

URBAN ECOSYSTEMS

Urban life is the life in a city where many people live close together. Presently there seems to be an urban revolution as people all over the world are moving into towns and cities.

Advantages of urban ecosystems

- 1) Economically well developed.
- 2) Hub of industrial growth.
- 3) Centre of commerce.
- 4) Multicultural social environment.
- 5) Reduced infantile mortality.
- 6) Centres of political activity.

Disadvantages of urban ecosystems

- 1) Urban areas consume around 75% of the earth's resources and produce more than 75% of the waste.
- 2) Urban areas are highly polluted since growing number of vehicles and industries emit large quantities of pollutants.
- 3) Suffer from problem of noise pollution is caused by industries and transport
- 4) Urban ecosystems suffer from serious shortage of water availability.
- 5) High crime rate, unrest and unemployment.
- 6) Increasing population density in cities of the world compels some people to live in slums e.g. in Mumbai 3 million people live in slums pavement and squatter settlements which lack basic civic facilities like safe drinking water, waste disposed, health care etc.

The areas of slums become centres of a number of environmental problems:

- These areas without proper water supply dispose their waste in an unplanned manner which pollutes air and water.
- The contamination of water causes diseases like typhoid, cholera, fever, etc.
- The unplanned waste dumping places and open defecation become the sites of the growth of a number of disease carriers like flies, mosquitoes, etc. These cause health hazards not only in slum areas but also in other nearby places.

Way Forward:

- Serious attention should be given to the need for improving urban strategies, which promote efficiency in resource use.
- Urgent attention should be given to reduce the generation of solid waste at the sources through mandatory standards and regulation fee and tax incentives, and education and voluntary compliance.

RURAL ECOSYSTEMS

Rural ecosystems are midway between natural and urban ecosystems since the exploitation of nature and natural resources by humans are relatively much less.

Characteristics of rural ecosystems

- 1) In rural areas people live in small clusters in thatched, mud houses surrounded by farm lands. In rural areas people are directly or indirectly dependent on agriculture and consume locally available resources.
- 2) Education, healthcare, drainage, sanitation, hygiene, and transport etc. are inadequate or lacking.
- 3) Rural areas are mostly free from air and noise pollution.

Environmental Problems in rural areas:

1. **Domestic Waste:** Rural areas lack proper disposal of waste like urban areas. Despite so many efforts being taken by the government to ensure sanitization, the rural areas are still facing such problems. This results in severe water and air pollution.