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**ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION IN INDIA: -  
CAUSES AND EFFECTS**

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# Environmental Degradation in India: - Causes and Effects

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**Abstract – This paper deals with the concept of environmental degradation which is the need of hour. Environmental degradation is the disintegration of the earth or declension of the environment through consumption of various assets like, soil air and water. The destruction of environment and the decimate of wildlife. Air pollution, soil pollution, water pollution and pollution of the natural environment are all challenges for India. According to World Bank report and experts, between 1995 through 2015, India has made one of the rapidly progress in the world in, addressing its environmental issues and improving its environmental quality. Recently pollution remains a major problems and opportunity for India. Environmental Degradation is one of the primary causes of diseases, long term livelihood impacts and health issues for India.**

**Key-Word:-Environmental degradation, degradation causes and effects.**

## INTRODUCTION

Environment can be defined as the physical surrounding of man/woman of which he/she is a part and on which he/she is dependent for his/her activities like physiological functioning, production and consumption. Environmental degradation is a result of the dynamic inters play of socio-economic, institutional and technological activities. Environmental changes may be driven by many Factors like, population growth, urbanization, deforestation, economic growth, intensification of Agriculture, rising energy use and transportation. Poverty still remains a problem at therootof Several environmental problems .His physical environment stretches from water air, and land to natural resources like energy carriers plants, soil , animals and ecosystems for an urbanized society, a large part of environment is man-made. But, even then the artificial environments like (building, roads) and implements (clothes, automobiles) are based on an input of both labour and natural resources. . The relationship between physical environment and the well-being of individuals and societies is multi-fold and multi-faceted with a qualitative as well as a quantitative aspect to it. The availability and use of natural resources have a bearing on the outcome and the pace of development process.

## CAUSES OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:-

Environmental degradation comes about due to erosion and decline of the quality of the natural

environment. It is caused directly or indirectly by anthropogenic activities that extract various environmental resources at a faster rate than they are replaced, and thus depleting them. There are two main factors are responsible for environmental degradation:-

### 1. Natural factors

### 2. Social factors

#### 1. Natural Factors:-

Despite the fact that environmental degradation is under normal circumstances associated with anthropogenic activities, natural causes are also contributors. Natural events such as wildfires, hurricanes, landslides, tsunamis and earthquakes can totally lower the survival grade of local animal communities and plant life in a region. These disasters can also destroy alter the nature of the landscape rendering it unable to support life forms on it. Besides, occurrences such as hurricanes and flooding can wash or force the migration of invasive species into foreign environments which can lead to its eventual degradation.

#### 2. Social Factors:-

#### A. Overpopulation and Over-exploitation of Resources:-

As the human population keeps on enlarging, there is a lot of pressure on the utilization of natural

resources. This often causes over-exploitation of the natural resources, and contributes to environmental erosion. According to a study by the UNEP Global Environment Outlook, excessive human consumption of the naturally occurring non-renewable resources can outstrip available resources in the near future and remarkably destroys the environment during extraction and utilization. Overpopulation simply means more pollution and fast extraction of natural resources compared to how they are being replaced.

#### **B. Ruinous Agricultural Practices:-**

Intensive agricultural practices have led to the decline in quality of most of our natural environments. Majority of farmers resort to converting forests and grasslands to croplands which reduce the quality of natural forests and vegetation cover. The pressure to convert lands into resource areas for producing priced foods, crops, and livestock rearing has increasingly led to the depreciation of natural environments such as forests, wildlife and fertile land. Intensive agricultural practices destroy fertile lands and nearby vegetation cover due to the accumulation of toxic substances like bad minerals and heavy metals which destroy the soil's biological and chemical activities. Runoffs of agricultural wastes and chemical fertilizers and pesticides into marine and freshwater environments have also deteriorated the quality of wild life habitats, natural water resources, wetlands and aquatic life.

#### **C. Poverty:-**

There are many cases where local poverty and perceived lack of alternative income sources will lead to environmental degradation. In both urban and rural areas, local population growth puts strain on certain resources, but often there are options which could be applied to redress the situation and avoid degradation if appropriate conditions were established. But even in these areas, poverty per se is not usually the only cause, as lack of awareness, personal greed of others using the same resource, inadequate tenure, ineffective controls and enforcement mechanisms, and corruption all contribute to local ecological decline. This highlights the importance of non-income poverty. Cash grants to most rural communities will generally do little to reduce overall poverty until there are also the necessary skills and investment opportunities to use the money to solve the underlying problems.

