

1. DISCUSS THE FACTORS OF SOIL EROSION AND SUGGEST CONSERVATION MEASURES.

Answer

Soil erosion and depletion are the major threats to soil as a resource. It takes away the productivity of the soil and makes it unfit for crop production. Both natural and human factors can lead to degradation of soils. Factors which are responsible for soil degradation are:

- Deforestation
- Overgrazing
- Overuse of chemical fertilisers or pesticides
- Rain wash
- Landslides and floods

Important measures for Soil Conservation

Mulching: The bare ground between plants is covered with a layer of organic matter like straw. It helps to retain soil moisture.

Contour Barriers: Stones, grass, soil are used to build barriers along contours. Trenches are made in front of the barriers to collect water.

Rock Dam: Rocks are piled up to slow down the flow of water. This prevents gullies and further soil loss.

Terrace Farming: Broad flat steps or terraces are made on the steep slopes so that flat surfaces are available to grow crops. They reduce surface run-off and soil erosion.

Intercropping: Different crops are grown in alternate rows and are sown at different times to protect the soil from rain wash.

Contour Ploughing: Ploughing parallel to the contours of a hill slope to form a natural barrier for water to flow down the slope.

Shelter Belts: In the coastal and dry regions, rows of trees are planted to check the wind movement to protect soil cover.