

IMPACTS OF MODERN LIFESTYLE ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Definition:

“It is defined as any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable”

OR

“Deterioration of Earth’s natural surrounding as a result of excessive exploitation of available resources “

Explanation:

Environmental degradation is a process through which the natural environment is compromised in some way, reducing biological diversity and general health of the environment. The environment can be entirely natural in origin or it can be accelerated or caused by human activities. Many international organizations recognize environmental degradation as one of the major threats facing the planet. If the environment becomes irreparably compromised it could mean the end of human existence. Environmental degradation has become a major global issue this century. It is impacting the national, social and economic landscape. Rapid economic development and man-made interference the natural system are the chief reason behind this problem.

“We can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs”

Depending upon the damage, some environments may never recover. The plants and animals that inhabited these places will be lost forever.

Impact of modern life on environment:

Modern lifestyle led to too much pressure on Earth’s resources

Simple example is: **Petroleum products.**

Global warming (climate change) is also an aftermath of modern lifestyle. The more you want to become the more waste you will produce. Another important aspect of modern life style is changes in food habits, sedentary jobs, comfortable but stressful life and bad eating habits

hazards like blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. They have become common lifestyle diseases and are a cause of worry all over the world. These conditions which were earlier seen in young people and, children. More people are ending up with heart problems, and obese bodies.

Importance of environmental quality:

The environment directly affects health status and plays a major role in quality of life, years of healthy life lived, and health disparities. Poor air quality is linked to premature death, cancer, and long-term damage to respiratory and cardiovascular systems. Second hand smoke containing toxic and cancer-causing chemicals contributes to heart disease and lung cancer in non-smoking adults. Globally, nearly 25% of all deaths and the total disease burden can be attributed to environmental factors.

Environmental Degradation Occurs:

- Increase in the sophistication of technology enabling natural resources to be degraded quickly natural resources to be degraded quickly and efficiently. e.g., in the past, it could take long hours just to cut down one tree only using saws.
- A rapid increase in population that is now decreasing. The current number of 7.132 billion humans consume many natural resources.
- Cultures of consumerism. Materialistic views lead to the mining of gold and diamonds to produce jewelry, unnecessary commodities for human life or advancement.
- Excessive demand often leads to conflicts due to intense competition.
- Non-equitable distribution of resources.

Sources of environmental deterioration:

Following sources of the environmental deterioration are:

- **Water and Air pollution:**

Water and air pollution are unfortunately the common causes of environmental degradation. Pollution introduces contaminants into the environment that can even kill the plants and animals species. The two often go hand in hand.

- **Acid rain:**

Acid rain occurs when sulfur dioxide from coal plant emissions combines with moisture present in the air. A chemical reaction creates this acid precipitations. Acid rain can acidify and pollutes lakes and streams. It cause similar effects to the soil. If enough acid rain falls in a given environment, it can acidify the water or soil to a point where no life

can be sustained. Plants die off. The animals depend upon them disappear. The condition of the environment deteriorates.

- **Deforestation:**

Deforestation is the clearance of forests by logging and or burning. Deforestation occurs for many reasons: trees or derived charcoal are used as, or a sold, for fuel or as a commodity, while cleared land is used as a pasture for livestock, plantations of commodities, and settlements. The removal of trees without sufficient reforestation has resulted in the damage to habitat, biodiversity loss and aridity. It has adverse impacts on bio sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide. Deforested regions typically incur significant adverse soil erosion frequently degrade into wasteland.

- **Desertification:**

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid and dry sub-humid areas due to various factors; including climatic variations and human activities. Desertification results chiefly from man-made activities. It is principally caused by overgrazing , over drafting of groundwater and diversion of water from rivers from human consumption and industrial use; all these process are fundamentally driven by overpopulation. A major impact of desertification is reduced biodiversity and diminished productive capacity, for example, by transition from land dominated by shrub lands to non-native grassland.

- **Agriculture Runoff:**

Farming creates agriculture runoff issues. Agricultural runoff is deadly sources of pollutants which can degrade environments, so much so that the EPA identifies agriculture as the primary sources of water pollution.

Surface water washes over the soil and into lakes and streams. When it does so, it carries the fertilizers and pesticides used on the farm lands into water resources. Fertilizers containing large amounts of phosphorus can cause explosions of algae in lakes. As the algae die, bacteria start to breakdown the organic material. It soon develops a situation where bacteria are using up the available of dissolved oxygen in the water. Plants, fish, and other organisms begin to die off. The water becomes acidic. Like acid rain, lakes becomes dead zone with conditions so toxic that neither plants nor animals can live in these environment..

- **Climate change:**

Climate change is a direct threat to a child's ability to survive, grow, and thrive. As extreme weather events such as cyclones and heat waves increases in frequency and ferocity, they threaten children's lives and destroy infrastructure critical to their well-being. Floods compromise water and sanitation facilities, leading to diseases such as cholera, to which children are particularly vulnerable.

- **Urban development:**

urban development is one of the primary cause of environmental degradation. As populations increased, so did the need for land for homes and farms. Wetlands were drained

- **Adverse effect of environmental degradation on health and productivity:**

1. Water pollution & scarcity contributes to poor household hygiene added health risks, aquifer depletion, & limits on economics activity, contributing to millions of death yearly
2. Excessive urban particulate matter responsible for 300 to 700 thousand premature deaths annually and for half of childhood chronic coughing.
3. Smoky indoor air affects 400 to 700 million people, mostly rural areas.
4. Air pollution from factories and vehicles affects forests & water through acid rain.
5. Solid and hazardous wastes & polluted groundwater increases diseases.
6. Soil degradation reduces nutrition for poor farmers on depleted soils and increases susceptibility to drought.
7. Deforestation & flooding leads to death and diseases, increased erosion, & reduced carbon sequestration.
8. Reduced biodiversity reduces new drug and genetic resource potential.

Environmental factors:

Factors of environment are as following:

- Osmolarity
- PH
- Temperature
- Oxygen concentration
- Pressure
- Radiation

Effects of environmental degradation :

Water pollution:

- Aquifer depletion
- Increased runoff & flooding form
- Land cleared to grow crops

- Sediment pollution from erosion

Soil:

- Erosion
- Loss of fertility
- Stalination
- Lateralization
- Water logging

Air pollution:

Greenhouse gasses emitted from;

- Fossil fuels
- Other air pollutants from fossil fuels
- Pollution from pesticides sprays

Biodiversity:

From clearing grasslands & forest:

- Fish kills from pesticides runoff
- Loss and degradation of habitat
- killing of wild predators to protect livestock
- loss of genetic diversity from replacing thousands of wild crops
- strains with a few monoculture strains

Human health:

- Nitrates in drinking water
- Pesticides residues in food, air & water
- Contamination through livestock waste
- Bacterial contaminations of meat

Causes of Environmental degradation:

- Overconsumption

- Over population
- Technological and industrial
- Erosion
- Habitat degradation
- Mining
- Aquifer depletion
- Pollution
- Irrigation
- The downstream river discharge is reduced
- The evaporation in the scheme is increased
- The groundwater recharge in scheme is increased
- The level of the water table rises

How to stop depletion:

There are ways which you can help to decrease degradation in our environment. Some of these include:

- Purchase recycled products
- Conserve water
- Conserve energy
- Do not litter to loss waste inappropriate place
- Join an awareness group
- Be an advocate to save our planet!

