

We face many challenges in our daily lives. You may recall having faced challenges such as diseases, examinations, competitions, accidents and the challenges of adolescence. We learn about the various challenges faced by society through the media. If you do not face challenges successfully, you may risk threats to your life and property, as well as mental and physical illness.

You have learnt about diseases, accidents, disasters and abuse among these challenges in previous grades.

Through this lesson you will gain an understanding of environmental challenges such as accidents, diseases, abuse, addiction to smoking, alcohol and illicit drugs as well as the skills needed to overcome these challenges.

Environmental challenges

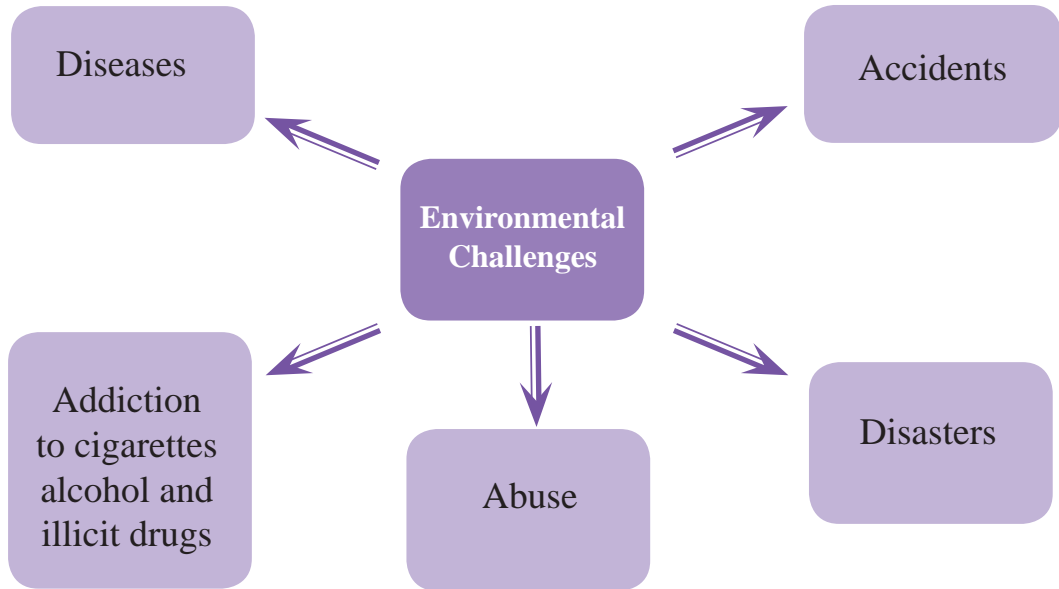
Challenges you will have to face in your everyday environment are called 'Environmental Challenges'.

Activity

List the environmental challenges we face.

Check if the following are included in your list.

Diagramme 17.1



Let us learn these environmental challenges one by one

Accidents

We see many accidents reported in the media. Accidents can happen to anyone at anytime. For example they could occur at home, at school, in factories, in the playground, on roads, in the course of occupations, in mines, at construction sites and other worksites.

The main reasons for accidents are carelessness and ignorance.



Activity

List the harmful situations that could arise due to accidents.



Figure 17.1 - Accidents

Harmful situations that arise due to accidents

- Cuts, bruises and scrapes
- Sprains and fractures
- Burns
- Concussions and loss of consciousness
- Falling ill
- Loss of life
- Mental stress
- Damage to property
- Air pollution
- Sound pollution
- Environmental pollution due to toxins, harmful chemicals and harmful radiation

You must be able to prevent, minimize or manage these harmful effects of accidents.

Steps to prevent accidents

- Gain knowledge and understanding regarding accidents
- Not engaging in risky activities
- Getting help and advice from others when necessary
- Returning things to their proper place after use
- Abiding by the law
- Carrying out safety measures

Measures that could minimize the harmful effects of accidents

- Giving first aid
- Giving CPR when necessary
- Getting medical help as soon as possible

Many accidents today are caused by people's impatience, ignorance and disregard for the law. To overcome these challenges there are a few skills we must develop and these are listed at the end of the chapter.

