

CLASS NOTES

Class: 11

Topic: The Ailing Planet: The Green Movement 's Role

Subject: English

Understanding the Text

Question 1:

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

Answer: The following lines in the text support the title "The Ailing Planet".

- "Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment.
- A three-year study using satellites and aerial photography conducted by the United Nations, warns that the environment has deteriorated so badly that it is 'critical' in many of the eighty-eight countries investigated.

Question 2:

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

Answer:

The notice "The world's most dangerous animals" at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia signifies that man is solely responsible for all the deterioration in environment and depletion of natural resources. Thus man is the world's most dangerous animal.

Question 3:

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

Answer:

The earth's principal biological systems are being depleted by excessive use. Over fishing is quite common. Forests are being cut to obtain firewood for cooking. Grasslands are turning into barren wastelands and croplands are deteriorating as their productivity has been impaired.

Question 4:

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

Answer:

The growth of world population puts a severe strain on the earth's principal biological systems. Due to excessive human claims these reach an unsustainable level where their productivity is damaged. Development is not possible if world population continues to grow so rapidly. Increasing population brings hunger, poverty and unemployment.

Talking About the Text

Discuss in groups of four:**Question 1:**

Laws are neither respected nor enforced in India.

Answer:

It is painful but true that laws are neither respected nor enforced in India. Let us take examples from everyday life. Almost everyone is conversant with the rule of the road. Still there are cases of wrong overtaking, lane jumping, signal jumping, over speeding and road rage. Our laws insist on compulsory elementary education up to the age of fourteen. Yet we find many illiterate teenager boys or girls of this age loitering around in lanes or employed in petty jobs in road side restaurants or as domestic servants. Our Constitution insists on the protection and improvement of the environment. The states have been given the responsibility of protecting forests and wildlife. Forests are being cut and illegal shooting of wildlife goes on. Similarly, there are laws regarding abolishing casteism, untouchability and bonded labour. But these remain on paper. In actual life, these are never put into practice. Hence, it can be concluded that laws are neither respected nor enforced in India.

Question 2:

“Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing desert, impoverished landscapes and an ailing environment?”

Answer:

I fully agree with the view contained in the statement. There is every likelihood of such an eventuality occurring in future. There are solid reasons behind this apprehension. Our resources are limited. They will not last indefinitely if we go on consuming them indiscriminately. Fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands form the basis of the global economic system. They supply us food and raw materials for industry. Increasing population has put a severe pressure on them. Excessive use of these resources have impaired their productivity. In large areas of the world these systems have reached an unsustainable level. The results are awful and disastrous. The fisheries will collapse, forests disappear, grasslands will become barren wastelands and croplands will lose their fertility. Decimation of forests will increase dryness and heat and there will be less rainfall. Hence there is a possibility of the earth becoming an overheated place full of increasing deserts, poor landscapes and ailing environment in future.

Question 3:

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

Answer:

This is a revolutionary statement by Mr. Lester Brown. It focuses attention on the position of man in this universe. People take it for granted that the earth is theirs as they have inherited it from their forefathers. They forget the fact that the real owners of the land are our children. We are only custodians or trustees and we must continue development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. We must not strip the natural world’ of the resources future generations would need. In our effort to feed the increasing millions, we are plundering the heritage of our children. We have open overusing natural resources for our present purposes. Destruction of natural resources will create an ailing environment. Our consumption of non-renewable resources should be checked. We must preserve natural resources and hand them over to children intact as they are the real owners.

Question 4:

The problems of overpopulation that directly affect our everyday life.

Answer:

Overpopulation causes many problems in every day life. The three basic human needs—food, cloth and shelter have assumed alarming proportions. Fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands are under severe strain. In many areas they have reached an unsustainable level. People resort to over fishing to obtain protein. Forests are being destroyed to obtain firewood. Grasslands are becoming deserts. Artificial fertilizers have improved the productivity of croplands. Overpopulation hinders development and adversely affects the spread of education and health care among the masses. It is observed that the poor beget more children. It only leads them to unending poverty. More children does not mean more workers but merely more people without work. Thus over-population leads to unemployment. Public transport proves insufficient. We see long queues everywhere. In short, overpopulation leads to deterioration in environment and shortens our lives by causing many diseases.

