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Class 11 English (Hornbill) Notes

THE AILING PLANET

Key Notes and Important Questions with Answers

5. The Ailing Planet: the Green Movement's Role

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The lesson, 'The Ailing Planet: the Green Movement's Role' focuses on the deteriorating health of the Earth because of human being's growing lust to exploit all its natural resources. A Zoo in Lusaka, Zambia calls man as the most dangerous animal in this world. Fortunately, the Green movement launched in 1972 has been responsible for a new awareness that has dawned upon the human race. There has been an irrevocable shift from a mechanistic view to a holistic and ecological view of the world. There is a growing world-wide consciousness that the earth itself is a living organism -an enormous being of which we are parts. It has its own metabolic needs that must be respected and preserved. But, today, its vital signs reveal a patient in declining health. In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development popularized the concept of sustainable development -development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs.

According to Mr. Lester R. Brown, there are four biological systems, namely fisheries, forests, grasslands and croplands. They form the basis of the global economic system. They supply food to us and raw materials for our industries. But in large areas of the world, these systems are reaching unsustainable levels. Their productivity is being damaged.

For the first time in human history we are concerned about the-Survival of not just the people but of the planet. In this era of responsibility, industry can play a crucial role. Today, many industrialists and politicians have realized their responsibility in preserving the natural resources for the future generation.

The growth of world population is another factor distorting the future of our children. Development is not possible if population increases. The writer says that fertility falls as incomes rise, education spreads, and health improves. Thus, development is the best contraceptive.

Short Answer Questions

Answer the following questions in not more than 30-40 words.

Q.1. What is meant by sustainable development? When did this concept become popular?

Ans. Sustainable development means development that meets the needs of the present but doesn't affect the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This concept became popular in 1987.

Q.2. The writer says, "What goes under the pot now costs more than what goes inside it." What is meant by this?

Ans. In poor countries, people cut down trees for firewood. As a result, there is shortage of firewood. It has become very expensive. That is why the author says "What goes under the pot costs more than what goes inside it".

Q.3. What are the facts that support the title, "The Ailing Planet".

Ans. The planet on which we live is, indeed, ailing. Its grasslands, croplands, forests and fisheries have been destroyed. Many of its species have been almost become extinct. The land, rivers and seas have been polluted. The fertility of soil has gone down. All natural resources have depleted badly. Hence, it is, indeed, an ailing planet.

Q.4. What does the notice "The world's most dangerous animal' at a cage in the zoo at Lusaka, Zambia Signify?

Ans. There is no animal in the cage but a mirror where one can see oneself. It makes one realise that the world's most dangerous animal is none but man himself which is very true. Man has destroyed forests, fisheries, grasslands and croplands. He has made many species almost extinct. Thus the mirror in the cage signifies man's cruelty and thoughtlessness.

1. What do the earth's vital signs reveal?
2. What remarkable shift in our attitude towards the earth has been brought on by the Green Movement?

3. What do you mean by 'Sustainable development'?
4. What does the expression, 'holistic and ecological view of the world' suggest?
5. What does the notice in the zoo at Lusaka read? What does it signify?
6. What role can the Industry play in this era of responsibility?
7. Why are tropical forests referred to as 'the Powerhouse of Evolution'?
8. When did the Green Movement start? How has it affected humanity?
9. What were the important issues raised in the First Brandt Commission on ecology and environment?
10. What is man's ethical obligation towards the planet 'Earth'?
11. What does the writer mean by —“the earth itself is a living organism-an enormous being of which we are parts’?”
12. What has the most dangerous animal on the earth learnt in recent times?
13. What was the question raised by the First Brandt Commission? What does it suggest? What is the significance of this question?
14. What did Lester Brown mean when he said “We have not inherited this earth from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children”?
15. How is the depletion of tropical forests affecting our Planet Earth?
16. How are the Earth's biological systems the foundation of the global economic system?
17. “What goes under the pot now costs more than what goes inside it”.What does this statement imply?
18. Justify the title 'The Ailing Planet...'
19. Design a poster to highlight the importance of 'Green Movement'.

Long Answers Type Questions

Q.5. "We have not inherited the earth from our forefathers : We borrowed it from our children" Discuss.

Ans. This earth supplies all our needs. But we don't have a freehold on it. We are not its masters. We have not inherited it from our forefathers. Rather, we have borrowed it from our children we have to give it back to them in good form. We should take from it as much as we can give back to it.

Q.6. Why is development called the best contraceptive?

Ans. When there is development, income rises, education spreads, and health improves. It means enlightened population which understands the value of small families. Thus, development is called the best contraceptive.

Q.7. Do you think element at Coercion is essential for family planning?

Ans. Human beings should not be treated like cattle. They should not be sterilized compulsorily like cattle they should be encouraged to adopt family planning voluntarily. There should be no element to coercion.

Answer the following in about 120 words.

1. What are the four principal biological systems of the earth according to Mr. Lester Brown? How do they sustain humanity? What would happen to them if they are over exploited by man?
 2. How has the growth of world population become the strongest factor in distorting the future of human beings? What does the author suggest in this regard?
 3. What has made the Earth sick? What remedial measures would you like to suggest about improving its health?
 4. 'Forests precede mankind; deserts follow'. Explain with suitable examples from the text.
 5. 'Development is the best contraceptive'. Elaborate this statement in the context of the Chapter, 'The Ailing Planet...'
 6. 'Laws are neither respected nor enforced in India' Justify citing examples from day to day life.
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