

# CHAPTER 13

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## ORGANISMS AND POPULATIONS

**1. Organism:** Basic unit of study in ecology.  
**2. Population:** group of ind. of same species → given area  
**3. Biological community:** assemblage of population of diff. species + interaction.  
**4. Ecosystem:** comp. of bio community + interaction.  
**5. Biome:** A large regional character by major vegetation.

### 13.1 Organism and its Environment

#### 13.2 Populations

Our living world is fascinatingly diverse and amazingly complex. We can try to understand its complexity by investigating processes at various levels of biological organisation - macromolecules, cells, tissues, organs, individual organisms, population, communities and ecosystems and biomes. At any level of biological organisation we can ask two types of questions - for example, when we hear the bubnu sing early morning in the garden, we may ask - 'How does the bird sing?' Or, 'Why does the bird sing?' The 'how-type' questions seek the mechanism behind the process while the 'why-type' questions seek the significance of the process. For the first question in our example, the answer might be in terms of the operation of the voice box and the vibrating bone in the bird, whereas for the second question the answer may lie in the bird's need to communicate with its mate during breeding season. When you observe nature around you with a scientific frame of mind you will certainly come up with many interesting questions of both types - Why are night-blooming flowers generally white? **FOR**  
How does the bee know which flower has nectar? **OR** Why does cactus have so many thorns? **OR** How does the chick recognise her own mother? **OR** and so on.

**Asd. g descending order**  
**Sexual Ecology:** -  
• Rieffel in 1868.  
**Renard Heackerl:** -  
↳ community define Ecology  
↳ science dealing with reciprocal relationship with org. and ext. world.  
**W. H. R. Wirth**:-  
↳ Father of MCA ecology in India.  
↳ pinning otherwise all water will loss and in desert water problem is there.



Ramdeo Misra (1908-1998)

**NCERT**

**Ramdeo Misra** is revered as the Father of Ecology in India. Born on 26 August 1908, Ramdeo Misra obtained Ph.D in Ecology (1937) under Prof. W. H. Pearseil, FRS, from Leeds University in UK. He established teaching and research in ecology at the Department of Botany of the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi. His research laid the foundations for understanding of tropical communities and their succession, environmental responses of plant populations and productivity and nutrient cycling in tropical forest and grassland ecosystems. Misra formulated the first postgraduate course in ecology in India. Over 50 scholars obtained Ph. D degree under his supervision and moved on to other universities and research institutes to initiate ecology teaching and research across the country.

He was honoured with the Fellowships of the Indian National Science Academy and World Academy of Arts and Science, and the prestigious Sanjay Gandhi Award In Environment and Ecology. Due to his efforts, the Government of India established the National Committee for Environmental Planning and Coordination (1972) which, in later years, paved the way for the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Forests (1984).



You have already learnt in previous classes that **Ecology** is a subject which studies the interactions among organisms and between the organism and its physical (abiotic) environment.

Ecology is basically concerned with four levels of biological organisation: **organisms, populations, communities and biomes**. In this chapter we explore ecology at organismic and population levels. **MCA**

**Unit 13.1 ORGANISM AND ITS ENVIRONMENT**

Ecology at the organismic level is essentially physiological ecology which tries to understand how different organisms are adapted to their environments in terms of not only survival but also reproduction. You may have learnt in earlier classes how the rotation of our planet around the Sun and the tilt of its axis cause annual variations in the intensity and duration of temperature, resulting in distinct seasons. These variations together with annual variation in precipitation (remember precipitation includes both rain and snow) account for the formation of major biomes such as desert, rain forest and tundra. [Figure 13.1]

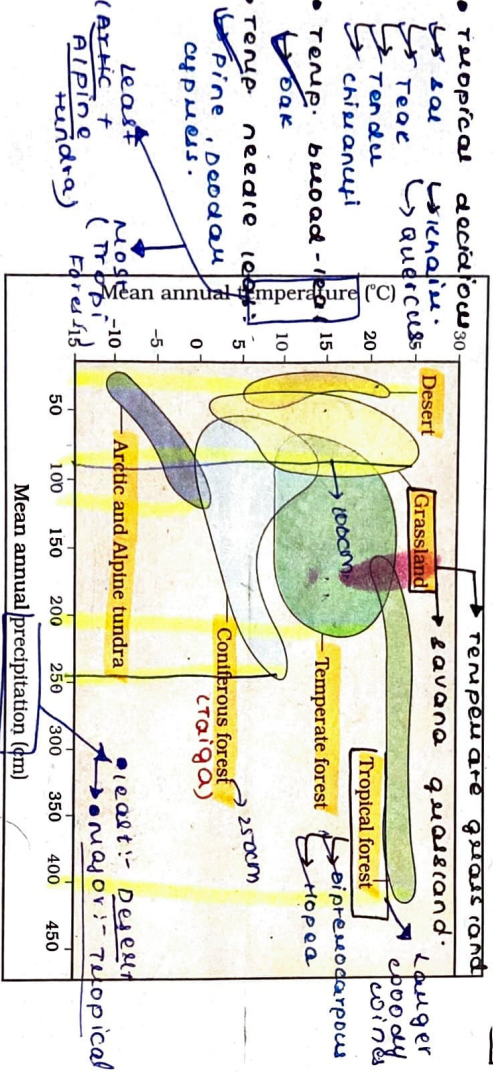


Figure 13.1 Biome distribution with respect to annual temperature and precipitation

**How wide variety of habitats?**

**HARSH HABITAT:**

- Desert
- Me ghaltva forest
- Deep ocean trenches
- Torrential streams
- Permafrost
- Polar tundra
- High mountain tops
- Thermal spring
- Retreating camps.

Regional and local variations within each biome lead to the formation of a wide variety of habitats. Major biomes of India are shown in Figure 13.2. On planet Earth, life exists not just in a few favourable habitats but even in extreme and harsh habitats (scorching Rajasthan desert, rain-soaked Meghalaya forests, deep ocean trenches, torrential streams, permafrost snow laden polar regions, high mountain tops, thermal springs, and stinking compost pits, to name a few. Even our intestine is a unique habitat for hundreds of species of microbes.

