

**MARUDHAR KESARI JAIN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN,  
VANNIYAMBADI**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

**CLASS : I MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

**SUBJECT CODE :23PSW25**

**SUBJECT NAME : Green Social Work**

**SYLLABUS**

**UNIT – I**

**Basic Concepts:**

- Ecology, Environment, Environmental Justice, Climate change, Global warming, Green Transition, Ozone Depletion, biodiversity, deforestation & desertification – Meaning & Concept.
- Green Social Work - Definition, Importance, Challenges in implementing Green Social Work & GSWN (Green Social Work Network).
- Natural resources - Concept and types. Ecosystem – Concept, Functions & Types.

## **Ecology:**

### **What is a simple definition of ecology?**

Ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms, including humans, and their physical environment; it seeks to understand the vital connections between plants and animals and the world around them.

### **What are the 4 types of ecology?**

The scope of ecology is huge, and it encompasses all organisms living on Earth and their physical and chemical surroundings. For this reason, the field is usually divided into different levels of study including:

- Organism ecology,
- Population ecology,
- Community ecology and
- Ecosystem ecology.

## **Environment:**

What is the definition of an environment?

Environment can be defined as a sum total of all the living and non-living elements and their effects that influence human life. While all living or biotic elements are animals, plants, forests, fisheries, and birds, non-living or abiotic elements include water, land, sunlight, rocks, and air

## **Environmental Justice:**

Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

### **Definition:**

#### **Definition of Environmental Justice**

Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies (US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 1998).

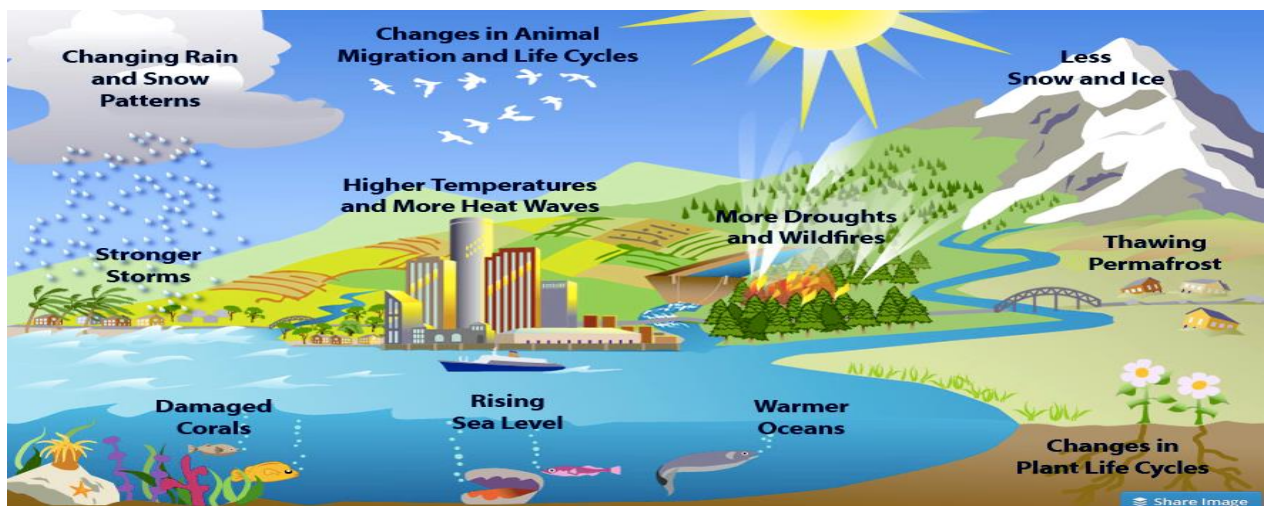
## Climate Change:

### What Is Climate Change?

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures. The main greenhouse gases that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and cutting down forests can also release carbon dioxide. Agriculture, oil and gas operations are major sources of methane emissions. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main sectors causing greenhouse gases.

