

Perspective

Types, causes and effects of environmental degradation

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Environmental degradation occurs when ecosystems are destroyed, wildlife is wiped out and natural resources like air, water and soil are depleted. This concept encompasses any environmental change or disturbance that is seen as harmful or undesirable. The environment can be harmed in a broad range of ways, including pollution, ecological destruction, loss of fresh water supplies and loss of arable land. Environmental degradation is brought on by erosion and a decline in the quality of the natural environment. Human actions that extract resources from the environment faster than they can be replaced have a direct or indirect impact on it. The ecosystem might degrade in a number of ways. When common resources are exhausted or ecosystems are destroyed, the environment is perceived as corrupted and ruined.

Types

Degradation of soil and land: Poor agricultural practises, overuse of pesticides and fertilisers, landfill leaks, and other factors all contribute to the loss of soil quality.

Water degradation: Degradation of water involves dumping garbage into the ocean, dumping without permission, dumping a lot of industrial waste in nearby rivers or lakes, etc.

Atmospheric degradation: Atmospheric degradation includes deterioration of the air, particle pollution, and depletion of the ozone layer, among other things.

Several other types of pollution: Along with the deterioration of the land, water, and atmosphere, there are several additional forms of pollution that harm the ecosystem. Examples include noise pollution and light pollution.

Causes

Environmental deterioration is a result of a variety of elements, such as social, economic, environmental, political, and administrative ones.

Social factors includes:

- Population-The primary ways that population impacts the environment are through the use of natural resources and the creation of garbage. Additionally, it is subject to a number of

environmental pressures like declining biodiversity, deteriorating air and water quality, and rising demand for arable land.

- Poverty-When people lack the essentials for survival, it is thought that poverty is both a cause and a result of environmental deterioration. For instance, they could be in a life-or-death situation without access to clean water, enough housing, appropriate clothing, or medications.
- Urbanization-Poor families are migrating to cities in ever-increasing numbers as a result of the ecological issues and the lack of opportunities for productive work in rural areas.

Economic factors includes:

- Market failure-Environmental degradation is mostly caused by a lack of or a dysfunctional market for environmental products and services.
- Economic development-Environmental problems can take on different forms depending on the rate and distribution of economic expansion. Economic development, especially industrialization-based economic development, is a cause of environmental degradation.
- Impact on agricultural development- Agricultural developments has an adverse effect on nutrient loss, land salinization, and soil erosion. Leaching from the extensive use of fertilisers and pesticides can harm water sources. Intensive farming and irrigation also contribute to land deterioration.
- Transport activities- Air pollution, noise from traffic, and oil spills from marine transportation are just a few of the ways that transportation activities have an impact on the environment.

Political and administrative factors includes:

Administrative and political reasons, such as a lack of visionary leadership, politicians' traditional role in crafting policy, and improper execution of environmental legislation, all contribute to environmental deterioration.

Environmental factors includes:

- Whole ecosystems might be wiped out by some of the long-term environmental effects of habitat fragmentation. Habitats become fragmented when development completely destroys

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large, stable land areas. One example is a road that passes through a forest, or a route that meanders through a prairie. Although it might not appear unpleasant at first glance, there are serious consequences.

- Sadly, the major causes of environmental decline are air and water pollution. Pollutants have the power to damage or even destroy some plant and animal species by bringing contaminants into the environment.
- Acid rain is caused when moisture in the air reacts with streams, acidifying and contaminating the water. Similar impacts are seen on the soil.
- Destruction of ozone layer.

Effects of environmental degradation

Impact on human health: Human health is significantly harmed by environmental degradation. Each year, poor water

quality kills millions of people and sickens billions more people worldwide. Environmental degradation has two effects they are lack of water and a decrease in food quality.

Atmospheric changes: The water cycle and regular animal and plant activities are only a few of the naturally occurring processes that might be altered by environmental degradation. Additional environmental degradation processes that destroy the natural land cover include mining and deforestation.

Scarcity of natural resources: A lack of resources, such as arable land, water, genetic resources, medicinal plants, and food crops, can be brought about by environmental deterioration. Overuse of natural resources, pollution, and deforestation are a few of these problems.