**can cause death**

Very heavy work

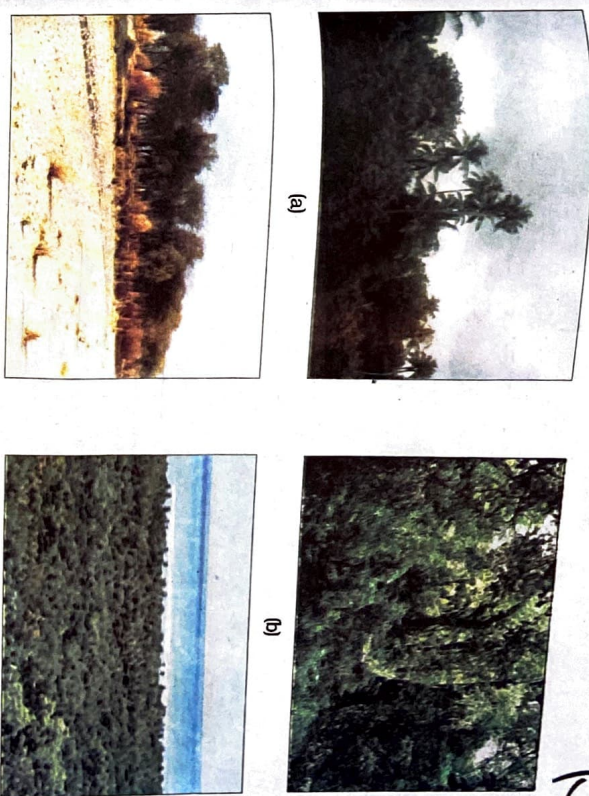


Figure 13.2 Major biomes of India (a) Tropical rain forest; (b) Deciduous forest; (c) Desert; (d) Sea coast

What are the key elements that lead to so much variation in the physical and chemical conditions of different habitats? The most important ones are temperature, water, light and soil. We must remember that the physico-chemical (abiotic) components alone do not characterise the habitat of an organism completely; the habitat includes biotic components also - pathogens, parasites, predators and competitors - of the organism with which they interact constantly. We assume that over a period of time, the organism had through natural selection, evolved adaptations to optimise its survival and reproduction in its habitat.

(Each organism has an invariably defined range of conditions that it can tolerate, diversity in the resources it utilises and a distinct functional role in the ecological system, all these together comprise its **niche**.)

**NECESSITY OF Niche**

no two species can have same niche if found in same environment.

**13.1.1 Major Abiotic Factors**

**Temperature:** Temperature is the most important ecologically relevant environmental factor. You are aware that the average temperature on earth varies seasonally, decreases progressively from the equator towards the poles and from plains to the mountain tops. It ranges from subzero levels in polar areas and high altitudes to  $>50^{\circ}\text{C}$  in tropical deserts in summer. There are, however, unique habitats such as thermal springs and deep-sea hydrothermal vents where average temperatures exceed  $100^{\circ}\text{C}$ . It is general knowledge that mango trees do not and cannot grow

ECOTHE RM  
 → Homeotherm or warmblooded  
 → can regulate Temp.  
 eg: birds and mammals.

→ can regulate Temp.  
 eg: birds and mammals.  
 → can regulate Temp.  
 eg: birds and mammals.

(exception: polar) and through the metabolic activity and other physiological functions of the organism. A few organisms can tolerate and thrive in a wide range of temperatures (they are called **eurytherms**) but a vast majority of them are restricted to a narrow range of temperatures (such organisms are called **stenotherms**). The levels of thermal tolerance of different species determine to a large extent their geographical distribution. Can you think of a few eurythermal and stenothermal animals and plants?

mandi which is sent global. car. coil push tropical to temp. areas and temp. area 2nd most imp. factor

Strengths and can be any acid blooded and even blooded animal.  
 → feed mammals such as polar bears and other mammals.

eg: shark  
 → can regulate Temp.  
 eg: birds and mammals.

Red Algae many organisms while not all the colour components of the visible spectrum

190-760 nm  
 400-700 nm  
 MODERATE HARM  
 QUIET HARM  
 LETHAL.  
 CHROMATIC  
 SHOW  
 DEPTH  
 DEPTH  
 DEPTH  
 DEPTH  
 DEPTH

ORGANISMS AND POPULATIONS

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 = study of soil.  
 pedology is a dark soil  
 humus acid c. soil  
 no pH as reservation of  
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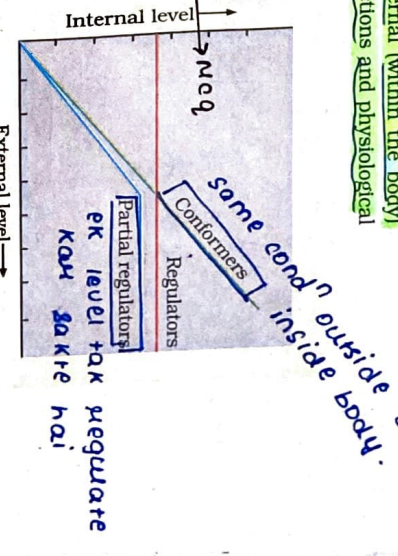


Figure 13.3 Diagrammatic representation of organismic response

→ edaphic factor  
 = study of soil.  
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 humus acid c. soil  
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 acid.

HIBERNATION RESERVATION



Migrate + suspend = TEMPORARY  
 Birds  
 BAC, Fungi, plants → only conventional

BIOLOGY

Birds  
 mammals  
 feco vertebrates  
 feco invertebrates

Due to good efficiency of warm blood.

