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The Environmental Impact of Early Humans to 5000 BCE.

Human beings characterized by development have impacted the environment in various ways. The way of life of human beings began with living a nomadic life before 5000 BCE. They used to move from one place to another based on environmental factors. Mobility highly depended on the climatic condition of the place. Those in dry areas used to move frequently in search of wet environments. Therefore, this paper seeks to address the environmental impact of early humans to 5000 BCE.

Overpopulation is one of the environmental impacts of Early Humans. The growth of the population has impacted the environment both negatively and positively. To start with the positive side, accommodating population growth has impacted knowledge advancement. As the population grew, the food supply increased to accommodate the need at hand. The pressure resulted in improving the skills that led to sufficient food production to serve the existing population. The changes can be spotted from the early Stone Age when humans used to hunt and gather food using different skills and tools. Life changed to the adoption of agriculture to ensure food supply was achieved. On the other hand, according to McNeill (p.30), overpopulation negatively affected the environment through the extinction of some species since the growing population had hunted most of the animals before shifting to farming.

Early humans practiced agriculture that impacted the environment. The growing number of humans necessitated the change of their way of acquiring food for their population (McNeill,

p.34). During the last ice age, people settled for farming as a way of life. A shift from hunting and gathering to domesticating animals and growing crops was the option at hand. Since farmland was required, the land was to be cleared to give space for farmland. For example, towards the end ice age, deserts such as northern ice sheets retreated to provide land for the farming and settlement of people. Land clearing led to soil losing cover; thus, the soil was exposed to soil erosion.

Man domesticated cats and dogs first and later domesticated other animals such as cows and goats. Animals like cows required grazing fields. Through their confinement in a specific grazing area, the land was exposed to soil erosion. Positively, agriculture changed the state of arid land that was irrigated to produce food.

Pollution introduces harmful substances into the environment, and human activities contribute immensely to pollution. Human activities led to the soil, air, and water pollution. The introduction of an irrigation system in farming led to increased water pollution since water carries the unwanted sediments back to the stream. The burning of fossil fuels leads to carbon dioxide emission, which is harmful to the ozone layer.

Furthermore, the soil was affected by the new way of grazing animals, and land clearing was carried out to set up farming land. The early man practiced quarry and used the stones in temple buildings (McNeill, p. 38). The land they acquired stones from remained unfilled, thus exposed to soil erosion. The soil was exposed to running water leading to loss of topsoil and soil fertility, among other effects. The human race needs to find a solution towards all kinds of pollution to settle the impact on human life.

Deforestation is a factor that the environment faces due to human beings. Deforestation is the clearing of land occupied by trees purposefully. Primates, notably Chimpanzees, could burn

forests, thus turning them into grasslands to attract animals that could be eventually turned into food. Furthermore, Paleolithic people burned land to ensure that their target crops could grow in the burned areas (McNeill, p.30). Additionally, the increasing population, space to build shelter, and shelter materials lead to deforestation. Cutting down of large trees leads to an increase in greenhouse gases, damage of animal habitats, and imminent risk of soil erosion. Despite the positive impact of deforestation on agricultural land, deforestation should be handled since it affects humans by reducing oxygen concentration.

Human activities have led to global warming. Global warming is the increase in temperatures due to greenhouse gases effects. The emission of Carbon dioxide from fossil fuels and lack of forest cover to handle the emission leads to the damage of the ozone layer. The temperatures will rise due to the weakening ozone layer, protecting the earth from ultraviolet rays and excessive heating. The green gases were effectively responsible for the ice age period (McNeill, p.24). The burning effects adopted by humans for hunting affected the ozone. To protect the planet earth from global warming impact, humans should avoid emitting carbon dioxide into the environment and plant many trees to help curb the gases.

In conclusion, the environment is significantly impacted by human beings. Overpopulation, agriculture, pollution, deforestation, and global warming are some of the ways human beings have affected the environment. The impacts range from positive to negative. Therefore, human beings should prioritize protecting the environment since the environment serves an important part of the lives of humans as well.

Works Cited

McNeill J. *The Webs of Humankind*. 1st ed. W. W. Norton, Incorporated,; 2021:768.

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