

FAQ's

What is the impact of humans on coral reefs?

Human impact on coral reefs is significant. Coral reefs are dying around the world. In particular, coral mining, pollution (organic and non-organic), overfishing, blast fishing and the digging of canals and access into islands and bays are serious threats to these ecosystems. Coral reefs also face high dangers from diseases, destructive fishing practices and warming oceans. In order to find answers for these problems, researchers study the various factors that impact reefs. The list of factors is long, including the ocean's role as a carbon dioxide sink, atmospheric changes, ultraviolet light, ocean acidification, viruses, impacts of dust storms carrying agents to far-flung reefs, pollutants, algal blooms and others. Reefs are threatened well beyond coastal areas.

In 2008 estimates assembled from coral reef specialists from around the world indicated that 19% of the existing area of coral reefs has already been lost, and that a further 17% is likely to be lost over the subsequent 10–20 years. Only 46% of the world's reefs could be currently regarded as in good health. About 60% of the world's reefs may be at risk due to destructive, human-related activities. The threat to the health of reefs is particularly strong in Southeast Asia, where 80% of reefs are endangered. By the 2030s, 90% of reefs are expected to be at risk from both human activities and climate change; by 2050, *all* coral reefs will be in danger.

How is human population affecting extinction of species?

Most notably, we are responsible for the reduction of the world's biodiversity by 50% as a recent World Wide Fund estimate shows (WWF, 2014). Due to our increasing numbers we must frequently fragment species' habitats for living space, or destroy them completely. When

species' habitats are disrupted they often have nowhere else to go, or some species die out and the food chain for others is disrupted and thus larger animals are affected,

We also destroy species' habitat to feed ourselves. Our growing numbers also demand that we need more food, and our main methods of production is agriculture, which clears great areas of land from its natural habitat to make way for our monocultures of single crops. The pesticides and fertilisers we use on these crops leech into the water ways and create algal blooms which deprive species of oxygen in the water. As species lower down in the food chain die, so do larger ones. In addition, we often hunt many animals to extinction. This is evident with the example of the black Rhino in Africa which recently went extinct because we hunted it for its horn, which is illegal, but a great black market. Many species go extinct because we exploit them for things such as their fur, or tusks or something else we fancy. Through this they suffer, and many go extinct.

Much of the extinction around us is directly due to our actions and our growing population numbers. It is also very dependent on the unsustainable ways in which we live. An even larger culprit is animal agriculture, which is the breeding of farm animals for meat, dairy and eggs. It contributes the most to this pesticide and fertiliser pollution, and also affects our grain status as great areas of land must be cleared to grow soy beans or other grains to feed the animals.

Perhaps one of the quickest and most alarming ways in which we affect the planet, and hence the species around us, is our burning of fossil fuels. We burn fossil fuels to run all the machines and industries around us, releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere. The levels in the atmosphere are higher than they have been in millions of years, and are directly leading to the acidification of the oceans. This eats away at coral reefs and all the species that feed on or around the coral also suffer, and may go extinct.

Another way in which we drive extinction is by introducing invasive species to other areas, which change how the ecosystem works by becoming the dominant species, or preying on another species until it goes extinct.

What is the role of the Family Welfare Programme with respect to the environment?

HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

Health of the people is not only a desirable goal but is also an essential investment in human resources. The National Health Policy (1983) reiterated India's commitment to attain "Health for All (HFA) by 2000 A.D". Primary health care has been accepted as the main instrument for achieving this goal. Accordingly, a vast network of institutions at primary, secondary and tertiary levels have been established. Control of communicable diseases through national programmes and development of trained health manpower have received special attention.

Many spectacular successes have been achieved in the country in the area of health. Small-pox stands eradicated and plague is no longer a problem. Morbidity and mortality on account of malaria, cholera and various other diseases have declined. The Crude Birth Rate and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) have declined to 29.9 and 80 (1990 SRS data) as compared to 37 and 129 respectively in 1971. Life expectancy has risen from a mere 32 years in 1947 to 58 years in 1990. However, HFA is a long way off. Disease, disability and deaths on account of several communicable diseases are still unacceptably high. Meanwhile, several non-communicable diseases have emerged as new public health problems. Rural health services for delivery of primary health care are still not fully operationalised. Urban health services, particularly for urban slums, require urgent attention due to changing urban morphology. It is towards human development that health and population control are listed as two of the six priority objectives of this Plan. Health facilities must reach

the entire population by the end of the Eighth Plan. The Health for All (HFA) paradigm must take into account not only high risk vulnerable groups, i.e., mothers and children, but must also focus sharply on the underprivileged segments within the vulnerable groups. Within the HFA strategy "Health for underprivileged" will be promoted consciously and consistently. This can only be done through emphasising the community based systems reflected in our planning of infrastructure, with about 30,000 population as the basic unit for primary health care.

Family Welfare Programme

High growth rate of the population continues to be one of the major problems facing the country. Although the 1991 Census recorded a marginal decline in the annual growth rate of population from 2.22% in 1971-81 to 2.11% in 1981-91 this would still mean an addition of 18 million people to the country's population annually.

The fast rate of population growth means that the economy has to grow faster to protect the already low level of per capita availability of food, clothing, housing, employment and social services.

The country is committed to social and economic justice to the millions of people living under conditions of poverty and deprivation. Failure to do so within a reasonable time-frame may generate social tensions and unrest. Besides this, the environmental degradation which is associated with unchecked growth of population carries the inherent risk of natural calamities and disasters.

In this context, population control assumes an overriding importance in the Eighth Plan.

Review of the Performance

The basic premises of the Family Welfare Programme till now have been -

- i. Acceptance of the family welfare is voluntary.
- ii. The Government's role is to create an environment for the people to adopt small family norm. This is done by spreading awareness, information and education by ensuring easy and convenient availability of family planning aids and services and by giving incentives for adopting family planning.
- iii. The programme, which is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme has integrated family planning and Mother and Child Health (MCH) services and is being implemented through countrywide network of primary health centres and supporting institutions.

What is environmental planning?

Environmental planning the process of facilitating decision making to carry out land development with the consideration given to the natural environment, social, political, economic and governance factors and provides a holistic framework to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Environmental planning concerns itself with the decision making processes where they are required for managing relationships that exist within and between natural systems and human systems. Environmental planning endeavors to manage these processes in an effective, orderly, transparent and equitable manner for the benefit of all constituents within such systems for the present and for the future. Present day environmental planning practices are the result of continuous refinement and expansion of the scope of such decision making processes. Some of the main elements of present-day environmental planning are:

- Social&economic development
- Urban development
- Regional development
- Natural resource management& integrated land use
- Infrastructure systems

- Governance frameworks

The environmental planning assessments encompass areas such as land use, socio-economics, transportation, economic and housing characteristics, air pollution, noise pollution, the wetlands, habitat of the endangered species, flood zones susceptibility, coastal zoneserosion, and visual studies among others, and is referred to as an Integrated environmental planning assessment. It is the ability to analyze environmental issues that will facilitate critical decision making.