(ii) **Regulate** Some organisms are able to maintain homeostasis by physiological **sometimes behavioural also** means which ensures **constant body temperature, constant osmotic concentration, etc.** All birds and mammals, and a very few lower vertebrate and invertebrate species are indeed capable of such regulation (thermoregulation and osmoregulation). Evolutionary biologists believe that the **success of mammals** is largely due to their ability to maintain a constant body temperature and thrive whether they live in Antarctica or in the Sahara desert.

The mechanisms used by most mammals to regulate their body temperature are similar to the ones that we humans use. We maintain a constant body temperature of **37°C**. In summer, when outside temperature is more than our body temperature, we sweat profusely. The resulting evaporative cooling, similar to what happens with a desert cooler in operation, brings down the body temperature. In winter when the temperature is much lower than 37°C, we start to shiver, a kind of exercise which produces heat and raises the body temperature. **Plants, on the other hand, do not have such mechanisms to maintain internal temperatures.**

(iii) **Conform** An overwhelming majority **99 per cent** of animals and **nearly all plants** cannot maintain a constant internal environment. Their body temperature **changes** with the ambient temperature. In aquatic animals, the osmotic concentration of the body fluids change with that of the ambient, water osmotic concentration. These animals and plants are **simply conformers**. Considering the benefits of a constant internal environment to the organism, we must ask why these conformers had not evolved to become regulators. Recall the human analogy we used above: much as they like, how many people can really afford an air conditioner? Many simply 'sweat it out' and resign themselves to suboptimal performance. In hot summer months, **Thermoregulation is energetically expensive** for many organisms. This is particularly true for **small animals** like **shrews and humming birds**. Heat loss or heat gain is a function of surface area. Since small animals have a larger surface area relative to their volume, they tend to lose body heat very fast when it is cold outside; then they have to expend much energy to generate body heat through metabolism. This is the main reason why very small animals are rarely found in polar regions. During the course of evolution, the costs and benefits of maintaining a constant internal environment are taken into consideration. Some species have evolved the ability to regulate, but only over a limited range of environmental conditions, beyond which they **simply conform**.

500%  
 MCB

If the stressful external conditions are localised or remain only for a short duration, the organism has two other alternatives for

MECHANISMS AND POPULATIONS  
 behavioural adaptation

(iii) **Migrate**: The organism can move away temporarily from the stressful habitat to a more hospitable area and return when stressful period is over. In human analogy, this strategy is like a person moving from Delhi to Shimla for the duration of summer. Many animals, particularly birds, during winter undertake long-distance migrations to more hospitable areas. Every winter the famous **Kooldo National Park (Bharatpur)** in Rajasthan host thousands of migratory birds coming from **Siberia** and other extremely cold northern regions.

(iv) **Suspend** In bacteria, fungi and lower plants, various kinds of thick-walled spores are formed which help them to survive unfavourable conditions - these germinate on availability of suitable environment. In higher plants, seeds and some other vegetative reproductive structures serve as means to tide over periods of stress besides helping in dispersal - they germinate to form new plants under favourable moisture and temperature conditions. They do so by reducing their metabolic activity and going into a state of 'dormancy'.

In animals, the organism, if unable to migrate, might avoid the stress by **escaping in time**. The familiar case of **bears** going into **hibernation** during winter is an example of **escape in time**. Some **snails and fish** go into **aestivation** to avoid summer-related problems - heat and desiccation. Under unfavourable conditions many **zooplankton** species in lakes and ponds are known to enter **diapause**, a stage of suspended development.

13.1.3 Adaptations

While considering the various alternatives available to organisms for coping with extremes in their environment, we have seen that some are able to respond through certain physiological adjustments while others do so behaviourally (migrating temporarily to a less stressful habitat). These responses are also actually, their adaptations. So, we can say that **adaptation** is any attribute of the organism (morphological, physiological, behavioural) that enables the organism to survive and reproduce in its habitat. Many adaptations have evolved over a long evolutionary time and are genetically fixed. In the absence of an external source of water, the **Kangaroo rat** in North American deserts is capable of meeting all its water requirements through its internal fat oxidation in which water is a by-product. It also has the ability to concentrate its urine so that minimal volume of water is used to remove excretory products. Many desert plants have a thick cuticle on their leaf surfaces and have their stomata arranged in deep pits (sunkers) to minimise water loss through transpiration. They also have a special photosynthetic pathway (CAM) that enables their stomata to remain closed during day time. Some desert plants like **Opuntia**, have **no leaves** - they are reduced to spines, taken over by the flattened stems.

return = migration  
 No return  
 TUNNING  
 NOT ONLY FROM MCB, SIBERIA

→ A kind of pause and leaving due to stress  
 → FISHES, BIRD

migration  
 behavioural adaptation  
 energetically fixed  
 MCB (APPLICATION BASED)  
 PHYSIOLOGICAL  
 BEHAVIOURAL  
 PHYSIOLOGICAL



**SEARCH EFFECTIVE** \* \* \*  
 Mammals from colder climates generally have shorter ears and limbs to minimise heat loss. This is called the Allen's Rule. In the polar seas their cell membranes contain a much higher lipid chain, which is less fluid.  
 ↓ **FLUIDITY**

**PHYSIOLOGICAL**  
 (1) symptoms include nausea, fatigue and heart palpitations. This is because in the low atmospheric pressure of high altitudes, the body does not get enough oxygen. But, gradually you get acclimatised and stop experiencing altitude sickness. How did your body solve this problem? The body compensates low oxygen availability by increasing red blood cell production, decreasing the binding affinity of hemoglobin and by increasing breathing rate. Many tribes live in the high altitude of Himalayas. Find out if they normally have a higher red blood cell count (or total hemoglobin) than people living in the plains.

**BIOCHEMISTRY**  
 (2) In most animals, the metabolic reactions and hence all the physiological functions proceed optimally in a narrow temperature range (in humans, it is 37°C). But there are microbes (archaebacteria) that flourish in hot springs and deep sea hydrothermal vents where temperature far exceed 100°C. How is this possible?  
 Many fish thrive in Antarctic waters where the temperature is always below zero. How do they manage to prevent their body fluids from freezing? A large variety of marine invertebrates and fish live at great depths in the ocean where the pressure could be > 100 times the normal atmospheric pressure that we experience. How do they live under such high pressures and do they have any special enzymes? Organisms living in such extreme environments show a fascinating array of biochemical adaptations.

