

ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS - II

23.4 National and International Efforts

In India, the environmental awareness gained importance since 1970s after the UN sponsored conference on environment in Stockholm (1972). Indian government took many environment friendly activities. Ministry of environment and forest was established and laws were enacted on environment protection in 1986.

The objective of India's National Environment policy, here, are worth stating.

- 1) Conserve and develop safe, healthy, productive, and aesthetically satisfying environment ;
- 2) Upgrade, develop and manage rural and urban settlement to enhance the quality of life ;
- 3) Plan development on sound ecological principles with environmental impact assessment and incorporating appropriate environmental safeguards ;
- 4) Promote environmental safety-technologies, recycling of resources and utilization of wastes ;
- 5) Conserve the biotic diversity in the country by creating nature reserves and sanctuaries for specific habitats such as mountains, rain forests, pastures, deserts, wet lands, lakes, beaches, mangroves, estuaries, lagoons and island ;
- 6) Safeguard the environment within the national maritime Exclusive Economic Zone ;
- 7) Evolve environmental norms and establish effective mechanism for monitoring surveillance and collection and dissemination of information ;
- 8) Preserve science landscapes, as well as historic and cultural monuments and their environs ;

- 9) Promote environmental education at all level and create public awareness ;
- 10) Encourage research in environmental science and technological and social investigation to conserve and improve the environment and
- 1 1) Develop adequate manpower within the country, of ecologists, environmental scientists, planners and managers of the highest quality and recognize their work as an important component of national development.

23.5 National and International Commitment to The Protection of Environment

The growing awareness about environmental protection has resulted in new measures across the world. The late Prime minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi was the only Head of Government, attending the 1972 Stockholm conference, which was called the "U.N. Conference on Human environment". The Rio Conference 20 years later was called the "U.N. Conference on Environment and Development". It was Mrs. Gandhi who first pointed out that poverty was the greatest polluter and unless it was eliminated through national and international efforts it was futile to talk about protecting the planet from environmental disaster. UNDP , the World Bank and other institutions of the U.N. system are now advocating the elimination of poverty as the central task in sustainable development. Indeed environmental and development polices are seen as complementing each other. The conflicted between the requirement of long-term environmental interests and the immediate compulsions of development is certainly to be resolved. But any world order cannot be sustainable if three-fourths of its population continues to live in poverty. Environmental rights and developmental rights together constitute the democratic and human rights of all the people of the world.

The Montreal convention and the conventions on climate change; bio-diversity and forest adopted at Rio are important landmarks in the world movement for sustainable development and environmental protection. India has accepted these conventions and is taking systematic measures to implement them. An environmental action programme funded by U.N.D.P. is under implementation. There are 31 schemes for industrial pollution control approved by the World Bank, involving of US. \$ 105 million. On the anvil are common effluent plants for small industries located in a cluster, the big plants being looked after individually. Seventeen grossly polluting industries have been identified for environment control within a time schedule. For certain categories of industries, prior environment clearance is compulsory before they can be set up. In regard to transport pollution apart from conversation measures, population free engines are being designed, some of which have already been introduced for two-wheelers, three-wheelers and some of the popular cars. A National Forestry Plan is in progress. Environmental Brigades, Afforestation Brigades and Ecological task Force have been organized by Non-government organizations (NGOs.) India's wild life conservation projects have met with remarkable success. India has a protected network of 75 national parks and 421 wild life sanctuaries.

The Tiger project has been a great success.

India also has an elaborate laws relating to the prevention of pollution of water, soil and air and a system of environmental audit of most industrial projects. While this is voluntary for most countries, India has a mandatory rule in this regard. India is also engaged in serious and systematic efforts to develop alternative and renewable sources of energy like solar, wind and wave energy which are environment friendly.

Emphasis is laid on solar energy on which some significant technological progress has been made. India is taking all these measures partially with international assistance.

23.6 Some Measures taken by Indian Government to Check Environmental Pollution

- 1) Environmental Courts: Special courts are being set up to ensure speedy justice of the poor against factories that pollute the Environment.
- 2) Environment Friendly Products :The government is setting stringent standards for all products in the market. Those, which meet these standards of production and performance will be given the label of excellence like the ISI mark.
- 3) Unleashing Of Petrol :Refineries are being persuaded to make their petrol lead free. Indian petrol has the highest lead content, which creates major pollution through automobiles.
- 4) Ban On Harmful Pesticides: Eight chemical pesticides, of which DDT , BHC, Aldrin and Malathion are the main culprits have been isolated. There are now plans to replace them with safe bio pesticides.
- 5) National Waste Management Council: The main task is to convert 40 million tones of fly ash, that lie as a mountain near thermal power plants into bricks, city garbage into energy and sewage into fertilizer .
- 6) Public Liability Insurance: This makes it mandatory for all companies to take out a public liability insurance to be paid in 48 hours.
- 7) Pollution By Motor Vehicles : Anti-pollution measures against motor vehicles are being strictly enforced. Vehicles not adhering to the standards prescribed are fined heavily and may even be asked to be off the road.

8) Hotel NearSea Shore: Action has been taken against a large number of hotels which encroach beaches in flagrant violation of laws.

9) National River Action Plan: The proposal is to set up a National river authority which will plan policy for water use and waste management at the national level.

10) SolarEnergy Commission: Since the energy sector is the major polluter, the idea is to create decentralized energy at the village level, instead of multiplying the mainstream producer.

11) No Smoking In Public Places: A ban is proposed on smoking in public places. The Delhi government has taken a lead in this direction.

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