

1. **What do you understand by carrying capacity of ecology? Answer in context of India, where many states have reached the limits of their capacity, due to mass tourism. (12.5 Marks)**

Answer:

Ecological carrying capacity denotes the limits of resources which an ecosystem can provide to various species without getting degraded. The states like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have a sensitive and fragile montane biome which is under threat due to various reasons, tourism being one of them. The adverse impact of tourism has been evident in many ways

- In Uttarakhand, religious tourism led to unregulated constructions of lodges along banks of rivers, which increased casualties during the floods of 2013.
- Similarly, Jammu Kashmir also witnessed major floods in 2014 in which encroachment of natural water-bodies was a major factor. The Dal Lake has shrunk to half of its original size due to tourism-oriented construction.
- Himachal Pradesh witnesses kilometers long traffic jams along Manali-Rohtang Pass route. The glaciers around the region have receded due to deposition of black carbon from vehicle exhaust.
- Tourists are not careful about preserving the pristine nature of the ecology there, throw waste including plastic in their gay abandon, leading to pollution of soil and rivers
- Construction of roads for tourism leads to problems such as landslides
- Deforestation caused due to tourism has also harmed the ecology
- Many indigenous mountainous species are at risk due to unsustainable tourism

However, this does not imply that we need to put a complete stop on all tourism activities in the region. First of all, tourism acts as a major source of revenue for these states and employment for the people. Secondly, they are reaching ecological carrying capacity also due to other unsustainable practices such as construction of dams along upper reaches of rivers.

Therefore, we need to have sustainable and eco-friendly tourism practices to create a win-win situation. Some steps to be taken include —

- Making these states plastic free zones
- Allowing only hybrid vehicles for tourism in these areas
- Regulating the number of visitors per season
- Creating awareness among tourists through media campaigns
- Including tourism in National Mission on Preserving Himalayan Ecosystem

This would ensure the preservation of ecology while allowing the people to enjoy the natural beauty of these regions.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Answer the following Questions

(12.5 Marks)

1. Discuss the impact of globalization on Indian plantation industry. Comment on the problems faced by women plantation workers in India.
2. 'The harsh environment support less population'. Justify this statement with suitable arguments from the tundra biome.

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