

The Ailing Planet: The Green Movement's Role



By Nani Palkhivala

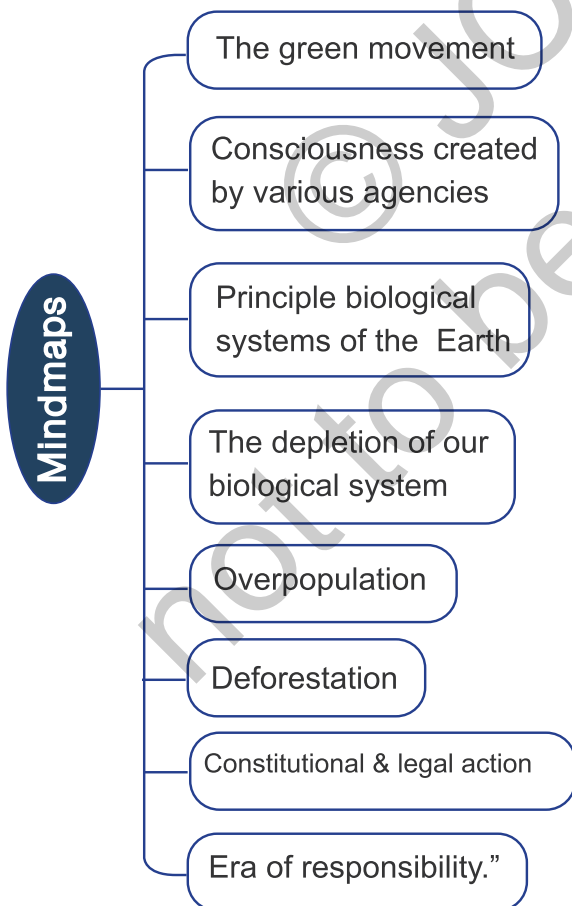
INTRODUCTION

The article “The Ailing Planet : The Green Movement’s Role” was written by Nani Palkhivala and published in ‘The Indian Express’ on 24th November 1994. In this article, the writer raises vital issues regarding degrading environment of the planet and the immediate need to promote sustainable development

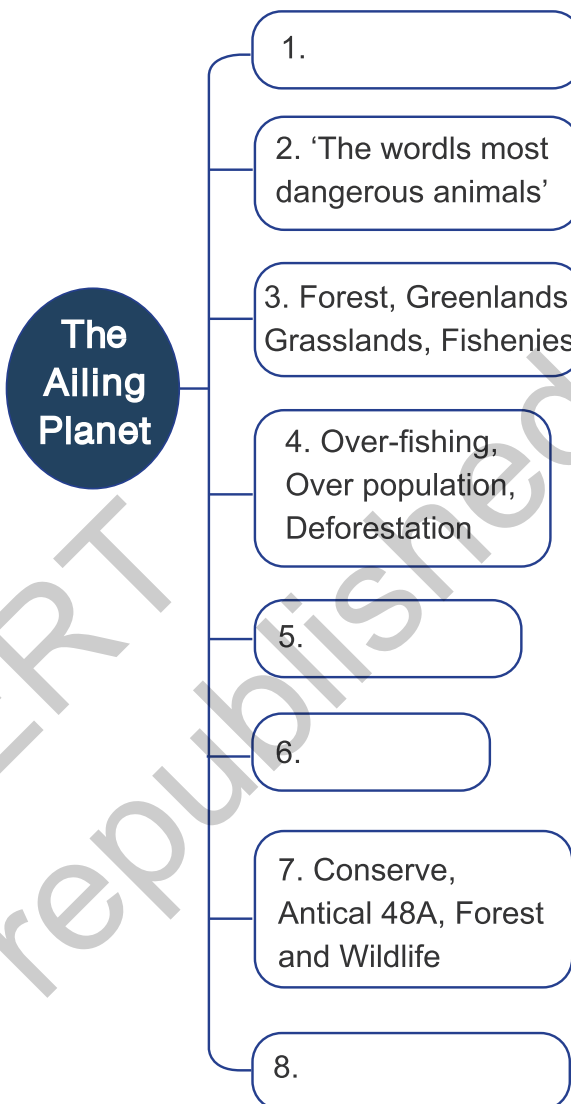
CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The chapter comments on the deteriorating condition of the earth . It talks about how a Zoo in Zambia declared humans as “World’s most dangerous animals”.

