

# **CHAPTER 9 THE ENVIRONMENT**

## **Objectives**

After studying this chapter, students should be able to:

- (i) define the environment.
- (ii) identify the different types of environment.
- (iii) describe the components of the different environments.
- (iv) classify the different environments and their components into three major domains.
- (v) state the importance of the environment to man.

### **9.1 Definition and Types of Environment**

Environment is defined as the total surrounding where living organisms live. This includes the physical surroundings, climatic factors and the living organisms found in that surrounding.

### **9.2 Types of Environments**

There are mainly three types of environment, these are:

- i) Physical environment
- ii) Social environment
- iii) Cultural environment.

**i) Physical environment:** This is also known as the natural environment and may be defined as the external surroundings and conditions in which living organisms exists. It consists of several physical features such as vegetation, water bodies, soils and landform features that occur naturally. The physical environment comprises all the different forms of nature.

**ii) Social environment:** This refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live and develops. The social environment means the environment which is created by man through his various activities. The political, economic, social and moral aspects of human life constitute the social environment.

**iii) Cultural environment:** Cultural environment is a general term referring to an environment that has been developed from various stages due to man's interaction with nature. This type of environment involves the culture and lifestyle of people. It includes the culture that the individual was educated on or lives in, the people and institutions with whom they interact. The interaction may be in person or through the communication media.

### **9.3 Domains of the Environment**

The environment is grouped into four domains and these are:

- (i) Atmosphere (ii) Lithosphere (iii) Hydrosphere (iv) Biosphere

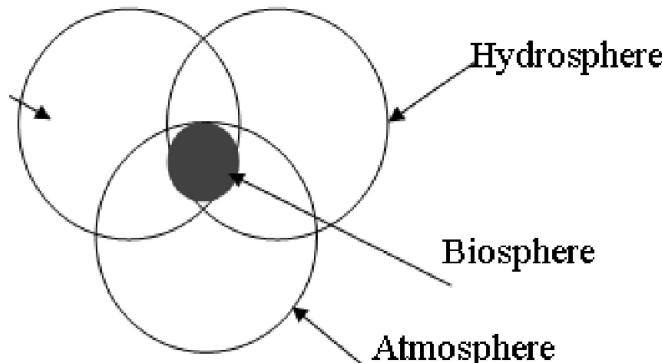
**i) Atmosphere:** This is the gaseous portion of the environment where gases like oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, etc are found. It also contains water in form of vapour in the lower layers.

**ii) Lithosphere:** This is the solid portion of the environment which contains rocks, sediments, sand, soil and minerals. It is the outermost layer or zone of the earth crust which forms the landmass.

**iii) Hydrosphere:** This is the liquid portion of the environment which exists in form of rivers, oceans streams; lakes etc. The hydrosphere holds water in various forms – solid, liquid and gas.

iv) **Biosphere:** This is the biologically active part of the Earth where plants, animals and micro-organisms are found.

Lithosphere



*Fig. 9.1: Intersection of Four Domains of the Environment*

#### 9.4 Importance of the environment to man

The following are importance of the environment to man:

1. The environment provides land where farming activities are carried out on.
2. Mineral resources are derived from the physical environment
3. The environment provides a medium of transportation and communication e.g. land, sea and air transport.
4. The environment provides water for domestic, agricultural and industrial uses.
5. The environment is the habitat of living organisms (plants, animals and micro organisms)
6. Oxygen used for respiration is derived from the physical environment
7. The environment provides food for man
8. The environment provides raw materials like cotton, timber, etc for industries.
9. The environment provides employment through activities such as fishing, mining, trading, hunting, etc.

#### Revision Questions

##### Essay Questions

- 1a) Define the term environment
- b) List three types of environment
- c) Describe any one of them.
- 2a) Define physical environment
- b) List the components of the physical environment
- c) List the components of the social environment
- 3) Classify the environment into domains and enumerate the components of each domain.
- 4) State five importance of the environment to man.
- 5) With examples, differentiate between physical and social environment.

##### Objective Questions

1. Which of the following is not a type of environment?
  - A. Physical
  - B. economic
  - C. social
  - D. cultural.
2. The following are the domains of the environment, except
  - A. atmosphere
  - B. hydrosphere
  - C. genosphere
  - D. lithosphere
  - E. biosphere.
3. Rivers, streams, ponds, lakes are components of the
  - A. hydrosphere
  - B. atmosphere
  - C. biosphere
  - D. lithosphere

4. The atmosphere is the portion of the environment  
A. liquid B. solid C. biological D. gaseous.
5. .... environment refers to the immediate physical and social setting in which people live and develops.  
A. Physical B. Cultural C. Social D. Local
6. The biological active part of the earth where plants, animals and micro organisms are found is called \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Biology. B. Ecology. C. Biosphere. D. Cultural.
7. The liquid part of the environment is referred to as the \_\_\_\_\_  
A. Hydrosphere. B. Lithosphere. C. Genosphere. D. Atmosphere.
8. .... is the outermost layer of the earth crust that forms the landmass.  
A. Lithosphere B. Social C. Atmosphere D. Biosphere.
9. The political, economic, social and moral aspects of human life constitute the environment.  
A. cultural B. physical C. social D. biological
10. Physical environment is known as environment.  
A. cultural B. social C. natural D. chemical

**Answers**

1. B 2. B 3. A 4. D 5. B 6. C 7. A 8. A 9. C 10. C