

Exploitation of Natural Resources Man Systematic Exploitation

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Editorial Note

Unfortunately this situation has slowly been damaging the very system which gives rise to these resources. In the following account, the main items concerned with man's exploitation of natural sources which yield pollution have been discussed in details. Side by side, necessary information has been provided with regard to impact on the environment and its consequences to man's interests, particularly his health. Exploitation of Natural Resources by Man Systematic exploitation of natural resources, modification and destruction of natural ecosystem began right from the time when man learnt to use fire, domesticate animals and grow plants for food. Man's interaction with his environment can be conveniently divided into three phases as suggested by some environmentalists. These are as follows. 1. The phase of food gathering and hunting. 2. The phase of plant and animal domestication. 3. The phase of science technology and industrialisation.

The primitive man was essentially a part and parcel of natural environment. His basic requirements were, as already pointed out before also, limited to food and shelter like all other animals. Food would be collected from surroundings while caves, bushes and trees were enough to provide shelter. For a major part of his existence since his appearance, man lived a life of hunter and gatherer of food material, as we find even now in remote areas of South-America, Africa and Asia. It was the phase of domestication of animals and plants so that he could harvest natural resources at ease and more effectively. Gradually necessity arose so as to clean some areas of natural vegetation to make room for his animals and plants. With

expanding needs of life, the natural ecosystem was modified, vegetation destroyed, flattened areas fenced off with stones, thorny bushes, logs etc. to accommodate his establishments, crops and fields. Thus, by 10,000 B.C. small human establishments sprang up in fertile regions of the world. It was around 4,000 years before Christ that man learnt to extract copper and use the metal for making arms, tools or pans, utensils. Gradually other metals were discovered. The technology for extraction of iron was discovered by about 1000 B.C., as extraction of iron from its ores requires a much higher temperature. Iron minerals are more abundant in nature as compared to those of copper. Use of metals conferred tremendous advantage to the human society. It was, however, only by 17th century A.D. that technique to harden to steel form by adding carbon was developed. With the appearance of steel and the use of mineral coal, dug out from earth, industrial revolution commenced in 17th Century. This Year gave birth to 'Origin of pollution,' but the state of affair remained unnoticed or unrealised by early technicians. With an absolutely primitive state of technology for harvesting natural resources, there was no glimpse of multifarious activities related to industrialisation. As human enterprises enlarged at the expense of natural ecosystem, there was slow and steady rise in world population, reaching, and 1 billion by 1800 A.D. Situation changed with further advancement of science and technology, especially in the fields of agriculture, fruit cultivation, horticulture, animal husbandry and fisheries. These endeavours provided ample resources to fulfil the food requirements of rising human population, which nearly doubled from 683.81 million to 1027 million in the millennium year. With the passage of time, there came tremendous impact on human life style.