We will focus on the chapter through these important key points.



SUMMARY



The green movement

- The Green Movement was started nearly twenty-five years ago.
- world's first nationwide Green party founded in New Zealand in 1972 and the movement has been a great success since then

Consciousness created by various agencies

- “The world’s most dangerous animal “- a notice on the cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia has created awareness that man is not the master of the planet, just one among the rest of the animals.
- Man shares with about 1.4 million living species which have been catalogued on our planet.
- First Brandt Report raised the question : “Are we going to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment’

Principle biological systems of the Earth

- The planet’s major four biological systems are fisheries, forests, croplands, and grasslands as referred to by Mr Lester R. Brown in his book ‘The Global Economic Prospect’. These four systems also provide food and raw materials for industries except for minerals and synthetics.
- The depletion of our biological system
- Fisheries collapsing & forests disappearing
- In poor countries, forests are being cut down for fuelwood. The deforestation at an alarming rate.
- Over-fishing became common practice .

Over population

- The population is rising at a very high rate. One million population is increasing every four days.
- There is an urgent need to control overpopulation in the world.
- No development possible due to population explosion .
- Rich get richer, poor beget children, population control to be given top priority in India.

Constitutional & legal action

- Article 48A of the Indian Constitution states that the state should improve and conserve the forest and the wildlife .

Deforestation

- The writer refers to a Parliamentary committee report that says the decline of a forest at the rate of 3.7 million acres every single year.
- Unofficial reports indicate 8 times the rate indicated by government statistics.

Era of responsibility.

- There is a major need to control the population of the earth.
- In the words of Mr Lester Brown, “We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children.”



Vocabulary words

1. declining - falling
2. Irrevocably - finally
3. gripped – held firmly
4. Obligations - duties or bindings
5. Stewards – manager
6. Reckon- count
7. Impoverished – damaged
8. Deteriorate – get worse
9. Sustainable development:- development that can be continued for a long time.
10. Endeavor – trying hard to achieve something
11. Demise – death
12. Synthetics – artificial substance
13. Impoverished – made poor
14. Ailing – in poor health

QUESTION & ANSWERS

Mcq. Type.

1. What was the issue raised by the author in the chapter 'The Ailing Planet'?

- A. Global Warming
- B. Save Water
- C. Save Electricity
- D. deteriorating health of the earth

Ans. D

2. When did the Green Movement help environmentalists to raise awareness about the harmful condition of the earth?

- A. 1992 B. 1972
- C. 1987 D. 1970

Ans. B

3. When was the Sustainable Development used by the World Commission on Environment and Development?

- A. 1987 B. 1992
- C. 1990 D. 1986

Ans. A.

4. "Who raised the question "Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment?"

- A. Brandt Commission
- B. Brundtland Commission
- C. UN World Commission
- D. None of the above

Ans. A

5. What are the four principal biological systems that form the foundation of the global economic system?

- A. water, air, sand, forests
- B. ocean, forests, deserts, land
- C. fisheries, grasslands, forests, and croplands
- D. fisheries, grasslands, oceans, land

Ans. C

6. What will the grasslands turn into if systems become unsustainable?

- A. turn into a barren waste-land
- B. turn into desert
- C. soil quality will deteriorate
- D. Nothing as such

Ans. A

7. What happens to the forest in poor countries?

- A. They are cut down for fuelwood
- B. they cut down for furniture
- C. they grow them into a large number
- D. Nothing as such

Ans.A

8. What is leading to deforestation at an alarming rate?

- A. sale of fuelwood
- B. sale of vegetables

- C. building up of houses
- D. sale of wood for burning purpose

Ans. A

9. What is one of the reasons for the exploitation of the environment?

- A. increasing population
- B. global warming
- C. animal extinctions
- D. water

Ans . A

10. What is the meaning of holistic and ecological view?

- A. the preservation of the environment
- B. saving of the water resources
- C. saving trees
- D. rainwater harvest

Ans. A

11. Which article of the Constitution of India provides that “the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country”?

