



## CONSERVATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES NEED OF THE HOUR

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### ABSTRACT

*Conservation of Natural Resources means wise use of these valuable resources. They should not be held back. Instead, these resources should be used intelligently for the welfare of mankind. They should be preserved from reckless exploitation.*

**KEYWORDS :** Conservation, Resources, Sustain, Ecology, Aerosols, Renewable.

Over the past few decades or so, more and more attention is being paid all over the world to conserve the Natural Resources. Human existence depends on the natural resources and the environment and the maintenance of which is now increasingly being considered as essential for mankind. As the society became socially, economically and technologically advanced, man broadened his environment by consuming his natural resources through his skill and design to have better food, shelter and comfort.

Natural Resources are those environmental gifts which satisfy the human wants. They are the means of attaining social objectives. The water, air, rain, light, soil, forest, animals, vegetation, fish and minerals are the natural resources. By conservation of natural resources is meant wise use of the natural resources and efficiency to produce the greatest possible benefits to man over the longest possible period of time. Conservation promotes proper use so as to ensure a continuous supply of resources for the further generation.

To some people, conservation means that the natural resources should not be used. These should be held back. But conservation of natural resources means a careful and rational utilization of resources. These resources should be used intelligently for the welfare of mankind. They should be preserved from reckless exploitation and destruction as to achieve a high standard of living for mankind. The essentials to sustain human life, such as the earth atmosphere, healthy air and drinkable water together with the non-essentials such as wild animals or wild places or human living space help in making life sustainable. With the passage of time mankind is realizing that preserving the essential ingredients of life and the rich natural diversity of the planet is indeed worthwhile. Thus, protecting and saving the environment involves keeping nature's gifts to mankind as much as possible and in good condition as possible.

Resources play an important role in the economic development of a country. They provide raw materials and energy for the industries. Energy is required in every sector of economy. The development of agriculture, industries, trade, transport and communications depends on the energy resources. Over exploitation of natural resources throughout the world, especially in the industrialized world, and the ecological crises are not wholly new science. The idea behind the preservation of natural resources is however almost as old as man. Now the realization has dawned on humanity that we have been destroying valuable resources and that there must indeed be a limit to our plans and ambitious for development, expansion and growth. Murder of the environment, which involves senseless poisoning of the earth, air, water and destruction of forest wealth, may be described as 'ecocide'. Our rivers, including the Ganga and Yamuna, are polluted. The Himalayan ecology is seriously endangered in many ways. The consequences of such continuous and reckless use of forest and other natural resources would be disastrous.

The first systematic and international effort in this direction was made in 1972 through the U.N. Conference on Environment held in Stockholm. The world's ecological mess and conservation of natural resources was discussed then for several days. But by that year barely 10 nations had formulated environment protection programmes: now the number is above 100. Then Soviet Union and the rest of the East-

ern Bloc stayed out of the Stockholm Conference. After the 1972 conference there was the U.N. Habitat Conference on Human Settlements held in Vancouver in 1972 and the U.N. Desertification Conference in Nairobi in August – September, 1977. Environment has now become a common problem of the entire world. The fear of doomsday has grown far and wide; it is regarded as inevitable unless appropriate correctives are applied well in time.

Some of the stark facts that are deepening the ecological crises are : some deserts have been spreading and encroaching at the rate of 30 kilometers every year, some oceans are reported to be dying and the earth's protective ozone layer is being broken up by aerosols and supersonic aeroplanes. Air, water and land are, after all, finite resources and can be largely used up. The need for natural resources ethic is now universally accepted. About 50 years ago, 15 out of 18 nations surrounding the Mediterranean Sea signed a "save the Mediterranean Agreement".

The United Nations established a Commission on Environment and Development in December 1983 under the chairmanship of G.H. Brundtland, former Prime Minister of Norway. The commission published its report in 1987 under the title 'Our Common Future'. In this report the commission discussed in detail sustainable development. In developing countries, development is necessary to improve the living conditions of the people. The needs and aspirations of the present generation should be met but it should not compromise the needs of the future generations.

Rapid increase in population poses a major challenge to the conservation of natural resources. And the availability of land for human use is very limited. Land covers only about 30 percent of the total area of the earth surface. Growing population in many parts of the world has converted parts of forests into crop lands or agricultural lands into non-agricultural uses such as buildings, roads and airports. Care must be taken to preserve and protect the soil, though soil is a renewable resource.

