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Is pollution deliberate?

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To solve the problem of pollution and climate change, we must understand our role in it. How does our economy affect pollution? What is the scale at which we need action? Any action done consciously is deliberate. Do we drive or ride in cars consciously? If yes then pollution is deliberate. It is a choice we make for the ease of transport at the cost of a little CO₂ emission. To extend this understanding across all actions since humans have evolved from being foragers to the civilized man we know today, we have been harming the environment to make our lives easier and better. Therefore, in a way, we need to pollute to develop. However, there is a bright side. According to the Global Sustainable Development report 2019 (UN), the developing nations like India have a much higher rate of increasing emissions and pollutants than the developed nations like the USA. This certainly indicated that after reaching a point we could improve the existing technology to reduce pollution. This change might not be the most cost-effective way but will ensure that the planet survives longer.

All over the world, and especially in India, we see a trend of directional growth towards the urban sector. More and more people are migrating to live in cities. This has caused pollution levels to rise drastically as more vehicles are purchased, people travel larger distances in the city, etc. Climate change is real and it is more alarming than ever. The people are expected to understand the impact their day-to-day decisions are causing on the larger picture of climate change over the years. The decision is mostly in the favor of comfort over the earth's health. We need a change in our development model. There needs to be a holistic approach that goes end to end. One of the promising ones is the Circular economy.

As the Ellen MacArthur Foundation describes, 'A circular economy is a systemic approach to economic development designed to benefit businesses, society, and the environment. In contrast to the 'take-make-waste' linear model, a circular economy is regenerative by design and aims to gradually decouple growth from the consumption of finite resources.' Therefore, the key here is to find ways like technologies and business models that can help us reduce the total waste generated. We can either do this by utilizing the waste generated by the industries or reduce the generation of waste itself. The latter is comparatively harder to achieve, as it requires us to rebuild the existing technologies for scratch and very high switching costs.

We at Kriya Labs, have worked on a technology that uses agro-waste as a raw material, that is currently being burnt and causing tremendous pollution, to make paper pulp that can be used to make sheets, boards, boxes, and even disposable tableware. We are taking the waste generated by the agriculture industry and making it into a product for the paper industry. We are reducing the rice straw that will be burnt by providing a market for it,

meanwhile reducing the number of trees that need to be cut for making paper. We are currently under commercial pilot phase and are looking forward to implementing on a large scale, to make a dent in the air pollution scenario. In the same way, if we are able to utilize all the waste that is generated by every other industry we can achieve a circular economy and in turn a cleaner, greener environment.