

"Do not waste water even if you were at a running stream."

1) Introduction.

Thesis statement:

Natural resources, needed for the sustainable existence of life, are ^{depleting} ~~being depleted~~ at a faster pace, thereby impacting the social, political, economic and environmental sectors of life.

There is an urgent need to take measures to conserve natural resources.

2) Why there is a need to conserve natural resources:

i) To prevent the scarcity of resources in the near future.

ii) To preserve the biodiversity.

iii) To make sure the sustainable economic rise of states.

iv) To preserve the national and international unity.

v) To prevent the environmental issues emerging from depletion of natural resources.

3) What are the negative implications of wastage of resources.

i) Threats to public health, food security and rise in poverty (World Bank Report: Responses on rising food insecurity).

ii) Rise in ethnic conflicts and Xenophobia.
(International Resource Panel 2023 report).

iii) Impacts on economy of the world in general and under-developed nations in particular.
(United Nations Report, 2019).

iv) Politics of natural resources; Intra-state and Inter-state conflicts.

(Provincial conflicts in Pakistan, Indo-Pak and global powers rivalry).

4) How to conserve natural resources.

i) Individuals awareness programs.

ii) Designing frameworks at national levels to ensure sustainable consumption of resources.

iii) Strengthening regional and global coordination.

5) Conclusion.

"The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased; and not impaired in value." Theodore Roosevelt, often called the 'conservationist president', gave an eye opening statement to the world, insisting the significance of natural resources. Nature has gifted the humankind with a plenty of resources that are the very reason for ^{the} survival of man on the planet earth. However, these resources are being used up at a faster rate than they are being replenished. Given the ongoing depletion of resources, there is a need to conserve these resources to make sure the formation of a sustainable world. Moreover, over the decades, the wastage of natural assets has been affecting the nations negatively. Threatening the quality of life, compromising the national unity, falls in annual Gross Domestic Products of the states and rising geopolitical tensions are some of the instances. In essence, natural resources, needed for the sustainable existence of life, are being depleted at a faster pace. It has impacted the social, political, economic and environmental sectors of life. There is

a need for an increased sense of urgency from local leaders, national governments and international institutions for the conservation of naturally gifted resources.

The existence of life on this planet is possible due to natural resources present on it. This is one of the reasons why 'earth' is the only planet which supports life out of all the planets in the solar system. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we consume, the land we harvest, the fuels we utilize, are all the resources that earth is providing us. However, the earth resources are being used up at rates that are becoming way too fast.

Consequent to the given consumption rates, there is a threat of resources' scarcity in the near future. The ^{life} supporting resources could go out of reach if the consumption rates remain unchanged. In the vast solar system, earth is the only planet that supports life. The earth was formed about 4.5 billion years ago and modern humans have existed for about 315,000 years. A study by the World Wildfire Fund revealed that more than a third of earth's

natural resources have been destroyed by humans in just thirty years. Not only humanity have used up a third of nature's resources, these are being consumed at an increasing rate. An estimate is that today, humans need 1.75 planets to provide the resources. If current consumption rate continues, then by 2030, man would need two planets to support life. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt, a successful nation conserves natural resources for its upcoming generations. However, the irony of today's world is that we are borrowing the natural resources from our future generations.

Another driving factor behind natural resource conservation is to prevent the biodiversity from going extinct. The biodiversity is being lost at a very alarming rate. The seriousness of this issue can be cited from the GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY OUTLOOK report by United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and Convention on Biodiversity (CBD). This report found that human activities such as agricultural expansion, overfishing and deforestation have led to a significant loss

of habitat. The earth's land which contain all essential resources needed for the sustainable development of human beings, has been degraded by anthropogenic activities. Around 75 percent of earth's surface has been significantly altered by human actions. Moreover, the most essential element of human body, water, is also under threat of being depleted. Due to impacts on ocean area, marine biodiversity is being lost at a calamitous rate. According to United Nations Environment Report, 66 percent of ocean area is impacted, ultimately resulting into around 90 percent of marine fish stocks fully exploited, over-exploited or depleted.

