

NUCLEAR ENERGY: DISADVANTAGES OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

There is a great deal of radiation danger associated with Nuclear energy. It is capable of causing genetic disorders, thus once exposed, can affect generations to come adversely. Another drawback is the storage of nuclear wastes, as it too can lead to disastrous effects if not disposed or stored in the right manner.

A well-known nuclear disaster was the attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States during World War II. An experiment, as described by some, was a grave event in the history of nuclear energy and its effects. It was the first of its kind. Another infamous event is the Chernobyl disaster. Although an accident, it made the world realize that controlling such a potentially great power is not entirely in our hands. The accident happened during a test in a nuclear power plant. The extent of damage was controlled as the plant was shut down immediately, and the residents relocated. Even now, the city is in ruins, a pale picture of its past.

The most recent nuclear mishap was the Fukushima Accident in Japan. It was caused by an earthquake-generated tsunami. The nuclear reactor was seismically

robust, however could not sustain the effect of the gallons of sea water that went inside the reactor, thus leading to power failure which in turn led to overheating. This ultimately resulted in a hydrogen explosion and subsequent events led to the discharge of radioactive materials into the atmosphere.

Disadvantages of Nuclear Energy

- 1) Radioactive minerals are unevenly distributed around the world and are found in limited quantities.
- 2) Supply of high quality uranium, one of the raw materials, will last only for few decades.
- 3) Nuclear waste from nuclear power plant creates thermal (heat) pollution which may damage the environment.
- 4) A large amount of nuclear waste is also created and disposal of this waste is a major problem.
- 5) The danger of accidental discharge of radio activity also exists.
- 6) Starting a nuclear plant requires huge capital investment and advanced technology.
- 7) Nuclear plants are opposed on moral grounds, by many groups, because of their close linkage with development of nuclear weapons.

- 8) There are number of restrictions on the export or import of nuclear technology, fuels etc.
- 9) Nuclear power stations are always at the risk from terrorist attack.
- 10) Aftermaths of Chernobyl cannot be forgotten easily.
- 11) Safety issues associated with nuclear power are hard to be overlooked.
- 12) Proliferation of nuclear technology increases the risk of nuclear war too.
- 13) The waste produced remains 'active' over many years and disposing it safely is an issue which needs to be addressed properly.
- 14) Nuclear power is not a renewable source of energy. Uranium is a metal that is mined from the ground in much the same way as coal is mined. It is a scarce metal and the supply of uranium will one day run out making all the nuclear power plants obsolete.

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