**Mammals**  
 Some organisms possess adaptations that are physiological which allow them to respond quickly to a stressful situation. If you had ever been to any high altitude place (> 3,500m) Kohatang Pass near Manali and Leh you must have experienced what is called altitude sickness. Its symptoms include nausea, fatigue and heart palpitations. This is because in the low atmospheric pressure of high altitudes, the body does not get enough oxygen. But, gradually you get acclimatised and stop experiencing altitude sickness. How did your body solve this problem? The body compensates low oxygen availability by increasing red blood cell production, decreasing the binding affinity of hemoglobin and by increasing breathing rate. Many tribes live in the high altitude of Himalayas. Find out if they normally have a higher red blood cell count (or total hemoglobin) than people living in the plains.

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**13.2 POPULATIONS**  
 13.2.1 **Population Attributes**  
 In nature, we rarely find isolated, single individuals of any species; majority of them live in groups in a well defined geographical area, share or compete for similar resources, potentially interbreed and thus constitute a population. Although the term interbreeding implies sexual reproduction,  
 ↓ **NOT INVOLVED IN SEXUAL REPRODUCTION**

**Mechanisms and Populations**  
 A group of individuals resulting from even asexual reproduction, generally considered a population for the purpose of ecological study. In a forest tract bacteria in an abandoned dwelling (eg) and are some examples of a population. In earlier chapters you learnt that although an individual organism is the one that has to cope with a changed environment, it is at the population level that natural selection operates to evolve the desired traits. Population ecology is therefore, an important area because it links ecology to population genetics and evolution.

A population has certain attributes whereas, an individual organism does not. An individual may have births and deaths, but a population has rates and death rates. In a population these rates refer to per capita increase (or decrease) with respect to members of the population. Here is an example. If in a pond there were 20 lotus plants last year and through reproduction 8 new plants are added, taking the current population to 28. We calculate the birth rate  $\frac{8}{20} = 0.4$  (springs per lotus per year). If 4 individuals in a laboratory population of 40 fruitflies died during a specified time interval say a week, the death rate in the population during that period is  $\frac{4}{40} = 0.1$  individuals per fruitfly per week. → **sex ratio**  
 Another attribute characteristic of a population is **sex ratio**. An individual is either a male or a female but a population has a sex ratio e.g., 60 per cent of the population are females and 40 per cent males). A population at any given time is composed of individuals of different ages. If the age distribution (per cent individuals of a given age or age group) is plotted for the population, the resulting structure is called an **age pyramid** (Figure 13.4). For human population, the age pyramids generally show age distribution of males and females in a diagram. The shape of the pyramids reflects the growth status of the population - whether it is growing, stable or declining.

**Added population**  
 → ornament in wetland  
 → rats of overland  
 → Toga wood  
 → bacteria of cultural place

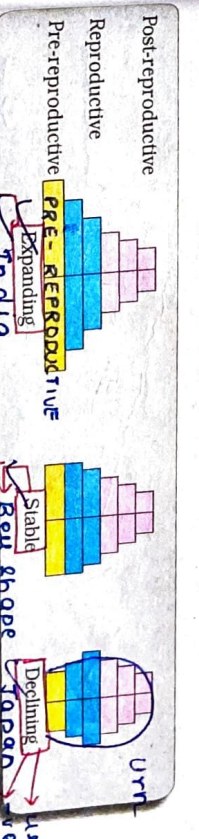


Figure 13.4 Representation of age pyramids for human population

The size of the population tells us a lot about its status in the habitat. Whatever ecological processes we wish to investigate in a population, be it the outcome of competition with another species, the impact of a



There are 1000 of birds but Siberian cranes are 100.

BIOLOGY

① Total numbers (most app.)

② Biomass or % cover.

\* Population Density → Population area

FOR TERRESTRIAL =  $m^2$

FOR AQUATIC =  $m^3$

③ Relative Density

④ Indirect count

predator or the effect of a pesticide application we always evaluate them in terms of any change in the population size. The size, in nature, could be as low as 10/Siberian cranes at Bharatpur Wetlands in any year or go into millions (*Chlamydomonas* in a pond). Population size, technically called **population density** (designated as N), need not necessarily be measured in numbers only. Although total number is generally the most appropriate measure of population density, it is in some cases either meaningless or difficult to determine. In an area, if there are 200 *Parthenium* plants but only a single huge banyan tree with a large canopy, stating that the population density of banyan is low relative to that of *Parthenium* amounts to underestimating the enormous role of the Banyan in that community. In such cases, the percent cover or biomass is a more meaningful measure of the population size. Total number is again not an easily adoptable measure if the population is huge and counting is impossible or very time-consuming. If you have a dense laboratory culture of bacteria in a petri dish what is the best measure to report its density? Sometimes, for certain ecological investigations, there is no need to know the absolute population densities. Relative densities serve the purpose equally well. For instance, the number of fish caught per trap is good enough to estimate its total population density in the lake. We are mostly obliged to see them. The tiger census in our national parks and tiger reserves is often based on bone marks and faecal pellets. \*\*\*

### 13.2.2 Population Growth

not stable

The size of a population for any species is not a static parameter. It keeps changing with time depending on various factors including **food availability**, **predation pressure**, **adverse weather**. In fact, it is these changes in population density that give us some idea of what is happening to the population - whether it is flourishing or declining. Whatever might be the ultimate reasons, the density of a population in a given habitat during a given period, fluctuates due to changes in four basic processes, two of which (**mortality** and **immigration**) contribute to an increase in population density and two (**natality** and **emigration**) to a decrease.

**Natality** refers to the number of births during a given period in the population that are added to the initial density.

