

What do we mean by environment?

“Environer” French means to surround or encircle.

- Meaning (common): Physical world, climate, ambience, atmosphere, condition, place, surrounds something, nature.
- Non human world=nature, Nature means non human (nature) and (quality) human nature. Scientific parlance nature synonymous to environment.
- Mother Earth

- Environment and nature usually understood as separate and independent from society. But human society has a relation with the Environment.
- Environment can be human-made artificial and non-human. Valuations* exists. Like: Green position: value natural and, techno centric position: human creation is greater than natural.
- Environment: as wilderness, as countryside, as urban environment and as global environment.

***Value: a belief that something is good, worthwhile in a society, what ought to be.**

Subject matter

- Understanding and management of environmental problems.
- Environmental change (a contested area)
- ✓ Both natural and human made. But how to disentangle both?
- ✓ Temporal and spatial aspect.
- ✓ Political aspect.
- ✓ Rapid or slow
- ✓ Technologically determined

A multidisciplinary Approach

- Science: method, approach or technique which involves observation, testing, falsification, verification, predictability, objective, universal principles.
- Environmental Science: Science concerned with the physical, chemical and biological surroundings. Like biology, physics, chemistry, geology, earth sciences, and also allied disciplines like statistics, engineering, computer sciences
- Environmental problems are social problems. Social sciences. Like political science, sociology, history, economics, philosophy
- Draws insights from other branches of (natural, engineering and technological) science and social sciences.

- Realist and Constructivist position/philosophies

Realist/Positivist/Scientific: What is truth about the environment issue, the objective facts

Constructivist: Whose truth about the environmental issues are portrayed as the truth, the subjective meanings

But the two positions should mutually support in the understandings of the environment

Scope:

- Conservation of natural resources
- Understanding of the ecological systems and problems
- Controlling of pollution
- Human impacts- population on environment, waste etc.
- Provide better holistic solutions
- Public awareness, education, advocacy, policy formulation

Assignment:

1. Read chapter no 1. pg 9 “ Institutions in environment” ; pg 12. “People in environment”.