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Chapter – 5

CONSERVATION OF PLANTS

AND

ANIMALS

DEFORESTATION AND ITS CAUSES

Deforestation means clearing of forests and using that land for other purposes. Trees in the forest are cut for some of the purposes

- 1. Procuring land for cultivation.**
- 2. Building houses and factories.**
- 3. Making furniture or using wood as fuel.**

Some natural causes of deforestation are forest fires and severe droughts.

CONSEQUENCES OF DEFORESTATION

Deforestation increases the temperature and pollution level on the earth. It increases the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Ground water level also gets lowered.

Deforestation disturbs the balance in nature

If cutting of trees continues, rainfall and the fertility of the soil will decrease. Moreover, there will be increased chances of natural calamities such as floods and droughts.

Plants need carbon dioxide for photosynthesis. Fewer trees would mean that less carbon dioxide will be used up resulting in its increased amount in the atmosphere. This will lead to global warming as carbon dioxide traps the heat rays reflected by the earth.

The increase in temperature on the earth disturbs the water cycle and may reduce rainfall. This could cause droughts.

Deforestation is a major cause which leads to the change in soil properties. Physical properties of the soil get affected by plantation and vegetation. Fewer trees result in more soil erosion. Removal of the top layer of the soil exposes the lower, hard and rocky layers.

This soil has less humus and is less fertile. Gradually the fertile land gets converted into deserts. It is called desertification.

Deforestation also leads to a decrease in the water holding capacity of the soil. The movement of water from the soil surface into the ground (infiltration rate) is reduced. So, there are floods. The other properties of the soil like nutrient content, texture etc., also change because of deforestation.

Conservation of Forest and Wildlife

To protect our flora and fauna and their habitats, protected areas called wildlife sanctuaries, national parks and biosphere reserves have been earmarked. Plantation, cultivation, grazing, felling trees, hunting and poaching are prohibited there.

Wildlife Sanctuary: Areas where animals are protected from any disturbance to them and their habitat.

National Park: Areas reserved for wild life where they can freely use the habitats and natural resources.

Biosphere Reserve: Large areas of protected land for conservation of wild life, plant and animal resources and traditional life of the tribal living in the area.

Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserves are the areas meant for conservation of biodiversity. Biodiversity has variety of plants, animals and microorganisms generally found in an area. The biosphere reserves help to maintain the biodiversity and culture of that area. A biosphere reserve may also contain other protected areas in it.

Flora and Fauna

The plants and animals found in a particular area are termed flora and fauna respectively of that area. Sal, teak, mango, jamun, silver

ferns, arjun, etc., are the flora and chinkara, blue- bull, barking deer, cheetal, leopard, wild dog, wolf, etc. are examples of the fauna.

Endemic Species

Endemic species are those species of plants and animals which are found exclusively in a particular area. They are not naturally found anywhere else. A particular type of animal or plant may be endemic to a zone, a state or a country.

Species

Species is a group of population which are capable of interbreeding. This means that the members of a species can reproduce fertile offspring only with the members of their own species and not with members of other species. Members of a species have common characteristics.

Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife Sanctuaries like reserve forests provide protection and suitable living conditions to wild animals. People living in wildlife sanctuaries are allowed to do certain activities such as grazing by their livestock, collecting medicinal plants, firewood, etc. killing (poaching) or capturing animals in general is strictly prohibited and punishable by law in all such places.

National Park

National Park are the reserves that are large and diverse enough to protect whole sets of ecosystems. They preserve flora, fauna, landscape and historic objects of an area.

Red Data Book

Red Data Book is the source book which keeps a record of all the endangered animals and plants. Red Data Book is maintained internationally by an organisation. India also maintains Red Data Book for plants and animals found in India.

Migration

Migratory birds fly to far away areas every year during a particular time because of climatic changes. They fly for laying eggs as the weather in their natural habitat becomes very cold and inhospitable. Birds who cover long distances to reach another land are known as migratory birds.

Recycling of Paper

It takes 17 full grown trees to make one tonne of paper. Therefore, we should save paper. We should save, reuse used paper and recycle it. By this we not only save trees but also save energy and water needed for manufacturing paper. Moreover, the amount of harmful chemicals used in paper making will also be reduced.

Reforestation

Reforestation is restocking of the destroyed forests by planting new trees. The planted trees should generally be of the same species which were found in that forest. We should plant at least as many trees as we cut. Reforestation can take place naturally also. If the deforested area is left undisturbed, it re-establishes itself. In natural reforestation there is no role of human beings. We have already caused tremendous damage to our forests. If we have to retain our green wealth for future generations, plantation of more trees is the only option.

In India we have the Forest (Conservation) Act. This act is aimed at preservation and conservation of natural forests and meeting the basic needs of the people living in or near the forests.