Moving forward, the most prominent resource of economic growth of countries are natural resources. The developed countries have natural assets as major source of income. For instance, countries like United States and United Kingdom leveraged their natural resources, such as coal and iron ores, to fuel the Industrial Revolution. Natural assets have been playing significant role in the growth of Gross Domestic Products by contributing in industrial sector, energy

Sector and in the most important
the 21st century - technological advancements.
To ensure the sustainable economic rise, it
is necessary for countries to conserve their
natural resources. As, coal, oil, natural gas,
waters, land and diverse species of fauna
and flora are major resources to run the
above mentioned sectors of economy, so it
is high time to work on conservation
strategies. The World Bank's "Changing Wealth
of Nations 2021" report highlights the critical
role that natural assets play in sustainable
economic growth. In the perview of this report,
natural capital, which includes renewable and
non-renewable resources, forms a significant
part of the wealth in many countries. For
example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, natural assets
constitute nearly 20 percent of total wealth.

Adding to it, the conservation of natural
resources is crucial to preserve the national
and international unity. It is a fact that
conflicts are there where there is hunger
or lust of getting more. This is the case for
the depletion of natural resources. The
depletion of such resources has significantly
impacted the national unity by exacerbating

social, economic and political tensions. Depletion of resources often leads to economic hardships, especially in communities dependent on these resources for their livelihoods. This can heighten social unrest with countries. For instance, over-extractions of minerals, waters, marine species and forests can lead to job losses, reduced income and migration which strain social cohesion and increased tensions among different groups of any country. The world Bank report "Independent Evaluation Group" highlights that conflicts over these resources can weaken national unity. It emphasizes the need for management of natural resources sustainably in order to avoid national dis-integration.

In addition to above discussed situations, another important matter of time that is linked with the conservation of natural resources, is the emerging environmental problems out of depleting natural resources. The melting of natural glaciers is resulting into the rise of sea level, consequently leading to increase in number of floods. Similarly, the removal of natural resources in the form of forests has

constituted to the rise of carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere, resulting into global warming. Putting all angles into consideration, depletion of natural resources is essential to be prevented in order to conserve the environment. The findings of United Nations Environment Program's "Global Resource Outlook, 2019" elucidate that the over-extraction of natural resources leads to significant environmental degradation. It highlights how the extraction and processing of materials like fossil fuels, minerals, metals and biomass are major contributors to environmental problems such as pollution, biodiversity loss and climate change.

Moving further, in order to understand the significance of conservation of natural assets, it is important to consider the possible negative implications of their wastage.

Among most severely affected sectors due to over-exploitation of natural resources is the social sector of life.

The scarcity of resources results into poor health conditions, malnutrition and ultimately rise in poverty among masses.

As water, land, food, clean air, etc. are the basic resources needed for healthy living being, their depletion will definitely lead to above mentioned social problems. Citing a new warning from a report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), it could be understood to how much extent the ongoing threat is eminent. This report finds that almost ten percent of the 8 billion people on earth are already undernourished with 3 billion lacking healthy diets. The unfolding global food crisis underlines nature's vital role in food security. The communities relying on natural resources for their incomes would be most vulnerable to the rising risk of poverty. As healthy ecosystems prevent the descent of poor households into deeper poverty by providing food, water, shelter and raw-materials, while their scarcity would increase the level of poverty among already deprived classes. As per the findings of World Bank report, 80 percent of the global population below the poverty line in rural areas tend to depend heavily on nature's services.

Prior to moving towards the other section, let us imagine ourselves at a border - an invisible line separating the laws of one country from another, a line which, if crossed will change your life, perhaps forever. Hundreds of thousands of people are forced to follow this path each year. One of the reasons behind this migration is the scarcity of natural resources. Refugee migration is the most commonly seen phenomena of today's world. The International Resource Panel report, "Human Migration and Natural Resources," covers the connections between resources and human mobility. This report makes clear that natural resources define the scale of forced displacement for the most vulnerable populations. The resulting refugee influx can lead to conflicts between different communities. This leads to xenophobia among local inhabitants. The hatred towards foreign groups causes increase in ethnic and cultural differences. There are many examples from different regions of the world which suggest that refugees increase ethnic instability in the receiving

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states. For instance, the massive influx of Afghan refugees into Balochistan province of Pakistan in the 1980s was followed by ethnic conflict. In Zaire, the arrival of Hutus from Rwanda led to a deterioration of relationship between local Hutus, Tutsi and other groups.

