

**Natural Resources Management (NRM)**  
**Professor Sudip Mitra, PhD**  
**Centre For Disaster Management and Research (CDMR)**  
**Head, School of Agro and Rural Technology (SART)**  
**Discipline - Agriculture Engineering**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati, Assam, India**  
**Week - 05**  
**Lecture - 32**  
**National Environment Policy (NEP)**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:34)

**National Environment Policy (NEP)**

It is an initiative taken by Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), 2006 to mainstream environmental concerns into all developmental activities. It is an effort towards India's commitment to clean environment and making positive contribution to international efforts.

- It emphasizes 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.
- The policy also seeks to stimulate partnerships of different stakeholders, i.e. public agencies, local communities, academic and scientific institutions, the investment community, and international development partners, in harnessing their respective resources and strengths for environmental management.
- Involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions and urban local bodies has been highlighted.
- It also seeks to revisit the Coastal Regulation Zone notifications to make the approach to coastal environmental regulation more holistic and, thereby, ensure protection to coastal ecological systems, waters and the vulnerability of some coastal areas to extreme natural events and potential sea level rise.
- Environmental Impact Assessment will continue to be the principal methodology for appraisal and review of new projects.
- To achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it

14

Now, let us discuss about National Environment Policy. During the lecture on Environmental Management System EMS almost at the end I mentioned about also one of the government initiatives in the line of Environment Management is NEP national environmental policy or National Environment Policy has an enormous role to play in the, best management of environment for our country.

National Environmental Policy has various important roles to play. It is an initiative taken by Ministry of Environment and Forest in 2006 largely to mainstream the environmental concerns into all of our development activities. Any kind of development activities that has to take place in any part of our country must include the concerns and the necessary steps for Environment Management.

It is an also effort that Indian Government has showed their commitment towards clean development, clean environment and making positive contribution to the international efforts. Today, all of us we know that India plays a very important role at the international arena of

Environment Management, climate change. So, keeping that in mind, our National Environment Policy has a very important role to play for environment restoration and management in our country.

NEP emphasizes also the conservation of various resources, various kinds of natural resources. And it also points that the best way to aid conservation is to ensure that people dependent on those resources, obtain better livelihoods from conservation and not from the degradation of those resources. It is for their own interest that they would or should take care of the natural resources on which their livelihood is based upon.

Now, National Environment Policy seeks to stimulate partnerships, partnership with different stakeholders, public agencies, local communities, private entities, academic institutions, scientific research institution, even investment community and of course, international development partners like UNDP, UNEP, FAO, WHO many other organization in harnessing their respective resources and the strength for environmental management.

So, it is in the best interest of our community to come forward and take care of the resources on which their livelihood is based upon. So, environmental management to the best possible way would not only ensure a green and clean environment, but also would ensure the continuous supply of natural resources which are important ingredient for generating livelihood for millions of people in our country.

Involvement of Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies are also very important in national environmental policy and its implementation. NEP also seeks to revisit the Cr zone notification coastal regulation Zone notification to make the approach towards coastal environment regulation more holistic and thereby ensure the protection of coastal ecological system the people who are depending on the coastal system.

The vulnerability of those coastal areas to extreme natural events like cyclone, floods, tsunami, and also potential sea level rise. NEP also emphasizes the importance of environmental impact assessment or we call it also as EIA; environmental impact assessment will continue to be the principal methodology for appraisal and review of various projects that takes place anywhere in the country.

NEP also facilitates to achieve the sustainable development. Environmental protections shall be one of the important or integral part of this development process and cannot be considered in isolation. As I mentioned in one of the previous lectures that environmental management

system must not be dealt with in isolation from the other management system of an NEC institution organization, industry or company. We need to learn to integrate EMS into the overall policy framework, then only you will find that, that environment aspect of any kind of activity will be taken care of in a appropriate manner.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:25)



Now, NEP also highlights certain, objectives, it actually talks about conservation of critical environmental resources. When I say critical environment resources largely mean those resources which are, very vulnerable in many manner. So, if those resources are not utilized in appropriate manner, then they may be totally removed from the ecosystem.

So, there is a chance of losing that particular environmental resource. So, those resources, we call as critical environment resource; conservation of critical environment resource is one of the objectives of NEP.

Second intragenerational equity. Now, the questions of equity, we have discussed in a couple of times in this course, equity also is important from the viewpoint of livelihood security, equity also important in the sharing of resources, and again the natural resources are directly linked with the livelihood.

So, if intragenerational equity is somehow is insured, then certainly the livelihood security of the community can also be, sustainable in every manner. When I talk about intragenerational equity, there is also intergenerational equity. Now, intergenerational equity, the question comes in when that our generation, when we actually extract the benefit from the resources, natural resources, that are available to us.

