



# Significance of Environmental Ethics in the Sustenance of Human Society: A study

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## Abstract:

As a subfield of applied ethics, environmental ethics examines the theoretical keystones of environmental values in addition to more tangible concerns pertaining to societal attitudes, behaviours, and laws intended to preserve and conserve natural systems and biodiversity. It holds that all living things, including plants and animals, are a part of civilization, including humans. Therefore, it is imperative that all humans treat other humans with dignity and respect, and that they behave morally and ethically towards others. The fundamental forms of reasoning that can be used to support the preservation of natural resources and their sustainable usage are also reconstructed by environmental ethics.

Numerous academic fields, such as environmental law, environmental sociology, eco-theology, ecological economics, ecology, and environmental geography, among others, all contribute to human civilization through environmental ethics. This article's primary goal is to examine how humans and the environment interact. It also addresses societal concerns that have an impact on the environment as well as environmental problems brought on by human activity. It provides the foundation for our actions to demonstrate our awareness of the environment.

**Keywords:** environmental ethics, bio-diversity, ecological system, sociology.

## Introduction:

In the words of Wayne Jackson, let us make a little exercise in logic, "No wickedness, no Flood; No Flood, no change of earth's environment, no geological disasters. Thus, no wickedness, no geological disasters." To comprehend the extent of environmental ethics based on the environment, it is necessary to talk about the nature and breadth of the environment reflecting society (Wayne, 2004). The earth's human civilization has a close connection to the "concept" and basis of the environment. Certain notions about the surroundings may have developed since the formation of this cosmos. Numerous religious texts, including the Bible, the Gita, the Hadith, the Holy Quran, the Ijma, and the Qias, also make reference to this idea. These works emphasised the value of the environment from a variety of perspectives and formats. In light of the slow advancement of human civilization, environmental ideas are also developing and flourishing. The idea of environment in contemporary society is quite distinct from that of other civilizations. The understanding of the environment nowadays is mostly micro-based. The environment is intimately tied to environmental law and its purposes. Its operations are environment-dependent. Thus, it initially necessitates a thorough grasp of the surroundings. Understanding the environment takes a broad spectrum of understanding because it is such a broad and nebulous concept. Although its typical definition is related to surroundings, it is clear that this idea is relative to the object it refers to. It is broad, ambiguous, and necessitates a variety of understandings.

**Literature Review:**

In his work "Urbanization in India," Datta, P. (2006) stated that poverty-driven rural-urban migration and the country's population expansion are the primary causes of urbanization. Fast urbanization causes slums to expand dramatically, which is followed by suffering, unemployment, inequality, exploitation, and a decline in the standard of living in cities.

In the paper "A study on urbanization in India -issues and challenges," Srikrishna, G. (2017) made the observation that people from incredibly diverse cultural backgrounds coexist in urban regions, particularly in metropolitan cities. This has a beneficial effect. People tear down the walls that once separated them by learning about one another's cultures and exchanging ideas. This leads to the hybridization of cultures.

In their work "Urbanization in India: An impact assessment," Jaysawal, N. and Saha, S. (2014) propose that policies should be linked to appropriate urban planning, wherein city planning will include of restorative, developmental, and operational planning. Roads, traffic, transportation, and other aspects of urban infrastructure should all be improved through operational planning.

According to Todaro & Smith (2015), migrants from rural areas account for roughly half of the urban population increase in emerging countries, which is significantly faster than population growth overall. Unchecked urbanization is putting public health and infrastructure in the developing nations under stress and endangering societal stability. Approximately 50% of the labour force in urban areas is employed in low-wage, low-skilled, informal sectors, frequently working for themselves in menial services and sales. Even yet, this industry has the potential to account for up to one-third of urban income and offers low capital intensity, inexpensive training, garbage recycling, and job creation.

Values are seen as the fundamental drivers of more particular attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs, and as such, a significant portion of psychological research on environmental attitudes has concentrated on them (Olson & Zanna, 1993).

