UNIT 12 CASE STUDIES AND ALTERNATIVES

Structure

12.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have discussed the role of people's initiatives in protecting the environment in the context of globalisation. In the present unit we present case studies and alternatives in dealing with these issues. As you have learnt, globalisation has many dimensions. This unit deals with some of those dimensions and their implications for the environment. Globalisation is not new but it is in the news today, perhaps, because the pace of globalisation has accelerated in the past century, and even more so, in the last decade.

The end of the Cold War has made dialogue possible among nations and regions of the world that formerly viewed each other as enemies. They are now working together as nations to promote free trade, to punish genocide, and to protect the environment. This unit deals with the most important relationship between globalisation and the environment and also attempts to give some background of the different experiences and implications of globalisation with reference to environment.

Not everyone views globalisation positively. Whenever the promoters of globalisation and partners of global trade organise their meetings to take important decisions on global trade policy formulation, millions of people gather to register protest and oppose the process outright. The latest example is the Cancun WTO ministerial level conference that ultimately ended up without taking any decision on very important issues related to global trade. Sometimes these protests turn violent and lead to self-immolations and police firings.

You may like to know: Why does this happen? What is so scary about globalisation? Why does it elicit this kind of protest? The Cold War has ended. Democracy has prevailed. Free market economics is widely accepted. Should this new global situation not be supportive of globalisation? Is not globalisation and an ever-closer world what we all want? These are the issues taken up in this unit.

We need not consider globalisation as good or bad. Instead, we can consider globalisation as a process that will continue, and is in many ways inevitable. At the same time, one should strive to understand it, consider its implications and lend one's might in countering its negative effects both on sustainable development and environment. This is the idea we would like to leave with you to reflect and act upon as we come to the end of the course.

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the environmental implications of globalisation;
- detail the experiences of various developing countries under neo-liberal and global economic policies;
- explain environmental implications of globalisation in the South Asian countries; and
- discuss alternatives of the present form of globalisation.

12.2 IMPLICATIONS OF GLOBALISATION

What is globalisation in all its manifestations, and what does it mean for governance, freedom, legitimacy, and accountability? What does globalisation mean for the very planet we live on? Will globalisation help us to protect the environment as some argue? Or is globalisation itself a threat to the environment?

Now let us see the other set of issues related to globalisation and environment. It is important to realise that the environment has the power to affect globalisation as well. Environmental degradation can have powerful regional and global impacts.

Our economic activities – activities that may be enhanced with globalisation – are causing considerable environmental damage, some of which are irreparable. Our burning of fossil fuels at ever-greater rates is contributing to global climate change. We do not even know what the full consequences of climate change may be, but we know that they may be severe. Sea levels could rise. Extreme weather conditions could become more common. Weather patterns could shift. Some species could perish. The economic disruption that could ensue from such large scale environmental degradation is enormous.

Other examples include rapid destruction of the world's tropical rainforests, the over-fishing of the oceans, the rapidly diminishing sources of fresh water – while perhaps not happening as fast as predicted by the likes of Paul Ehrlich and other environmental critics of industrialization – are nevertheless occurring.

Does this generation have the right to leave future generations, a planet scarred by our rapacious greed? Do we have the right to condemn the inhabitants of some parts of the globe to yet greater environmental stresses than they already face because of our desire to live more comfortable lives – lives that are based on the consumption of innumerable commodities?

If we do not begin to pay more attention to how economic activities, life styles, and population growth affect the environment we will most certainly see more environmental migrants in the future. There are already an estimated 20 million stateless people. These numbers will certainly grow. There are an estimated 100 million migrants within China alone – people moving from the rural areas to the cities in search of jobs during the period when agricultural work are low. This too places great strains on the urban environment.

Environmental degradation can result in large-scale desertification, bss of agricultural land, or loss of livelihoods (e.g., with the loss of fishing industry). This can have major implications for global corporations, insurance companies, and aid agencies. It can cause great despair at the individual level too.

Environmental degradation can be linked to the spread of disease. Disease has killed more people in the world than has war. The great plagues – like the Black Death – wiped out one in four people. The flu killed more people during World War-I than did bullets and bombs. There is a growing concern that diseases that are now under control could come back again. Malaria is one such disease.

Environmental destruction can place greater additional burdens on the international aid system and on insurance companies as more communities are damaged or destroyed by severe weather conditions – hurricanes, floods, drought, or soaring temperatures.

Environmental degradation can negate the benefits of economic growth. China, for example, is recognising that pollution control is not just a luxury for the rich. Pollution is causing China great economic loss in terms of damaged agricultural products, loss of worker time, and the health costs associated with pollution.

