

The Ailing Planet – Important Questions

Important Question and Answers

Q. What do you know about the Green Movement?

Ans. In 1972, the world's first Green Party was founded in New Zealand. The Green movement has never looked back since its inception.

Q. What does the author mean by a mechanical view of the world?

Ans. The mechanical view of the world means looking at the world as if it was a machine. A machine has no feeling and no emotional needs.

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

Ans. 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.

Q. How have human beings shifted their perceptions?

Ans. We have shifted our perception from mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological one. 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.

Q. What is the holistic and ecological view of the world?

Ans. The holistic and ecological view means that the world is one whole one enormous being of which human beings are a part. So, the ecology depends not just on human beings but on all things living and non-living. Like a human being, the world has its own metabolic needs which should be respected and preserved. This view considers the earth as a living organism.

Q. What do you understand by the concept of sustainable development?

Ans. The concept of sustainable development is linked with the survival of human race. It means to consume the resources of the earth in a manner that does not hamper the survival of the coming generations. We should use the resources for our present need without compromising the right of our children to use them in their need.

Q. Describe the terms 'Holistic approach' and sustainable development.

Ans. The holistic approach is a comprehensive approach in which the world is viewed as a living organism with all its natural resources and species. Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their needs.

Q. What is the new world view according to the author?

Ans. In the new world view, people feel concerned for the survival of not just the people but of the planet. The new world view is the holistic view of our existence. We can survive or perish only with all other creatures—our future is linked with them.

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

Ans. The signs of the earth which are connected with life shows 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.

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

Ans. 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 most 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.

Q. Who is the world's most dangerous animal? Why is it called so?

Ans. There is a zoo at Lusaka, in Zambia. A notice outside one of the cages says 'the world's most dangerous animal' and when one looks inside the cage, one finds himself in the mirror inside the cage clearly telling that human beings are the world's most dangerous animals as they are the creators of all kinds of pollution, destruction and destruction.

Q. How does the earth's biological systems behave on reaching an unsustainable level?

Ans. The productivity of the earth's biological systems is impaired on reaching an unsustainable level. Fisheries collapse, forests disappear, grasslands turn into barren wastelands, croplands become worse.

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

Ans. The four principal biological systems of the earth are croplands, fisheries, forests and grasslands. Their productivity has become impaired because of human pressure on them. Forests have been cleared. Grasslands have been converted into wastelands. People are overfishing for protein. The world's increasing population is the cause behind the depletion of these biological systems.

Q. How can overfishing and decimation of forests prove harmful?

Ans. Overfishing may lead to stripping of fisheries. Then man will lose a rich source of protein. The decimation of forests will harm ecology. Moreover, several species of life that live in forest will face extinction.

Q. Why do we need to plant more forests in India?

Ans. According to official data, India is losing its forests at the rate of 3.7 million acres a year. The actual loss of forests is estimated to be about eight times the rate indicated by government statistics. Large areas, officially named forest land are already treeless. Moreover a five fold increase in the rate of forest planting is needed to cope up with the expected fuel wood demand five years later.

Q. How have the croplands deteriorated?

Ans. The growing population needs more food. So, different chemical fertilizers are used to produce more and more food. In the long run these fertilizers deteriorate the quality of the soil, i. e., the croplands.

Q. What is new awareness that has dawned upon most of the countries in the world?

Ans. The new awareness which dawned upon most of the countries of the world is the realization that we have to shift from a system based on domination of the earth to one of partnership. It means that if the human race is to survive, it can do so only with all other creatures and things.

Q. What makes the author unhappy about the laws in India?

Ans. The author is unhappy with the laws of India because laws are neither respected nor enforced in India. There are many good laws in India for the protection of the environment but they are shamelessly flouted.

Q. How has the population increased after the year 1800?

Ans. The world's population was only about one billion around the year 1800 and this had been possible after about a million years. However, there has been a very rapid increase since then. By the year 1900 it became two billions and it has reached upto some 6 billions now.

Q. What are the factors enumerated by Nani Palkhivala that have made our earth an ailing planet? How can we ensure its health?

Ans. 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.

Q. Lester R. Brown divided the Earth into four biosystems, what are they? What harm is being caused by human beings to these bio-systems?

Ans. According to Lester R. Brown, there are four principal biological systems in the world. They are croplands, grasslands, fisheries and forests. They together form the foundation of the global economic system. In addition to provide food, these four systems provide us with the raw materials for industry. But in most part of the world, these systems have been overexploited. Fisheries are being ruined, forests are fast disappearing, grasslands and croplands are being converted into deserts and wastelands. The Earth and its environment show deterioration and degradation. Sudden climatic

change and global warming are all vital signs. The Mother Earth shows all signs of a patient in declining health and is in need of immediate cure.

Q. "No generation has free hold on the earth. All we have is a life with a full repairing lease." Explain with reference to 'The Ailing Planet– The Green Movement's role.'

Ans. This statement is made by Mr. Lester Brown, the author of the book 'The Global Economic Prospect'. Mr. Brown has in his mind the well known belief that the property which we inherit from our forefathers is ours and we can do whatever we like with it. So, he asks us to remember that the earth is not for us to use or abuse as we like. It is something which we are duty-bound to preserve for the next generations. So, while we use the earth and its resources for our present needs, it is our duty to see that we do not compromise the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. It is therefore, very important that we do not strip the world off natural resources the our future generation would need. Even more important is the fact that we should not pollute these resources which make them useless or harmful.

Q. How is growing human population responsible for the falling health of the earth?

Ans. Earth's principal biological systems are being depleted because of over-consumption. These systems are unable to cope up with the demands of human beings. The population of the world which was just one billion in the year 1800, has now become six billion. The increased population has increased demands. There are large areas on the earth where the forests have disappeared and the grasslands have become barren. The protein hungry world eats more fish than the sea can easily afford. Consequently, the amount of the fish has depleted. The poor burn wood for fire. The number of trees that are planted are not enough to undo the cutting of trees and so the forests deplete. Human beings use chemicals to have more production from crops and this results in the deterioration of the cropland.