



1. What do you understand by the term 'environment'? Explain the different perspectives to understand the human-environment relationship.

Ans: Word 'environment' refers to all that is around us. Literally, it means everything that surrounds us including the physical, Social world and cultural environment. In general, it includes all the forces outside the human beings to which they respond in some way. A psychologist named Stokols proposed three approaches to describe human-environment relationship:

(i) The Minimalist Perspective: This view assumes that physical environment has negligible influence on human behaviour. Both run parallel to each other.

(ii) The Instrumental Perspective: According to this approach, environment is simply provider. It is for the comfort of us. Human beings can use the environment as per their needs.

(iii) The Spiritual Perspective: It refers to the view of the environment as something to be respected and valued rather than exploited. Physical environment and human relationship are interdependent. The traditional Indian view about the environment supports spiritual perspective, worshipping Pipal, respect for rivers and mountains. Chipko Aandolan and movement by Bisnoi Community are examples of Indian perspective.

2. "Human beings affect and are affected by the environment."

Explain this statement with the help of example.

Ans: Environment significantly influences various physical and psychological aspects of human behaviour. Some are as follows:

(a) Environmental Influence on Perception: According to researches, our perception is influenced by the environment in which we live. For example. Tribal societies of Africa living in Circular huts show less error in a geometric illusion (the Muller Lyer illusion) than people from cities, living in houses with angular walls.

(b) Environmental Influence on Emotions: For example, watching quietly flowing river, a smiling flowers or a tranquil mountain top provides joy and happiness.

- Natural disasters, landslides can provide deep depression and sorrow, lack of control over their lives.
- Such an influence is traumatic, changes people's lives forever, and can last for a long time after the actual event in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder.

(c) Ecological Influence on Occupation, Living style and Attitudes:

(i) The natural environment of a particular region determines the people living in that region will develop what type of societies—may be agricultural or may be industrial.

(ii) In turn, the occupation determines the life-style and attitudes of the residents of a particular geographical region.

Human behaviour particularly influencing on the environment in negative manner. Following are the environmental stressors which effect human beings, although many are created by human beings themselves.

1. Pollution:

(a) Air-pollution: Emission of toxic gases due to automobile and industrial emissions cause adverse effect on the health.

Air-pollution reduces visibility and leads to eye irritation, headache,

fatigue, occurrence of cancer of respiratory system.

(b) Noise or sound pollution: Any sound which an individual finds unpleasant in a particular situation is considered noise or sound-pollution. Noise (sound pollution) leads to adverse psychological effects. It may lead to high level of stress, narrowing of attention, decrease in concentration, etc.

(c) Water-pollution: Various problems related to digestive system and gastrointestinal issues occur due to water-pollution.

2. Noise

Any unpleasant, irritating or interfering sound is called as Noise.

Noise is an environmental stressor which may affect adversely depending on (a) Predictability (b) Controllability (c) Intensity

3. Crowding and Density:

- Crowding is the subjective feeling of crampedness or being too close to each other. It has negative effects on task performance, personality, interpersonal relationship, general physical and mental health.
- Density is an objective geographical term which refers to number of persons living within the available space, or per square meter area.

4. Natural and Man-made Disasters:

Natural disasters are earthquake, volcanic eruption, windstorm, tornado, cyclone, famine etc.

- There are man-made disasters also; like Bhopal gas tragedy and nuclear bomb explosion in Japan, which not only caused extensive damage to property and physical environment but also had long-term effects on the lives of people.
- Man is largely responsible for regarding the quality of environment that surrounds us. Almost everything humans do has small but cumulative effects on the environment in which we live. e.g., driving a car, using a hair spray, use of refrigerator, etc.

3. What is noise? Discuss the effects of noise on human behaviour.

Ans: Noise is defined as an unwanted sound or sounds that create an effective response. Some may not be disturbed by even a loud-speaker sound, on the other hand, some might even find whistle, tinkling of wind as noise. Thus, any sound "which an individual finds unwanted is noise."

