

Political Science

Class 12 Notes

Chapter 8

Environment and Natural Resources

Environmental Concerns in Global Politics

- There have been many environmental issues that are concerns of the global politics.
- There is a decline in the availability of cultivable land and a substantial portion of existing agricultural land is losing fertility.
- Around 1.2 billion people in developing countries have no access to safe water and 2.6 billion have no access to sanitation

according to the Human Development Report, 2006.

- The loss of biodiversity continues due to destruction of habitat in areas which are rich in species. The act of deforestation takes place for personal gains, removing the natural inhabitants.**
- Another danger to ecosystems and human health is a steady decline in the total amount of ozone in the Earth's stratosphere. Even the coastal waters are becoming increasingly polluted due to land-based activities.**
- The environmental consequences of economic growth acquired an increasingly political character from the 1960s onwards.**
- International agencies like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP),**

started holding international conferences to deal with environment issues.

- Earth summit or Rio summit was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in June 1992 which produced conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, forestry and recommended a list of development practices called 'Agenda 21'.

The Protection of Global 'Commons'

- Commons' are the resources shared by the community as a whole not individually.
- In the world, there are some areas which are located outside the sovereign jurisdiction of any one state and hence require common governance by the international community. This is known as Global Commons. They include Earth's atmosphere, Antarctica, the ocean floor, and outer space.
- A number of agreements were signed which includes the Antarctic Treaty (1959), the Montreal Protocol (1987) and the Antarctic Environmental Protocol (1991).

- The history of outer space as a global commons shows that the management of these areas is thoroughly influenced by North-South inequalities.

Common but Differentiated Responsibilities

- There were differences between the countries of the North and the South over environment issues.
- The Northern countries want everyone to be equally responsible for ecological conservation.
- The developing countries of the South believes that the ecological degradation is the product of industrial development undertaken by the developed countries.
- In the Rio summit, 1992, it was accepted that special needs of the developing countries must be taken into account in the

development and interpretation of rules of international environmental law.

- The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also provides that the parties should act on the basis of equity.
- It was accepted that a large amount of greenhouse gas emission has originated in developed countries and per capita emissions in developing countries are relatively low.
- Developing countries like India and China were exempted from the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.
- **The Kyoto Protocol** is an international agreement setting targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions.

Commons Property Resources

- It represents common property for the group but with a rule that members of the group have both rights and duties with respect to the nature, levels of use of a given resource.
- But issues like privatisation, agricultural intensification, population growth and ecosystem degradation have caused common property to dwindle in size.

India's Stand on Environmental Issues

- India has signed and ratified Kyoto Protocol (1997) in August 2002. Developing countries like India and China were exempt from the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.
- At the G-8 meeting in June 2005, India pointed out that the per capita emission rates of the developing countries are a tiny fraction of those in the developed world.

- The Indian Government is already participating in global efforts through a number of programmes like Energy Conservation Act (2011), Electricity Act of 2003 and so on.
- In 1997, a review of the implementation of the agreements at the Earth summit in Rio was undertaken by India.
- India suggested that the developing countries must get financial resources and clean technologies from the developed countries in order to meet UNFCCC commitments.

Environmental Movements

- Some of the most significant responses to the challenge of environmental degradation has come from groups of environmentally conscious volunteers working in different parts of the world.

- The forest movements of the South, in Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia, Continental Africa and India are faced with enormous pressures regarding forest clearing.
- Another example is of the group which is working against mineral extraction company as it leads to displacement of communities etc.
- Another groups of movements are those involved in struggles against mega-dams. In India, **Narmada Bachao Aandolan** is one of the best known of these movements.

Resource Geopolitics

- Resource geopolitics means who gets what, when, where and how.
- Throughout the cold war the industrialised countries of the North adopted a number of methods to ensure a steady flow of resources.

- **Oil countries to be the most important resource in global strategy. The immense wealth associated with oil generates political struggles to control it.**
- **West Asia, specifically the Gulf region, accounts for about 30 per cent of global oil production.**
- **Another important resource relevant to global politics is water. Regional variations and scarcity of freshwater in some parts of the world is a leading source of conflicts in the 21st century.**
- **A number of studies show that countries that share rivers and many countries do share rivers are involved in military conflicts with each other.**

The Indigenous People and their Rights

- **As per the United Nations, indigenous population comprises the descendants of peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country at the time when persons of a different culture arrived there from other parts of the world.**
- **Indigenous people voices in world politics to treat them equally with other communities.**
- **The areas occupied by indigenous people include Central and South America, Africa, India and South-East Asia.**
- **The indigenous people appeal to governments to come to terms with the continuing existence of indigenous nations as enduring communities with an identity of their own.**

- In India, indigenous people applies to the scheduled tribes who constitute nearly 8 per cent of the population of the country.
- Issues related to the rights of the indigenous communities have been neglected in domestic and international politics for very long.

