

TITLE: Population dynamics of an arid zone in India.

AUTHOR: Murthy MS

SOURCE: [Unpublished] 1994. Presented at the UNESCO / IUSSP / IGU Conference on Population and Environment in Arid Regions, hosted by the University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan, October 24-27, 1994. 19 p.

ABSTRACT: Population parameters in arid zones show adaptation to environmental conditions of the region. A study of population and environment relationship in an Indian desert present in Rajasthan shows greater exploitation of it by man. The desertification conditions are traced back to the Harappan culture, which systematically denuded the already fragile forest area. Besides, nature also played havoc with Rajasthan, by the rise of tectonic plates impeding the river flow from the Indus River. The demographic factors reveal that Rajasthanis have high fertility, with around 6 children [sic] and high infant mortality. Though density of the population is low, the exploitation for uneconomical agricultural practices on marginal lands and dunes and cattle grazing on few available tracts of grass has intensified the desertification process. Irrigation from Rajasthan canal and lift irrigation system have brought up the salinity of the soil. Therefore, cultivation of salt resistant grasses and crops can reduce the desertification. Further, people should be discouraged from growing crops in areas where rainfall is as low as 300 mm. In addition, mineral exploitation is also increasing desertification. People involved in sandstone mining are found to suffer from silicosis and silico-tuberculosis. Therefore, careful planning is needed for checking up soil erosion and desertification in Rajasthan's arid area. (author's, modified)

YEAR: 1994