

## **Degradation of Yamuna Floodplains**

### **Why in news?**

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The National Green Tribunal (NGT) held the Art of Living Foundation responsible for degradation to the Yamuna floodplains.

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### **What is the reason behind NGT's decision?**

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- World Culture Festival was organised by the the Art of Living Foundation in the Yamuna Floodplains in March 2016.

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- NGT earlier imposed Rs.5 crore as interim environment compensation on the Art of Living Foundation for the event's impact on the environment.

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- An expert committee, in its report, said that due to the event, the floodplains lost "almost all its natural vegetation" like trees, shrubs, tall grasses, aquatic vegetation.

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- It includes loss of water hyacinth that provides habitat to a large number of animals, insects and mud-dwelling organisms.

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- Now, NGT again held the organisation responsible for causing damage and environmental degradation.

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- It also added that if restoration costs exceeded earlier fine of Rs.5 crore, DDA could recover the balance from the Art of Living Foundation.

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- The decision was based on polluter pays principle.

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### **What is polluter pays principle?**

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- It is an universally acknowledged in environmental jurisprudence.

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- According to this, those who pollute the environment must be made to pay not just for the costs of remedial action, but also for compensating victims of environmental damage.

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- The principle's origin can be traced back to the Stockholm Declaration made at the UN Conference on the Human Environment in 1972.

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- The Declaration asked signatory countries to develop international laws "regarding liability and compensation for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage".

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- After this World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), was established in 1983 emphasised polluter's pay principle.

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- The 1987 WCED report greatly influenced the Rio Earth Summit of 1992, which, for the first time, explicitly enshrined the Polluter Pays Principle.

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**Source: The Indian Express**

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