Environmental degradation can exacerbate existing ethnic tensions and even result in civil wars. In the period since the end of the Korean War – there have been many disputes among Russia, Japan, the two Koreas, and China. Many of these disputes revolve around fishing rights. There have been a surprisingly high number of deaths associated with these disputes as fishermen and coast guards shoot at boats believed to be trespassing into their territorial waters.

Globalisation damaging Environment: The Gulf Co-operation Council based environmental experts have warned that globalisation is irreparably damaging the environment, threatening the future survival of the mankind. "While the industrial revolution has caused an imbalance in the environment, today's economic globalisation is taking this imbalance so far that it today poses a grave threat to man's very existence on this planet," said Dr Omar Abdulaziz, head of Research and Studies at the Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA).

Dr Badruddin Abdul Rahim, an economic expert at Oman's Ministry of Finance: "The present generations should desist from investing in some projects and industrial areas and leave it to future generations, who will be better placed to understand environmental requirements from a more holistic – and economic – perspective, as suggested by other respected economists". Presenting a stark scenario, he has warned that the future might prove even bleak since man continues to ignore the numerous signals being put out by a delicate eco-system in imbalance.

A fine balance between economic development and environmental requirements makes for a self-sustaining model that survives into the future. Suggestions include creating increased public consciousness about the issue; explaining the concept of environmental conservation; highlighting the dangers of environmental devastation, particularly from the historical perspective; and actively exploring the possibility of incorporating self-sustaining eco-systems within our daily work cycles.

Source: http://*www.gulf-news.com/Articles/news.asp?ArticleID=80677*

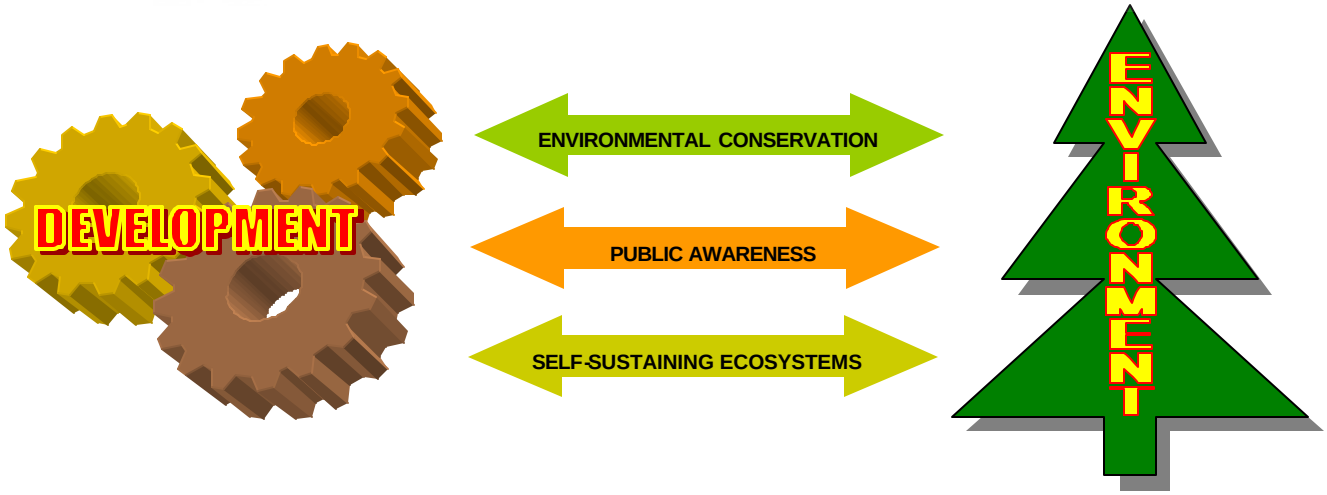

Fig.12.1: A fine balance is needed between economic development and environmental conservation

12.3 DEBATES ON GLOBALISATION

Many see globalisation, the spread of a global culture, the strengthening of financial and economic interdependence and the diffusion of knowledge, technology, and norms as positive for the society and the environment. According to this logic, globalisation brings people and cultures closer together. We can now easily travel long distances in a short span of time and be in different cultures. As the world becomes smaller, we can work together, learn from each other, and teach each other.

Globalisation makes far away places seem less strange, less exotic. It gives us common points of reference. It reduces inefficiencies. It promotes interdependence. It is a positive development that we should encourage. It will remove the artificial boundaries established by the nation state and allow local cultures to flourish. It will tie societies together, thus reducing the potential for conflict among peoples.

