

MANDATORY CREATION OF HUMAN-FREE ZONES AMIDST THE HUMAN HABITATIONS ON EARTH

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Reducing the Human Impact

None damages or pollutes the environment the way we humans do. Many of our development activities often impair our ecosystem in some way or the other. Indeed, the negative human impact on our environment has reached alarming levels.

Reducing the gravity of anthropogenic impact on our planet is one of the primary concerns of our civilisation today. We have to strive hard to slow down, if not stop, the ongoing degradation of our environment. We have to make multidimensional efforts to achieve this goal. We need to explore all the possible ways to reduce the level of human impact to the minimum.

In this regard, I too would like to drop a coin in the box.

Human-Free Zones amidst Human Habitations

As a part of our efforts to reduce the gravity of human impact on our planet, I propose the creation of “human-free zones” (HFZs) amidst all human habitations all over the world.

We shall leave such territories—set up in villages, cities, and beyond—completely “untouched” making all efforts to keep those zones free of anthropogenic impact of any kind.

True, we may not be able to make those zones free of microwaves, electromagnetic waves, radiations, and the like incessantly poured out by our high tech civilisation. However, wherever possible, our ideal objective shall be nothing less than zero human impact.

In and around all human settlements, a certain percentage of the territories—portions of lands

as well as ponds, lakes, rivers, and so on—shall be declared as human-free zones.

HFZs could be created amidst house premises, farms, valleys, and hills.

Convert Ten Percentage of Human Habitations Human-free

To start with, at least ten per cent of the area we use in villages and cities shall be marked, fenced, and declared as human-free zones.

In the beginning, creation of HFZs in the private property shall be a voluntary activity for all. People may convert small patches of their land into HFZs. For instance, a person may simply fence off a few square metres of area on his/her house premises and designate it as a human-free zone.

However, in case the idea gains wide public acceptance—and after enactment of suitable laws and regulations—creation of such zones shall be made a mandatory pre-requisite for all development activities of the humankind.

Absolutely Human-free

The expression “human-free zones” (HFZs) has to be taken in all sense of the term. Areas designated so, whether land or water, shall be left absolutely “untouched” by humans and their activities whatsoever.

Those zones have to be absolutely out-of-bounds for humankind.

No human shall enter or meddle with such zones. No activities like cleaning, sowing or irrigation are to be allowed in those territories. Let natural forces alone take control of such zones.

Ideally, we should totally ignore—and, if possible, forget—such declared zones. Indeed, zero human impact will have to be the ultimate goal.

Shall it be made Mandatory?

We may encourage people to create and maintain human-free zones voluntarily on private properties. Eventually, once the idea gets enough recognition among the society, the governments at various levels—local, state, and national—can enact laws and regulations to make it mandatory.

Indeed, citizens may voluntarily create HFZs in their private property—house premises, gardens, farms, marsh areas, or ranches—as they wish. They are free to decide how much of the area of the land or waters they own shall be declared, fenced, and converted into HFZs. The area of voluntarily created human-free zones could vary from ten per cent to ninety per cent of the property.

For example, a person who owns ten acres of land may fence, and convert one acre of land into a HFZ. Another person might create a HFZ measuring nine acres of land keeping only the remaining one acre for his house premise.

Schools, colleges, universities, corporate houses, factories, and the like shall mark, fence, and declare patches of lands as human-free zones. Likewise well chosen ponds, lakes, rivulets, and rivers could also be declared as HFZs.

Indeed, creation of human-free zones all over the world requires global acceptance of the idea. This could be achieved through prolonged and sustained public communication campaigns. NGOs as well as other individuals shall come forward to materialise this objective

We have to encourage individuals for voluntarily creating human-free zones in their private property. We might mobilise our school/college/university students on a global scale to create and maintain HFZs in and around educational institutions

Making Human-Free Zone a Mandatory Prerequisite to Development

The governments at different levels—local, state, and national—through the enactment of the necessary laws and regulations shall make creation of “human-free zones” a mandatory prerequisite for development activities.

This is to ensure that territories amounting to a minimum percentage of the area of the human habitations—say, at least ten per cent—are declared and maintained as HFZs.

International bodies including the United Nations may consider the idea for discussion on a global level. If found sensible and feasible, the United Nations could contribute a lot in spreading this innovation in all the member states

Eventually, after gaining enough public support, creation of human-free zones on private properties like house premises, gardens, farms, and ranches too could be made mandatory. I suggest that at least ten per cent of all sorts of private properties shall be converted into HFZs.

The Benefits of Human-Free Zones

Indeed, the primary objective of creating human-free zones is to minimise the level of the gravity human impact on our planet and ecosystems. Such designated areas should not be confused with sanctuaries wherein humans might somehow gain access at times.

HFZs, on the other hand, are absolutely out-of-bounds for humans and such zones shall be left totally untouched and left to the forces of nature. Ideally, such zones shall be forever free of any anthropogenic impact.

Different forms of life might find sanctuary in such zone unbothered by humans. A variety of plants, animals, birds, microorganisms might live, thrive or perish in such protected territories in our villages, cities, and beyond.

When we think of human impact on our environment a host of negative consequences do rush into our mind: pollution, depletion, extinction, destruction, and so on. Creation of HFZs would contribute towards minimising all the negative consequences of human impact.

If millions of people, in different continents, could individually convert territories, even as tiny as one square metre in size, into HFZs that would add up to something remarkable on a global scale.

Creation of numerous, widely scattered HFZs in and around our villages and cities is likely enhance overall freshness to our environment,

providing conducive pools of ecosystem to a variety of plants, animals, and microorganisms of all kind. And, our “development” is likely to become still more sustainable!

