Environment

The physical and biological world where we live is called our environment. The environment includes our physical surroundings like air, water bodies, soil, and al organisms such as plants, animals, human beings, and micro-organisms like bacteria and fungi called decomposers. All these constituents of the environment interact with one another and maintain a balance in the environment in a natural way. All the waste materials produced by the various activities of man and animals are poisonous to some extent and can be divided into two main groups.

1. Biodegradable wastes- Those waste materials which can be broken down to non- poisonous substances in nature in due course of time by the action of micro- organisms like certain bacteria, are called biodegradable wastes e.g. cattle dung, compost; animal bones; leather, tea- leaves, wool, paper, wheat, wood, hay, cotton, jute, grass, fruits, vegetable peels, leaves, flowers. Such wastes usually do not pollute the environment.
2. Non- biodegradable wastes- The waste materials which cannot be broken down into non- poisonous or harmless substances in nature are called non- biodegradable wastes e.g. D.D.T., plastics, and polythene bags. Ball- point pen refill, synthetic fibers, glass objects, metal articles like Aluminum cans, iron nails, silver foils, and radioactive wastes. They are major pollutants of the environment.