## Global Warming:

Global warming is a term used for the observed century-scale rise in the average temperature of the Earth's climate system and its related effects. Scientists are more than 95% certain that nearly all of global warming is caused by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and other human-caused emissions. Within the earth's atmosphere, accumulating greenhouse gases like water vapor, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and ozone are the gases within the atmosphere that absorb and emit heat radiation. Increasing or decreasing amounts of greenhouse gases within the atmosphere act to either hold in or release more of the heat from the sun.



Global warming is gauged by the increase in the average global temperature of the Earth. Along with our currently increasing average global temperature, some parts of the Earth may actually get colder while other parts get warmer—hence the idea of average global temperature. Greenhouse gas-caused atmospheric heating and agitation also increase the unpredictability of the weather and climate, and dramatically increase the severity, scale, and frequency of storms, droughts, wildfires, and extreme temperatures. Global warming can reach levels of irreversibility, and increasing levels of global warming can eventually reach an extinction level where humanity and all life on earth will end.

### **Green Transition:**

The green transition means a shift towards economically sustainable growth and an economy that is not based on fossil fuels and overconsumption of natural resources. The green transition is a general concept of moving from a carbon-based economy to a more sustainable economy. Many organizations, countries and businesses are pursuing a green transition in order to align with the global decarbonization goals of 2030 and 2050, but there are also formal policies in place to facilitate a move away from carbon.

The green transition is the **time needed** to implement the changes that will lead societies to achieve a sustainable way of life and so that human activity no longer endangers the planet. The important thing, or at least the most noteworthy, will be to determine precisely what strategies and actions should be conducted during the period considered as the limit in order **not to reach a point of no return**.

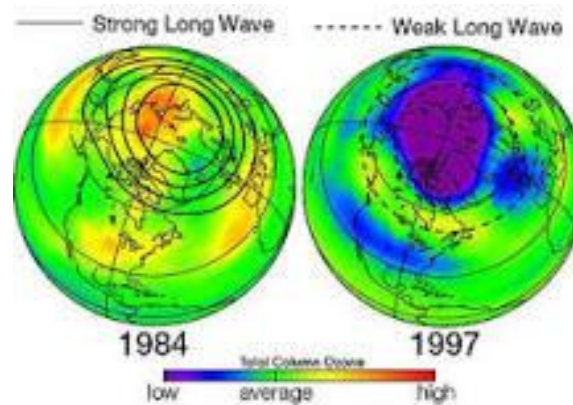
One of the latest reports issued by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) made it clear that life in 2100 will be greatly altered if society does not change its relationship with the environment. Climate change is already a visible reality in many parts of the world. It is resulting in severe weather events and impoverished living conditions for millions of people. Preventing such a situation from escalating and becoming completely irreversible is one of the commitments of today's society. To this end, it is essential to implement plans to limit pollutant emissions and completely change the current way humans relate to the environment.

## Ozone Depletion:

Ozone layer depletion is the **thinning of the ozone layer present in the upper atmosphere**. This happens when the chlorine and bromine atoms in the atmosphere come in contact with ozone and destroy the ozone molecules.

### What are the causes of the ozone depletion?

The main causes of ozone depletion and the ozone hole are **manufactured chemicals, specially manufactured halocarbon refrigerants, solvents, propellants, and foam-blowing agents** (chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), HCFCs, halons), referred to as ozone-depleting substances (ODS)



### Where is ozone depletion?

Depletion of stratospheric ozone occurs **over both hemispheres of the Earth**. However, this phenomenon is more pronounced in the Southern Hemisphere (Antarctica) than in the Northern Hemisphere (Arctic). This is the case because the formation of the ozone hole is directly linked to the stratosphere's temperature.

## Biodiversity:

Biodiversity is **all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area**—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganisms like bacteria that make up our natural world. Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.

Biodiversity — short for biological diversity — is **the variety of all living things and their interactions**. Biodiversity changes over time as extinction occurs and new species evolve. Scientists often speak of three levels of diversity: species, genetic, and ecosystem diversity.



### **What are the 3 types of biodiversity?**

Levels of biodiversity. Biodiversity is usually explored at three levels:

**Genetic diversity,**

**Species diversity and**

**Ecosystem diversity.**

These three levels work together to create the complexity of life on Earth.