Extra Questions

Question 1:

Which movement does Nani Palkhivala refer to? How popular do you think it is?

Answer:

The author, Nani Palkhivala, refers to the ‘Green Movement’. It has become very popular among the people of all countries. It started nearly twenty five years ago but it has gripped the imagination of the entire human race completely and quite rapidly.

Question 2:

How does the author point out the importance of Green Movement?

Answer:

The author points out the importance of the Green Movement by comparing it to the revolutionary ideas of Copernicus. He had taught mankind in the 16th century that the earth and the other planets revolved round the sun.

Question 3:

How have human beings shifted their perceptions?

Answer:

We have shifted our perceptions from mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological view. Now we regard the earth as a living organism. It is an enormous being and we are its parts. It has its own metabolic needs and vital processes. We must respect and preserve them.

Question 4:

What is the state of earth today? How should we act now?

Answer:

The signs of the earth which are connected with life show that the earth is a patient in declining health. We must realize our moral obligations to be good stewards of the planet. We must act as responsible trustees of the legacy of future generations.

Question 5:

How has the concept of sustainable development been defined?

Answer:

Sustainable development has been defined as the development that meets the needs of the present without putting in danger the ability of future generations to meet their needs. In other words, the present generation would not deprive the natural world of the resources the future generations would need.

Long Answer Type Questions

Question 1:

Why does Nani Palkhivala call the earth 'The Ailing Planet'? How can the ailing planet survive?

Answer:

The signs of the earth connected with life necessary for staying alive show that the earth is a patient in declining health. Its deserts are advancing, landscapes are being impoverished and environment is ailing. Aerial photography using satellites has revealed that the environment has deteriorated very

badly in many parts of the world. In fact, it has become critical in many of the eighty eight countries investigated. The concept of sustainable development and green movement can help the ailing planet to survive. People must discharge their moral responsibility as stewards of the planet and trustees of the legacy of the future generations. The plundering of the natural resources should be controlled. These must be preserved for the future generations.

Question 2:

What are the earth's principal biological systems? Why have they been depleted and how can they be preserved?

Answer:

The earth has four principal biological systems. These are: fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands. They form the basis of the world's economic system. They supply us food and raw materials for industry. These biological systems are being depleted by excessive use. Over fishing is quite common. Forests are being destroyed to obtain firewood for cooking. In many areas of the world, these biological systems have reached an unsustainable level. Grasslands are turning into deserts and produce from croplands is decreasing. It seems they have lost their productivity. The decimation of forests is likely to cause extinction of several species. We must change our outlook and stop overusing the natural resources. We have to hand them over to the coming generations in a healthy state so that they can meet their needs. Consciousness of our moral responsibility as caretakers of the legacy of our children can help to preserve these non-renewable resources.

Question 3:

"Forests precede mankind; deserts follow", Examine the validity of this remark in the light of reading 'The Ailing Planet: The Green Movement's Role'.

Answer:

Forests are one of the most important biological systems of the earth. They came into existence much before mankind. In this sense forests precede mankind. We have inherited large tracts of forests from our forefathers. Forests are the power house of evolution. Several species of life exist in them. The world's ancient inheritance of tropical forests is now wearing away at the rate of forty to fifty million acres per year. In poor countries, local forests are being destroyed to procure fuel wood. It is estimated that a five - fold increase in the rate of forest planting is needed to cope with the expected fuel wood demand in the year 2000. It is the responsibility of the state to protect and improve the environment essay and to safeguard the forests and wildlife. However, large areas named as the forest land are now treeless. As the forests disappear, deserts will follow. We must take timely steps to prevent this.