World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalisation released its Report, *A Fair Globalisation: Creating Opportunities for All,* in February 2004. It is the first attempt at structured dialogue among representatives of constituencies with different interests and opinions on globalisation. The Commission examined the process of globalisation through the eyes of ordinary people, drawing on extensive consultations with various sections in different parts of the world. Some of the important findings of the Report are as follows:

(1) There is a widespread sense of instability and insecurity due to unstable global financial systems. Stronger systems of social protection and income security are being preferred by all.

(2) There is a great concern about employment and livelihoods. Though people largely favour more openness and interconnectedness, they are much less positive regarding its impact on their jobs and income.

(3) The rural economies remain on the margins resulting in persistent poverty. There is a downward pressure due to stress on workers and their rights.

(4) There are numerous debates are on the role of markets and how the progress is impeded by unfair global rules that favour the powerful and neglect social impacts.

(5) Trade and investment are favoured over the human rights and environment, leading to the democratic deficit internationally.

(6)There is a widespread western impact which is encouraging consumerism in the midst of extreme poverty.

(7) Emphasis should be on the issues of mitigating hunger, promoting universal education to counterbalance trade, finance and technology.

(8) There is a failure on the part of MNCs to respect the law and labour standards of the host country.

(9) Developing countries should have a much bigger say in the rules of globalisation and the poorest countries should have more development assistance.

Source: *http://www.ilo.org/public/english/fairglobalisation/*

Some people strongly advocate the technological dimensions of globalisation. They argue that the spread of modern technology, science, regulations, and the like are helping to raise living standards, and over the time, this is improving health care and sanitation. Through developments in medicine, we have wiped out some deadly diseases – like polio and have controlled others; fewer women are dying in childbirth, fewer infants are dying in infancy. Air pollution control technology has disseminated and thus, the air is far more breathable in many of the world's major cities than it was a few years ago. Life expectancy is growing in most parts of the world. There is an assumption that economic development, which can be enhanced by globalisation, will improve economic conditions and that this will reduce human suffering, pollution, and environmental degradation has gained ground.

Yet, not everyone agrees with this logic. Critics of this view the globalisation of finance and trade as a factor in the growing differential in wealth between the North and the South. Globalisation is not benefiting all groups equally. Rather, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. When two billion people live in abject

Fig.12.2: Globalisation is turning out to be the feast for a few at the cost of most

poverty in the world, it is argued that, it is hard to talk of the benefits of globalisation. It is a fallacy to talk about the improving quality of life.

On the other hand some see that there are certain problems associated with globalisation. The spread of AIDS is a problem that we have failed to overcome. The growth in wealth and consumption – which has led to growing dependence on the automobile, use of air travel, and appliances requiring energy – is contributing to the global climate change. With globalisation of consumer lifestyles, consumption levels are increasing both in the rich countries and states in transition. This adds yet more pressures to the global environment, as more people are able to heat their homes, enjoy refrigerators, or ride scooters or cars. The globalisation of consumer cultures may improve the quality of life, but at what expense is this to the global environment?

Globalisation has raised many fears – some of them valid. There are those who think that globalisation is little more than a new form of imperialism – a process that is manipulated by a few wealthy countries at the expense of developing countries. They raise serious concerns about the lack of democratic accountability in many international institutions. There are many valid concerns that can be raised about globalisation and what it means for labour, health, and the environment.

12.4 LESSONS FROM THE PAST

For South Asia, there are lessons to be learnt from recent developments in Africa and Latin America, where the consequences of the surrender of essential services to corporate interests have been drastic. Water has been one of the main targets of corporate attention and Africa has been at the receiving end of some cut throat multi-lateral intervention. Both Mozambique and Tanzania have privatised water supply under threat from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In 1999 Mozambique had to sell off 70 percent of its water services to European multinationals as a precondition for debt relief.

Water utilities across Africa have been brought under the "full cost recovery" model, under which those who cannot pay their water bills are left out of the supply loop, besides also being evicted from their homes. Since 1994, in South Africa alone, over 10 million people have been denied water services and some 2 million have been ousted from their homes for non-payment of water dues. This failure to pay is not unusual since tariffs have increased dramatically ever since the water service was privatised. For instance, between 1994 and 1996, in the black townships of Fort Beaufort, service charges have increased by 600 percent. As a result of such extortionist rates, the consumption of drinking water from unsafe sources has increased.

Fig.12.3: The tyranny of privatisation of water will affect the poorest the most
(**Source of the cartoon**: www.thehindubusinessline.com/)

In Ghana, the World Bank conditionality for assistance required the sale of water services. Five multinationals, among them Vi-vendi and Bi-water, whose annual turnovers exceed the GDP of Ghana, sent their bid for providing water services. Interestingly, the proposed Private Sector Participation gives the corporate participants the responsibility to operate and manage the water systems without requiring them to extend services, a task that has been left to the public sector. Latin America too has seen its share of water profiteering. In 1999, Bolivia privatised water supply and the resulting 200 percent hike in tariffs led to an eight-month long agitation in Cocha-bamba, the country's third largest city that eventually forced the cancellation of the private contracts.

