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***Mala Moni Kalita, Asstt. Prof.***

**DEFINING ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS**

Environmental problems are the harmful effects on the ecosystem that arise from different human activities, generally as unwanted and more or less accidental consequences.

When these types of problems are not corrected in time, cause an unpredictable change in the environment which, in the long run, usually results in environmental disasters, that is, tragic and catastrophic situations that involve (and come from) the deterioration of the environment.

Environmental problems are one of the main challenges of the industrialized world, whose continuous production of consumer goods also requires the continuous entry of raw materials, extracted directly from nature.

In this sense, the impact that the Industrial Revolution and the urban way of life have had on the global ecosystem has meant changes much more vertiginous than in the rest of human history.

That is the reason why numerous **national and international organizations fight to promote ecological legislation** in most countries and for reaching agreements that make it possible to avoid or at least slow down the pace of environmental deterioration as a consequence of our way of life.

There are many forms of environmental problems, some with a greater impact on the environment, which makes them urgent to address, and others, on the other hand, more innocuous and simple. The main ones today would have to be:

1. Deforestation:

This is understood by the indiscriminate felling of forests and green areas to use their wood in various industries (paper, lumber, etc.) or to allocate the soil to agricultural or livestock activities. This process, which prehistoric humanity began in its own way, has never occurred at such a ferocious pace as it is today, so much so that replanting forests is imperative to create a counterweight. The absence of trees deteriorates the soil, leaves it exposed to erosion, decreases the amount of oxygen in the world and increases that of atmospheric carbon, contributing to increase the average temperature of our planet.

2. Contamination:

It refers to the adulteration of water, land or air by adding chemically reactive substances, capable of destroying ecosystems, making water unusable or generating diseases in both human beings and other forms of life. This problem is one of the most serious, as it also leads to destructive phenomena such as acid rain (polluted rain), the toxic accumulation of plastic or the acidification of the seas, for example. All this translates into too rapid chemical changes, which do not allow life to adapt to them, or to remedy them in its own way.

3. Global warming:

The planet is getting hotter and hotter, at a much faster rate than it had in the past, and the logical person responsible for this is the human being. Most industrial activities, from livestock to the burning of fossil fuels, flood the atmosphere with carbon derivatives (carbon monoxide or carbon dioxide), which not only impoverish air quality, but also remain in the atmosphere preventing the normal release of heat, and thus generating a greenhouse effect that is already melting the perpetual snows of the poles and raising the water level. This translates into intense climatic changes, the creation of new deserts, floods and the destruction of the planet's meteorological balance.

4. Biodiversity loss:

The extinction of numerous species, due to the destruction of their habitat or its contamination, or the interference of humans in their food chains, leads to imbalances in the biological circuits that can become critical for the world. For example, the gradual but constant disappearance of bees is leaving plants without pollinators, which would translate into loss of genetic variety and impoverishment of plant species.

The causes of most environmental problems are summarized in **human industrial activity**. Among them are the factories and their solid, liquid and gaseous chemical waste, the burning of fossil fuels to obtain energy or to power our vehicles.

In addition, the constant dumping of biological waste in the waters and other activities that make up our daily lives has a great environmental impact; they have been adulterating the world in which we live for almost two centuries. The consequences of this could be just around the corner.