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Subject- English

Class- xi

Date- 31.07.21

### The Ailing Planet: the Green Movement's Role

#### Introduction-

This chapter focuses on the factors that are responsible for the declining health of the earth. The chapter was originally an article written by Nani Palkhivala which was published in the newspaper 'The Indian Express' on November 23, 1994.

The writer discusses the Green Movement, how a zoo in Zambia declared human beings as 'world's most dangerous animals'. The writer also focuses on overpopulation, deforestation and what should be our responsibility towards the environment.

#### Summary-

In this chapter, the writer raises an issue towards the deteriorating health of the earth. As human beings have been exploiting natural resources from decades, presently the condition has made the environment critical. In 1972, the Green Movement helped environmentalists to raise awareness about the harmful condition of the earth and since then there has been no looking back as the movement has been successfully educating people about the conservation of the environment.

Earth is like a patient whose health is declining and it is our duty to improve it. In 1987, the term Sustainable Development was used by the World Commission on Environment and Development. A zoo in Lukasa, Zambia has a cage in which a sign reads 'The World's most dangerous animal' and inside there is a mirror. It gives a message that human beings are the most dangerous animals. Brandt Commission raised a question "Are we to leave our successors a scorched planet of advancing environment?"

There are four principal biological systems that form the foundation of the global economic system - fisheries, grasslands, forests, and croplands. These four systems also provide food and raw materials for industries except for minerals and synthetics. With these systems becoming unsustainable, fisheries will collapse, the forest will slowly disappear, grasslands will turn into a barren wasteland and croplands will become worse.

In poor countries, forests are being cut down for fuelwood which is used for cooking purposes. There are some areas where the cost of fuelwood is more than the cost of food. It is leading to deforestation at an alarming rate.

One of the reasons for the exploitation of the environment is the increasing population. It is observed that about one million population is increasing in every four days. This is not a good sign. There is an urgent need to control overpopulation in the world. Development is the best contraceptive for this problem as it will

help in reduction in fertility, increase in education and income and improvement in health. We must see the world as a whole and not as dissociated parts. It is a holistic and ecological view. According to Lester Brown, we have not inherited the earth from our forefathers but we have borrowed it from our future generations.