



RIVER PRESERVATION: THE NEED OF THE HOUR

CASE STUDY/INSIGHT

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Rivers are the beautiful creation of nature. It is a body of fresh flowing water, which is home to several species of aquatic plants and animals. Rivers are an important source of drinking water to the human community. People depend on rivers for various activities like agriculture, fishing, and electricity production (hydropower). People also visit rivers for leisure activities like swimming and boating. Therefore, rivers are important sources of revenue and they contribute to the country's economy.

Such valuable rivers are being polluted due to various human activities. Pollution in rivers can occur in various forms like solid wastes such as plastics, bottles, containers; agricultural residues such as fertilizers and chemicals; wastewater discharge from industries and human wastes. One of the major causes of river pollution is agriculture. Fertilizers and pesticides used on crops get mixed up in rivers through runoff. The chemicals present in fertilizers and pesticides contaminate the river water, making it unfit for consumption and affects aquatic life.

Another important reason for river pollution is the discharge of effluent from industries into rivers. The effluent will be high in temperature, pH, biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), chemical oxygen demand (COD), low dissolved oxygen (DO), and harmful substances.



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Effluent from textile industries will also contain dyes. The other reason for river pollution is littering. People carelessly throw bottles, containers, plastic bags, newspapers, and other trash into rivers. All this pollution degrades the quality of river water and possess great danger to aquatic life, human beings, and the environment. Polluted river kills aquatic life, spreads diseases to animals and human beings, and takes up the unsightly look and bad odor.

Policies and action committees have been formed at international, national, and regional levels for cleaning up the rivers. But what is the use of cleaning rivers if the dumping of wastes is not stopped? Preservation of rivers has two main steps; one is to stop polluting and the other is to start cleaning. Both steps have to be done simultaneously for better results. Already we have lost several small rivers due to insufficient rainfall, climate change, and urbanization. Let us at least join hands to safeguard the remaining rivers from pollution.

Everyone should take the moral responsibility of not littering in rivers and also educate friends and family members who do it. Industries must treat their effluents appropriately before discharging into the river and the treated effluent must comply with the effluent discharge regulations/standards.

From our part, we can stop throwing trash at rivers and must make an effort to reuse, reduce and recycle plastics. People should start using more biodegradable things. Individuals can volunteer with NGOs and community groups that work towards protecting rivers. Trees can be planted along riverbanks, which would enhance improved cleanliness of the water, better habitat for birds and animals, and more stable riverbanks. Also planting trees around riverbank would reduce runoff from agricultural land and act as a buffer zone. Let us pledge to be responsible and work towards protecting rivers.