

Chapter – 5 The Ailing Planet The Green Movement's Role

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Q1. Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context. a holistic and ecological view inter alia sustainable development decimated languish catastrophic depletion ignominious darkness transcending concern

Answer. A holistic and ecological view - It refers to the view that calls for the preservation of the planet. The holistic and ecological view refers to understanding the importance of earth's resources and environment for the future generations. Sustainable development — A balanced development that meets the needs of the present while taking care of the needs of the future generations. Languish — lot of species are neglected or go unnoticed ignominious darkness — disgrace or dishonour as has knowledge about them or is enlightened about them inter alia — among other things decimated — to reduce drastically in number catastrophic depletion — a disastrous and harmful reduction in the number of something transcending concern — a concern that surpasses generation. boundaries. It is not only about the present but also about future; not only about people but also about the planet.

Understanding The Text

Q1. Locate the lines in the text that support the title 'The Ailing Planet'.

Answer. The lines that support the title of the chapter are given below. "The earth's vital signs reveal a patient in declining health." "Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment?" "...the environment has deteriorated so badly that it is Critical' in many of the eighty-eight countries investigated".

Q2. What does the notice 'The world's most dangerous animal' at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia, signify?

Answer. The notice signifies that there is depletion of resources and deterioration of environment. Man is responsible for this and his own survival is threatened.

Q3. How are the earth's principal biological systems being depleted?

Answer. There are four principal biological systems of the earth. These systems are fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands. However, due to the increasing demand of human beings to such an 'unsustainable' extent, the productivity of these systems is being hampered. The excessive demand results in deterioration and depletion of these resources. A country where protein is consumed on a large scale, overfishing is common, which leads to the collapse of fisheries in that area. Grasslands have been turned into deserts and production of crops is decreasing. The forests are destroyed in

large proportions to obtain firewood. Depletion of tropical forests has also led to the extinction of several species.

Q4. Why does the author aver that the growth of world population is one of the strongest factors distorting the future of human society?

Answer. Overpopulation is one of the strongest factors responsible for a nation's poverty and unemployment. It disturbs the earth's principal biological systems leading to degradation of environment. The author highlights the problem of over-population by pointing out the mental set-up of the poor who feel more children means more workers to earn money. They do not realise that more children only means more unemployed people. He argues that development is the best contraceptive, which includes spread of education, improvement of health and rise in income. Spread of education leads to awareness among people, which in turn results in a fall in the 'fertility' rate. The author makes a comment which emphasises the never ending circle of population and poverty by asserting that the choice is really between control of population and the perpetuation of poverty.

Talking About The Text

Q1. Discuss in groups of four

1. Laws are never respected nor enforced in India.

Answer. 1. India, the biggest democracy in the world is condemned for its easy attitude towards laws. Laws are constituted but never respected nor enforced in our country. For instance, the Indian Constitution mentions that casteism, untouchability and bonded labour shall be abolished; however, these evils flourish barefaced even today. The author points out that Article 48A of the Indian Constitution, propounds that the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and Wildlife of the country". However, little is done in favour of this. What we see is a near "catastrophic depletion" of forests over the last four decades. Forests are disappearing over the decades at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year. Areas that are officially designated as forest land, in reality, are treeless. The actual loss of forests is eight times the rate pointed by the government statistics.

2. "Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and an ailing environment?"

Answer. 2. As we learn in the text, the first Brandt Report raised the above mentioned question about the deteriorating condition of the planet. Earth is like a: • patient in declining health'. The depletion of forests, grasslands, fisheries and croplands are the result of excessive demand for resources. Overpopulation has led to a severe strain on the health of our planet. We must realise soon that in this "Era Of Responsibility". • it is solely our duty to preserve our planet. We must realise that the earth belongs as much to the future generation as much to us. Rather making it our property, we should do our

best to preserve it for the generations we have borrowed it from".

3. "We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children".

Answer. 3. Over the decades, a change has come in the perception of the people in respect to the planet. The human perception has shifted to a • holistic and ecological view of the world'. Earth is a living organism that has limited resources. These resources will not last forever. The earth has its metabolic needs that require to be preserved The need of the hour is: • sustainable development" which propounds the need of meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising with those of future generations. The present problems are not necessarily fatal for us but they are a 'passport for future'. This is the "Era of Responsibility' that calls for a responsible action from us. we must realise that the earth belongs as much to the future generation as much it belongs to us.

4. The problems of overpopulation that directly affect our everyday life.

Answer. 4. Overpopulation leads to the issues of poverty and unemployment The vicious circle of population and poverty will continue unless the root cause i.e. population is taken care of. It hampers the development of a country. It leads to the consumption of the natural resources at a much faster rate. The forests consumed, the resources depleted, the forests cleared the heat produced, the global warming caused are all the repercussions of the fast-growing population.

Thinking About Language

Q1. The phrase 'inter alia' meaning 'among other things' is one of the many Latin expressions commonly used in English. Find out what these Latin phrases mean.

1. prima facie

Answer. 1. prima facie means 'at first sight, closer inspection'

2. ad hoc

Answer. 2. ad hoc means 'for the specific purpose, case, or situation at hand and for no other'

3. in camera

Answer. 3. in camera means 'in secret, in private'

4. ad infinitum

Answer. 4. ad infinitum means 'to infinity, having no end'

5. mutatis mutandis

Answer. 5. mutatis mutandis means 'changing? only those things which needs to be changed, Only the necessary changes having been made'

6. Caveat

Answer. 6. Caveat means 'a warning or caution'

7. tabula rasa

Answer. 7. tabula rasa means 'blank slate', 'without any prior experience or knowledge'

Working With Words

QI. Locate the following phrases in the text and study their connotation.

1. gripped the imagination of

Answer. 1. gripped the imagination of: received much attention

2. dawned upon

Answer. 2. dawned upon: realised it for the first time

3. ushered in

Answer. 3. ushered in: began the new idea

4. passed into current coin

Answer. 4. passed into current coin: has been brought into use

5. passport of the future

Answer. 5. passport of the future: a thing that makes something possible or enables one to achieve it

QII. The words 'grip', 'dawn', 'usher', 'coin', 'passport' have a literal as well as a figurative meaning. Write pairs of sentences using each word in the literal as well as the figurative sense.

Answer. 1. grip: a) She was excellent during the rock-climbing session. She has a good grip b) The movement of 'India Against corruption' has gripped the minds of Indians.

2. dawn: a) The day dawned with a clear sky. b) Suddenly, the idea dawned on him.

3. usher: a) The waiter ushered them to their seats. b) The Green Movement ushered in a new era of awareness.

4. Coin: a) I have ten coins of Rs. 5. b) The term was coined by a famous philosopher.

5. passport: a) He has just got his passport to visit his uncle in the USA. b) Education is the passport to a future.