**Mortality** is the number of deaths in the population during a given period.

**Immigration** is the number of individuals of the same species that have come into the habitat from elsewhere during the time period under consideration.

**Emigration** is the number of individuals of the population who left the habitat and gone elsewhere during the time period under consideration.

### ORGANISMS AND POPULATIONS

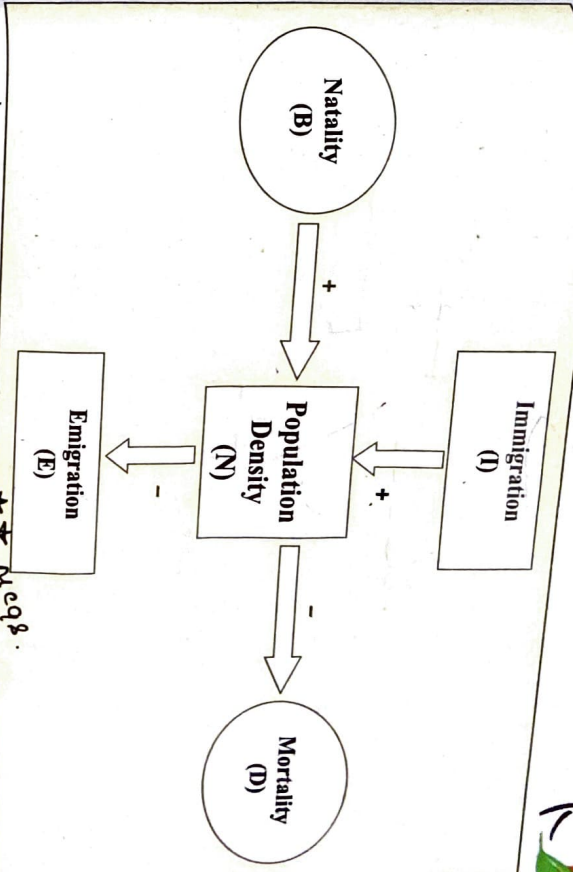


Figure 13.5

So, if N is the population density at time t, then its density at time t + 1 is

$$N_{t+1} = N + (B + I) - (D + E)$$

You can see from the above equation (Fig. 13.5) that population density will increase if the number of births plus the number of immigrants (B + I) is more than the number of deaths plus the number of emigrants (D + E). Under normal conditions, births and deaths are the most important factors influencing population density. The other two factors assuming importance only under special conditions. For instance, if a new habitat is just being colonised, immigration may contribute more significantly to population growth than birth rates.

**Growth Models**: Does the growth of a population with time show any specific and predictable pattern? We have been concerned about unbridled human population growth and problems created by it in our country and it is therefore natural for us to be curious if different animal populations in nature behave the same way or show some restraints on growth. Perhaps we can learn a lesson or two from nature on how to control population growth.

**(i) Exponential growth**: Resource (food and space) availability is obviously essential for the unimpeded growth of a population. Ideally, when resources in the habitat are unlimited, each species has the ability to realise fully its innate potential to grow in number, as Darwin observed while developing his theory of natural selection. Then the population grows in an exponential or

MOX. 9NB09M  
POPULATION

→ Exponential growth is a specific way that quantity may increase over time

geometric fashion. If in a population of size  $N$ , the birth rates (not total number but per capita births) are represented as  $b$  and death rates (again, per capita death rates) as  $d$ , then the increase or decrease in  $N$  during a unit time period  $t$  ( $dN/dt$ ) will be

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = (b - d) \times N$$

Let  $(b - d) = r$  then  $\frac{dN}{dt} = r \times N$  → **BIOTIC POTENTIAL**

The  $r$  in this equation is called the **intrinsic rate of natural increase** and is a very important parameter chosen for assessing impacts of any biotic or abiotic factor on population growth.

$$r = 0.0146 = \ln(1.015) \quad (2001)$$

To give you some idea about the magnitude of  $r$  values, for the Norway rat the  $r$  is 0.015 and for the flour beetle it is 0.12. In 1981, the value for human population in India was 0.0205. Find out what the current  $r$  value is. For calculating it, you need to know the birth rates and death rates.

eg:- **Biga bloom and INCREASE POPULATION.**

The above equation describes the exponential or geometric growth pattern of a population (Figure 13.6) and results in a J-shaped curve when we plot  $N$  in relation to time. If you are familiar with basic calculus, you can derive the integral form of the exponential growth equation as

$$N = N_0 e^{rt}$$

where  
 $N_t$  = Population density after time  $t$   
 $N_0$  = Population density at time zero  
 $r$  = Intrinsic rate of natural increase  
 $e$  = the base of natural logarithms (2.71828)

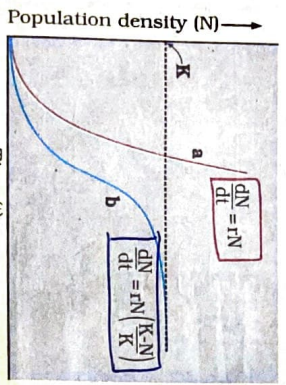


Figure 13.6 Population growth curve

a when responses are not limiting the growth, plot is exponential.  
 b when responses are limiting the growth, plot is logistic.  
**K is carrying capacity.**

The king and the minister sat for a chess game. The king, confident of winning the game, was ready to accept any bet proposed by the minister. The minister humbly said that if he won, he wanted only some wheat grains, the quantity of which is to be calculated by placing on the chess board one grain in Square 1, then two in Square 2, then four in Square 3, and eight in Square 4, and so on, doubling each time the previous quantity of wheat on the next square until all the 64 squares were filled. The king accepted the seemingly silly bet and started

the game, but unluckily for him, the minister won. The king felt that fulfilling the minister's bet was so easy. He started with a single grain on the first square and proceeded to fill the other squares following the minister's suggested procedure, but by the time he covered half the chess board, the king realised to his dismay that all the wheat produced in his entire kingdom pooled together would still be inadequate to cover all the 64 squares. Now think of a tiny paramecium starting with just one individual and through binary fission, doubling in number's every day, and imagine what a mind-boggling population size it would reach in 64 days. (provided food and space remain unlimited)

**Logistic growth:** No population of any species in nature has at its disposal unlimited resources to permit exponential growth. This leads to competition between individuals for limited resources. Eventually, the fittest individual will survive and reproduce. The governments of many countries have also realised this fact and introduced various restraints with a view to limit human population growth. In nature, a given habitat has enough resources to support a maximum possible number, beyond which no further growth is possible. Let us call this limit its **nature's carrying capacity (K)** for that species in that habitat.

