

The Ailing Planet the Green Movement's Role

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Question:

Notice these expressions in the text. Infer their meaning from the context.

- i) a holistic and ecological view
- ii) inter alia
- iii) sustainable development
- iv) decimated
- v) languish
- vi) catastrophic depletion
- vii) ignominious darkness
- viii) transcending concern

Answer :

- i). a holistic and ecological view – It refers to the view that calls for the preservation of the planet and understanding the importance of earth's resources and environment for the future generations.
- ii) Inter alia – among other things
- iii) sustainable development – A balanced development that meets the needs of the present while taking care of the needs of the future generations.
- iv) decimated – to reduce drastically in number
- v) languish – lot of species are neglected or go unnoticed
- vi) catastrophic depletion – a disastrous and harmful reduction in the number of something
- vii) ignominious darkness – disgraced or dishonored as nobody has knowledge about them or is enlightened about them
- viii) transcending concern – a concern that surpasses generation, boundaries. It is not only about the present but also about future; not only about people but also about the planet.

Page No: 47 Understanding the Text

Question:

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

Answer :

The lines that support the title of the chapter are given below.

- “The earth's vital signs reveal a patient in declining health.”
- “Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing deserts, impoverished landscapes and ailing environment?”
- “...the environment has deteriorated so badly that it is ‘critical’ in many of the eighty-eight countries investigated”.
- “When this happens, fisheries collapse, forests disappear, grasslands are converted into barren wastelands and croplands deteriorate.”

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- “it has been well said that forests precede mankind; deserts follow”
 - “ Several species of life face extinction as a result of its destruction.”
- “The environmental problem does not necessarily signal our demise, it is our passport for the future.”

Question:

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

Answer :

The notice outside a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia reads that “The world’s most dangerous animal.” And inside the cage there is no animal but a mirror where one can see his image. It is a sarcastic way of making man realize how they are responsible for the destruction of so many species which has resulted in the depletion of resources and deterioration of environment. Man is responsible for this and his own survival is threatened.

Question:

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

Answer :

There are four principal biological systems of the earth. These systems are fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands. In addition to supplying our food, these four systems provide virtually all the raw material for the industry. However, due to the increasing demand of human beings to such an ‘unsustainable’ extent, the productivity of these systems is being hampered. The excessive demand results in deterioration and depletion of these resources. A country where protein is consumed on a large scale, over-fishing is common, which leads to the collapse of fisheries in that area. Grasslands have been turned into deserts and production of crops is decreasing. The forests are destroyed in large proportions to obtain firewood. Depletion of tropical forests has also led to the extinction of several species.

Question:

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

Answer :

Over-population is one of the strongest factors responsible for a nation’s poverty and unemployment. It disturbs the earth’s principal biological systems leading to degradation of environment.

The author highlights the problem of over-population by pointing out the mental set-up of the poor who feel more children means more workers to earn money. They do not realize that more children only mean more unemployed people. He argues that development is the best contraceptive, which includes spread of education, improvement of health and rise in income.

Spread of education leads to awareness among people, which in turn results in a fall in the ‘fertility’ rate. The author makes a comment which emphasizes the never ending circle of population and

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poverty by asserting that “The choice is really between control of population and the perpetuation of poverty.”

Talking about the Text**Question:**

Laws are never respected not enforced in India.

Answer :

India, the biggest democracy in the world, is condemned for its easy attitude towards laws. Laws are constituted but never respected nor enforced in our country. For instance, the Indian Constitution mentions that casteism, untouchability and bonded labour shall be abolished; however, these evils flourish barefacedly even today.

The author points out that Article 48A of the Indian Constitution, propounds that “the State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country”. However, little is done in favour of this. What we see is a near “catastrophic depletion” of forests over the last four decades. Forests are disappearing over the decades at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year. Areas that are officially designated as forest land, in reality, are treeless. The actual loss of forests is eight times the rate pointed by the government statistics.

Question:

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

Answer :

As we learn in the text, the first Brandt Report raised the above mentioned question about the deteriorating condition of the planet. Earth is like a “patient in declining health”.

The depletion of forests, grasslands, fisheries and croplands are the result of excessive demand for resources. Over-population has led to a severe strain on the health of our planet.

We must realise soon that in this “Era of Responsibility” it is solely our duty to preserve our planet.

We must realise that the earth belongs as much to the future generation as much to us. Rather making it our property, we should do our best to preserve it for the generations we have “borrowed it from”.

Question:

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

Answer :

Over the decades, a change has come in the perception of the people in respect to the planet. The human perception has shifted to a “holistic and ecological view of the world”. Earth is a living organism that has limited resources. These resources will not last forever.

The earth has its metabolic needs that require to be preserved. The need of the hour is “sustainable

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development” which propounds the need of meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising with those of future generations.

The present problems are not necessarily fatal for us but they are a ‘passport for future’. This is the “Era of Responsibility” that calls for a responsible action from us. We must realise that the earth belongs as much to the future generation as much it belongs to us.

Question:

The problems of over population that directly affect our everyday life.

Answer :

Over-population leads to the issues of poverty and unemployment. The vicious circle of population and poverty will continue unless the root cause i.e. population is taken care of. It hampers the development of a country. It leads to the consumption of the natural resources at a much faster rate. The fossils consumed, the resources depleted, the forests cleared, the heat produced, the global warming caused are all the repercussions of the fast- growing population. The present world population is estimated at 5.7 billion and every four days it increases by one million. Development won't be possible if the population increases at this pace. Controlling the population will solve many a problems.

Page No: 48 Thinking about the Language

Question:

The phrase 'inter alia' meaning 'among other things' is one of the many Latin expression commonly used in English.

Find out what these Latin phrases mean.

- i. Prima face
- ii. ad hoc
- iii. in camera
- iv. ad infinitum
- v. mutatis multanis
- vi. tabula rasa

Answer :

- i. prima facie means ‘at first sight, before closer inspection’
- ii. ad hoc means ‘for the specific purpose, case, or situation at hand and for no other’.
- iii. in camera means ‘in secret, in private’
- iv. ad infinitum means ‘to infinity, having no end’
- v. mutatis mutandis means ‘changing [only] those things which needs to be changed’, [only] the necessary changes having been made Caveat means ‘a warning or caution’
- vi. tabula rasa means, chance to start afresh, ‘without any prior experience or knowledge’.

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Working with Words

Question:

Locate the following words in the text and study their connotation.

- i). gripped the imagination of
- ii). dawned upon
- iii). ushered in
- iv). passed into current coin
- v). passport of the future

Answer :

- i). gripped the imagination of: received much attention
- ii). dawned upon: realised it for the first time
- iii). ushered in: began the new idea
- iv). passed into current coin: have been brought into use
- v). passport of the future: a thing that makes something possible or enables one to achieve it, authorization of growth

Question:

The words 'grip', 'dawn', 'usher', 'coin', 'passport' have a literal as well as a figurative meaning. Write pairs of sentences using each word in the literal as well as figurative sense.

Answer :

1) grip:

- a) She was excellent during the rock-climbing session. She has a good grip.
- b) The movement of 'India Against corruption' has gripped the minds of Indians.

2) dawn:

- a) The day dawned with a clear sky.
- b) Suddenly, the idea dawned on him.

3) usher:

- a) The waiter ushered them to their seats.
- b) The Green Movement ushered in a new era of awareness.

4) Coin:

- a) I have ten coins of Rs. 5.
- b) The term was coined by a famous philosopher.

5) passport:

- a) He has just got his passport made to visit his uncle in the USA.
- b) Education is the passport to a bright future.