**TDC, 2nd Year, 4th Sem, Paper-4016**

***Mala Moni Kalita, Asstt. Prof.***

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY**

Although there are numerous pre-existing policies on the environment, a need for a comprehensive policy covering all significant aspects of the environment as well as to fill the lacuna in such policies was felt. In the light of such circumstances, The National Environment Policy (NEP) came into force to address the rising threat to the environment and devise effective measures and action plans to tackle the deplorable state of the environment. The various strategies and plans enumerated in the policy have been brought into action in different parts of the country. They have been quite successful in resolving many ecological challenges that were predominant in the country. However, a more effective and robust implementation of the NEP is the need of the time to tackle newly found emerging threats of the decade. It is, also, equally important for the general public to join hands with the government and ministries trying to work out the environmental challenges and ensure their full support in the implementation of these policies.

The National Environment Policy of 2006 was framed in this regard to extend the coverage of such already existing policies. It does not displace, but rather builds on the earlier policies. It is an acknowledgement of India’s commitment to a clean and safe environment mandated in Articles 48A and 51A (g) of the Indian Constitution substantiated by judicial interpretation of Article 21. It calls for mutual cooperation between states and their citizens towards maintaining and upgrading the quality of the environment.

The National Environment Policy (NEP) by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) aims at mainstreaming environmental concerns into all developmental activities. It emphasises conservation of resources, and points that the best way to aid conservation is to ensure that people dependent on resources obtain better livelihoods from conservation, than from degradation of the resources. It argues that environmental degradation often leads to poverty and poor health outcomes among populations.

The document goes on to highlight the principles underlying the policy that emphasise the

Important role of human beings in the sustainable development processes

a) The non-negotiability and incomparable value of environmental resources

b) Right to development for all

c) Equity in the use of environmental resources and

d) The need for the decentralised and multi-sectoral approach in dealing with environmental issues.

**Objectives of this Policy**

The fundamental objectives of the National Environment Policy are listed below. These objectives outline the contemporaneous perception of the environmental challenges of the time.

Conservation of Critical Environmental Resources: It involves protecting and conserving crucial ecological systems and resources along with vital natural and human-made heritage. These are essential for livelihoods, economic growth, and the well-being of man.

Intra-generational Equity: It includes securing equitable access of environmental resources to different sections of society with a specific focus on low-income groups which are mostly reliant on environmental resources for livelihoods.

Inter-generational Equity: It aims at wise and judicious use of environmental resources to meet the demands and needs of the current generation without compromising with the aspirations and needs of the future generations.

Integration of Economic and Social development Environmental concerns: It focuses on integrating environmental concerns into effective plans, programs, projects, and policies for socio-economic progress.

Efficient use of Environmental Resource: It involves ensuring efficient use of environmental resources to reduce their use per unit of economic output, in order to reduce negative ecological impacts.

Environmental Governance: It means applying the fundamental principles of good governance to manage and regulate the use of environmental resources.

Enhancement of Resources for Environmental Conservation: It aims at partnering with various local communities, public agencies, investors, researchers, and academic groups to ensure higher resource flows, including finance, technology, management skills and traditional knowledge for environmental protection.

The document outlines a range of strategies to meet these objectives that aim at:

1. Conservation of existing environmental resources through regulatory reforms

2. Emphasis on education, information, research, capacity building and technological innovations

3. Intersectoral collaboration and periodic evaluations of the existing policies.