A population growing in a habitat with limited resources show initially a lag phase, followed by phases of acceleration and deceleration and finally an asymptote, when the population density reaches the carrying capacity. A plot of  $N$  in relation to time ( $t$ ) results in a sigmoid curve. This type of population growth is called **Verhulst-Pearl Logistic Growth** (Figure 13.6) and is described by the following equation:

$$\frac{dN}{dt} = rN \left( \frac{K - N}{K} \right)$$

Where  $N$  = Population density at time  $t$   
 $r$  = Intrinsic rate of natural increase  
 $K$  = Carrying capacity

Since resources for growth for most animal populations are finite and become limiting sooner or later, the logistic growth model is considered a more realistic one. → **MCG**.

Gather from Government Census data the population figures for India for the last 100 years, plot them and check which growth pattern is evident. → **AIRMS - 2016**

**3.2.3 Life History Variation**

Populations evolve to maximise their reproductive fitness, also called **darwinian fitness** (high **r value**) in the habitat in which they live. Under



PROTOCO-PERATION:-

2 species benefited by each other but can live without association.

eg:- Red-billed ox-pecker sits on back of rhinoceros and feeds on ticks. Both are benefited and can live separately.

a particular set of selection pressures, organisms evolve towards the most efficient reproductive strategy. Some organisms breed only once in their lifetime (Pacific salmon fish, bamboo) while others breed many times during their lifetime (most birds and mammals). Some produce a large number of small-sized offspring (Oysters, pelagic fishes) while others produce a small number of large-sized offspring (birds, mammals). So, which is desirable for maximizing fitness? Ecologists suggest that life history traits of organisms have evolved in relation to the constraints imposed by the abiotic and biotic components of the habitat in which they live. Evolution of life history traits in different species is currently an important area of research being conducted by ecologists.

Population Interactions

I think of any natural habitat on earth that is inhabited just by a few species? There is no such habitat and such a situation is even possible. For any species, the minimal requirement is one more on which it can feed. Even a plant species, which makes its own food, must survive alone; it needs soil microbes to break down the organic matter in soil and return the inorganic nutrients for absorption. And then, the plant manages pollination without an animal agent? It is that in nature, animals, plants and microbes do not and cannot exist in isolation but interact in various ways to form a biological community. Even in minimal communities, many interactive linkages though full may not be readily apparent.

Specific interactions arise from the interaction of populations of two different species. They could be beneficial (detrital or neutral) (neither harm nor benefit) to one of the species or both. Assigning a (+) sign for beneficial interaction, (-) sign for detrimental and (0) for neutral interaction, let us look at all the possible outcomes of interspecific interactions (Table 13.1).

Table 13.1 : Population Interactions

Species A	Species B	Name of Interaction
+	+	Mutualism
+	-	Competition
+	0	Predation
0	+	Parasitism
0	0	Commensalism
-	0	Amensalism

9th. species live together together 232

used for neutral

Both the species benefit in mutualism and both lose in competition in their interactions with each other. In both parasitism and predation only one species benefits (parasite and predator, respectively) and the interaction

is detrimental to the other species (host and prey, respectively). The interaction where one species is benefited and the other is neither benefited nor harmed is called commensalism. In amensalism on the other hand one species is harmed whereas the other is unaffected. Predation, parasitism and commensalism share a common characteristic - the interacting species live closely together.

Predation: What would happen to all the energy fixed by autotrophic organisms if the community has no animals to eat the plants? You can think of predation as nature's way of transferring to higher trophic levels the energy fixed by plants. When we think of predator and prey, most probably it is the tiger and the deer that readily come to our mind, but a sparrow eating any seed is no less a predator. Although animals eating plants are categorised separately as herbivores, they are, in a broad ecological context, not very different from predators.

Besides acting as 'conduits' for energy transfer across trophic levels, predators play other important roles. They keep prey populations under control but for predators, prey species could achieve very high population densities and cause ecosystem instability. When certain exotic species are introduced into a geographical area, they become invasive and start spreading fast because the invaded land does not have its natural predators. The prickly pear cactus introduced into Australia in the early 1920s caused havoc by spreading rapidly into millions of hectares of rangeland. Finally, the invasive cactus was brought under control only after a cactus-feeding predator (a moth) from its natural habitat was introduced into the country. Biological control methods adopted in agricultural pest control are based on the ability of the predator to regulate prey population. Predators also help in maintaining species diversity in a community, by reducing the intensity of competition among competing prey species. In the rocky intertidal communities of the American Pacific Coast, the starfish Pisaster is an important predator. In a field experiment, when all the starfish were removed from an enclosed intertidal area, more than 10 species of invertebrates became extinct within a year because of fier

specific competition. If a predator is too efficient and overexploits its prey, then the prey might become extinct and following it, the predator will also become extinct for lack of food. This is the reason why predators in nature are prudent. Prey species have evolved various defenses to lessen the impact of predation. Some species of insects and frogs are cryptically coloured (camouflaged) to avoid being detected easily by the predator. Some are poisonous and therefore avoided by the



role of predation

role of predation

Best eg. of predation

3) role

cactus - moth, predator - Invert. (Tiger - deer), Sparrow - seed

protection

1st protection technique







### \* FOUL ANIMALS:

- Spanner & Louge (Insects + Frogs)
- Poisonous Chemical
- Monarch Butterfly
- Goats (eat toxic weeds)

### \* NOT POISONOLOGY

#### ② Protection

predators. The Monarch butterfly is highly distasteful to its predator (bird) because of a special chemical present in its body. Interestingly, the butterfly acquires this chemical during its caterpillar stage by feeding on a poisonous weed.

