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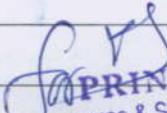
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Natural Resources

Earth's biosphere is endowed with extremely diverse kinds of environments which provide concrete goods and services to human kind. Any component in the natural environment that can be utilized by man to provide his welfare, is considered as a natural resource. The natural resources can be a substance, grasslands, etc. are example of important components of the life supporting system. Besides being a source of food, folder and shelter, natural resources also provided recreational opportunities, solace and even inspiration to mankind. Natural resources have been exploited by humans since the resources were beginning of civilization or even before. However, since the resources were abundant the relative to human population, no significant depleted occurred. During the last millenial human population increased considerably causing serious damage or destruction of natural resources. In this chapter we will study major kinds of natural resources, causes of their degradation and their conservation.

Classification of natural resources:-

Natural resources vary greatly in their location, quantity and quality. for instance, a particular forest type may occur only in certain countries. Also the geographical area covered by forest and wood quality may differ widely in different countries. Some resources can be renewed after being used once. It con-

Classification of resources is based upon their exhaustibility and renewability (fig 2.17) Basically resources can be categorized in Inexhaustible and Exhaustible

Inexhaustible resources:-

Inexhaustible resources are available in unlimited quantities on the earth. While some inexhaustible resources remain virtually unaffected by human impact, many others may show some changes in their quality though their quantity may remain unchanged. Resources like solar energy, wind power, tide power, rainfall, and even atomic energy cannot be exhausted significant at global level due to human activities. Such resources may sometime be locally affected by human activities; for example, pollution may change the quality of air.

Exhaustible resources:-

A large number of natural resources are exhaustible i.e. they have finite supply on the earth and can be exhausted if used indiscriminately. Broadly, the exhaustible resources can be either renewable or non-renewable.

Renewable resources:-

Most of biotic resources are renewable. The growth and reproduction of such resources can be successfully managed so that these resources are continually regenerated. However, if the consumption of these resources continues to exceed their rate of renewal,