

The human impact on environment



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In many people's opinions mans impact on the environment is a big issue in our life which is easily neglected, as humans are responsible for a staggering amount of damage on the earth. Nature manages its own components.

Since the outbreak of technology and industrialisation humans have greatly had a negative impact on the environment, such as; air pollution, habitat destruction, water pollution, the burning of rainforests and land pollution. In this essay I intend to give facts and discuss the effects and causes on these topics and discuss the solutions being carried out to improve the conditions.

Air pollution effects people in areas of emission sources, such as, power plants, local industry and major roads. Humans contribute to pollution by the use of machinery in industry causing pollution to the environment. More effects of air pollution on the environment involve using diesel fuel for

vehicles and coal for power along with the lack of emission controls for vehicles and industry.

Another cause of air pollution is the greenhouse gas CO₂, this gas warms the earth through living things as they emit CO₂ when breathing which contributes to humans also, as we add to this statistic through breathing also. CO₂ is usually thought to be involved with cars, aeroplanes and power plants, in the past 150 years, CO₂ has been polluting our atmosphere through the sources mentioned, this is the highest CO₂ emissions recorded for a long time. More causes of air pollution is methane gas which comes from swamps which are contributed to man through flooding. CFC's are another major cause of air pollution by man through the use of fridges and deodorants (aerosols) which harms the earth's ozone layer.

Solutions to Air Pollution

Solutions to air pollution include driving and flying less, recycling, and conservation. Governments are limiting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases through the Kyoto Protocol; this is an agreement between countries that they will cut back on carbon dioxide emissions. Another method being put into practice is to put taxes on carbon emissions or higher taxes on gasoline.

(<http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/pollution-overview.html>)

Acid Rain

Acid rain has a big effect on the environment and is caused through men by the emission of nitrogen oxides through road transport, power stations and <https://assignbuster.com/the-human-impact-on-environment/>

industry, over 2000 tonnes of nitrogen oxide was polluted into the air in 1990 along with over 3000 tonnes of sulphur dioxide through power stations and industry. Sulfur dioxide is known primarily as a cause of acid rain. But they also reflect light when released in the atmosphere, which keeps sunlight out and causes Earth to cool. Another adverse effect of these gases being emitted into the atmosphere by humans is the weathering of buildings, particularly those made from limestone, marble and sandstone. For example sulphate-rich precipitation reacts with limestone and is easily eroded. Many methods have been used to reduce the effects of acid rain, one is to add powdered limestone to lakes to increase their pH values, however the only real effective and practical solution is to reduce fossil fuel consumption by using alternate energy sources that do not produce nitrate or sulphate gases (hydropower or nuclear power).

Water Pollution

Asian rivers are the most polluted in the world. They have three times as many bacteria from human waste as the global average and 20 times more lead than rivers in industrialized countries.

Thirty percent of Ireland's rivers are polluted with sewage or fertilizer. The King River is Australia's most polluted river, suffering from a severe acidic condition related to mining operations. 100,000 marine mammals, 1 million sea birds and other aquatic lives are killed due to plastic waste in water and coastal areas.

Bangladesh has some of the most polluted groundwater in the world. In this case, the contaminant is arsenic, which occurs naturally in the sediments.

Around 85% of the total area of the country has contaminated groundwater, with at least 1.2 million Bangladeshis exposed to arsenic poisoning and with millions more at risk.

Pollution of freshwater is a problem for about half of the world's population. Each year there are about 250 million cases of water-related diseases, with roughly 5 to 10 million deaths.

The main problem of water pollution is that it kills life; Dead fish, birds, dolphins, and many other animals often wind up on beaches, killed by pollutants.

Pollution disrupts the natural food chain as well. Pollutants such as lead and cadmium are eaten by tiny animals. Later, these animals are consumed by fish and shellfish, and the food chain continues to be disrupted at all higher levels.

Humans are affected by this process as well. People can get diseases such as hepatitis by eating seafood that has been poisoned.