For plants, herbivores are the predators. Nearly 25 per cent of all insects are known to be phytophagous (feeding on plant sap and other parts of plants). The problem is particularly severe for plants because, unlike animals, they cannot run away from their predators. Plants therefore have evolved an astonishing variety of morphological and chemical defences against herbivores. Thorns (Acaia, Cactus) are the most common morphological means of defence. Many plants produce and store chemicals that make the herbivore sick when they are eaten, inhibit feeding or digestion, disrupt its reproduction or even kill it. You must have seen the weed Calotropis growing in abandoned fields. The plant produces highly poisonous cardiac glycosides and that is why you never see any cattle or goats browsing on this plant. A wide variety of chemical substances that we extract from plants on a commercial scale

all 2 neretabolites → nicotine, caffeine, quinine, strychnine, opium, etc. are produced by them actually as defences against grazers and browsers.

### NOT ANTRA

#### Defination

- eg: -
- ① Stammingoes - fishes
- ② Interference
- ③ Tortoise - goats
- ④ Balanus - Charatanalum (coast of scotland)

- canine and snaggare eg. of competition. Best definition

### MECHANISMS AND POPULATIONS

#### \*\*\*

the occurrence of competition in nature comes from competitive release. A species whose distribution is small geographical area because of the presence of a superior species, is found to expand its distribution dramatically when the competing species is experimentally eliminated eventually. This may be true if resources are limiting, but not otherwise. More recent studies do not support such gross generalisations about competition. While they do not rule out the occurrence of interspecific competition in nature, they point out that species facing competition might evolve mechanisms that promote co-existence rather than exclusion. One such mechanism is resource partitioning. If two species compete for the same resource, they could avoid competition by choosing, for instance, different times for feeding or different foraging patterns. MacArthur showed that five closely related species of warblers living on the same tree were able to avoid competition and co-exist due to behavioral differences in their foraging activities. → Different bird rule.

Parasitism: Considering that the parasitic mode of life ensures free lodging and meals, it is not surprising that parasitism has evolved in so many taxonomic groups from plants to higher vertebrates. Many parasites have evolved to be host-specific. They can parasitise only a single species of host! In such a way that both host and the parasite tend to co-evolve: that is, if the host evolves special mechanisms for rejecting or resisting the parasite, the parasite has to evolve mechanisms to counteract and neutralise them. In order to be successful with the same host species, in accordance with their life styles, parasites evolved special adaptations such as the loss of unnecessary sense organs, presence of adhesive organs or suckers by clinging on to the host, loss of digestive system and high reproductive capacity. The life cycles of parasites are often complex, involving one or two intermediate hosts or vectors to facilitate parasitisation of its primary host. The human liver fluke (a nematode parasite) depends on two intermediate hosts (a snail and a fish) to complete its life cycle. The malarial parasite needs a

Gause's 'Competitive Exclusion Principle' states that two closely related species competing for the same resources cannot co-exist indefinitely and the competitively inferior one will be eliminated eventually. This may be true if resources are limiting, but not otherwise. More recent studies do not support such gross generalisations about competition. While they do not rule out the occurrence of interspecific competition in nature, they point out that species facing competition might evolve mechanisms that promote co-existence rather than exclusion. One such mechanism is resource partitioning. If two species compete for the same resource, they could avoid competition by choosing, for instance, different times for feeding or different foraging patterns. MacArthur showed that five closely related species of warblers living on the same tree were able to avoid competition and co-exist due to behavioral differences in their foraging activities. → Different bird rule.

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① Competitive exclusion (Gause)  
eg: ① Species of paramecium  
② Goats and Abingdon tortoise.

③ Superior and inferior barnard on scotland.  
④ Co-existence  
eg: ① Connell's elegant field experiments showed that on Galapagos island.

eg: ② Experiment  
③ Balanus dominates the intertidal area, and excludes the smaller Chthamalus from that zone. In general, herbivores and plants appear to be more adversely affected by competition than carnivores.

eg: ④ Resource partitioning  
⑤ is an exception of Gause's law this is compulsory

eg: ⑥ Loss of sense organ  
⑦ Line of adhesion  
⑧ Loss of 205 c.  
⑨ High Reproduction

eg: ⑩ Liver fluke  
⑪ Snail  
⑫ Fish

eg: ⑬ Loss of sense organ  
⑭ Line of adhesion  
⑮ Loss of 205 c.  
⑯ High Reproduction



majority are not social parasite biology

- \* Parasites
- ① lice → dog human
- ② ticks → dog
- ③ Fishes → copepods might render the host more vulnerable to predation by making it physically weak
- ④ Cuckoo → hedge pig parasite
- ⑤ cuckoo → parasite
- (X) Female wasp

Eq: CUCKOO = PARASITIC  
CROWD = HOST  
Cuckoo lays its egg in crow's nest.

Because it needs blood  
Can you explain why?

For reproduction not for growth and nutrition means.

Parasites that feed on the external surface of the host organism are called ectoparasites. The most familiar examples of this group are the lice on humans and ticks on dogs. Many marine fish are infested with ectoparasitic copepods. *Cuscuta*, a parasitic plant that is commonly found growing on hedge plants, has lost its chlorophyll and leaves in the course of evolution. It derives its nutrition from the host plant which it parasitises. The female mosquito is not considered a parasite, although it needs our blood for reproduction.

- Epiphyte → mango
- Saccharine → cow
- Cattle → grass
- Cuckoo → crow
- Cuckoo fish → sea anemone



Figure 13.7 Mutual relationship between fig tree and wasp. (a) Fig flower is pollinated by wasp; (b) Wasp laying eggs in a fig fruit

between sea anemone that has stinging tentacles and the clown fish that lives among them. The fish gets protection from predators which stay away from the stinging tentacles. The anemone does not appear to derive any benefit by hosting the clown fish.