We must ensure that we use those natural resources in a judicious manner, so that the future generation can also get the benefit of those natural resources and that is, called as inter generational equity.

Number four, integration of environmental concerns in economic and social development. Now, there are a lot of awareness across various stakeholders people now understand the importance of environmental concerns in every phase of our life and especially economy and social development, these two are very closely related with environment, more awareness, deliberations are required to bring environment or mainstream environment with economic and social development of a region of a country and overall the world.

Efficiency or in environmental resource use is another important objective of National Environmental Policy. Now, there are many environmental resource say one, if I consider, coal or gas, these are all resources. Now, we must utilize these resources in such a manner that we can get the benefit to the maximum possible way with limited uses. So, that means, enhancing the efficiency of that particular resource for that, we need better technology, better engineering, better management system.

Six; environmental governance now, we understand that no system, whether it is a small school or college or your home itself, if the governance or the system is not properly maintained, nothing will work. Similar thing is also for environmental governance, so, we need certain rules and regulations, certain tools and techniques for proper management of resources. So, that environment is managed in an appropriate manner and for that we need this regulation otherwise; there will be inappropriate utilization of resources, which we discussed at the very beginning of this particular course.

Enhancement of resources for environmental conservation. Now, conservation of environmental resources actually will finally decide the sustainability of these resources. How long actually you can use a particular resource that depends on that how best you are actually managing that particular resources. So, conservation of natural resources or enhancement of conservation of a particular resource is also another important objective of National Environment Policy.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:57)

### Principles of NEP

- ✓ 1. Human Beings are at the Centre of Sustainable Development Concerns
- ✓ 2. The Right to Development:  
The right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitably meet developmental and environmental needs of present and future generations.
- ✓ 3. Environmental Protection is an Integral part of the Development Process
- ✓ 4. The Precautionary Approach:  
Where there are credible threats of serious or irreversible damage to key environmental resources, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- ✓ 5. Economic Efficiency:  
This Principle requires that the services of environmental resources be given economic value, and such value to count equally with the economic values of other goods and services, in analysis of alternative courses of action.

15

Now, principle of National Environment Policy like any other policy of course, NEP also is based on certain principles and those principles are very important to run these NEP in a appropriate manner. If you look at that human beings are at the center of sustainable development concerns human beings are at the center of NEP.

Then second is the right to development, the right to development must be fulfilled so as to equitable share of these resources are there for not only for development purpose, but also for the environmental needs for present as well as for future generation.

Environmental protection is an integral part of the development process, you cannot separate development process and Environment Protection, this has to be integrated, because if you take care of environment, your development process will be sustainable. Now, if you other way want to, get success in the development path then environment also has to be taken care of.

Precautionary approach, what does it mean it talks about that where there are credible threats or serious kind of, impacts can happen if you utilize certain environmental resources. So, to avoid that, we must understand the scientific region and the scientific manner of maintaining or managing these resources. So, we must also look at that how we can prevent any kind of environment degradation to a impending threat, like climate change is one impending threat. It can cause certain impact which could be unseen, unknown, but precautionary approach comes into picture to avoid any kind of irreversible damage to this kind of unseen phenomena.

Economic efficiency, all of us we know that at the end of a day, everything boils down to economy. Now, economic efficiency this principle, it requires that the services of environmental resources to be given economic value and this kind of value, it needs to be counted equally with the economic values of other goods and services, like a forest resources a timber or clean water or a good soil or a good medicinal plant; these are the gift from nature.

These are natural resources, but we must attach certain value that is what this economic efficiency principle is talking about. Some kind of economic value, and this value should be countable, and should be at, in the same line for other goods and services that we actually buy or we pay for, because that is the way it will help us to understand that what are the actually value is attached to a particular environment resource natural resources.

And then only we can understand that if we lose that particular resource, how much actually economic loss that can happen to the country or to the region, and if we understand that figure, then certainly there will be enormous amount of sincerity out of sheer fear or concern of losing that much of economic wealth.

So, in a sense, we should not consider the natural resources as a free gift and continue using as much as we want. If a value is attached to that particular resource, then certainly the management of that particular resource also will be much better.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:40)

**Principles of NEP**

**6. Entities with "Incomparable" Values**  
A conventional economic cost-benefit analysis could not be applied in these entities as their importance are beyond monetary calculation. They would have priority in allocation of societal resources for their conservation without consideration of direct or immediate economic benefit.

**7. Equity:**  
The cardinal principle of equity or justice requires that human beings cannot be treated differently based on irrelevant differences between them. All shall be treated equally in terms of benefits and implications.

**8. Legal Liability:**  
Civil liability for environmental damage would deter environmentally harmful actions, and compensate the victims of environmental damage. It follows the "polluter pays" approach. It can be fault based liability or strict liability.