Disasters

Disasters occur due to long or short term changes in the environment as well as due to human activities.

You have probably heard of the Tsunami which struck Sri Lanka on the 26th of December 2004. This disaster affected not only Sri Lanka but many other islands in the Indian Ocean.



Activity

Make a list of natural disasters.

Disasters we face

- Floods
- Drought
- Landslides
- Tsunami
- Earthquakes
- Cyclones
- Volcanoes
- Forest fires and wildfires
- Lightning
- Buildings collapsing
- War
- Epidemics

Due to the floods and landslides in 2016 many people lost their lives, homes and the farmlands that were their source of income. Due to disasters mental stress, social unrest and illnesses as well as the harmful effects of accidents can occur.



Figure 17.2 - Disasters

Harmful effects of disasters

- Bodily injury including bruises, scrapes, cuts, fractures, burns and other bodily harm
- Illnesses
- Concussions and loss of consciousness
- Electrocution
- Loss of life
- Pollution
- Loss of homes and property

If people were more aware of changes in the environment the harm caused by disasters could be minimized. For example during the landslide in Meeriyabedda in Badulla, because some of the inhabitants saw the cracks appearing on the ground on the hillside and understood what it meant and they were able to escape the disaster.

Methods to prevent or minimize the harmful effects of disasters

- Sufficient warning through different media of communication
- Abiding by the law
- Being prepared
- Creating social policies
- Identifying safe places in advance
- Not putting up illegal structures
- Stopping deforestation
- Being aware of environmental changes
- Working together as a team in emergencies

To successfully overcome disasters we must develop the skills needed to overcome challenges in general.



Activity

Explain how to face a disaster successfully.

Abuse

Causing one to engage in wrongful conduct is known as abused.
eg: inducing others to indulging the use of narcotic drugs,
harassment, etc.

One can get coerced to engage in anti-social activities.

You have probably heard of child abuse in the media. Read the following examples to get an idea about child abuse.

- Tricking children
- Physically and mentally abusing children

- Humiliating children
- Child labor
- Using children for drug trafficking
- Inducing to view inappropriate images and films
- Sexual abuse



Figure 17.3 Child labor

Steps to prevent abuse and coercion

- If anyone tries to coerce you into performing anti-social acts, resist immediately
- Be conscious about those who try to induce you to perform anti-social acts
- Tell a responsible adult about any suspicious conduct
- Do not be alone in deserted places
- If you think that you are about to be sexually abused shout for help and run to a safe place.
- Always remember that your body is your own and therefore do not let others touch your private parts.
- Make sure that your behavior, clothing and speech are decent
- Do not bring your friends home when there are no adults present
- Do not use the internet, social media and mobile phones without adult consent.

If a child is alone at school a teacher should be present. If a child is alone at home an adult should be present.

Harmful effects of abuse and coercion

- Mental distress
- Education is disrupted
- Being cornered in society
- Contracting sexually transmitted diseases
- Unwanted pregnancy
- Death and suicide

The life skills you have learnt in previous lessons will help you avoid being engage in abused as well as to face these situations successfully.



Activity

Write the steps you would take to ensure your safety if you were at home alone with no adults.

Narcotics

Narcotics include tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs.

Narcotics is another challenge you will have to face during adolescence. Due to the various physical and mental changes that occur during adolescence there is a desire to fit in with your peers.

Many youth are pressured into using narcotics due to associating with wrong peers. You should have the strength to be free of this yourself as well as to safeguard your friends from this threat. You should use your creativity to create positive ideas within your peer group.

Whatever reasons users of narcotics bring up none of them are valid. They instead have a large number of negative consequences. Some examples for narcotics are Cocaine, Hashish, Ganja, Marijuana, Heroin, Alcohol, Cigarettes and Cigars.

