**What is the importance of forests?**

**A/ Environmental importance**

* **Forests help in maintaining the water cycle on earth:**

Plants absorb water from the soil and release excess water into the atmosphere in the form of water vapour.

water vapour from oceans rises and condenses to form clouds and this eventually leads to rainfall.

* **Forests help in maintaining the temperature and oxygen level of the atmosphere.**

Plants release oxygen during photosynthesis and consume carbon dioxide and they play a significant role in balancing oxygen level in the atmosphere.

* **Forests prevent soil erosion**.

Trees present in the forests hold the soil particles strongly with the roots and prevent them from erosion.

* **Forest controls climate change by absorbing greenhouse gases and acting as a carbon storehouse.**
* **forests provide habitats to diverse animal species.**

**B/ Economic importance**

* **They are also a source of raw material for many commercially important products such as paper, wood, and fabric.**
* **The use of forests for the purposes of tourism**

**C/social importance**

* **Forest provides people with employment benefits.**
* **Forests provide us with fruits, timber, water, medicine, etc.**
* **Space for leisure and relaxation**

**DEFORESTATION**

**Definition**

**Deforestation or forest clearance is the removal of trees and vegetation from forest area**

**Then the cleared land is converted to farms, ranches, or urban use.**

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION?**

**1. INDUSTRIAL AGRICULTURE**

**Industrial agriculture accounts for around 85% of deforestation worldwide.**

**2.** **TIMBER** **LOGGING**

**TIMBER (wood prepared for use in building and carpentry)**

**LOGGING (cutting down trees for commercial purpose)**

**Around 380,000 hectares of forest are cut every year to meet the global demand for wood.**

**3. MINING**

**To mine, trees and vegetation are cleared and burned.**

**4. EXPANSION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Urban expansion (housing and infrastructure).**

**5. CLIMATE CHANGE**

* **Climate change is a leading cause of deforestation.**
* **Extreme weather events like wildfires (which are responsible for an estimated 10% of degradation annually), droughts, and storm destroy millions of hectares of forest every year.**
* **Their intensity is increasing with global warming.**

**IMPACTS OF DEFORESTATION**

**Environmental effects**

**Atmospheric**

* **The incineration and burning of forest plants to clear land releases large amounts of CO2, which contributes to global warming**
* **Deforestation increases the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and rises the greenhouse effect.**
* **Tropical deforestation is responsible for approximately 20% of world greenhouse gas emissions**

**Hydrological**

* **The water cycle is also affected by deforestation.**
* **Trees extract groundwater through their roots and release it into the atmosphere. When part of a forest is removed, the trees no longer transpire this water, resulting in a much drier climate.**
* **Deforestation reduces the content of water in the soil and groundwater as well as atmospheric moisture.**

**Soil**

* **Deforestation leads to soil erosion**
* **the removal of trees causes sloped lands to be more susceptible to landslides.**

**Biodiversity**

* **Deforestation results in decline in biodiversity and causes the extinction of many species.**

**HOW TO STOP DEFORESTATION**

* **Develop a sense of care for trees**
* **Spread awareness to strengthen the fight against deforestation.**
* **Plant Trees to recover the loss faced through deforestation.**
* **Opt for Sustainable Land Use Planning to lessen urban sprawl and urban agriculture can play a major role in stopping deforestation.**
* **Support and join organizations against deforestation**
* **There are plenty of local and international organizations that are fighting against the issue of deforestation. They are focused on implementing sustainable forestry practices. Examples of such organizations are the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Greenpeace, Conservation International, and Amazon Watch. Support these organizations in their cause against deforestation by either joining as a volunteer or making donations. against deforestation by either joining as a volunteer or making donations.**