Ecosystems can be severely changed or destroyed by water pollution. Many areas are now being affected by careless human pollution,

Solutions to Water Pollution

- stabilising wetlands to act as a buffer zone to runoff and to assist in filtering pollutants
- Drive less to reduce the amount of air pollution being emitted into the environment and minimize the amount of nitrogen deposition.

- Improve the sewage treatment system to stop the leaks in the pipes.
- Conserve water
- Improve storm water management.
- Monitor watershed
- Stop deforestation to soak up the rain water and prevent runoff from occurring.

Land Pollution

The human impacts related with land pollution involves the Increase in urbanization as Construction uses up forestland. More constructions means increase in demand for raw materials like timber. This leads to the exploitation and destruction of forests, the Increase in agricultural land As the human population grew there was a greater demand for food. This caused more land allocated to agriculture. Forests were cut down for this purpose, Agricultural activities Besides domestic waste, pesticides and herbicides used by farmers to increase crop yields also pollute the land when they are washed into the soil and Industrial activities are also a contributing factor to land pollution. For example, in open cast mining, huge holes are dug in the ground and these form dangerously deep mining pools. Heaps of mining waste are left behind and these waste often contain several poisonous substances that will contaminate the soil.

The effects on humans is that the Pollution is likely to affect over a billion people around the world, with millions poisoned and killed each year. The

World Health Organization estimates that 25 percent of all deaths in the developing world are directly attributable to environmental factor.

Some researchers estimate that exposure to pollution causes 40 percent of deaths annually. Many people are not aware of the impact that such industrial pollution can have on the earth. By helping to make it known, you can be one of the voices that will draw attention to the issue thus helping to inspire change.

Solutions to Land Pollution

New laws and regulations such as, reduce use of plastic, recycle and reuse have greatly reduced the amount of commercial and industrial pollution,

Habitat Destruction/Deforestation

Habitat destruction is happening all over the world and closer to your home than you might think. Tropical rain forests in Central and South America and in Southeast Asia and Oceania are being threatened. Rainforests now occupy less than ½ of the land that they did 100 years ago (that's less than 2% of the earth's surface).

Humans are a major cause of habitat destruction. The causes include, logging, agriculture, the building of roads and cities, and forest fires. Logging involves Humans cutting down the forests and rain forests for wood and wood products.

Usually, only large prime trees are cut down, such as mahogany. However, smaller trees can be destroyed in the process and never replaced. Logging can cause soil erosion, and the logging roads that are built can damage

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rivers and streams. Agriculture involves Wild lands being cleared for crops and domestic animals. The single biggest cause of deforestation is farming. Animals that are used to living in a biodiverse habitat cannot survive in an area with one crop. Humans impact on habitat destruction is majorly involved in the building of roads and cities, although essential for life, this still causes a problem for biodiversity as Humans are clearing trees and wild lands to make room for roads and cities. Cities replace the natural habitat of many species of plants and animals. Highways and freeways can destroy plants and also keep animals from safely travelling through their natural habitat.

Recent effects of humans on the environment

Humans have recently had a massive impact on the environment with the nuclear power plant disaster in Japan following the biggest earthquake/tsunami ever recorded

” cooling systems failures that led to radiation escaping from a reactor at one location. The emergency declarations, which include five reactors at the two plants, followed Friday’s 8.9-magnitude earthquake off the country’s northeast coast. In a troubling announcement, Japan Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency official Ryohei Shiomi said a monitoring device outside the plant detected radiation that is eight times higher than normal and an evacuation zone has been expanded from three kilometres around the plant to 10 kilometres.”

(<http://news.slashdot.org/story/11/03/12/038218/Nuclear-Emergency-Declared-At-2-Plants-In-Japan?from=rss>)

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The impact this had on the environment was really frightening as fears of people being exposed with radiation which was life threatening and people were even evacuated from their homes and told not to go outside, there is now fears that the food produced there may be contaminated with radiation and they are stopping all exports. This radiation from Japan has the potential to cause worldwide biological disruption

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