

## Chapter 8 Environment And Natural Resources

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**Q 1. Which among the following best explains the reason for growing concerns about the environment?**

1. The developed countries are concerned about projecting nature.
2. Protection of the environment is vital for indigenous people and natural habitats.
3. The environmental degradation caused by human activities has become pervasive and has reached a dangerous level.
4. None of the above.

**Ans.** c. The environmental degradation caused by human activities has become pervasive and has reached a dangerous level.

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**Q 2. Mark correct or wrong against each of the following statements about the Earth Summit:**

1. It was attended by 170 countries, thousands of NGO)s and many MNCs.
2. The Summit was held under the aegis of the UN.
3. For the first time, global environmental issues were firmly consolidated at the political level.
4. It was a summit meeting.

**Ans.**

1. Correct
  2. Wrong
  3. Correct
  4. Wrong
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**Q 3. Which among the following are true about the Global Commons?**

1. The earth's atmosphere, Antarctica, ocean floor and outer space are considered as part of the Global Commons.
2. The Global Commons are outside sovereign jurisdiction.
3. The question of managing the Global Commons has reflected the North-South divide.
4. The countries of the North are more concerned about the protection of the global Commons than the countries of the South.

**Ans.** (a) The Earth's atmosphere, Antarctica, ocean floor and outer space are considered as a part of global commons.

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**Q 4. What were the outcomes of Rio-Summit?**

**Ans.**

1. The Rio Summit produced conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, forestry, and recommended a list of development practices called 'Agenda 21'. But it left unresolved considerable differences and difficulties.

2. It gave the concept of 'sustainable development' to be combined economic growth with ecological responsibility.
  3. The problem however was how exactly this was to be achieved. Some critics have pointed out that Agenda 21 was biased in favour of economic growth rather than ensuring ecological conservation.
  4. Rio-Summit developed various contentious issues like Commons, Global Commons in global politics of environment.
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**Q 5. What is meant by Global Commons? How are they exploited and polluted?**

**Ans.** There are areas or regions located outside the sovereign jurisdiction of any one state and region, common governance by the International community are Global Commons. These are known as res communes humanitatis or global commons. They include the earth's atmosphere, Antarctica, the ocean floor, and outer space.

They are exploited and polluted due to:

1. Difficulty of achieving consensus on common environmental agendas on the basis of vague scientific evidence and time frames.
  2. North-South inequalities and their exploitative activities and competition lack proper management area out space.
  3. Technological and Industrial development has also affected the earth's atmosphere and ocean floor.
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**Q 6. What is meant by 'Common but differentiated responsibilities'? How could we implement the idea?**

**Ans.** 'Common but differentiated responsibilities' mean that the state shall cooperate in the spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the earth's ecosystem. As the states have common but differentiated responsibilities over various contributions of global environmental degradation. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technological and financial resources they command.

We could implement the idea with the help of conventions and declarations:

1. The Rio-Summit held in June 1992 produced conventions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, forestry and recommended a list of developed practices called Agenda 21.
  2. The 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) also provides that the parties should act to protect the climate system "on the basis of equity and in accordance with their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities". It was acknowledged that per capita emissions in developing countries are still relatively low. China, India and other developing countries were, therefore, exempted from the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol.
  3. An international agreement is known Kyoto Protocol set targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions which support global warming. Certain gases like Carbon dioxide, Methane, Hydro-fluoro carbons etc. are considered at least partly responsible for global warming – the rise in global temperature which may have catastrophic consequences for life on Earth. The protocol was agreed to in 1997 in Kyoto in Japan, based on principles set out in UNFCCC.
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**Q 7. Why have issues related to global environmental protection become the priority concern of states since the 1990s?**

**Ans.** Issues related to global environmental protection became the priority concern of states since the 1990s because at global level, the environmental issues drew the attention of various states at the United Nations Conference On Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992 through Agenda 21:

1. Rio-Summit 1992 dealt with climatic change, biodiversity and forestry.
  2. Agenda 21 combined economic growth with ecological responsibilities, known as sustainable development. Some critics have pointed out that Agenda 21 was biased in favour of economic growth rather than ensuring ecological conservation.
  3. The Kyoto Protocol set targets for industrialised countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions. The above-mentioned conferences and summits raised the environmental issues at the global level to take steps by various states to check environmental degradation in a cooperative manner.
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**Q 8. Compromise and accommodation are the two essential policies required by states to save Planet Earth. Substantiate the statement in the light of the ongoing negotiations between the North and South on environmental issues.**

**Ans.** Compromise and accommodation are the two essential policies to save Planet Earth by the states but the states from North and South have different notions towards environmental issues.

- The Northern states were concerned with ozone depletion and global warming whereas the Southern states were anxious to address the relationship between economic development and environmental management.
- The developed countries of the North want to discuss the environmental issues which stand equally responsible for ecological conservation. The developing countries of the south feel that much of the ecological degradation in the world is created by developed countries through their industrial projects. And if developed countries cause more environmental degradation they are supposed to take more responsibility onwards.
- The developing countries are under process of industrialization and they should be exempted from restrictions imposed on developed countries through various conventions like protocol etc.
- The special needs of developing countries must be taken into considerations in the process of development, application and interpretation of rules of International Environmental Law.

All the above-mentioned provisions were accepted in Earth Summit, 1992 while adopting common but differentiated responsibilities.

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**Q 9. The most serious challenge before the states is pursuing economic development without causing further damage to the global environment. How could we achieve this? Explain with a few examples.**

**Ans.** The economic development can be achieved even without damaging the global environment by following practices.

- In June 1992, Earth Summit provided some conservative measures for sustainable growth without damaging the environment anymore.
- The Antarctic Treaty of 1959 covered Global Commons for mutual economic development.
- Kyoto protocol cut greenhouse emissions from industrialised countries to protect the environment and to develop industries also.
- Resource Geopolitics allocates and distributes natural resources among the nation states of the global arena for sustainable development of nations.

Hence, the above-mentioned practices protect the global environment and even though the states are developing we could achieve this challenge only if we follow the provisions and practices mentioned in all these conferences and summits.