Fig.12.4: Privatisation of water in Ghana was opposed vehemently

These are the compelling realities of the liberalisation of services in many Third World countries over the last few years to which South Asia needs to pay close attention. Since one of the major issues on the anvil at Cancun is the further liberalisation of trade in services, midwives, nurses, municipal refuse workers, tourist guides, teachers and other such service providers who normally play a negligible role in global commerce are likely to figure prominently on the agenda for negotiations.

Under GATS, trade in services is divided into four modes or categories. The first of these is "cross-border trade in services", which covers the flow of services from the territory of one member-country into the territory of another member-country. These include subjects like banking or architectural services performed via telecommunication or mail channels. The rubric "consumption of services abroad" is the second category and covers those situations where a service consumer, for example a tourist or a medical patient goes to another member-country's territory to obtain a service.

The third category of trade services is "commercial presence". This concerns those situations where a service supplier of one member-state establishes a territorial presence, including the ownership or lease of premises, in another member-state's territory to provide a service. The last and perhaps most contentious category is "movement of people" and deal with persons of one member-country entering the territory of another to supply services.

As the pre-GATS experience of Africa and Latin America suggest, the liberalisation of essential services under WTO mandate is a sensitive matter for developing countries. The critics fear that the GATS will allow global service delivery corporations to engage smash and grab operations in the arena of public services once the push for privatisation gains momentum.

The ramifications of this are grave especially for South Asia whose large populations are always on the lookout, for an easy commission making it a soft target for global conglomerates. These are countries with a third and a half of the population living below the poverty line and therefore will not to able to afford privatised services. It is imperative, therefore, to debate the issue as South Asian economies take a decisive step towards finalising the opening up of different service sectors for negotiations.

SAQ 1

a) Outline the salient points in the debates on globalisation. Evaluate these arguments in your own specific context.

b) Discuss the implications of globalisation for developing economies of South Asia.

So far, you have been acquainted with various arguments in favour of and against globalisation. We have also presented certain experiences of countries that have faced the worst effects of privatisation that has become a defining characteristic of globalisation. We now present some case studies drawn from South Asian countries that show people's perceptions of globalisation and their response to its aftermath.

12.5 SOUTH ASIAN SCENARIO

We begin with the Indian experience in the worst-case scenario.

12.5.1 Seed Suicides (India)

The Indian agricultural sector is facing a crisis called seed suicides. For more than a decade, the farm community has been fighting against multinational seed companies which forced poor farmers to invest huge amounts on agriculture. Hundreds of farmers are committing suicides every year. In Andhra Pradesh, a South Indian state, where globalisation is in full swing and multinational companies are having free field, more than thousand farmers committed suicide within a period of three years. Across the country farmers are taking the desperate steps of ending their lives because of the new pressures building upon them as a result of globalisation and the spread of capital-intensive agriculture.

The promise of huge profits linked with clever strategies evolved by the seeds and chemical industries include the lure of easy credit for purchase of costly inputs. However, the reality of globalisation is different from the corporate propaganda and from the promises of trade liberalisation and agriculture inputs offered by the World Bank, the WTO experts and economists in various ministries.

Noted Indian environmentalist Vandana Shiva observes that "the epidemic of farmer suicide is the real barometer of the stress under which Indian Agriculture and Indian farmers have been put by globalisation of Agriculture. Indebtedness and crop failure are the main reasons that the farmers are committing suicide along the length and breadth of rural India. Indebtedness and crop failure are also inevitable outcomes of the corporate model of industrial agriculture being introduced in India through globalisation. Agriculture driven by MNCs is capital intensive and creates heavy debt for purchase of costly internal inputs such as seeds and agri-chemicals. It is also ecologically vulnerable since it is based on monoculture of introduced varieties and on non-sustainable practices of intensive farming".

In her study "Seeds of Suicide" she has analysed the impact of trade liberalisation on Indian agriculture and Indian farmers; the study is a detailed account of the social and ecological costs of globalisation. The study of the Andhra Pradesh tragedy highlights these high social and ecological costs of globalisation of non-sustainable agriculture; these are not restricted to the cotton growing areas of this state but have been experienced in a commercially grown and chemically farmed crops of all regions. **While the benefits of globalisation go to the seeds and chemical corporations through expanding markets, the costs and risks are exclusively borne by the small farmers and landless peasants.** This is in contrast to the developed countries where farmers enjoy state subsidies, economic protectionism and benefits like easily available crop insurance leaving them much less vulnerable to such risks.