Mutualism: This interaction confers benefits on both the interacting species. Lichens represent an intimate mutualistic relationship between a fungus and photosynthesising algae or cyanobacteria. Similarly, the mycorrhizae are associations between fungi and the roots of higher plants. The fungi help the plant in the absorption of essential nutrients from the soil while the plant in turn provides the fungi with energy-yielding carbohydrates.

The most spectacular and evolutionarily fascinating examples of mutualism are found in plant-animal relationships. Plants need the help of animals for pollinating their flowers and dispersing their seeds. Animals obviously have to be paid 'fees' for the services that plants expect from them. Plants offer rewards or fees in the form of pollen and nectar for pollinators and juicy and nutritious fruits for seed dispersers. But the mutually beneficial system should also be safeguarded against 'cheaters', for example, animals that try to steal nectar without aiding in pollination. Now you can see why plant-animal interactions often involve co-evolution of the mutualists, that is, the evolutions of the flower and its pollinator species are tightly linked with one another. In many species of fig trees, there is a tight one-to-one relationship with the pollinator species of wasp. Figure 13.7. It means that a given fig species can be pollinated only by its 'partner' wasp species and no other species. The female wasp uses the fruit not only as an oviposition (egg-laying) site but uses the developing seeds within the fruit for nourishing



• A seedling is returned to parent

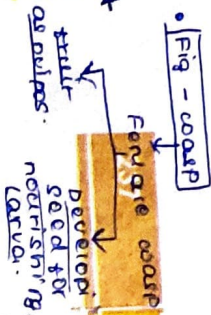




Figure 13.8 Showing bee-a-pollinator on orchid flower

its larvae. The wasp pollinates the fig inflorescence while searching for suitable egg-laying sites. In return for the favour of pollination the fig offers the wasp some of its developing seeds, as food for the developing wasp larvae. Orchids show a bewildering diversity of floral patterns many of which have evolved to attract the right pollinator insect (bees and bumblebees) and ensure guaranteed pollination by it (Figure 13.8). Not all orchids offer rewards. The Mediterranean orchid *Ophrys* employs sexual deceit to get pollination done by a species of bee. One petal of its flower bears an uncanny resemblance to the female of the bee in size, colour and markings. The male bee is attracted to what it perceives as a female. (pseudocopulates) with the flower, and during that process is dusted with pollen from the flower. When this same bee 'pseudocopulates' with another flower, it transfers pollen to it and thus, pollinates the flower. Here you can see how co-evolution operates. If the female bee's colour patterns change even slightly for any reason during evolution, pollination success will be reduced unless the orchid flower co-evolves to maintain the resemblance of its petal to the female bee.

(VII) Amensalism

It is an interaction between two organisms of different species in which one species inhibits the growth of other species by secreting certain chemicals. The organism which inhibits the growth of another organism is called **amensal**. This phenomenon of inhibition of growth of one species by the other species through secretion of certain chemicals is also termed **allelopathy (in plants), or antibiosis or biological antagonism**. Following are some examples of amensalism :

- (i) *Penicillium* secretes penicillin, that inhibits the growth of large number of bacteria.
- (ii) Different species of *Streptomyces*, an actinomycete, produce wide range of chemicals which inhibit the growth of other bacteria. Some of which cause various diseases in human beings. Such chemicals are isolated from these microorganisms are thus, used as antibiotics for curing various diseases caused by all bacteria.
- (iii) Roots of black walnut (*Juglans nigra*), secrete a chemical 'Juglone' which is toxic to other plants like apple, alfalfa etc.
- (iv) *Convolvulus arvensis* inhibits the growth of wheat.



Space (Juglone) or in their hibernation, and diapause). Evolutionary changes through natural selection take place at the population level and hence, population ecology is an important area of ecology. A population is a group of individuals of a given species sharing or competing for similar resources in a defined geographical area. Populations have attributes that individual organisms do not- birth rates and death rates, sex ratio and age

distribution. The proportion of different age groups of males and females in a population is often presented graphically as age pyramid; its shape indicates whether a population is stationary, growing or declining.

Ecological effects of any factors on a population are generally reflected in its size (population density), which may be expressed in different ways (numbers, biomass, per cent cover, etc.) depending on the species.

Populations grow through births and immigration and decline through deaths and emigration. When resources are unlimited, the growth is usually exponential but when resources become progressively limiting, the growth pattern turns logistic. In either case, growth is ultimately limited by the carrying capacity of the environment. The intrinsic rate of natural increase (r) is a measure of the inherent potential of a population to grow.

In nature populations of different species in a habitat do not live in isolation but interact in many ways. Depending on the outcome, these interactions between two species are classified as competition (both species suffer), predation and parasitism (one benefits and the other suffers), commensalism (one benefits and the other is unaffected), amensalism (one is harmed, other unaffected) and mutualism (both species benefit). Predation is a very important process through which trophic energy transfer is facilitated and some predators help in controlling their prey populations. Plants have evolved diverse morphological and chemical defenses against herbivory. In competition, it is presumed that the superior competitor eliminates the inferior one (the Competitive Exclusion Principle), but many closely related species have evolved various mechanisms which facilitate their co-existence. Some of the most fascinating cases of mutualism in nature are seen in plant-pollinator interactions.

EXERCISES

1. How is diapause different from hibernation?
2. If a marine fish is placed in a fresh water aquarium, will the fish be able to survive? Why or why not?
3. Most living organisms cannot survive at temperature above 45°C. How are some microbes able to live in habitats with temperatures exceeding 100°C?
4. List the attributes that populations but not individuals possess.
5. If a population growing exponentially double in size in 3 years, what is the intrinsic rate of increase (r) of the population?
6. Name important defence mechanisms in plants against herbivory.