### **What is biodiversity and its importance?**

Biodiversity is **the natural world around us, and the variety of all of the different kinds of organisms - the plants, animals, insects and microorganisms that live on our planet.** Every one of these live and work together in ecosystems to maintain and support life on earth, and exist in delicate balance.

### **Deforestation:**

Deforestation refers to **the decrease in forest areas across the world that are lost for other uses such as agricultural croplands, urbanization, or mining activities.** Greatly accelerated by human activities since 1960, deforestation has been negatively affecting natural ecosystems, biodiversity, and the climate. Deforestation can be defined as the large-scale removal of trees from forests (or other lands) for the facilitation of human activities. It is a serious environmental concern since it can result in the loss of biodiversity, damage to natural habitats, disturbances in the water cycle, and soil erosion. Deforestation is also a contributor to climate change and global warming.

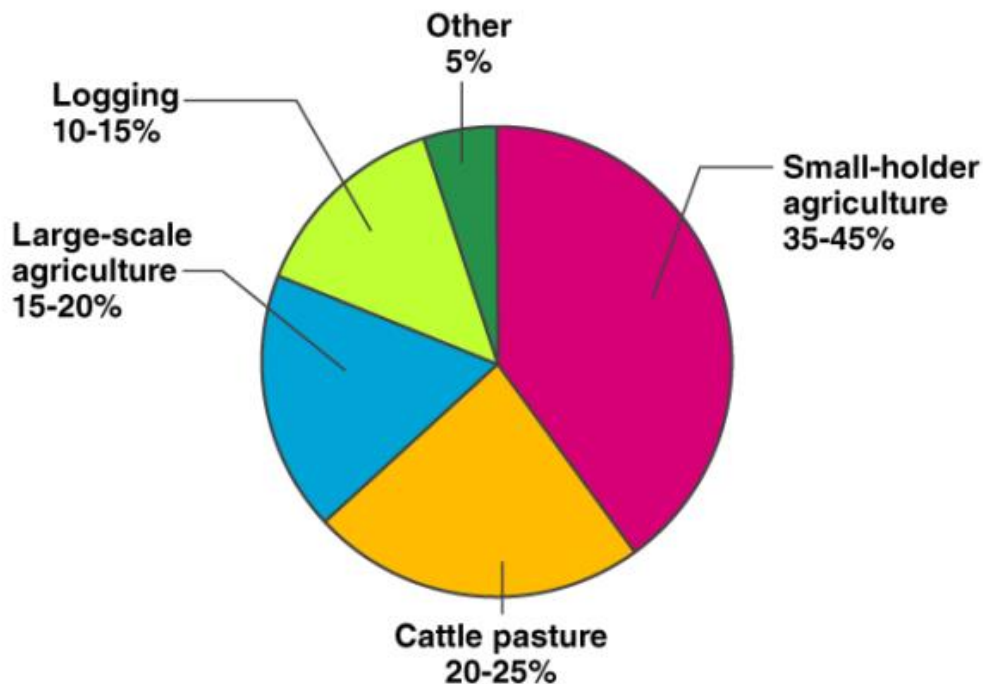
### **Causes of Deforestation**

The primary anthropogenic activities (human activities) that contribute to deforestation include:

- Agriculture – small-scale and large-scale farming
- Logging – cutting of trees for use as raw material
- Mining and urban expansion – clearing of forest area for the construction of infrastructure.

According to the secretariat of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change), agriculture is the root cause of 80% of deforestation. Logging accounts for another 14% and the cutting of trees for use as wood fuel account for 5%. A pie-chart detailing the driving cause of the deforestation of tropical forests between the years 2000 and 2005 is provided below.

### CAUSES OF TROPICAL DEFORESTATION



#### What are the 5 effects of deforestation?

- Major climate change: Increase in temperature and pollution level.
- Desertification and soil erosion.
- Increase in the greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- Decrease in groundwater level.
- Loss of food and habitat of animals which leads to their extinction

## **Desertification:**

Desertification is the process by which vegetation in drylands i.e. arid and semi-arid lands, such as grasslands or shrublands, decreases and eventually disappears.

