

# Vidyasagar University

## Ability Enhancement Compulsory Course (AECC – Environmental Studies)

### Environmental Studies

Credits: 4

#### Unit 1: Introduction to environmental studies

- Multidisciplinary nature of environmental studies;
- Scope and importance; Concept of sustainability and sustainable development.

(2 lectures)

#### Unit 2: Ecosystems

- What is an ecosystem? Structure and function of ecosystem; Energy flow in an ecosystem: food chains, food webs and ecological succession. Case studies of the following ecosystems:
  - a) Forest ecosystem
  - b) Grassland ecosystem
  - c) Desert ecosystem
  - d) Aquatic ecosystems (ponds, streams, lakes, rivers, oceans, estuaries)

(6 lectures)

#### Unit 3: Natural Resources: Renewable and Non-renewable Resources

- Land resources and land use change; Land degradation, soil erosion and desertification.
- Deforestation: Causes and impacts due to mining, dam building on environment, forests, biodiversity and tribal populations. Joint forest management.
- Water: Use and over-exploitation of surface and ground water, floods, droughts, conflicts over water (international & inter-state).
- Energy resources: Renewable and non renewable energy sources, use of alternate energy sources, growing energy needs, case studies.

(8 lectures)

#### Unit 4: Biodiversity and Conservation

- Levels of biological diversity : genetic, species and ecosystem diversity; Bio-geographic zones of India; Biodiversity patterns and global biodiversity hot spots
- India as a mega-biodiversity nation; Endangered and endemic species of India
- Threats to biodiversity: Habitat loss, poaching of wildlife, man-wildlife conflicts, biological invasions; Conservation of biodiversity: In-situ and Ex-situ conservation of biodiversity.
- Ecosystem and biodiversity services: Ecological, economic, social, ethical, aesthetic and Informational value.

(8 lectures)

#### Unit 5: Environmental Pollution

- Environmental pollution : types, causes, effects and controls; Air, water, soil and noise pollution
- Nuclear hazards and human health risks
- Solid waste management: Control measures of urban and industrial waste.
- Pollution case studies.
- Noise pollution.

(8 lectures)

### Unit 6: Environmental Policies & Practices

- Climate change, global warming, ozone layer depletion, acid rain and impacts on human communities and agriculture
- Environment Laws: Environment Protection Act; Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act; Water (Prevention and control of Pollution) Act; Wildlife Protection Act; Forest Conservation Act. International agreements: Montreal and Kyoto protocols and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- Nature reserves, tribal populations and rights, and human wildlife conflicts in Indian context.
- Environmental policy and gender issues.

(7 lectures)

### Unit 7: Human Communities and the Environment

- Human population growth: Impacts on environment, human health and welfare.
- Resettlement and rehabilitation of project affected persons; case studies.
- Disaster management: floods, earthquake, cyclones and landslides.
- Environmental movements: Chipko, Silent valley, Bishnois of Rajasthan.
- Environmental ethics: Role of Indian and other religions and cultures in environmental conservation.
- Environmental communication and public awareness, case studies (e.g., CNG vehicles in Delhi).

(6 lectures)

### Unit 8: Field work

- Visit to an area to document environmental assets: river/ forest/ flora/fauna, etc.
- Visit to a local polluted site---Urban/Rural/Industrial/Agricultural.
- Study of common plants, insects, birds and basic principles of identification.
- Study of simple ecosystems---pond, river, Delhi Ridge, etc.
- Disaster management.
- Coastal ecosystem.

(Equal to 5 lectures)

### Suggested Readings:

1. Carson, R. 2002. *Silent Spring*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
2. Gadgil, M., & Guha, R. 1993. *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India*. Univ. of California Press.
3. Gleeson, B. and Low, N. (eds.) 1999. *Global Ethics and Environment*, London, Routledge.
4. Gleick, P. H. 1993. *Water in Crisis*. Pacific Institute for Studies in Dev., Environment & Security. Stockholm Env. Institute, Oxford Univ. Press.
5. Groom, Martha J., Gary K. Meffe, and Carl Ronald Carroll. *Principles of Conservation Biology*. Sunderland: Sinauer Associates, 2006.
6. Grumbine, R. Edward, and Pandit, M.K. 2013. Threats from India's Himalaya dams. *Science*, 339: 36--37.
7. McCully, P. 1996. *Rivers no more: the environmental effects of dams* (pp. 29--64). Zed Books.
8. McNeill, John R. 2000. *Something New Under the Sun: An Environmental History of the Twentieth Century*.
9. Odum, E.P., Odum, H.T. & Andrews, J. 1971. *Fundamentals of Ecology*. Philadelphia: Saunders.
10. Pepper, I.L., Gerba, C.P. & Brusseau, M.L. 2011. *Environmental and Pollution Science*. Academic Press.

11. Rao, M.N. & Datta, A.K. 1987. *Waste Water Treatment*. Oxford and IBH Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd.
12. Raven, P.H., Hassenzahl, D.M. & Berg, L.R. 2012. *Environment*. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. John Wiley & Sons.
13. Rosencranz, A., Divan, S., & Noble, M. L. 2001. *Environmental law and policy in India. Tripathi 1992*.
14. Sengupta, R. 2003. *Ecology and economics: An approach to sustainable development*. OUP.
15. Singh, J.S., Singh, S.P. and Gupta, S.R. 2014. *Ecology, Environmental Science and Conservation*. S. Chand Publishing, New Delhi.
16. Sodhi, N.S., Gibson, L. & Raven, P.H. (eds). 2013. *Conservation Biology: Voices from the Tropics*. John Wiley & Sons.
17. Thapar, V. 1998. *Land of the Tiger: A Natural History of the Indian Subcontinent*.
18. Warren, C. E. 1971. *Biology and Water Pollution Control*. WB Saunders.
19. Wilson, E. O. 2006. *The Creation: An appeal to save life on earth*. New York: Norton.
20. World Commission on Environment and Development. 1987. *Our Common Future*. Oxford University Press.