

**AN ANALYSIS OF SUNITA NARAIN'S  
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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# INTRODUCTION

- **Global environmentalism history:** Greek, Roman, Indus, and South American groups have discussed nature. The contemporary era of environmental rights began in the eighteenth century. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, the environmental movement reached its peak worldwide. Rachel Carson 1962 book *Silent Spring* about the dangers of using the pesticide DDT.
- **Environmentalism in India:** Chipko movement, Silent Valley, Apiko movement, Narmada Bachao Andolan, Tehri, Sariska, Aarey.
- **Sunita Narain:** Environmentalist, Activist, CSE, Tiger Task Force, National Ganga River Basin Authority, Padma Shri, Time Magazine 2016- 100 most influential people.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** First-person account of her struggles with environmental movements, discusses significant environmental issues, corporate lobbying and political, interests, publicised controversies

# OBJECTIVES

- To make an analysis of Sunita Narain's book 'Conflicts of Interest: My Journey through India's Green Movement.'
- To examine the book from contemporary 'development discourse' perspective.
- To understand the preoccupations of India's Green Movement.

# METHODS

- The primary methodology for this research was based on discourse analysis.
- Alternate paradigms of development and basic need approaches were used as part of research technique.
- Discourse analysis was done to examine the essays of the book from a development discourse perspective. Discourse analysis is a research method for studying written or spoken language in relation to its social context. It aims to understand how language is used in real life situations.

# RESULTS

## Air Pollution: Breathless

- Sunita Narain addresses the issue of Delhi's air pollution, which has been exacerbated by the rise in diesel vehicle ownership.
- She cites Delhi's pollution as an outcome of various issues, including the inability to stop activities like burning trash and reducing road and construction dust.
- Talks about her encounters with corporations like Tata Motors and Bajaj when it came to the introduction of diesel vehicles onto the road.
- Additionally, she talks about CSE's opposition to them and the Supreme Court's endorsement of the diesel car ban.
- She discusses the switch to CNG (Compressed Natural Gas), plans for new road construction, and strategies for lowering air pollution in places like the nation's capital.- BRT and Odd- even scheme.

## Climate's Charge

- Sunita Narain takes on an international dimension as it describes the tortuous politics associated in any multilateral negotiation, amid which the principles of justice, equity and science take the backseat.
- She talks about the developed countries not ready to cut down their emissions.
- She talks about various COP (Confluence of Parties) summits, where the leading world countries either don't acknowledge their emissions or blame the developing countries, for what their impact has done to the poor countries.
- She emphasizes on reducing the global warming below 2°C and that only when all countries work together, and the developed countries acknowledging and cutting their emissions sooner, can the world be saved.

## Tigers And/ Or People?

- Sunita Narain details her tenure as the Tiger Task Force's chairperson
- She opposes the conventional conservation methods, pugmark cast. Sariska and Ranthambore- fall in tiger numbers.
- Talks about the ecosystem of the reserves, the human inhabitants, tourism in Tiger Reserves.
- Emphasizes coexistence in the villages around.

## A Blueprint for the Future

- Sunita Narain's concluding chapter tries to offer an Indian future. Our future will be determined by our capacity to manage the three tendencies she outlines: climate change uncertainty, societal concerns, and fears (caused by rising economic inequality and the tearing apart of the social fabric), and society's diminishing ability to shape policy as democracy develops are a few of these.
- It is necessary to create policies with a stronger emphasis on inclusivity to find long-term fixes for the most vulnerable and impoverished people. This would necessitate funding, improved institutional structures, a socio-technical approach, and ideas that originate from the grassroots as opposed to policymakers.
- Denies NIMBY- Not in my Backyard. We need to practice INMY- In my backyard.



## CONCLUSION

- Basic needs approach to development gives priority to meeting the basic needs of all the people. It includes the fulfilment of certain standards of nutrition (food and water), and the universal provision of health and education services. They also cover other material needs, such as shelter and clothing, and non-material needs such as employment, participation, transport, and political liberty.
- In the first essay, Sunita Narain mentions that air pollution is a great leveler. It does not know if one is affluent or poor. It has an equal impact on everyone. The alternative she proposes is the implementation of CNG instead of diesel and BRT on roads. Though BRT failed, BRT was designed with accessibility for even the most disadvantaged in mind. There was room for bicyclists, cars, two-wheelers, buses, and trucks in addition to pedestrians and bicycles.

- In the second essay, she emphasizes the need for the poor countries to grow. She criticizes the capitalist model of development and contends that because impoverished and emerging nations are still in the initial stages of growth, they can alter their country-building strategies to be more sustainable than rich nations.
- She emphasizes the coexistence of humans and tigers in the essay on tiger conservation. But for the villagers and tigers to coexist, it is crucial to meet their requirements for basics like work, education, shelter, and other necessities.
- In her final essay, she emphasizes that people from all socioeconomic backgrounds speak up for their rights. Therefore, it is critical to develop solutions that benefit everyone, not just the wealthy.
- Sunita Narain is one of the few persistent and unrelenting environmental activists, whose advocacy has several times pulled India back from the edge of environmental catastrophe. Her insights of India's environmental issues offer one way to look at them.

- Her concerns about air and water pollution, climate change, the need for necessities, the empowerment of the poor, etc., are reflective of the preoccupations of India's green movement. In that sense, her book's title 'Conflicts of Interest: My Journey through India's Green Movement' justifies her preoccupations with the country's green movement.
- From the analysis of Sunita Narain's essays, it can be understood that she views development from the standpoint of the basic needs approach. Development of the poor is a recurrent statement in all of them. She critiques the dominant development discourse, which is capital intensive and centralized, suggesting an alternate which is human centric development paradigm with a due focus of micro narratives.
- An evident example is that of tigers. Alternative solutions have been implemented and proved that once people get their basic needs, conservation and the fight become simpler. Thus, it is important to fulfill the basic needs of the populace. It is always the poor who are vulnerable to risks. But when action is taken for a collective reformation, everyone reaps benefits.

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