Noise (sound pollution) leads to adverse psychological effects. How the noise affect the individual depends on:

(a) its intensity (loudness), loud sound is often unpleasant and irritating.

(b) predictability, we can adapt more easily to a regular, predictable sound such as chirping of birds in the morning.

(c) Perceived Control: The negative effects of noise are reduced when individuals perceive that they have control over it.

Effects of noise (sound-pollution) on task performance:

(i) When the task being performed is a simple mental task, such as addition of numbers, noise does not affect overall performance whether it is loud or soft.

(ii) If the task being performed is very interesting, then, too, the presence of noise does not affect performance.

(iii) When the noise comes at intervals and in an unpredictable way, it is experienced as more disturbing than the noise being continuously present.

(iv) Difficult task performance requires full concentration, then intense, unpredictable and uncontrollable noise reduces the level of task performance.

(iv) When switching off the noise is within the control of the person, the numbers of ' errors in task performance decrease.

4. What are the salient features of crowding? Explain the major

psychological consequences of crowding.

Ans:

Crowding: It is psychological crampedness. It manifests following features:

(a) Feeling of discomfort because of too many people or things around us the experience of physical restriction and sometimes the lack of privacy.

(b) Crowding is the person's reaction to the presence of a large number of persons within a particular area or space.

Features of Crowding:

Crowding has the following features:

- Crowding gives feeling of discomfort.
- It gives a feeling that individual privacy is being threatened.
- It gives feeling that individual's personal space is being invaded.
- It gives negative view of a space around the person.
- Crowding develops feelings of loss of control over social interaction.
- Crowding is studied by various psychologists in India and abroad.
- Crowding is not always experienced in high density setting nor all people experience its negative effects. For example, Mela has high density but still people enjoy it.

Effects of Crowding and High Density:

(a) Crowding and High density may lead to abnormal behaviour and aggression. e.g., an increase in population has sometimes been found to be accompanied by an increase in violent crime.

(b) Crowding leads to lowered performance on difficult tasks that involve cognitive processes and has adverse effects on memory and the emotional state.

(c) Children growing up in very crowded households show lower academic performance. They also show a weaker tendency to continue working on a task if they are unsuccessful at it, compared to children growing up in non-crowded households. They experience greater conflicts with parents and get less support from their family members.

(d) The nature of social interaction determines the degree to which an individual will react to crowding. For example, in parties, large number of persons may not cause stress rather it may lead to positive emotional reactions.

(e) Individuals differ in the degree to which they show negative effects of crowding and also in the nature of these reactions.

Two kinds of tolerance can be mentioned that may explain these individual differences:

(i) Crowding Tolerance

(ii) Competition Tolerance

(i) Crowding Tolerance: It refers to the ability of a person to mentally deal with the high density or crowding environment, e.g., crowded residence.

- It is developed because people can use to manage people around them.
- It is modifying ones perception one holds regarding high density/crowded situations.
- Indians in general have more crowding tolerance.

(ii) Competition Tolerance: It is the ability to put up with a situation in which individuals would have to compete with many others for even basic resources including physical space.

Since there is a greater possibility of competition for resources in a crowded setting, the reaction to that setting would be influenced by the extent of tolerance for competition for resources.

(iii) Cultural Characteristics: It may determine the extent to which a particular environment is judged to be subjectively more crowded

or less crowded.

5. Why is the concept of 'personal space' important for human beings? Justify your answer with the help of an example.

Ans: The concept of personal space refers to the personal physical distance that we maintain in our social interaction.

It is important for following reasons:

(i) It explains many of the negative effect of crowding as an environment stressor.

(ii) It tells us about social relations. For examples, two people sitting or standing close together are seen to be friends.

It gives us idea about how physical space can be modified in order to reduce stress or discomfort in real life situations.

Everyone has desire of personal space. Males generally have a larger personal space than females. Degree of personal space differ from culture to culture.

Personal space can vary between people, between situations and settings and between cultures. Edward Hall, an anthropologist, mentioned four kinds of interpersonal physical distance—intimate distance, personal distance, social distance and public distance.

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