FACTS THAT MATTER

1. Environmental concerns in Global politics cover losing fertility of agricultural land, and grazing, depletion of water resources as well as loss of bio-diversity, real danger to ecosystem and coastal pollution, deteriorating of marine environment,

2. Environmental consequences of economic growth acquired a political shape from 1960s onwards, following a book published in 1972 namely Limits To Growth and Initiatives taken by United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP) to promote co-ordination and effective response on environment at global level.

3. The Earth Summit held in Rio-de-Janerio, Brazil in 1992 revealed different views i.e. global north (the first world countries) and global south (the third world countries). Global North was concerned with the issues of ozone depletion and global warming and global south focused on economic development and environment management by Agenda 21.

4. Global commons refer to the areas or regions which require common governance by international community on major problems of ecological issues i.e. discovery of ozone hole over Antarctic, earth's atmosphere and ocean floor associated with technology and industrial development.

5. The Rio Declaration at the Earth Summit in 1992 adopted the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities 'referring special needs of developing countries in the fields as development, application and interpretation of rules of international environmental law to protect environment by both developing nations in a responsible manner.

6. The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also emphasised to protect the climate system on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and capabilities.

Example-Largest and current global emissions of greenhouse gases originated in developed nations, hence low emissioned developing countries like India and China have been exempted from Kyoto Protocol held in Japan in 1997.

7. Common property resources refer to a group who have both rights and duties with respect to nature, levels of use and the maintenance of a given resource with mutual understanding and practices i.e. management of sacred groves on state owned forest land.

8. India plays a dominating role on the environmental issues as it signed and ratified 1997 Kyoto Protocol in August 2002 to follow common but differentiated responsibilities and India is a wary of recent discussions with UNFCCC about introducing binding commitments. India participated in global efforts by introducing National Autofuel Policy, Electricity Act, 2003 and National Mission on Biodiesel. Besides, India supports to adopt a

common position by SAARC countries on major environmental issue to have a greater say regionwise.

9. Environmental movements are the movements of groups which are environmentally conscious to challenge environmental degradation at national or international level aiming at raising new ideas and long term vision i.e. in Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Malaysia, Indonesia, India faced enormous pressure.

10. Environmental movements are categorised as forest movements, movements against mining and mineral industry for creating Water Pollution and Anti Dam Movement.

11. 'Resources Geopolitics' is all about who gets what, when, where and how? The practices of neo-colonialism spread on a large scale and throughout a cold war, industrialised countries adopted methods to ensure a steady flow of resources by deployment of military forces near exploitation sites and sea-lanes of communications, the stock piling of strategic resources and efforts to prop up friendly governments.

12. The global economy relied on oil as a portable and essential fuel. The history of petroleum is the history of war and struggle. Water is another important resource relevant to global politics. Regional variations and increasing scaring of fresh water may also lead to conflicts in the world to play politics.

13. Indigenous people bring the issues of environment, resources and politics together. Indigenous people live with their social, economic, cultural customs in particular areas who speak of their struggle, agenda, and rights to have equal status i.e. Island states in ocean region, Central and South America, Africa, India and South East Asia.

14. The issues related to rights of indigenous communities have been neglected in domestic and international politics for long. The World Council of Indigenous People was formed in 1975 which became first of 11 indigenous NGOs to receive consultative status in the UN.

WORDS THAT MATTER

- 1. Earth Summit: A conference held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in June 1992 on**

Environment and Development to deal with various environmental problems.

2. **Agenda 21**: The Earth Summit recommended a list of practices in reference of development to attain sustainability, called Agenda 21.

3. **Kyoto Protocol**: An international agreement setting targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions was agreed to in 1997 in Kyoto in Japan, based on principles set out in UNFCCC.

4. **UNFCCC**: The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change provided that parties should act to protect the climate system with common but differentiated responsibilities.

5. **Indigenous People**: Indigenous people comprise the descendants of peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country at the time when persons of different

culture arrived there from different parts of the world.

THE END.