**9. Public Trust Doctrine:**  
The State is not an absolute owner, but a trustee of all natural resources, and facilitates public use and enjoyment, provides protection to the legitimate interest of a large number of people, or for matters of strategic national interest.

17

Now, entities with incomparable values, this is another important principle of NEP. A conventional economic cost benefit analysis could not be applied in such entities, because

these entities these natural resources, importance of value in our life or in the life of mankind are beyond any monetary calculation. So, we should have priority in allocation of societal resources for their conservation without consideration of direct or immediate economic benefit.

Equity, we have discussed a lot about this NEP also based on equity principle. The cardinal principle of equity or justice requires that human beings cannot be treated differently based on a relevant difference between them; all shall be treated equal in terms of benefits and implication.

The issue of equity is also important when it comes to access that particular resources by someone legal liability, for environmental damage would deter the environmentally harmful action. People will think twice if there is a legal liability attached with any environmental resource and it is mismanagement, compensate compensation of you know for the victims of environmental damage also comes under legal liability.

So, any organization, any company industry start a project and then after few months suppose is damages some natural resources, soil water biodiversity, they have to compensate that those people who are surviving in that particular area on the basis of these resources. So, it follows polluter pays approach. So, it can be based fault based liability or strict liability as well; means, if you damage a particular resource, resource base, you have to pay for that.

Now, next comes public trust doctrine, the state is not absolute owners; means a state means a country or any region; in our case in India we can say that a district or a state or the entire central government cannot be the absolute owner but a trustee of all natural resources and they should facilitate public use and enjoyment and provides also protection to the legitimate interest of a large number of people for that matters also for strategic national interest. So, you can utilize for a national interest, a particular resource or you can utilize a natural resource when it comes to the benefit of a large number of people.

So, if you see that, in a sense, it says that a resource is not something that is untouchable, it can be utilized with proper justification, proper, a volume of users, benefit of a larger community and finally, the country.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:07)

## Principles of NEP

### 10. Decentralization:

It involves ceding or transfer of power from a Central authority to State and Local authorities, in order to give them jurisdiction because environmental issues are best tackled at the spatial level where they are prominent. The local authorities can address the issues better.

### 11. Integration:

It refers to the inclusion of environmental considerations in sectoral policymaking, the integration of the social and natural sciences in environment related policy research, and the strengthening of relevant linkages among various govt. agencies charged with the implementation of environmental policies.

### 12. Environmental standard settings:

It must reflect the economic and social development situation in which they apply. Standards adopted must be problem specific and society specific to avoid unjust social and economic costs.

### 13. Preventive action:

It is preferable to prevent environmental damages from occurring in the first place, rather than attempting to restore the degraded ones.

Prevention → Cure

### 14. Environmental Offsetting:

There is a general obligation to protect the biodiversity as they are often not considered significant from an economical point of view rather than raw materials.

18

So, next, principle of NEP; decentralization; it involves the transfer of power from central authority to state local authorities in order to give them jurisdiction, because environmental issues are based you know handle at the spatial level, where they are prominent. Suppose in a district, there is an issue, and then the district collector district commissioner is the best person to handle that. So, the local authority can actually address this issue better than the regional or the national level authority.

Integration means that the inclusion of environmental consideration inclusions. This word is important of environmental consideration in sectoral policymaking in sectoral policymaking. This also talks about the integration of social and natural sciences is in environmental related policy research and the strengthening of relevant linkages among various government agencies, which are responsible for implementing the environmental policies in our country.

Next, environmental standard settings very, very important aspect. Now, this must reflect the economic and the Social Development situation in which they apply standards which are adopted must be problem specific, society specific to avoid unjust social or economic costs. Very important that in order to avoid unjust social and economic cost, we must keep this in mind all the time.

Preventive action, very, very important, does not cost much but it is preferable to prevent environmental damages from occurring in the first place, rather than attempting to restore once it degrades the system. So, prevention is better than cure.

Now, next, environmental offsetting. There is a general obligations under NEP to protect the biodiversity as they are often not considered significant from a specially economic point of



view, other than, looking them as, some raw materials. But we understand if the biodiversity is affected or lost almost everything, whichever is present in the ecosystem will irreversibly be affected. Because in the ecosystem, it is completely linked with each other. It is not that a particular plant species if you are just, removed from the ecosystem and, sell it in the market and earn a lot of money for one time.

But after that what because that particular plant, maybe host for many other, microorganisms, many other important valuable organisms and those organisms probably are also creating some beneficial activities in the soil and the plant. So, these inter relationships gets affected when a particular resource is totally removed from our ecosystem. So, environment offsetting is also important principle under NEP.