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STUDY NOTES

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## Science

### **CHAPTER: 7 Biodiversity and conservation of Flora and Fauna**

#### **Today's Topic: Effect of Deforestation**

#### **Effects of deforestation:**

There are a number of adverse effects of deforestation. They include soil erosion, disruption of the water cycle, loss of **biodiversity**, floods and droughts as well as **climate change**.

When forest areas are cleared, the soil is exposed to the sun, making it very dry. Humus, which helps increase the water-retentive properties of soil, cannot be easily formed in dry soil. Loss of trees also leads to the loosening of the soil because it is no longer held together by the roots of trees. When it rains, the fertile topsoil is easily washed away leading to **soil erosion**. The removal of the top layer of the soil exposes the lower, hard and rocky layers. Large tracts of land are thus rendered permanently barren due to deforestation and gradually the land gets converted into deserts-a process called **desertification**.

Forests contribute to a large extent in maintaining the **water cycle**. The trees take up water through their roots and release it into the atmosphere through the process of transpiration. When trees are

cut down, this cycle is disrupted and very little moisture remains in the atmosphere. The climate in such an area becomes drier.

Deforestation also leads to a reduction in rainfall in the deforested area.

The loss of forest cover also leads to a reduction in the infiltration rate, which is the movement of water from the soil surface into the ground. This leads to reduced recharge of groundwater and a drop in the **water table**.

The part of the earth and its atmosphere in which living organisms exist or that is capable of supporting life is called the **biosphere**. Biological diversity or **biodiversity** refers to the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat.

**Biodiversity:** the variety of plant and animal life in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

**Climate change:** an increase in the average temperature of the earth's atmosphere with consequent changes in climate.

**Desertification:** the gradual transformation of habitable land into a desert.

**Water table:** underground surface below which water can be found.

**Biosphere:** the regions of the surface and the atmosphere of the earth where living organisms exist.

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