

## Ecology, economy and natural resources

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**Synopsis:** Rapid and radical changes in our surroundings indicate disorder and imbalance in ecology. These are dangerous trends and need to be checked and reversed. Indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources, industrial development and rapid growth of population have resulted in widespread pollution and degradation. In our own country the pollution levels have reached beyond biological endurance foreboding ecological disaster. Massive deforestation, soil-erosion and loss of green cover cause recurring floods, droughts and loss of precious flora and fauna. Some measures have been taken of late to check pollution and increase forestation but still many needs to be done. Global cooperative efforts are needed to face the global problem of pollution and ecological imbalance. The recent forest and bush fires in Indonesia are an example how an environmental problem adversely affects a large area of the world.

In our own country, this process of indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources all these years have created ecological insecurity and rapid degradation of animal and plant life so much so the the very survival of the nation is at stake. The explosive population and industrial growth have unfolded an age of untold suffering, diseased and disasters. The levels of pollution in air, water, soil etc, have reached record levels and well beyond biological endurance. According to the report of Tata Energy Research Institute the sub-continental environment is losing its green over at such a fast rate that ecological disaster is imminent, if it is not checked immediately. It does not augur well for sustainable development and economical growth.

Poaching coupled with indiscriminate commercial and industrial expansion threatens the Indian wildlife. A member of the Indian Board of Wildlife and the Steering Committee of Project Tiger has identified 50 wildlife hot spots in the 50<sup>th</sup> year of Indian independence. These sanctuaries and national parks are the best water catchment areas. The water security of the subcontinent will be at risk if these areas are degraded or lost, he warns, what is worse, India's network of parks and sanctuaries is being dismembered by government design and sanction, almost invariably for short term gains. India's wildlife species might become extinct because of the rapacity of developers that the avarice of the poachers, avers he.

In modern India there have been many great champions of science and advocates of scientific thinking who paid their wholehearted homage at the shrine of pure knowledge. But pt. Nehru stands above them all beaus the strove hard throughout his life as a man, leader and the first Prime Minister of India to

inculcate the scientific temper among the Indian populace. Once in an opening ceremony speaking on the spirit of Science, he said, "Science teaches us new ways of doing things. Perhaps, it improves our conditions of industrial life but the basic things that science should do is to teach us to think straight, to act straight and not to be afraid of discarding anything or of accepting anything provided there are sufficient reasons for doing so.

Science in itself is neither good nor bad. It is human beings who make science. Ills of science like the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the erosion of values because of spread of gross materialism, ever increasing depletion of natural resources, degradation and pollution of the environment etc. are actually the ill of man using science in a way that is destructive, undesirable and unholy. It is because the scientist in man has deviated from his social commitments, social conscience. Therefore, there are some sections in the society who want an immediate halt to the growth of scientific researches and studies.

Undoubtedly, industrial growth, technological progress and expansionist a must for India but the age-old harmony between man and nature is equally important. Without the balance and harmony any productivity and progress would be counter-productive. Therefore, it is imperative that we strive for greater and abiding coherence, harmony and friendliness between nature and our way of life, that we check the rapidly increasing consumerism and thereby stop the depletion of valuable and limited natural resources. We have to increase the comforts and conveniences but at the same time we have to see that we do not lose our should and the rapport between ourselves and the nature.