

POPULATION AND ENVIRONMENT

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Environment is the topic of common discussion these days the reason for this is the rapid deterioration occurring in the environment. The common problems that have come up in the environment include global warming, Ozone layer depletion, acid precipitation, pollution, extinction of species, soil erosion, etc. The common cause of these problems is the ever - increasing human population

POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT :

An increase in population of a country necessitates rapid development to provide basic amenities to people. Development involves establishment of new townships, industries; expansion and improvement of agriculture; modernization of transport, building up of dams and canals etc. Thus, all development projects need space. The space is usually made available by clearing forests and reclaiming the waste lands. Both the methods destroy the natural habitats of plants and animals. Habitat destruction has been the main cause of extinction of species. Some animals migrate to new habitats where they are likely to disturb the ecosystem balance.

The productive areas of grasslands, croplands and woodlands are fast reducing because of development projects. Modern industry and agriculture are polluting the life supporting systems - air, land and water by releasing harmful chemicals.

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR POPULATION GROWTH :

1. Decrease in death rates due to increased food production and control of diseases as a result of advancements in science and technology.
2. Increase in average life span.
3. Better medical facilities.
4. Control of insect nectars of fatal diseases and epidemics.
5. Better sanitation.

6. Proper care of new-born babies and their mothers.
7. Better nutrition and easy availability of basic amenities.
8. Protection against wild life and adverse weather as people live in houses.

EFFECTS OF OVERPOPULATION ON ENVIRONMENT :

1. Shortage of space - New towns and cities are coming up to accommodate the growing population. This has put a great strain on agricultural land and forests. Clearing of forests for habitation and agriculture has caused new problems, including soil erosion, floods and increasing pollution.
2. Energy Crisis - Increase in population has created greater demands for energy. Growing consumption of fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) and electricity can lead to the depletion of these resources. Rapid industrialization and urbanization have added to the problem.
3. Eco-degradation - Overpopulation causes eco-degradation in the following ways :-
 - (i) Pollution : Rise in population has caused pollution of air, water and land. This is also seriously affecting the human health.
 - (ii) Sanitation : It is difficult to maintain sanitation in crowded areas. This also leads to several diseases.