The two most significant ways through which the risks of crop failures in developing countries have been increased by globalisation are the rampant promotion of ecologically vulnerable hybrid seeds with no access to alternatives and the resulting increased dependence on agri-chemical inputs such as pesticides, which are associated with the use of hybrids.

In many parts of the country, farmers are left with no alternative but to buy such hybrid seeds from MNCs like Monsanto, thanks to their aggressive marketing that sees to it that no other seeds are available in the market through various means.

The privatisation of the seed sector under trade liberalisation has led to a shift in the cropping patterns from polyculture to monoculture and a shift from open pollinated varieties to hybrids. In the district of Warangal in Andhra Pradesh, this shift has been very rapid, converting Warangal from a mixed farming system based on millets, pulses and oilseeds to a monoculture of hybrid cotton. The focus of the cotton failure

has been on the excessive use of pesticides or of spurious pesticides. However, pesticide use is intimately linked to hybrid seeds. Pesticides become necessary when crop varieties and cropping patterns are vulnerable to pest attack. Hybrid seeds offer a promise of higher yields, but they also have higher risks of crop failure since they are more prone to pest and disease attack as shown by the Andhra Pradesh experience. Monocultures further increase the vulnerability to pest attacks since the same crop of the same variety planted over large areas year after year encourages pest build up.

The problem of pests is therefore a problem created by the erosion of diversity in crops and cropping patterns. The most sustainable solution for pest control is rejuvenating biodiversity in agriculture. Non-sustainable pest control strategies offer chemical or genetic fixes while reducing diversity, which is the biggest insurance against pest damage.

As the cotton disaster shows, the globalisation of agriculture is threatening both the environment and the survival of farmers. Biodiversity is being destroyed, the use of agri-chemicals is increasing, ecological vulnerability is increasing and farmer debts are skyrocketing leading to suicides in extreme cases. The social scientists have undertaken this study both to take stock of the impact of the seven years of trade liberalisation and to create help policies for a more sustainable future.

Not only agriculture but also water, minerals and other natural resources are becoming targets of the Multi National Companies. Enron's episode in Nepal and Mining operations attempt of Sri Lanka shows how the people are refusing to become a part of the process of globalisation due to its exploitative nature.

12.5.2 Enron Power Project (Nepal)

Enron's withdrawal from the Karnali-Chisapani hydroelectric project in Nepal is a classic example of the social resistance for a wrong policy decision. After nearly two years of doggedly pursuing, the US gas and energy giant Enron Corp pulled out of the Karnali-Chisapani hydroelectric project in 1998, citing the "changing trends in the international financial and power markets." Enron's bombshell decision came within 4 months after the company submitted a request for a license to survey the 10,800-megawatt Karnali project. Back in September 1996, Enron had proposed investing US 6-9 billion dollars to develop the project with the intention of exporting power to India and China.

Enron's saga has several lessons relevant for the Glocal (local and global). At the local level, the company's first stint in Nepal was damaging. The company's proposal should have surprised all: How would a project of such magnitude be built in a country with a weak economic base, institutional capacity and deteriorating political context? Also the company did not have a track record of building hydropower plants. Perhaps smart executives wanted to project a facade of work ethos and professionalism as the cornerstones of their corporate existence. So it seemed, until the later months of 2001. The company's appearance was totally deceptive.

At its core, Enron was a corporate mirage created to fool the public while its unscrupulous leaders enriched themselves even while the company came crashing down. The company's answer to every problem was to bulldoze its way through using financial and political clout. Its managers were told to "go out there and secure". They did that by flouting all the rules of the game. Questions were swept under the carpet. And the political establishments of both India and Nepal bent over backwards to accommodate its illegitimate demands. The company just could not have continued. Enron imploded like a house of cards under the weight of its own hubris.

The project has long been controversial, with both the Asian and Western environmentalists and conservation organisations presenting powerful arguments against the construction of such massive dams. They opposed high dam and barrage projects, since their construction greatly threatens an already endangered river population.

Fig. 12.5: Enron turned out to be one of the biggest corporate rip-offs in history. You may like to go back to the literature on the Enron Dabhol power project in India to understand the role of the political establishment in promoting globalisation (Source of the cartoon: zena.secureforum.com)

Whilst controlling the natural flow of a river arguably has economic and political advantages, including generating hydro electricity which is clean, relatively cheap and reliable, and providing fresh water for crop irrigation and industry throughout the year, these 'advantages' must be weighed against the considerable environmental price which must inevitably be paid in return.

