

4. Everything I Need To Know I Learned In The Forest

Comprehension I

1. Trace the childhood experiences that shaped the author's interest in ecology?

Vandana Shiva's ecological journey started in the forests of Himalaya. Her father was a forest conservator and her mother was a farmer. Vandana Shiva's mother composed poems about trees, forest and India's forest civilization, which inspired an interest of ecology in the author. Later her involvement in the contemporary ecology movement began with 'Chipko', these were her childhood experiences that shaped her interest in ecology and also learned about biodiversity and biodiversity- based living economies.

2. How does the scarcity of water, fodder and fuel affect women?

Women provide water, fodder and fuel for their family by collecting them from the nearby forests. If nearby forests are destroyed they had to go to a large distance to collect firewood, fuel and also fodder. Carrying burden from far places was a physical strain for them; due to this their health would be affected.

3. What features of the 'Chipko' movement does the author highlight?

The author denotes that only women can understand the real value of forest. According to the poet forests are not merely timber but provide water, food and fuel.

'Chipko' was a non-violent movement against deforestation. It was led by the peasant women in the Garhwal Himalaya. They declared to hug trees to prevent them from being cut down, even if the loggers had to kill them. 'Chipko' volunteers took out padhyatra to spread awareness.

In one such 'Chipko' action in 1977 a woman named Bachni Devi from the village of Adwani resisted her husband, a contractor from cutting trees. When officials arrived at the forest she and other volunteers lighted lanterns even in broad day light and explained the authorities, how the officials were blind to the destruction of forests and she would teach them to protect forest. Later they sang a song about the usefulness of forest.

4. The real value of forest for women was :

B) Source of basic needs

5. List the activities of Vandana Shiva that under took after her involvement with 'Chipko' movement?

The activities that Vandana Shiva took as a volunteer for the 'Chipko' movement are as follows

- She spent every vacation doing Padhyatras, documenting the forestation and the work of the forest activists.

- She spread the message of ‘Chipko’ movement.
- She protected Biodiversity and Biodiversity-based on living economies.
- She started ‘Navadhanya Farm’ in 1994 at Doon valley for conservation, demonstration and training farmers.
- She practiced and promoted, a Biodiversity intensive form of farming.
- She setup 100 community seed banks.
- She helped farmers to convert to organic farming.

6. The conservation of Biodiversity in agriculture leads to :

c) More quality food and higher nutrition.

7. Why is it important to change the fossil fuel and chemical based monoculture?

It is important to change the fossil fuel and chemical based monoculture because it impoverishes nature and culture.

8. What promoted the UN to initiate a discussion on the rights of Mother Earth?

The United Nations General Assembly – inspired by the constitution of Ecuador and the Universal declaration of the rights of the Mother Earth initiated by Bolivia- which was included an organized conference on harmony with nature as a part of Earth Day celebrations. These specified things were promoted the UN to initiate a discussion on the rights of Mother Earth.

9. The conference organized by UN General Assembly aimed at transforming domination of (a. people over nature , b. men over women , c. rich over poor.)

d) all the above

10. What according to the author, is eco-apartheid ? Why is it necessary to end this ?

Eco- apartheid means that humans consider themselves as separate from nature and damage the environment of the Earth. We have to end this as it is based on the illusion of separateness of humans from nature in our minds and lives.

Separatism is indeed at the root of disharmony with nature and violence against the nature and people. Eco-apartheid should be stopped because it will destroy nature, that is equal to destroying ourselves as we are the inseparable part of nature.

Cormac Cullinan, the prominent South African environmentalist is off the opinion that apartheid means separateness, here he gave a great support to end the violent separation of people on the basis of color and because of this apartheid was put behind in South Africa to protect everything from everyone.

11. Which event in human history marked the beginning of separation of humans from nature?

Industrial revolution marked the beginning of separation of humans from nature.

12. How do Carolyn Merchant and Francis Bacon differ in their views ?

Francis Bacon the father of modern science is off the opinion that science and its invention have the power to conquer and subdue nature, also use it as he wishes.