Growing population and their ever-growing demands have led to a large-scale destruction of natural sources. It has created a fear of losing many natural resources. Therefore, the present rate of destruction must be checked. The conservation of natural resources is also necessary because it controls the pollution of weather, it improves the food supply and ensures the continuity of food supply for the future generation. It maintains the continuity of economic, social and cultural development of a country. Natural resources are the symbol of our modern civilization. The destruction of natural resources means destruction of our modern civilization. Some of the ways to prolong the use of these wonderful gifts of nature are as follows : minimizing our resource needs; finding ways and means to utilize these resources in a more efficient manner; looking for alternatives whenever possible and conserving these resources with better planning.

In hilly and mountainous areas, soil can be conserved by following : terrace farming, contour ploughing, controlling shifting – cultivation, afforestation, building dams and plugging of gullies. In arid regions, shelter belts are quite effective in checking soil erosion.

About 97 percent of the earth's total water is in oceans and seas. Another two percent water is contained in ice-caps and glaciers. Only one percent is fresh water, which is easily available and suitable for human use. Fresh water, therefore, is one of the most precious substances on the earth. Water shortage is a major and recurrent problem in many regions of the world. In 1999, 26 countries were experiencing water scarcity; by 2025, it is likely that 65 countries will face water scarcity. Access to clean and adequate water sources are emerging as the greatest problem of the 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

Water is the basis of life. It supports all forms of life such as vegetative, agricultural, animal and human life. Water is used for domestic requirements, for raising crops and trees and also needed in manufacturing industries. Thus conservation of this exhaustible resource means conservation of life. Surface run-off can be slowed down by forest and other vegetation cover to improve underground storage. Water harvesting is another method of saving surface run-off. Water can also be impounded by making check dams. Modern methods of irrigation such as Drip irrigation technique and sprinkles method of irrigation should be adopted. Recycled water should be used in industries.

Though, man uses various oceanic resources to make his food but of all the marine resources, fish form a rich source of food and nutrition to man. The most important factor about marine food resources is that they are easily available and inexhaustible with the increasing of population day by day. This valuable resource has been depleting due to over fishing, pollution of water by chemical plants and factories and indiscriminate fishing due to ignorance of fish culture. To conserve this resource, scientific methods of fishing should be used. Sea-water and river water should be protected from pollution. Catching of the endangered species should be banned by U.N. under the law of sea.

Forest is the national wealth and have been exploited rapidly. As the forests have important protective as well as productive functions, they should be conserved in order to continue to do their valuable work. The forests can be maintained by preventing fire, replanting the trees and substitution of synthetic products. The cutting of trees should be treated as a crime and suitable punishment should be given. The practice of shifting cultivation should be held in check.

The wild life, on the other hand, has great importance in the ecological balance. The colorful birds, animals and other forms of life are very important for maintaining the ecological balance. Hence, the disappearance or reduction in number of any individual species results in upset the ecological balance. Because of this very reason, various steps have been taken to save the destruction of wild life. More and more national parks and wild life sanctuaries should be established. Public attention should be focused on making efforts for preservation of wild life.

It is true that resources are to be used by human beings but they should be used in a way that imbalance does not take place. The ancient dictum in India "Tyakten Bhunjitha" (concept of consumption along with sacrifice) indicates towards the method of checking the state of imbalance. We cannot imagine the environment without human beings as they are integral part of the environment. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century density of population was low. Needs of human beings were limited and the level of technology available to them was primitive. Therefore, those societies never felt the need of conservation as the regenerative processes compensate for the utilization. With the scientific progress and technological development, man started utilizing these resources at a much larger scale. Continuous rise in population has caused an increasing demand for resources. This competition created a situation in which the non-renewable resources may come to an end after some time.

It seems that the large scale consumerism has brought the mankind at a state where our needs have gone beyond the means to fulfill them. In our desire to reach the maximum production limit, we have started taking loans from the resources meant for future and which cannot be paid back. As a result, we are using all those resources which are in fact the future generations' property. It is a matter of great concern today.

**Summary :-** Natural Resources are those valuable gifts which fulfil the human needs. They are the means of attaining social objectives. Conservation of natural resources means wise and efficient use of these resources to produce the greatest possible benefits to mankind over the longest possible period of time. They should be preserved from reckless exploitation and destruction.

## REFERENCES

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