Furthermore, loss of natural resources can lead to loss of annual income of countries. Particularly, countries which are dependent on natural assets for their economies will face a severe loss of economy. For example, biodiversity is a cornerstone of development and its loss threatens many hard-won development gains. It is the wealth of poor nations and communities within nations as a source of employment. The World Bank illustrates that in the fisheries sector, 60 million jobs globally are linked directly to fishing and fish farming. However, nature is vanishing at an unprecedented rate. The poorest economies stand to lose the most. World Bank modelling shows that in such circumstances, low income countries could forego 10 percent in real GDP annually by 2030, compared with global

Losses of 2.3 percent.

Also, the depletion of resources has been driving cause of conflicts within the states and between the states. The shift of policies of countries from geopolitics to geo-economics has deepened the crises. If intra-state conflicts over resources are concerned, Pakistan's provincial water disputes are the instances. The disputes between Sindh and Punjab remain unresolved even three decades after signing of the Water Apportionment Accord to share waters of the Indus river basin. While on the other hand, the inter-state competitions over resources are also there. The Indo-Pak conflicts over water, the Gulf War between Iraq and Kuwait, South China Sea dispute and the US-China rivalry are all about resources. These conflicts highlight the strategic importance of natural resources and their potential to exacerbate tensions.

Although the situation of conservation of resources is grim, yet there could be a hope of change if several encouraging steps are followed. World has also taken some measures which enhances the lights of hope

for the best.

The first and foremost thing towards conservation strategy should be to make individuals aware of its paramount significance. As change starts at home, there should be made awareness at local level. Taps should be kept closed when not used to conserve water, lights should be kept switched off to conserve energy, farming practices should be modified to conserve land and forests should be replanted to conserve biodiversity. Awareness programs should be introduced by using electronic, social and print media. One such campaign has been initiated by the United Nations termed as The UN's SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS ACTION CAMPAIGN. This campaign encourages individuals to take action towards accomplishing the 17 SDGs, which include goals related to environmental sustainability, such as clean water, affordable and clean energy, responsible consumption and production of resources.

Moreover, countries should integrate sustainable consumption strategies into national policies and frameworks in order to achieve

Sustainable consumption of resources. These policies should be followed and implemented at all levels of governance. From local to provincial and at national level, sustainable consumption strategies should be made part of plan of actions. Among such initiatives, Japan is an instance. Japan continues to implement and strengthen its policies for sustainable consumption, including initiatives to promote eco-friendly products, reduce food waste and enhance resource efficiency through technological innovations and consumer education. Similarly, Pakistan has been actively developing frameworks and policies to promote sustainable consumption of resources. One of the biggest leap forward by the government of Pakistan is that it has aligned its national development agenda with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which include goals related to sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12).

Moving further, there is a need for regional and global coordination for ensuring resource conservation goals. Effective regional

and global coordination plays a crucial role in achieving resource conservation goals by fostering cooperation, sharing resources and expertise and aligning efforts towards sustainable development and resource conservation. There are organizations involved in such coordination including United Nations Environment Program, the World Bank, regional development banks, e.g., Asian Development Bank and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Greenpeace, etc. Regional organizations collaborate by investing in resource conservation programs. ASEAN, SAARC and such other regional organizations have made environment as a separate part of their agendas. A recent development by the United Nations is The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030). It aims at preventing degradation of ecosystems worldwide and restoring degraded ecosystems to enhance biodiversity, ecosystem services and contribute to sustainable resource management. These developments reflect ongoing regional and international efforts to address resource conservation challenges.

through collaborative actions, policy frameworks and scientific assessments.

Concluding the long story, it is clear from above discussion that our planet is running out of resources. On the similar end, populations are continuing to expand.

If the global population reaches 9.8 billion by 2050, the equivalent of almost three planets will be required to provide the natural resources needed to sustain current lifestyles.

If ongoing consumption patterns ~~is~~ remains to be followed, the natural resources would go depleted in the coming years. Therefore, in order to prevent our future generations from facing scarcity, it is necessary to consider the importance of conservation strategies. Moreover, because of environmental problems emerging from ~~water~~ over-exploitation of resources, the planet earth is under threat.

There can be even more serious implications on the ecosystems of earth due to resources depletion. The social, economic, political and environmental, even all the sectors of life are being affected due to replenishing natural resources.

It is high time for national and international leaders to design effective frameworks and policies in order to take control over the harsh situation.

Also, the regional and international organisations should participate by sharing resources, human and scientific innovations and by collaborating to tackle the issue of wastage of natural resources.

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Well attempted
Keep practicing on different themes/
topics