A severely modified river environment means a huge loss of bio-diversity, threatening the entire river ecosystems, of which the fish varieties form an integral part. Dams not only alter the flow of water and sediment, changing the entire makeup of rivers, but also create artificial 'barriers' which subdivide and isolate the already vulnerable river fish populations, as well as other riverine species. The natural migration patterns of fish and their prey are irreversibly altered, with potentially devastating results. The Karnali River contains the last remaining population of susus that might contain enough individuals to be genetically viable. Should the Chisapani project go ahead (still a possibility) although so far, no other major backer has shown an interest, this would surely seal the fate of this beleaguered river fish population.

Considering the unanimity of opinion on the merits of the project among a wide and influential cross section of the Nepali decision-and-opinion-making classes, it was left to the dissenting civil society groups in the country to raise questions and concerns. These concerns were not purely local. Questions of a similar nature were being posed in the international quarters as well.

From the panchayat era which ended in 1990, Nepal's development was equated with export-driven power projects. In the time of democracy, the definition of development remained unchanged. Politics had eroded itself in the pursuit of one policy to the exclusion of all other considerations. Nobody in power paused to reflect on why and how a private company with a track record of raking unjustified profit, would help lift the country's economy. Enron just happened to collapse in time.

12.5.3 Mining Project (Sri Lanka)

The scientists, trade unionists and priests joined farmers from the northeast region of Sri Lanka against government plans to hand over phosphate mines to a US-based trans-national company (TNC). This is another example of people's collective action against global economic forces, which create environmental hazards. The protest was

spearheaded by the Committee for the Protection of the Eppawela Phosphate mines and was joined by Colombo-based trade unions, scientists and clergy from Sri Lanka's main religious groups. The issue was debated in the context of the government's attempt to sell the immense rock phosphate deposits at Eppawela to a consortium of foreign mining companies led by IMC Agrico, a US-based group, for the manufacture of phosphate fertiliser for export.

IMC Agrico is a merger of IMC Global Inc and Freeport McMoran Resources Partners, which was the company involved in the project initially. The project covers an area of 56 sq km and would result in the relocation of some 12,000 people from 26 villages. Buddhist temples, schools and a large number of government buildings also face destruction. Earlier the government decided to go ahead with the project, because of the enormous financial worth of the phosphate deposits that have not been properly utilised since its discovery 25 years ago. Later it was decided that the project has to go to a foreign firm as Sri Lanka lacked the knowhow, capital and machinery to tap this huge phosphate resource base. The annual phosphate output would be around 1.2 million tonnes compared to 40,000 tonnes at present. Local scientists considered it safe to extract up to 350,000 tons per year without disturbing the ecology and future use.

Eppawala is located near Kekirawa, some 50 kilometres from Anuradhapura of Sri Lanka's North Central Province. In the entire region smaller canals feed the Kalawewa water to smaller tanks, all carefully calibrated to the natural watersheds in this region full of rock outcroppings like the Eppawala Phosphate Deposit. It has been speculated that phosphate leaches into the Jayaganga as the water clears. Eppawala has contributed to the spectacular fertility of this region, which has been one of Sri Lanka's major "paddy baskets" since ages. The region is known for its landscapes, natural watersheds and self-sustaining conservation ecosystem. The region protects endangered wildlife by utilising every drop of rain water and irrigation water, and every inch of good soil, to support not only agriculture but also irreplaceable stretches of old growth jungle filled with rare medicinal herbs, and useful wild fruits.

The careful calibration of natural watersheds is part of an intricate man-made mechanism. Villagers in the region, who spend a lot of time in these jungles, attest that they are literally the gardeners of former times; not a single plant is useless, and the jungles are punctuated with known as well as unknown archaeological sites. This planned ecosystem, which was naturalised many centuries ago, has produced agricultural surplus for more than two millennia.

The Government has demarcated 56 square kilometres of land for the initial exploitation of the phosphate where about 87 villages are located. The residents of the ancient villages in the affected region are the descendants of the same people who have enjoyed the bounty of this incredible feat of human ingenuity since centuries. Their temples are the same temples, which their ancestors built; they worship the same *stupas*, which were constructed when their village tanks were first excavated two thousand years ago. The acres-large stretches of jungle designated for burials and cremations (sohon pitiya) in each village are literally filled with the bones of those same ancestors.

Numerous Sri Lankan and international scientists, scholars, environmentalists and journalists who have examined the Eppawala scheme have warned of the severe consequences it will entail for the region, if the project is taken up.

