

VIII B.

5. Ecological Issues

(Part-1)

What are Ecological Issues?

- The term 'Ecology' refers to 'the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to its organic and inorganic environment' (Andrew Heywood, Global Politics, p. 384)
- Environmental processes and problems have tendency to transgress and do not respect national boundaries.
- They are intrinsically ***transnational*** in character.
- Countries are peculiarly vulnerable, therefore international cooperation on such matters are warranted.

Issues

- Environment, as for many, understood to be a neutral subject matter but as a matter of fact it has been an arena of particular ideological and political debate.
- This underlined the need and basis for the students of political science to understand and debate the issues.
- For example the heated debate on climate change has very often spiralled beyond the bounds of a nation and at times it has petrified the nations on ideological basis.
- It has given rise to what popularly being referred as “Green Politics”.

Major Ecological Concerns

- Global Warming
- Ozone hole
- Environmental Pollution
- Biodiversity
- Water Pollution
- Deforestation
- Climate change and climate Justice

Explanations in detail

- Global warming is basically an incremental increase in the earth's surface temperature due to heat trapped by green house gases such as Carbon dioxide. It may have tendency to disrupt the normal life as it will lead to severe disturbance in earth's biological clock.
- Ozone depletion is a decline in the total amount of ozone in the earth's stratosphere causing to huge distress in the form of uv rays.

Green Politics

- Green politics, ie politics over environment concern usually have spoken in terms of twin epithets : reformist or radicals.
- ***Reformists*** try to reconcile the principle of ecology with modernity/development. The key feature to this approach is that the recognition that there are 'limits to growth' as environmental degradation ultimately threatens prosperity and economic performance. It calls for 'sustainable development' i.e the balance between the environment and development.

Reformist Ecology

- Hugely influenced by the utilitarianism , it advocates three main solutions to environmental degradation:
 - 1. *Green capitalism*** : an attempt to adjust market to take account of the damage done to the environment. For e.g. Green Taxes
 - 2. *Green technologies*** i.e. Environment friendly industrialization focussing on innovation and intervention.
 - 3. *Global governance*** through the ‘tragedy of commons’ can be reduced, if not removed.

Radical Ecology

- According to this the growth of capitalism has degraded the human life and is the root cause of environmental degradation. It calls for the radical steps to be taken to mitigate the disaster and the solution lies in adopting “social ecology”, i.e a balance has to be struck between the humankind and nature largely by the reference to social structures. Very often it is heard in following forms:
 - Eco socialism;
 - Eco anarchism; and
 - Ecofemism.

Radical Ecology

- According to Radical approach to Green Politics, the commodification has caused deep social disorder as it puts cost to every thing.
- Michael Sandel, while writing in Justice, expressed similar concern when he suggested that everything, including, moral is up for sale.
- It clearly hinted where the world is heading by not heeding to the environment.

The after effect of Environmentalism



Examples and the impact of Eco degradation

- Moths are said to be the Ferraris of the insect world. They are the ones that pollinate, working at night, way more than their butterfly cousins that operate by day.
- Moth populations are on the decline as are of many insects.
- The international community made a fundamental flaw in assessing the returns from nature,, assigning cost value (reformist ecology) to a forest, a valley, a marine ecosystem without simultaneously establishing that such economic returns are not sustainable. People saw business opportunities in these assessments, and not the inviolable and irreplaceable value that needed careful utilization.
- Moths are casualties.