

# Unit 4 Social Issues and the Environment

## FROM UNSUSTAINABLE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- Sustainable development is defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It also looks at the equity between countries and continents, races and classes, gender and ages. It includes social development and economic opportunity on one hand and the requirements of environment on the other. It is based on improving the quality of life for all, especially the poor and deprived within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystems. It is a process which leads to a better quality of life while reducing the impact on the environment. Its strength is that it acknowledges the interdependence of human needs and environmental requirements.

# URBAN PROBLEMS RELATED TO ENERGY

- Urban centers use enormous quantities of energy. Traditional housing in India required very little temperature adjustments as the materials used, such as wood and bricks handled temperature changes better than the current concrete, glass and steel of ultra modern buildings.
- Urban transport depends on energy mainly from fossil fuels. Most urban people use their own individual transport rather than public transport systems for a variety of reasons.

# Water Conservation

- Saving water in agriculture
- Saving water in urban settings

# Rain water Harvesting

- Current technologies of rainwater harvesting require that all roof and terrace water passes down into a covered tank where it can be stored for use after the monsoon. This is most advantageous in arid areas where clean water is very scarce.

# Watershed Management

- Rivers originate in streams that flow down mountains and hill slopes. A group of small streams flow down hillsides to meet larger streams in the valley which forms the tributaries of major rivers. The management of a single unit of land with its water drainage system is called watershed management

# RESETTLEMENT AND REHABILITATION OF PEOPLE: ITS PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS

- Major projects such as dams, mines, express ways, or the notification of a National Park disrupts the lives of the people who live there and may also require moving them to an alternative site. None of us would like to give up the home we grew up in. Uprooting people is a serious issue. It reduces their ability to subsist on their traditional natural resource base and also creates great psychological pressures.

# ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: ISSUES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Resource consumption patterns and the need for their equitable utilisation
- Equity – Disparity in the Northern and Southern countries
- Urban – rural equity issues
- The need for Gender Equity
- Preserving resources for future generations
- The rights of animals
- The ethical basis of environment education and awareness
- The conservation ethic and traditional value systems of India

# THE ENVIRONMENT (PROTECTION) ACT

- The purpose of the Act is to implement the decisions of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment which was held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5–14 in 1972.



# Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act

- The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 is an Act of the Parliament of India to control and prevent air pollution in India. The law was amended in 1987. This was the first attempt by the government of India to combat air pollution.

# Water (Prevention and control of Pollution) Act

- The Government has formulated this Act in 1974 to be able to prevent pollution of water by industrial, agricultural and household wastewater that can contaminate our water sources.

# Wildlife Protection Act

- This Act passed in 1972, deals with the declaration of National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and their notification. It establishes the structure of the State's wildlife management and the posts designated for Wildlife Management.

# Forest Conservation Act

- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 an Act of the Parliament of India to provide for the conservation of forests and for matters connected therewith or ancillary or incidental thereto. It was further amended in 1988.

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# ISSUES INVOLVED IN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

- Once a legislation is made at the global, National or State level, it has to be implemented. For a successful environmental legislation to be implemented, there has to be an effective agency to collect relevant data, process it and pass it on to a law enforcement agency. If the law or rule is broken by an individual or institution, this has to be punished through the legal process.

# ISSUES INVOLVED IN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

- There are several NGOs in the country such as WWF-I, BEAG and the BNHS which take these matters to court in the interest of conservation. Anyone can request them to help in such matters. There are also legal experts such as MC Mehta who have successfully fought cases in the courts to support environmental causes.

# ISSUES INVOLVED IN ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

- Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)
- The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has identified a large number of projects that need clearance on environmental grounds. The EIA must define what impact it would have on water, soil and air.



# Public awareness

- Using an Environmental Calendar of Activities
- Habitat preservation
- Soil conservation
- Conserving water
- Conserving energy