Carolyn merchant the philosopher and historian expressed that , if the earth is taken to be

dead material it could lead to capitalism. The domination images created by Bacon and other leaders of the scientific revolution replaced those of the nurturing Earth, removing a cultural constraint on the exploitation of nature. She poetically says that “One does not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold or mutilate her body,” It means we won’t kill our mother to steal her gold jewelry.

13. What idea of Tagore inspired the author to start the Earth University?

Rabindranath Tagore, the India’s National poet and a Nobel Prize laureate started a forest school ‘Shantiniketan’ in West Bengal, both to take inspiration from nature and to create an Indian Cultural renaissance. This idea of Tagore inspired the author to start the Earth University.

The author also states that the Earth University located at Navadanya ‘Farm inspired by Rabindranath Tagore’s ideas expressed in his essay ‘Tapovan’(Forest of Purity). She was even impressed by the writings of Tagore that the forest was not just the source of knowledge and freedom, it was the source of beauty and joy of art and aesthetics of harmony and perfection where it gave the information towards the universe that the forest teaches us union and compassion and also enoughness: as a principle of equity, how to enjoy the gifts of nature without exploitation and accumulation. So life’s lessons in the peaceful environment of a forest will be highly beneficial.

14. How are unity and diversity related to each other?

The works of Rabindranath Tagore which has been inspired everyone about the forest has given the information about “Unity in diversity ” where it is to be considered as the two faces of single coin. The forest is a symbol of Unity and diversity and is the basis of both ecological sustainability and democracy.

Diversity without unity becomes the source of conflict and contest .Unity without diversity becomes the ground for external control. The forest is unity in its diversity; we are united with nature through our relationship with the forest. The forest teaches us union and compassion and given enoughness.

Comprehension II

1. How did the women, led by Bachni Devi, put up resistance to felling of trees ? Do you think it was effective?

Vandana Shiva became a volunteer towards ‘Chipko’ movement. She spent her vacation doing padayatras and spread the memory of ‘Chipko’.

In 1977 one of the dramatical ‘Chipko’ movement took place in the village of Adwani of Himalaya. A village woman named Bachni Devi led resistance against her own husband who had obtained a contract to cut the trees. When officials arrived at the forest, the women held up lighted lanterns in broad day light. When the forester asked the reason of holding lanterns, the women told them that they had come to teach them forestry. The forester retorted that how they could stop cutting of trees by those who know the value of the forest.

According to the forester the value of the forest lies in its profit, resin and timber. Women sang back the famous folk song in chorus that, forest bears soil, water and pure air. Women also declared that they would hug trees and the loggers would have to kill them before killing the trees .In fact women really got a success in agitation and made the authorities to realize their folly.

2. Why is it important to promote biodiversity intensive farming? How did the author achieve it?

Monoculture is the cultivation of single crop on a single farm was as Biodiversity is nothing but the variety of life in the world or in a particular habitat or ecosystem.

The author Vandana Shiva learnt about diversity in the Himalayan forests. She used this knowledge to protect biodiversity of farms that produces more food and nutrition per acre. She started saving seeds from farmers fields later realized for the development of the seeds needed a farm, So started her own farm called 'Navadhanya Farm' in 1994 in the Doon valley located in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand.

Through their efforts today they have conserved 630 varieties of rice, 150 varieties of wheat and hundreds of other species. She also promoted organic farming in 1987. At Navadanya, they have worked with farmers to set up more than 100 community seed bank across India. They have also saved more than 3000 varieties of rice.

Biodiversity has helped in growing more quantity and nutritious food. It has helped in achieving food security. Finally, she tells that biodiversity has become her teacher of abundance and freedom of co-operation and mutual giving. She was considered as the crusader of biodiversity intensive form of farming.

3. "Rights of Nature" means

b)The duty of human beings to conserve nature.

4.What does the idea of the Earth University convey? How is it different from other universities?

The Earth University located at Navadanya teaches Earth Democracy, which is the freedom for all species to evolve within the web of life, and the freedom and responsibility of humans , as members of the Earth family, to recognize, protect and respect the rights of their species.