#### **D. Urbanization:-**

Urbanization has become a common feature of Indian society. Growth of Industries has contributed to the growth of cities. As a result of industrialization people have started moving towards the industrial areas in search of employment. This has resulted in the growth of towns and cities. Urbanization denotes a diffusion of the influence of urban centers to a rural hinterland.

Urbanization can also be defined as a process of concentration of population in a particular territory.

Urbanization has many negative effects on the environment. It can cause pollution and it destroys existing habitats of organisms. Urbanization has many negative effects on the environment. It can cause pollution and it destroys existing habitats of organisms

#### **E. Increase in Deforestation:-**

The act of deforestation (cutting down of trees) has impacted on the world in terms of depreciating the natural environment and wildlife. It has also impacted on humans on the account of changes in environmental support processes such as weather conditions. Some of the reasons for deforestation include farming, construction, settlement, mining, or other economic purposes. For more than one hundred years, the number of trees on the planet has plummeted, resulting in devastating consequences such as biodiversity loss, soil erosion, species extinction, global warming, and interference with the water cycle.

#### **F. Environmental Pollution:-**

Most of the planet's natural environments have been destroyed and a large portion is under huge threat due to the toxic substances and chemicals emitted from fossil fuel combustions, industrial wastes, and homemade utilities among other industry processed materials such as plastics. Land, air, and water pollution pose long-term cumulative impacts on the quality of the natural environments in which they occur. Seriously polluted environments have become insignificant in value because pollution makes it harsh for the sustainability of biotic and abiotic components. Pollution impacts the chemical compositions of lands, soil, ocean water, underground water and rocks, and other natural processes. Air pollution from automobiles and industries that results in the formation of acid rain which in turn brings about acidic lake is a good example of how the environment is degraded by pollution.

### **EFFECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:-**

#### **1. Impacts on Human Health**

Human health is heavily impacted by environmental degradation. Reduction in water quality is responsible for more than two million deaths and billions of illness annually across the globe. Due to environmental degradation, the results include water scarcity and decline in quality foods. Reduction in air quality is responsible for more than 300,000 deaths annually and millions of chronic diseases. Landfills increase the risk of hazardous materials getting into the food chain which causes bio magnifications and the ultimate risk of developing chronic diseases. Altogether, the toxic wastes and harmful chemicals

from factories, agriculture and automobiles cause illnesses and death in children and adults.

## 2. Poverty:-

Many readers are probably familiar with the tale of four blind men being asked to identify the object in front of them. Each blind man just investigated a part so no one identified the whole as an elephant. Similarly, both environmental degradation and poverty alleviation are urgent global issues that have a lot in common, but are often treated separately. This article explores some of these linkages. Therefore, the approaches to such issues require rethinking. The overloaded phrase sustainable development must recognize the interconnectedness between human beings and the environment if true environmental and social justice is to be obtained

## 3. Atmospheric Changes:-

Environmental degradation can alter some of the natural process such as the water cycle and the normal processes of animal and plant activities. Also, environmental degradation aspects such as deforestation and mining destroy the natural land cover. This, together with air, water, and land pollution pose several atmospheric alteration threats. The alterations include global warming and climate change which can increase the risks of climatic natural disasters, and ozone layer depletion which increases the risk of skin cancer, eye disease, and crop failure.

## 4. Loss of Biodiversity:-

Degradation of the environment has recorded a continued destruction of wild forests and the damage of natural ecosystems that has greatly contributed to the mass extinction of species. The number of threatened species persists to multiply worldwide whereas some have completely gone extinct. This is because of the human activities such as acidifying water systems, over-exploitation of natural resources, overpopulation, and the deliberate and indirect destruction of natural systems necessary for the survival of different species. These anthropogenic activities simply alter the natural process combined, thus, destroying the natural ecosystems supporting biodiversity.

## 5. Scarcity of Natural Resources:-

Environmental degradation through aspects such as over-exploitation of natural resources, pollution, and deforestation can contribute to the scarcity of resources particularly arable land, water, genetic resources, medicinal plants, and food crops.

## CONCLUSION:-

The one of the main causes of environmental degradation in India is rapid growth of population in combination with economic development and overuse of scarce natural resources. Major environmental calamities in India include soil degradation, deforestation, air pollution, habitat destruction. Economic growth and changing consumption patterns have led to a rising demand for energy and increasing transport activities. Air, water and noise pollution together with water scarcity dominate the environmental issues in India. According to the different aspect and issues concerned by me on environmental degradation in view point of its very dangerous effects for the coming generation. Our country has made one of the fastest progresses in the world. India needs improving its environmental quality. Now India has a long way to go to reach environmental quality similar to those enjoyed in world developed economies.

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