

ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

LECTURE-3

What is Environmental Studies?

Environmental studies refer to an extensive and systematic study of nature/environment and of its physical, biological, social, and cultural factors, and the nature and characteristics of relationship between man and environment. How far man influences nature and to what extent nature delivers its bounties constitute another objective of environmental studies.

Environmental studies describe the interrelationships among organisms, the environment and all the factors, which influence life on earth, including atmospheric conditions, food chains, the water cycle, etc.

It is an interdisciplinary study as subjects like ecology, biochemistry, toxicology, geography, geology, meteorology, sociology, etc. are dealt with under environmental studies.

The Need for Environmental Studies

Nature or environment sustains life. As a conscious and rational being, man needs to know the importance of environment and help keep the environment as healthy and productive as it can be. It is the environment that has made this beautiful world possible for him. Hence, there is an ever demanding need for environmental studies.

The natural environment that mankind had before the onset of industrialization, urbanization, and exponential growth in population was expectedly healthy and resilient.

Nature was able to replenish the loss of its resources, which was very limited.

After the onset of modern civilization, the overall health and efficiency of natural environment started deteriorating gradually and went on to such an extent that nature has virtually lost its natural ability to replenish the loss of resources caused by man.

Environmentalists, geographers, and biologists the world over are constantly endeavouring for a sustainable solution to restore a sustainable environment.

There is a need for focus on environmental management, laws governing environment protection, pollution and recycling of non-bio-degradable material, etc. There is also a need for careful and cautious use of natural resources in the present time to establish sustainability in every aspect of nature.

There is a need to clarify modern environmental concepts such as how to conserve biodiversity and maintain an ecological balance.

Environmental studies help us understand the importance of our environment and teaches us to use natural resources more efficiently and embrace a sustainable way of living. It enables us to know the behavior of organisms under natural conditions and the

interrelationship between organisms in population and communities.

Scope of environmental studies

Environmental studies discipline has multiple and multilevel scopes. The scopes are summarized as follows:

1. The study creates awareness among the people to know about various renewable and Non-renewable resources of the region. The endowment or potential, patterns of utilization and the balance of various resources available for future use in the state of a country are analysed in the study.
2. It provides the knowledge about ecological systems and cause and effect relationships.
3. It provides necessary information about biodiversity richness and the potential dangers to the species of plants, animals and microorganisms in the environment.
4. The study enables one to understand the causes and consequences due to natural and man induced disasters (flood, earthquake, landslide, cyclones etc.,) and pollutions and measures to minimize the effects.
5. It enables one to evaluate alternative responses to environmental issues before deciding an alternative course of action.
6. The study enables environmentally literate citizens (by knowing the environmental acts, rights, rules, legislations, etc.) to make appropriate judgments and decisions for the protection and improvement of the earth.
7. The study exposes the problems of over population, health, hygiene, etc. and the role of arts, science and technology in eliminating/ minimizing the evils from the society.
8. The study tries to identify and develop appropriate and indigenous eco-friendly skills and technologies to various environmental issues.
9. It teaches the citizens the need for sustainable utilization of resources as these resources are inherited from our ancestors to the younger generation without deteriorating their quality.
10. The study enables theoretical knowledge into practice and the multiple uses of environment.