These negative consequences are juxtaposed with the existing labour-intensive slow-extraction project at Eppawala – which will not deplete even "Phosphate Mountain" for centuries, all the time providing for the Sri Lankan export crop fertilizer needs. The alternate plan for faster depletion suggested by a New Zealand study group, found that the Sri Lanka Government itself could produce export fertilizer locally, for a manageable initial investment. Instead of looking at the alternative proposals for exploitation of the Eppawala Phosphate Deposit which entails the degree of Eppawala

and maximum local benefit, the Government's willingness to proceed with the more harmful and less beneficial proposal is lacked by any logic.

In fact there is no unimportant space within the 56-square-kilometre exploration area, because every inch which is not someone's home or livelihood is one of those stretches of pristine Dry Zone jungle. Particularly in the last two hundred years Eppawala has been known in the region as a major centre for traditional (Ayurvedic) medicine, and as mentioned, these jungles were actually planted as medicinal gardens countless centuries ago. The bounty they provide makes possible the comfortable lives of the surrounding villagers, supplying in addition to medicine all sorts of culinary needs, fuel, cash "crops" such as curry leaves and rare mushroom, tank fish, and building materials. These "undeveloped lands" are moreover self-sustaining home to the wildlife of all varieties, and they are filled with important history and relics as Kyoto.

The project involved a huge displacement of people: the primary estimation says about 40,000 people in 12,000 families residing in the initial exploration zone, and some 500,000 residing in the "buffer zone" will be affected by this project.

Further, it was going to create dangerous by-products: carcinogenic dusts and waste rock, noise, toxic run-off, and pollution of ground water; even those who do not get displaced will suffer the ill effects of the project, as phosphate mining is one of the dirtiest and most environmentally invasive of all such activities.

In addition, six miles of "the Giant's Canal" would be compromised by this project, while the proximity of mining operations to the canal would pollute the entire water works of the region; the intricate social, natural and technological networks, which sustain the entire Kalawewa-Jayaganga Water and Soil Conservation Ecosystem, would be disrupted.

The grassroots Committee to Protect Eppawala Phosphate, headed by a Buddhist monk, has been working against this scheme since the news of the secret negotiations was first leaked during the early 1990s. The Committee became especially active beginning in 1996 when the government, which had won the support of this region in 1994 with an explicit promise by the President of Sri Lanka that the Eppawala Phosphate Deposit would not be given to foreign companies, inexplicably initiated its own secret negotiations to turn Eppawala over to the Freeport-McMoRan conglomerate of "Jim Bob" Moffet. The first mass protest rally was held in Anuradhapura to correspond to Sri Lanka's 50th Independence Day Celebration. In February, 1998; an estimated 20,000 participants fasted at the Sacred Bodhi Tree to protest this neo-colonial desecration of the very heartland of Sri Lanka's ancient civilisation. Subsequent rallies were held at Colombo (February 1998) and in Eppawala (June 1998, December 1998, March 1999, August 1999, October 1999) and involved thousands of participants.

Fig.12.6: The Eppawala protest

While the express philosophy of the Committee is non-violent protest based on the studies of Gandhian social action, these rallies have included much symbolic violence including the burning of an effigy of "the company" (labelled "McMoRan") and of the President of Sri Lanka, and angry chanting, gestures and promises to fight even unto the death. Indeed, Rev. M. Piyarathana, leader of the local protest movement, has vowed just this if his pleas are unheard. After several meetings with the President of Sri Lanka and the U.S. Ambassador, and with petitions signed by hundreds of revered Buddhist monks and publishing of poignant articles in the Sinhala press, the government has finally withdrawn the proposal.

SAQ 2

Proceeding from your answer to SAQ 1, draw the appropriate lessons from the above experiences for orienting the processes of globalisation towards a people-friendly sustainable development paradigm.

People's Resistance

To sum up the argument so far, the anti-globalisation movements have been gearing up in recent years. It was not so long ago that various movements arose in many parts of the world to fight for greater openness of national governments or for equal rights or for greater democracy. It was not so long ago that environmentalists were fighting battles with government and industry for the right to the protection of human health from pollution or for a voice in the economic decision making that could affect the environment. The anti-globalisation protestors focus their attention on some of the same shortcomings that exist at the global level that nation states have been accused of in the past. What does globalisation mean for those whose voice is not easily heard? What does globalisation mean for those who cannot talk – other species or future generations? These protest movements draw international attention on the concerns regarding global institutions as they have risen in the past in relation to national institutions.

The World Social Forum, which took place in Mumbai in 2004, was conceived as a space to analyse and criticise the many paradoxes in this world or, more precisely, those that issue out of a neo-liberal ideology, which underpins the process of economic globalisation. More than 100,000 people attended, 15,000 of these coming from 130 countries, representing NGOs, social movements, leftist political parties, churches, and development agencies. The Forum offered more than 1, 200 of these on topics like organic farming, the occupation of Iraq, HIV/AIDS, gender and trade. The participation of women and youth was strong, compared to previous Forums. Trying to find a common ground on each and every issue was difficult, if not impossible, but it was clear that the Forum's slogan, "another world is possible" captured the hearts, minds and imagination of everyone who took part in it.