The Earth University stands apart from other universities because teaching does not take place in a concrete building but in the natural surroundings of the 'Navadanya' where participants work with living seed, living soil and the web of life.

The students include farmers, school children and people from across the world. The two most popular courses are "A to Z of organic farming and Agro- Ecology" and "Gandhi and Globalization".

Comprehension III

1. "Tagore saw unity with nature as the highest stage of human evolution". Do you think consumerism and accumulation of wealth comes in the way of realizing Tagore's vision of human evolution?

Yes, Consumerism and accumulation of wealth come in the way of realizing Tagore's vision of human evolution. Tagore firmly believed that Indian civilization found its source of regeneration both material and intellectual in the forest, protection of nature's wealth guaranties the protection of the next generation. But consumerism means protection or promotion of the interest of consumers that is necessary for his existence. These unwanted wants leads to accumulation, which leads for destruction of his unwanted desire, human beings become the capitalist and use their domination on the nature.

2. “The conservation of bio-diversity is the answer to the food and nutrition crisis.”Discuss?

Yes, conservation of biodiversity is the answer to the food and nutrition crisis because biodiversity works on the paradigm of Earth Democracy, Which is the freedom for all species to evolve within the web of life. Bio-diversity conservation is very important because through this we can ensure the continuous supply of basic needs of living beings. The protection of forest stops the floods, soil erosion and the problems which cause great damage to the humans, wild life etc.

Vandana Shiva transformed knowledge of diversity learnt in the Himalayan forest to the protection of bio-diversity in Indian farms. she started saving seeds from farmers field and set up Navadanya farm Gradually, they conserved and grew varieties of rice, wheat and other species of grains, they produces more food and nutrition per acre. Organic farming is also a method to conserve Bio-diversity due to this less wastage of raw- materials, pollution and more nutritious food can be grown. It will promote co-operation and peaceful co – existence of human beings and animals.

3. “Conservation of diversity is crucial for the sustenance of both nature and human society.” Discuss.

The Earth houses millions of Eco-systems and nurtures bio-diversity. Bio-diversity ensures abundance, freedom , co-operation and mutual giving. Tagore agrees that the forests have served as sources of material and intellectual regenerations. The culture that has arisen from the forest is nurtured by the unifying principle of life in diversity and of democratic pluralism. It is this unity in diversity that is the basis of both ecological sustainability and democracy. This is true of both nature and culture. We are united with nature through our relationship with the forest. The forest teaches us union , compassion and enoughness. The peace of the forest has helped the intellectual evolution of man. The culture of the forest has fueled the culture of Indian Society.

The Unity in Diversity seen in the forest should serve as a model for human society, otherwise it will lead to conflict, greed, exploitation and finally to the impoverishment of our culture. Therefore the conservation of diversity is crucial for the sustenance of both nature and human society.

4. In the light of this essay how does one synthesize the wisdom of the past with the modern knowledge system?

The Essay ‘Everything I need to know I learned in the forest by Vandana Shiva highlights the importance of sustaining bio-diversity in nature. Scientific inventions and discoveries have proved successful in controlling infant mortality, increasing longevity. But some of the discoveries and inventions are not successful. It is damaging our Eco-systems.

The diversity is the root of unity. The wisdom of the past was to find peace and emancipation from human misteries to mother nature. The modern system should restrict the cruel effect of consumerism and accumulation for the beginning of the joy of living. Man has to develop harmony with nature, respect a sense of gratitude towards nature has to be developed at every step. Every nation of this world has started co-operating with each other and taken different steps to curb the destruction of Natural Resources, like forest, wild animals and human health.

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ASSIGNMENT

Affix: An affix is a linguistic element added to a root word to produce an inflected or derived form of that word.

Types of Affix:-

- 1) **Prefix**: A prefix is a group of letter placed before the root of a word.
For Example : **un**happy , **non**violent, **im**possible.
- 2) **Suffix**: A suffix is a group of letter placed after the root of a word.
For Example : Relations**ship** , Dramatic**al** , Movement**ment**

Note: Refer the lesson and write five Prefix and Suffix words and use each of the words meaningfully in your own sentences.