Desertification is a type of land degradation in drylands in which biological productivity is lost due to natural processes or induced by human activities whereby fertile areas become arid.

## **Types:**

The classification system used in the preparation of continental desertification maps is based on four classes of desertification: **slight, moderate, severe, and very severe.**

**Desertification** is a type of land degradation in drylands in which biological productivity is lost due to natural processes or induced by human activities whereby fertile areas become arid. It is the spread of arid areas caused by a variety of factors, such as overexploitation of soil as a result of human activity and the effects of climate change. Geographic areas most affected include the Sahel region in Africa, the Gobi Desert and Mongolia in Asia as well as parts of South America. Drylands occupy approximately 40–41% of Earth's land area and are home to more than 2 billion people. Effects of desertification include sand and dust storms, food insecurity, vegetation patterning and increasing poverty. There are many possible countermeasures such as reforestation, soil restoration, desert reclamation and managed grazing. Throughout geological history, the development of deserts has occurred naturally. In recent times, the influences of human activity, improper land management, deforestation and climate change on desertification is the subject of many scientific investigations.

## **Desertification – Degradation of Fertile Land**

Desertification is the degradation process by which a fertile land changes itself into a desert by losing its flora and fauna, this can be caused by drought, deforestation, climate change, human activities or improper agriculture. Desertification is a process of degradation of the land. It occurs because of man-made activities and climate change. Desertification takes place when a particular type of biome converts into a desert biome.

## **Desertification Causes**

1. Overgrazing



2. Deforestation
3. Farming Practices
4. Urbanization and other types of land development
5. Climate Change
6. Stripping the land of resources
7. Natural Disasters

### **Desertification Impacts**

1. Farming becomes difficult or even impossible in the area
2. Flooding chances are more
3. Hunger – because of no farming
4. Poor quality of water
5. Overpopulation
6. Poverty as a result of the above

### **Steps To Reduce Desertification:**

Given below are the steps which may help in reducing Desertification:

- Focus on Water management. Rainwater harvest must be done, water that can be reused must not be left out as waste
- Reforestation and tree regeneration
- Buttressing the soil through the use of sand fences, shelter belts, woodlots and windbreaks
- Better and hyper-fertilization of soil through planting
- The residue from pruned trees can be used to provide mulching for fields thus increasing soil water retention and reducing evaporation

### **Green social work**

Green social work is a branch of social work that deals with the impact of the faltering environmental stability upon human populations. It is essentially a broadening of the definition of environment, sociologically speaking, from referring exclusively to someone's immediate surroundings to referring to the planet that we all share.

After the CSWEs 2010 announcement, it became quite clear that social workers globally were eager to enter a realistic conversation about how climate change affects people, impoverished groups in particular, and that they were ready to take action.

There was no more denying that the extreme flooding, hurricane damage, or broken levees of the age impacted people beyond reason.

Green social work is a holistic perspective that seeks to secure the well-being of people and the planet through reforming socio-political power structures (Dominelli, 2012). It is an eco-centric perspective that respects not only humans, but also values the natural environment in its own right within the ecosystem.

**Definition:**

Green social work affirms environmental justice within social justice while promoting social development. GSW: ‘focuses on how the social organization of relationships between peoples and their interaction with the flora and fauna in their physical habitats create the socio-economic and physical environmental crises that undermine the well-being of human beings and planet earth’ (Dominelli, 2012:25).

Green Social Workers assess the risks posed by hazards and argue for:

- locality specific and culturally relevant practice.
- Profound holistic conceptual and social transformations.
- Sustainable relationships among peoples, other living things and inanimate world – caring for planet earth.
- Trans disciplinaryity relates to all sciences and professions in engagement with local communities/residents.

**Concept:**

Green social work is a holistic perspective that seeks to secure the well-being of people and the planet through reforming socio-political power structures (Dominelli, 2012). It is an eco-centric perspective that respects not only humans, but also values the natural environment in its own right within the ecosystem.

What is the meaning of green social work?

Green social work is a practice that is rooted in the enhancement of the wellbeing. of individuals and their environments. It is in this light that social work is by definition linked to. the concepts of environmental inequality and ecosocial justice.