The WSF has proved to be a space not only to criticise and denounce but also to allow the emergence of new ideas and forms of struggle, offer solidarity and demonstrate that another world is, indeed, possible. Similarly the protests that witnessed during the WTO Trade Negotiations Rounds serve as glaring examples of People's Resistance to globalisation process.

Source*: http://www.worldywca.org/news_items/*

The anti-globalisation movements have not only been blaming the policy makers, and market promoters but also have been suggesting alternatives for the sustainable future of the world. We now discuss these.

12.6 ALTERNATIVES

The World Social Forum (WSF) has come up with several such alternatives against imperial globalisation and neo-liberal economic policies. The World Social Forum was conceived as an international forum built around the slogan "Another World Is Possible" to contest the formulations offered by neo-liberal economic policies and

capitalist-led globalisation. It seeks to provide a space for discussing alternatives, for exchanging experiences and for strengthening alliances between social movements, unions of working people and NGOs, as well as an opportunity for cross-sectoral dialogue. It says that global institutions like the IMF or the World Bank must be more transparent and citizens groups from the developing world be given more voice in these powerful institutions.

The citizen groups feel that it is not possible to simply promote free trade and assume that this will benefit the environment in the long run. The short term cost to the environment might be too high. If we, the people of South Asia, are to continue on a path of economic and financial globalisation, then it is imperative that we also develop global rules and mechanisms to enforce those rules – that will protect the environment and human health. We would also argue that we must develop systems that will lead to a fairer distribution of wealth in the world.

Fig.12.7: Samir Amin

Well-known intellectuals like Samir Amin and others who are associated with WSF argue that there should be regional cooperation among the Third World Countries. At the global level Asian, African and Latin American countries should come together. It is also necessary that the Asian and South Asian countries join hands to counter the negative impact of global forces. The formation of regional or sub regional cooperative endeavours is indeed imperative when resources are shared by the concerned countries and more so, when opportunities for accumulating common benefits are in place. While we should not ignore the possibilities of benefit from such cooperation, we must also ensure that these endeavours are based on natural concerns and share due advantages for each and every participating country.

For an accelerated economic development, sub-regional efforts should encompass some pragmatic steps. These include the simplification of tariff and taxation, and waiving of non-tariff barriers. To make sub-regional cooperation in the region meaningful, a wide array of current perspectives has to be taken into account. There are good possibilities for developing a workable economic interaction in the region, which can ensure a massive uplift of the socio-economic facade of the teeming millions here. But these possibilities are being overshadowed by huge trade imbalances between the countries in the region.

To boost sub-regional economic cooperation in trade, the first and foremost thrust has to be given to the development of the entire network of infrastructural facilities, which mainly entail transportation, telecommunication and banking. The physical constraints existing in the missing linkages in road and railway network will have to be overcome. The transit facilities have to be drawn and respected in the governance of an individual country's economic sovereignty.

With this brief presentation on alternatives, we end this unit and summarise its contents.

12.7 SUMMARY

- Globalisation has many dimensions. It appears most positive but works very negatively on poor. We have to consider globalisation as a process that will continue, and is in many ways inevitable. At the same time it should not be taken for granted and one should strive to understand it and consider its implications. The IMF, World Bank, WTO and other Multi National Companies are promoting globalisation and these institutions are especially focusing on the Asian countries.
- The implications of globalisation on environment are quite dangerous and hampering the sustainable future of the people. More particularly after liberalisation, governments are encouraging the MNCs and other foreign companies to invest in their respective countries, without considering the

ecological damages and environmental problems. The cases like permitting seed companies in India, inviting foreign firms to construct mega projects like Nepal's Enron and privatising mining in massive scale are the best examples of misusing the resources. The foreign mega companies investing huge money are working only for their profits and using the Asian and other such countries as dumping yards for their wastage.

- But across the globe people are rallying against globalisation and privatisation of public resources and opposing the designs of global market promoters with one voice. Every time the promoters of globalisation and partners of global trade organise their meetings to take important decisions on global trade policy formulation, millions of people are gathering to register their protest and opposing the process.
- People are looking at the regional and sub regional forms to protect not only the economic sovereignty but also environmental sustainability.

12.8 TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Define the concept of globalisation. Discuss its advantages and disadvantages.
2. Examine the experiences of various developing countries under neo-liberal economic reforms.
3. What is the impact of globalisation on the South Asian countries?
4. Explain the people's resistance against globalisation.

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