

Human and Environment Interaction



Human and Environment Interaction: Anthropogenic activities and their impacts on the Environment

Environment and human beings are inter-related. The environment gives us food, water, fuel, medicines, building materials, etc. Though science and technology have advanced and because of that we have benefitted a lot but it also introduced pollution and damaged the environment. The impact of this is also on human beings like health-related issues and socio-economic development.

Further, to this, we will study the relationships between human beings and the environment and how we use environmental resources.

Interaction of human activity and the environment –

By environment, we understand the surrounding of the place, natural world of land, sea and atmosphere and its characteristics in which we live. Human beings interact with this environment when they first walked on the Earth.

People can live and flourish when they have a good climatic condition with accessible clean water, fertile soil, etc. Whereas, it becomes difficult for people to survive on a very hot climate, limited water resources and infertile land.

We also get affected on the natural calamities like floods, drought, and earthquakes which damage the agriculture, properties, homes and water sources, pipelines, etc.

These causes dislocation of people, loss of life, destruction, etc. Waterborne diseases, water contamination can be caused due to damage of water sources.

Another change which is affecting our environment is due to industrialization. We use various types of things to do our things which have increased the human impact on the environment.

Though the relationship between human activities and the environment are multifaceted they can be grouped in major two types of activities.

They are:

- Use of natural resources like land, water, soils, food, minerals, animals and plants.
- Production of waste like agriculture, industry and mining and from our own bodies.

In our daily lives, we use different types of natural resources. We require food and water for our living and energy for various different uses like cooking or industrial processes. We require different types of resources for the production of clothes, transport, building, etc. A simple example of natural resources is the production of a notebook. To manufacture a paper we require raw materials like wood and water and energy for the production process. The wood we are getting from the trees which require soil, water and land to grow on. There are other components in the notebook like ink or metal staples which require other types of resources.

Thus, the need for resources is infinite and it is growing with the increase of population and consumption with socio-economic progress.

Renewable and non-renewable resources

Resources can be classified as **renewable and non-renewable resources**.

Renewable resources can be replenished by natural means like solar energy is powered by heat from the sun and never runs out. Oxygen, water, solar energy and biomass are some examples of renewable resources.

Whereas, non-renewable resources cannot be replenished by natural means and quickly as the rate they are consumed like minerals and fossils fuels such as oil, coal and gas which are produced over several of years by natural processes from decayed plants and animals.

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Over-exploitation of natural resources damages the eco-system. By eco-system we understand, all the living organisms like human beings, animals, plants, etc. and their

physical environments like soil, water, air and land and the connections between them. If one of the components is detached of the system, then it affects the other part as well.

Another, issue that affecting the natural resources is deforestation, which happens when the trees are cut down from the forests or not allowed to re-grow. If there are no forests it also has a significant impact on water supply. The roots of the trees reach deep into the soil and create space between the particles which further increases the soil, allowing rainwater to soak and replenish groundwater.

Energy resources

Renewable and non-renewable resources play a major role in energy resources. For global industrialization, fossil fuels are the main energy source, but as they are non-renewable the quantity is limited and are not sustainable for longer period. Another main cause of climatic change is due to the burning of fossil fuels. The wood we know is a renewable source, when we cut the trees, it will re-grow but this also causes deforestation.

Solar power is another renewable energy source that converts the sun's energy into electricity.

Water resources

The direct use of water can be categorized into three main categories –

- Domestic use
- Agricultural use
- Industrial use

The use of unnecessary water from rivers and groundwater for domestic, agricultural and industrial use decreases the amount of water availability for current and future generations.

Water is also important for biodiversity. Rivers, lakes and wetlands are important for wildlife and need water. It will become a problem if the demand for water exceeds the supply. The demand of water supply in many parts of the world and is above sustainable water supply. By sustainable water supply we understand, the adequate supplies, in both quality and quantity which meets both the current and future requirements of people.

Warming of climate is due to the increased rate of evaporation from the lake.

Production of waste and pollutants

The impact of inadequate sanitation, waterborne diseases in water and food has been contaminated by the wastes from infected people. Not only has these, industry, agriculture and energy production all generated wastes that pollute the air, water and soil.

Technology and the environment

Human beings have produced many several types of wastes that pollute the environment. One of the major examples is e-waste, which is caused by discarded electronic gadgets like mobile phones, computers, televisions, microwaves, etc. It has many toxic substances that pollute groundwater, soil and air unless and until they are disposed in a well-managed way.

We conclude this article on a positive note...human beings also contribute to the environment positively to sustain it. When we do wastewater treatment on plants, it protects the species and replants the forests. It gives a positive impact on our environment. With some developmental programme like reforestation, the environment has benefitted and improved a lot.