convention and Bamako Convention were created to stop hazardous waste from being dumped in developing countries, although illegal dumping still occurs.
- Local governments in LEDCs have begun taking action to reduce air pollution, especially in overcrowded cities.
- Recycling and waste-management programmes have been promoted as long-term solutions to reduce pollution and support sustainable development.
- Global climate agreements, such as the Paris Agreement, encourage cleaner industrial practices and support LEDCs in reducing emissions and pollution.
- Some LEDCs have introduced stricter environmental laws, but enforcement remains difficult due to limited funding and resources.

Definitions of key terms:

LEDCs	Less Economically Developed Countries; nations with lower income levels and limited industrial regulation
Industrial pollution	Contamination caused by factories and industrial processes, affecting water, land and air
Hazardous waste	Toxic or dangerous waste materials that can harm people and the environment
Basel convention	An international treaty designed to reduce hazardous waste movement from wealthy to poor countries.
E - waste	Electronic waste such as old computers and phones, often discarded in LEDCs
Urbanisation	The growth of cities, often leading to overcrowding and pollution

Major countries / organisations involved:

- **United States** - Historically linked to waste exports and major industrial emissions.
- **China** - A major global manufacturer; also receives and produces large amounts of industrial waste.
- **United Kingdom** - Involved in international waste regulations and environmental agreements.
- **France** - Active in global environmental policy and climate agreements.
- **Russia** - Major industrial producer with significant emissions.
- **LEDCs** such as Ghana, Nigeria, Haiti, and the Philippines - Heavily affected by industrial waste dumping and pollution.



- **UNEP** (United Nations Environment Programme) - Monitors pollution and supports environmental protection.
- **UNFCCC** - Oversees climate agreements that influence industrial practices.
- **World Health Organization (WHO)** - Tracks health impacts of pollution.
- **NGOs** such as Greenpeace and Basel Action Network - Expose illegal waste dumping and push for stronger regulations.

Timeline of key events

1980s	First major cases of toxic waste dumping in LEDCs gain global attention.
1989	Basel Convention adopted to control hazardous waste movement.
1990s - 2000s	Rapid industrialisation in many LEDCs increased pollution levels
2015	Paris Agreement encourages cleaner industrial development
2019	LEDCs account for around 1.1% of global CO ₂ from industrial processes but face severe pollution impacts.
2020s	Growing awareness of e-waste dumping in African and Asian LEDCs