



NOTES – THE AILING PLANET: The Green Movement’s Role – by Nani Palkhivala

Class: XI

Sub: ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION:

More than ever the planet earth is losing its vitality and freshness. Due to human activities the earth has become highly polluted, irreparable and damaged. We have taken out petroleum, coal and a lot of natural resources from the earth. We have removed more than half of world's vegetation and emitted large quantity of carbon and a lot of other chemicals. We have destroyed marine life and made rivers dry. Moreover, our greed for more and more wealth resulted in depleting the protective ozone layer on the earth's surface. Besides, we have brought out a great imbalance between humans and the other species of the earth.

SUMMARY:

The lesson, ‘The Ailing Planet: The Green Movement’s Role’ focuses on the deteriorating health of the Earth because of human being’s growing lust to exploit all its natural resources. A Zoo in Lusaka, Zambia calls the man as the most dangerous animal in this world. Fortunately, the Green movement launched in 1972 has been responsible for a new awareness that has dawned upon the human race. There has been an irrevocable shift from a mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological view of the world. There is a growing worldwide consciousness that the earth itself is a living organism -an enormous being of which we are parts. It has its own metabolic needs that must be respected and preserved. But, today, its vital signs reveal a patient in declining health. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development popularized the concept of sustainable development – a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs.

According to Mr. Lester R. Brown, there are four biological systems, namely fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands. They form the basis of the global economic system. They supply food to us and raw materials for our industries. But in large areas of the world, these systems are reaching unsustainable levels. Their productivity is being damaged.

For the first time in human history, we are concerned about the-Survival of not just the people but of the planet. In this era of responsibility, an industry can play a crucial role. Today, many industrialists and politicians have realized their responsibility in preserving the natural resources for the future generation.

The growth of world population is another factor distorting the future of our children. Development is not possible if population increases. The writer says that fertility falls as incomes rise, education spreads, and health improves. Thus, development is the best contraceptive.

KEY POINTS

1. Green Revolution

- He points at the rise of global consciousness caused by the Green Revolution in the last century and a wave of urgency and inevitability of the need to develop a long term plan of action to replenish and recover the various natural ecosystems.
- The change from a human-centric approach to a grander scale where humans become agents of positive change for the entire system with various other species closely linked to each other for ensuring the livability and survivability of the planet itself.

2. Over-Use of Resources

- He criticises such progress that is using resources for fulfilling the needs of the present time and argues for preserving them for the future generation. Present developmental goals must include the estimates of future essentials and needs.
- The four biological systems; grasslands, agriculture land, forestland and aquatic system serve as repositories for all the food and material supplies that humans require to feed and produce commodities and utilities.
- However, in the race to attain a higher rate of progress, humans have caused massive devastation and destruction of all the four systems. The croplands have been damaged due to excessive use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides and the presence of natural fertilizers like urea applications and faunal health of the fisheries has deteriorated due to protein heavy diet.
- Forest cover has been fast decreasing without adequate reforestation and compensatory afforestation. This is on contrary to the constitutionally enshrined directive principle of state policy (Art 48A) which encourages the preservation of natural heritage.

3. Education

- The author then puts forward the need for education and the spread of family planning information. He considers the population as the biggest cause for such abuse of natural wealth. Therefore, immunization of population control through information and awareness drives is important to sustain the health of the planet and its systems.
- He also points out that the massive role industry leaders must agree to deliver environmental costs of their unhindered production. The industrial wastes are the primary contaminant of the Earth's flora and fauna.
- The article ends with a revision of our responsibility towards our progenies and generations with constant resolve to improve the natural health of the planet.