Eutrophication Euphoria

The small water reservoir located in Valley Road Imsida has become the habitat of a small group of ducks. These ducks waddle their way in the water from early morning and throughout the day. The water reservoir is also a source of food for these ducks.

Frequently throughout the year, the surface of the water is capped by a thick green layer. This green layer is an intense growth of algae – the result of eutrophication.

Eutrophication takes place when soil fertilisers, most probably originating from the small number of fields surrounding the water reservoir, leech their way into the water. These fertilisers, very often rich in nitrates to help promote plant growth, are taken up by algae. The algae use these fertilisers themselves for growth. Thus, there will be an overgrowth of algae and a green surface will be observed at the surface of the water.

When these algae die, they are decomposed with the help of microbes present in the water. In order for this process of decomposition to occur, oxygen is required. The microbes use oxygen gas dissolved in the water to carry out the process of algae decomposition.

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Moreover, the algae provide a ‘solid’ surface on which waste may settle. It is not the first time that plastic bottles, wrappers and other such small items are observed in this reservoir.

This case of eutrophication is of detriment to a number of living organisms and is disrupting ecosystems. Organisms living in the water have access to less oxygen concentration, this resulting in less possibility of growth and reproduction. In turn, the duck population has a smaller possibility of finding nutritious food. Not to mention that the waste present on site may be a cause of disease.

It is recommended that farmers working the surrounding fields use soil fertilisers that are less rich in nitrates and phosphates. The local council could also dedicate a small percentage of its funds towards the upkeep of this zone so that the area may become a natural attraction in this busy town.