The Impossibility of Zero Human Impact

It could be argued the no zone on our planet could be made absolutely free of any anthropogenic impact since the global environment is almost saturated with a host of human made phenomena including various electronic waves and radiations.

This may be true but we have to make all possible efforts to keep the level of such anthropogenic effect to the minimum. Indeed, the insurmountable problem indicated here is one of the countless limitations of our civilisation.

Mandatory Human-Free Zones beyond Human Habitations

Some portions of our remote areas including forests, valleys, hills, and the like—not generally frequented by humans—shall also be declared by law as absolutely human-free zones. Such areas could already be with only minimum human impact. Still we can bring such zones under the protection of law denying any sort of access to those areas.

Once we accept the core idea of mandatory creation of HFZs for implementation, we have to leave the questions regarding its legal aspects—enactment of statutes, laws, regulations, and the like—to the legal experts.

However, individuals are free to set up HFZs in their private property the extent they like and this has to be encouraged through communication campaign at local, state, national, and international level. And our ultimate objective shall be to convert territories constituting at least one third of the surface of our planet into absolutely human-free zones.

Human beings, the most advanced beings on the earth shall thus impose an ultimate restriction on themselves: creating and maintaining human-free zones.

SOME QUESTIONS ON HUMAN-FREE ZONES

- **We do have enough natural human-free zones all over the world. Then why should we create more in and around our habitations?**

Maybe there are human-free zones on our planet wherein we have not yet intruded into or just could not get access to those areas yet. Our technology may help us, presently or in future, to gain access to such remote or inaccessible areas.

For the sake of other life forms, we have to bring at least a certain percentage of such areas under the protection of law. For instance at least thirty per cent of such areas could be declared, by law, as HFZs.

Humanity, other forms of life, and the environment are going gain a lot by the setting up of HFZs amidst human habitations as well.

Wouldn't it be great if humans, “the most advanced beings on the planet”, could impose an outlandish restriction on themselves by creating HFZs in their own backyards?

- **How could we fence and protect the proposed HFZs?**

Whenever possible, we have to use vegetative fencing using thick thorny plants like the cactus. Wire fencing could be another option. If it is possible and feasible, creating six-foot walls could also be used in some cases. After designating and fencing off, the ideal way to “protect” such zones would be to “ignore and forget” them.

- **Can't parents allow their children to create little HFZs in their house premises?**

Indeed, they could be encouraged to mark and fence off small patches of land in a corner in their “homeland” and declare them as their sweet little HFZs. It is better for their parents to avoid meddling with what they thus create.

- **Why don't we promote the setting up of HFZs at schools, colleges, universities, and other institutions?**

Yes, why don't we do so and go ahead? The government as well as the management of the various institutions shall come forward and take up the challenge.

- **Who will ultimately own the Human-Free Zones?**

Ideally, the human civilisation should shun all its rights on Human-free zones. Humans shall not have any “sovereignty” over such zones. Indeed, such territories are supposed to be for all beings—all forms of life—except Homo sapiens.

However, until we could evolve an adequately viable system, the mandatory HFZs amidst the human habitations shall be treated as government owned.

Besides the mandatory area, people shall be free to create and maintain HFZs on their private property the way they like, keeping them so as long as they like. Such individuals can organise and formulate codes and ethics of their own for “regulating” creation and maintenance of HFZs. A person might voluntarily designate and declare twenty per cent of one’s private property as human-free. Another person might keep for oneself only ten per cent and declare the rest as a HFZ.

Humans might need or take years, decades, or even centuries to accept, imbibe, and implement most of the ideas presented here. This is primarily because many who are in power—directing the destiny of our civilisation—are too insensitive to the survival rights of other forms of life on Earth.

- **Can’t we designate ponds, lakes, rivulets, rivers, oceans or parts of them as Human-Free Zones?**

We have to apply serious thought to the goal of converting whole or portions of ponds, lakes, rivers, and oceans into HFZs.

- **How far humans shall go on creating and maintaining HFZs?**

Ideally, we shall not rest until we succeed in converting territories amounting to at least one third of the total surface area of our planet into HFZs. Anything less would be an underachievement for the “most advanced” beings on Earth.

- **In an age when human civilisation is attempting to explore and colonise other planets, is not the idea of converting domains on the Earth into human-free zones a bit nutty?**

It appears that for the very survival of human race and other life forms on this planet in a sustainable environment we are in need of some “nutty” ideas as well.

The achievements of our civilisation are quite often extolled by those who argue that science and technology can solve our problems. They present before us an impressive list of benefits we all enjoy at present. Yet, strangely, members of Homo sapiens alone have to “buy, buy, and buy” almost all of our survival needs: water, food, shelter, leisure, and so on. For all other beings, except the most advanced beings on Earth, all the survival needs are absolutely free. All our “wisdom and sanity” had led us to this plight.

If “sane” ideas fail to save us, why not try a few “nutty” ones? Perhaps, it would take mountains of “nuts” to enable us and all other forms of life to regain a sustainable environment on the planet.

- **Once widely spread, won’t this idea of creation of HFZs add a lot more “nuts” in the world?**

Our civilisation has always been blessed with a few, but precious, servings of “nuts” that still lay glitteringly scattered in the pathetic path of our history. They include great saints, philosophers, and thinkers who partly succeeded in delaying the degeneration of our civilisation. Those are the ones who argued for the well being of all forms of life—not just that of the humankind.

Perhaps, once the idea of creating HFZs gains acceptance globally, there remains a possibility of widespread mushrooming of what could be called “HFZonuts” all over the world. A few extremist “nuts” among them might even argue for the total evacuation of human beings from the Earth, and to declare the entire planet as a human-free zone.

Fortunately, our civilisation is endowed with adequate resilience to absorb and assimilate nuts of all kind including the human.