- A. Article 48A
- B. Article 51A
- C. Article 48 A (1)
- D. Article 52

Ans.A

12. At what rate are the forests in India depleting?
- A. at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year
 - B. at the rate of 36.7 million acres a year
 - C. at the rate of 13.7 million acres a year
 - D. None of the above

Ans. A

13. Complete this line from the chapter 'The rich get richer, and the poor beget children ____'
- A. to work harder
 - B. which condemns them to remain poor
 - C. to remain poorer
 - D. to get richer

Ans. B

14. Who said, "We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children."?
- A. Margaret Thatcher
 - B. Mr Edgar S. Woolard
 - C. Mr. Lester Brown
 - D. Brandt Commission

Ans.c

15. When did the Green Movement start?
- A. 35 years ago
 - B. 15 years ago

- C. nearly 25 years ago
- D. 20 years ago

Ans.c

16. Where was the first nationwide Green party founded?
- A. USA
 - B. Australia
 - C. New Zealand
 - D. Canada

Ans.c

17. What is the concept of Sustainable Development?
- A. Development of the future
 - B. Development for the present
 - C. "Development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations"
 - D. Environmental development

Ans.c

18. "Scientists have catalogued about living species with which mankind shares the earth"
- A. 1.4 million B. 1.6 million
 - C. 1.8 million D. 1.2 million

Ans. A

19. " Every four days the world population increases by"
- A. 1.5 million
 - B. 1 million

- C. 1.7 million
- D. half a million

Ans.b

20 has a most crucial role to play in this new Era of Responsibility

- A. Agriculture
- B. Fishery
- C. Industry
- D. deforestation

Ans.c

SUBJECTIVE QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q.1 What does the notice “The world’s most dangerous animal” at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia signify ?

Ans. At a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia there is a notice which reads, ‘The world’s most dangerous animal’. This notice signifies that amongst all the animals, man is the most dangerous. Man is solely responsible for all the deterioration in environment and depletion of natural resources. Thus man is the world’s most dangerous animal.

Q.2 How are the earth’s principal biological systems being depleted?

Ans. There are four principal biological systems of the earth—fisheries, forest, grasslands and croplands..

With increase in population human needs increases thus affecting these systems to the core. Overfishing is affecting fisheries, forests are being exploited for firewood, grasslands are turning into deserts and croplands are being overused due to increase in crop production leading to infertility of land. Thus, all the four systems are being depleted.

Q3. “We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers; we have borrowed it from our children” Explain

Ans. The author Nani Palkhiwala rightly quotes the words of Mr Lester Brown—this earth is not our personal property inherited from our forefathers. We must not forget that we are living because it’s giving us all the natural resources. It’s our responsibility to save it for our children else we will be the destroyers and murderers of our future generations without bloodshed.

Q.4. Laws are never respected nor enforced in India.

Ans. Laws are made to improve the quality of life, to ensure safety, to fight injustice, and protect the environment. They are also enacted to safeguard forests and wildlife. Our constitution calls upon all the states to work in this direction. But unfortunately laws in our country are not enforced strictly and due to corruption,

people have no fear or respect for laws.

Our constitution forbids casteism, untouchability, and bonded labour. But these social evils are flourishing even after seventy years of Independence. Take the case of forests. They are being reduced and overexploited. India is losing them at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year. This is an official figure. The actual loss is eight times the official statistics. This shows the state of lawlessness in our country.

Q5. What do you know about the Green Movement?

Ans. In 1972, the world's first Green Party was founded in New Zealand. The Green movement has never looked back since its inception.

Q6. What is the holistic and ecological view of the world?

Ans. The holistic and ecological view means that the world is one whole one enormous being of which human beings are a part. So, the ecology depends not just on human beings but on all things living and nonliving. Like a human being, the world has its own metabolic needs which should be respected and preserved. This view considers the earth as a living organism.

Q.7. Lester R. Brown divided the Earth into four biosystems, what are they? What harm is being caused by human beings to these biosystems?

Ans. According to Lester R. Brown, there are four principal biological systems in the world. They are croplands, grasslands, fisheries and forests. They together form the foundation of the global economic system. In addition to provide food, these four systems provide us with the raw materials for industry. But in most part of the world, these systems have been overexploited. Fisheries are being ruined, forests are fast disappearing, grasslands and croplands are being converted into deserts and wastelands. The Earth and its environment show deterioration and degradation. Sudden climatic change and global warming are all vital signs. Mother Earth shows all signs of a patient in declining health and is in need of immediate cure.

Q.8. How have the croplands deteriorated?

Ans. The growing population needs more food. So, different chemical fertilizers are used to produce more and more food. In the long run these fertilizers deteriorate the quality of the soil, i. e., the croplands.