

The Rapid Growth of Human Population Has Brought an Ever-Rising Drain on Natural Resources

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Editorial Note

Human population figure of the world has crossed two billion. Such a huge accumulation of human mass in the biosphere is due to availability of energy and material resources. To lead a comfortable life with sufficient food, material and other needs of life at disposal, biotic and abiotic, natural as well as man-made resources are used and in some cases, exploited or over-exploited. This trend has brought the natural resources in some areas of the world on the brink of collapse. The rapid growth of human population has brought an ever-rising drain on natural resources. The amount of waste materials produced by human population has multiplied. The traditional method of dilution of wastes in the natural water sources is no more a solution. With the increase in the amount of wastes, their nature also changed. Thus containment of insecticides, pesticides, plastics, polymers, plasticizers, heavy metals, toxic trace elements in the wastes has turned the wastes of non-biodegradable kind and worsened the problem. The quality of surface water, on coming in contact with the industrial effluents and urban wastes, deteriorated and availability of the natural or pure water became a dreamy or wishful thinking. Even the atmosphere became polluted due to release of polluted gases in the atmosphere. Its ozone layer began to show trend of depletion. Vehicles or automobiles, factories, power houses, production units of agro-chemicals became the main sources of pollution.

Accompanied with use in human population natural resources are being heavily exploited all over the world. Yet total global production

is nearly enough to suffice the human demand for energy and materials, provided we discard lust of power and wealth and judiciously distribute the resources available to us. However, looking forward to trends of future scenario, the situation is not bright; it is rather, reflective of gloomy picture. The situation is such that the number of mouths to be fed is regularly rising. One can take notice of degradation of natural ecosystem, deterioration of fertile soils, livestock population, pasture and forest areas, wildlife numerical figures, and quality of freshwaters. In short, the natural resources, which form its basis of entire life on this planet, are being exploited non-judiciously. The natural resources are of two kinds: (i) Biotic resources and (ii) Abiotic resources. Biotic resource is the resource which is directly or indirectly derived from photosynthetic activity of green plants, food, fruits, wood, fibre, milk and milk-products, fish, meat and leather etc. belong to biotic resources. Also coal, air, natural gases are biotic resources, as they were produced by photosynthetic activity of plants which occurred millions of years ago. On the other hand, mineral materials, freshwaters, rocks, salts and chemicals etc. are items of abiotic resources as biological activity is not involved in their formation. A point of consideration about natural resource is that a resource can be renewable or non-renewable. Renewable resources are those resources which can be regenerated once they are exhausted. Fossil fuels are non-renewable resources as a finite quantity of coal, oil and natural gas is present in our planet which may be consumed completely.