Harmful effects of using narcotics

- Bodily functions are disrupted
- Mental disturbances
- Disfiguration
- Contracting diseases
- Impotency
- Weakness in the nervous system
- Decrease of life span and loss of life
- Financial difficulties
- Family problems
- Forced to engage in anti-social acts
- Be lead to abuse and coercion
- Being cornered in society
- Conflicts arise



Figure 17.4 - Boxes of cigarettes containing health advice



Activity

Describe how to minimize or prevent the above harmful situations.

Steps to prevent the use of narcotics and to prevent others from using them

- Being informed and warning/educating your friends and society
- Abiding by the law
- Cultivating good habits and character
- Think critically about the information available in the media
- Using your leisure wisely by engaging sports and aesthetic activities
- Rehabilitating those addicted to narcotics
- Opposing the use of narcotics in public places

You can overcome the challenge posed by narcotics.

You as school children can easily overcome the challenge posed by narcotics, because of your knowledge about their ill effects. You have the ability to resist efforts by others to introduce you to narcotics.

You can also use your skills to help those addicted to narcotics to rehabilitate themselves.

Diseases

The two types of diseases are communicable and non-communicable diseases.

Communicable diseases

Diseases that spread from the diseased person to others are known as communicable diseases. Although some communicable diseases have been eradicated many are still prevalent.



Figure 17.5 - Chicken pox

Some examples of communicable diseases are, dengue, leptospirosis, cholera, measles, chicken pox, mumps, chickengunya, SARS virus and sexually transmitted diseases.

These diseases either directly or through vectors such as mosquitoes can spread.

Of these diseases dengue is prevalent among both adults and children. There are many programs being carried out to eradicate dengue mosquito that spread the disease.

You too should cooperate in the eradication of the breeding places of these mosquitos.

The sexually transmitted disease HIV/AIDS is also a major threat, the decline of moral values in the society could be the main cause for its spread.

Non-communicable diseases

Some non-communicable diseases are diabetics, heart diseases, high blood pressure, cancer, nervous disorders. The main causes for these are, unhealthy eating habits and lifestyle. A larger portion of society suffers from non- communicable diseases.



Figure 17.6 - Heart diseases

Harmful effects of diseases

- Dysfunction of organs
- Becoming disabled
- Change in physical appearance
- Become less active
- Harm to life
- Financial troubles
- Education is disrupted
- Mental stress

Steps to prevent or minimise the harmful effects of diseases

- Gain knowledge about diseases and share this knowledge
- Consume healthy food
- Drink clean water
- Do not use narcotics
- Maintain a healthy BMI
- Get proper exercise, sleep and relaxation
- Reduce stress
- Get appropriate vaccines
- Destroy methods through which diseases are transmitted
- Destroy the root causes of diseases
- Obtain medical advice regarding genetic diseases
- Carryout medical checkups regularly
- Obtain medical treatment at proper time when ill



Activity

Make a leaflet to inform your friends about the prevention of non-communicable diseases.

Skills needed to overcome environmental challenges

- Patience
- Knowledge, being law-abiding
- Taking correct decisions, solving problems intelligently
- Creative and critical thinking
- Necessary training
- Effective communication
- Good interpersonal relationships
- Ability to control emotions
- Self-awareness
- Faith in yourself
- Good attitudes
- Good habits
- Being methodical
- Team spirit

Summary

Accidents, disasters, abuse, narcotics and diseases are the environmental challenges we face in everyday life.

The harmful effects of these are disability, disruption of education, contracting diseases, environmental pollution and social unrest.

To overcome these challenges we need to develop the skills of self-awareness, faith in yourself, making correct decisions, good interpersonal relationships, good habits, effective communication, creativity, correct attitudes, controlling emotions and being law abiding.

We should also take steps to prevent and minimize the harm caused by these challenges.

Exercises

1. What are the reasons for environmental challenges?
2. What skills should you develop to face environmental challenges?
3. What steps could be taken to minimize the harm caused by an accident?
4. What are the causes of disasters?
5. What steps could be taken to prevent the harm caused by a disaster?
6. Name methods by which you can avoid abuse.
7. Describe how you would face a situation where someone forces you to take narcotics.
8. What steps can be taken to avoid contracting non- communicable diseases?