R V INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

EVS Assignment-I report

Topic-: Groundwater depletion/recharging

Mohammadgouse M Y [1RF22EC022]

Groundwater Depletion and Recharging

Introduction

Water is a fundamental resource essential for human survival, ecosystem health, and economic development. Groundwater, stored beneath the earth’s surface in soil pores and rock formations called aquifers, is one of the planet’s most valuable natural resources. It supplies drinking water, supports agriculture, and sustains ecosystems.

Despite its importance, groundwater is being extracted at unsustainable rates due to population growth, urbanization, and agricultural expansion. Depletion of groundwater can cause severe environmental and economic issues. This report explores the causes, consequences, and strategies for recharging groundwater, offering sustainable solutions to this pressing global challenge.

Groundwater Depletion

Groundwater depletion occurs when water is extracted faster than it can be naturally replenished. This overuse leads to a significant drop in water tables, creating various environmental and socioeconomic problems.

Effects of Groundwater Depletion

1. **Lowering of the Water Table:**
   Excessive extraction causes the water table to drop, making it more challenging and costly to access water. In extreme cases, wells may run dry, forcing communities to rely on alternative water sources.
2. **Land Subsidence:**
   Groundwater supports the ground above it. When aquifers are depleted, the land can sink, causing structural damage to buildings, roads, and pipelines.
3. **Reduced Water Quality:**
   As aquifers are depleted, contaminants such as salts, heavy metals, and pesticides can concentrate in remaining water supplies, making the water unsafe for consumption and irrigation.
4. **Ecological Impacts:**
   Groundwater sustains rivers, lakes, and wetlands during dry periods. Depletion can dry up these ecosystems, threatening biodiversity and disrupting natural habitats.

Groundwater Recharging

Groundwater recharging refers to the process of replenishing underground water reserves through natural or artificial means. This process is essential to counteract depletion and ensure long-term water availability.

Natural Recharging Methods

1. **Infiltration from Rainfall:**
   Rainwater seeps through the soil, replenishing underground aquifers. This natural recharge process is vital in regions with high rainfall but is often reduced in urban areas due to concrete surfaces.
2. **River and Stream Flow:**
   Rivers and streams naturally replenish groundwater when they flow over permeable surfaces. During floods, excess water can infiltrate into surrounding aquifers.
3. **Wetlands and Forests:**
   Wetlands act as natural water reservoirs, holding water during floods and releasing it slowly into the ground. Forests also contribute to groundwater recharge by slowing down runoff and enhancing infiltration.

Artificial Recharging Techniques

1. **Recharge Wells:**
   Specially designed wells are used to inject surface water directly into underground aquifers. These wells are often installed in urban areas and industrial sites to offset water extraction.
2. **Percolation Tanks:**
   Large, shallow reservoirs collect rainwater, allowing it to percolate

slowly into the soil and recharge aquifers. These tanks are commonly built in rural areas to support agriculture.

3. **Rainwater Harvesting:**
   This method involves collecting rainwater from rooftops and other surfaces, storing it in tanks, or directing it into the ground through specially designed structures like soak pits and recharge trenches.
4. **Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR):**
   This advanced technique involves intentionally recharging aquifers using engineered structures such as infiltration basins, recharge ponds, and water injection systems. It is often used in large-scale water management projects.

Sustainable Management Practices

To combat groundwater depletion and promote sustainable use, the following strategies are essential:

1. **Water Conservation Techniques:**
   - Use water-efficient irrigation methods such as drip irrigation and sprinklers.
   - Install water-saving fixtures in homes and industries.
2. **Policy and Regulatory Frameworks:**
   - Enforce regulations on groundwater extraction limits.
   - Implement water pricing policies to discourage overuse.
   - Monitor groundwater usage through technology and data collection.

3. **Community Involvement and Education:**
    - Raise public awareness about the importance of groundwater conservation.
    - Promote community-led initiatives like water-user associations and local water management committees.
4. **Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM):**
    - Coordinate the management of surface water and groundwater resources.
    - Use advanced technologies like remote sensing and GIS mapping for efficient water management.

Conclusion

Groundwater is a critical resource that supports life and sustains economic activities. However, its depletion poses serious environmental, social, and economic risks. Reversing this trend requires a combination of natural and artificial recharging methods, efficient water management, and strong public awareness campaigns. By embracing sustainable practices, we can secure groundwater resources for future generations and ensure a water-resilient future.

Multiple-Choice Questions (MCQs)

1. **What is groundwater?**
   A. Water in rivers and lakes
   B. Water that flows on the earth's surface
   C. Water stored beneath the earth's surface
   D. Water in the ocean
   Answer: C
2. **Which of the following is a major cause of groundwater depletion?**
   A. Sustainable farming practices
   B. Industrial pollution
   C. Over-irrigation in agriculture
   D. Afforestation
   Answer: C
3. **What is the purpose of artificial groundwater recharge?**
   A. Increase water salinity
   B. Lower the water table
   C. Restore depleted aquifers
   D. Cause land subsidence
   Answer: C

4. **Which method is used for rainwater harvesting?**

   A. Water desalination

   B. Recharge wells

   C. River diversion

   D. Groundwater pumping

   Answer: B

5. **What is one effect of groundwater depletion?**

   A. Increased rainfall

   B. Improved agricultural yield

   C. Land subsidence

   D. Expansion of forests

   Answer: C