

Introduction to Environmental science

What does environment mean?

The term environment has been derived from a French word “Environia” means to surround. It refers to both abiotic (physical or non-living) and biotic (living) environment. The word environment means surroundings, in which organisms live. Environment and the organisms are two dynamic and complex component of nature. Environment regulates the life of the organisms including human beings. Human beings interact with the environment more vigorously than other living beings. Ordinarily environment refers to the materials and forces that surrounds the living organism. The scope of the environment varies — from the tiniest, “*micro*” scale to the largest, *global* scale.

Environment is the sum total of conditions that surrounds us at a given point of time and space. It is comprised of the interacting systems of physical, biological and cultural elements which are interlinked both individually and collectively. Environment is the sum total of conditions in which an organism has to survive or maintain its life process. It influences the growth and development of living forms.

In other words environment refers to those surroundings that surrounds living beings from all sides and affect their lives in toto. It consists of atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere. It’s chief components are soil, water, air, organisms and solar energy. It has provided us all the resources for leading a comfortable life.

1. According to P. Gisbert “Environment is anything immediately surrounding an object and exerting a direct influence on it.”
2. According to E. J. Ross “Environment is an external force which influences us.”

Thus, environment refers to anything that is immediately surrounding an object and exerting a direct influence on it. Our environment refers to those thing or agencies which though distinct from us, affect our life or activity. The environment by which man is surrounded and affected by factors which may be natural, artificial, social, biological and psychological.

Components of Environment:

Environment mainly consists of atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere and biosphere. But it can be roughly divided into two types such as (a) Micro environment and (b) Macro environment. It can also be divided into two other types such as (c) Physical and (d) biotic environment.

(a) Micro environment refers to the immediate local surrounding of the organism.

(b) Macro environment refers to all the physical and biotic conditions that surround the organism externally.

(c) Physical environment refers to all abiotic factors or conditions like temperature, light, rainfall, soil, minerals etc. It comprises of atmosphere, lithosphere and hydrosphere.

(d) Biotic environment includes all biotic factors or living forms like plants, animals, Micro-organisms.

Sources : <https://www.gktoday.in/topic/environment-definition-and-four-components/>

Objectives and Guiding Principles of Environmental Studies:

According to UNESCO (1971), the objectives of environmental studies are:

- (a) Creating the awareness about environmental problems among people.
- (b) Imparting basic knowledge about the environment and its allied problems.
- (c) Developing an attitude of concern for the environment.
- (d) Motivating public to participate in environment protection and environment improvement.
- (e) Acquiring skills to help the concerned individuals in identifying and solving environmental problems.
- (f) Striving to attain harmony with Nature.

According to UNESCO, the guiding principles of environmental education should be as follows:

- (a) Environmental education should be compulsory, right from the primary up to the post graduate stage.
- (b) Environmental education should have an interdisciplinary approach by including physical, chemical, biological as well as socio-cultural aspects of the environment. It should build a bridge between biology and technology.
- (c) Environmental education should take into account the historical perspective, the current and the potential historical issues.
- (d) Environmental education should emphasise the importance of sustainable development i.e., economic development without degrading the environment.
- (e) Environmental education should emphasise the necessity of seeking international cooperation in environmental planning.
- (f) Environmental education should lay more stress on practical activities and first hand experiences.

Thank you

Source : <https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/environment/>