A comprehensive model for categorising the aspects of values has been established by Schwartz (1992, 1994), with 56 value items covering 10 universal value kinds. The 10 value kinds can be further divided into 4 value categories: conservatism, self-transcendence, self-enhancement, and openness to change, according to cross-cultural studies. Values of hedonism, stimulation, and self-direction characterise openness to change. The principles of tradition, conformity, and security characterise conservatism. Universalist and charitable ideals are traits of self-transcendence. Lastly, the values of achievement and power characterise self-enhancement.

Using confirmatory factor analytic techniques, Schultz (2000, 2001) discovered compelling evidence supporting the differentiation between egoistic, biosphere, and altruistic concerns. Numerous American samples, including college students and the general public, as well as cross-cultural studies involving samples from Spanish-speaking nations worldwide, have revealed the same three-factor structure. A recent international study (Schultz, 2001; Schultz & Zelezny, 1999) looked at how values, environmental concerns, and worldview related in 14 different nations.

**Environment and its importance:**

The term "environment" is extremely broad. Domesticated animals have been characterised by various scientists from different fields using different references, but it is the entirety of the environment surrounding us, including plants. The word "environ" comes from the French word "encircle," which implies to create surroundings. Determining the surroundings is a difficult task. The definition of "environment" is "the action of surrounding; the state of being surrounded." the circumstances under which anything exists or develops; the culmination of all the

factors that affect and shape a person's life or character. Although its typical definition is related to surroundings, it is clear that this idea is relative to the object it refers to.

People live and engage in economic activity for their livelihood but at the cost of environmental degradation as it plays a crucial role in human existence. The environment, as a productive system, offers the fundamental supports needed for all life forms to develop. When it comes to the European Union, Einstein once described the environment as "everything that is not us." An entire collection of components that make up human and societal frameworks, environments, and living situations as they exist or are perceived. In actuality, nature and culture are constantly included when discussing the environment. While nature can be viewed as peaceful and beautiful, man, who has had to battle it to survive, finds it frightening. The modern man, estranged from nature, poses a threat to it. Thanks to technology, people now possess the ability to act like a significant geological force that can affect entire continents or even the entire world. Some examples of such forces are acid rain, photochemical smog, radioactive pollution, stratospheric ozone depletion, and climate change (Bourdeau, 2004).

### **What are environmental ethics and its importance?**

A branch of ethics known as environmental ethics is concerned with how people interact with the environment. It takes a comprehensive approach to comprehending and assessing our moral duties to save and maintain the environment. Recognising that the environment and humanity are interrelated and have intrinsic value, environmental ethics aims to balance their interests.

Environmental ethics is defined by a range of ethical theories, such as virtue ethics, consequentialism, and utilitarianism. These ethical theories offer a framework for comprehending our moral duties to the environment and the appropriate course of action for its preservation. Environmental ethics offers a thorough method for comprehending and assessing the moral ramifications of human behaviour by incorporating ideas from philosophy, economics, ecology, and law.

#### **Types of environmental ethics:**

**Libertarian Ethics:** Libertarian extension is a kind of environmental ethics that emphasises a person's freedom to use the environment and its resources as they deem fit. This idea also emphasises how important it is for people to respect other people's decisions rather than forcing their own beliefs on them.

**Ecological Ethics:** This kind of environmental ethics is concerned with protecting the environment and its resources to keep the ecosystem in balance and be healthy. This idea emphasises how crucial it is for people to coexist with nature in order to protect it for coming generations.

**Conservation Ethics:** Under this category of environmental ethics, the goal is to protect existing natural resources so that they can be used for future generations.

**Conservation Ethics:** A subset of environmental ethics, conservation ethics aims to protect existing natural resources from being exhausted or irreparably harmed in order to preserve them for future generations. In order to ensure that there will be sufficient natural resources for future generations, this idea encourages people to use them sensibly and sparingly.

To put it briefly, conservation ethics stresses the sustainable use of natural resources, ecological extension encourages humans to coexist with nature, and libertarian extension supports an individual's right to exploit natural resources. When thinking about the best ways to conserve the environment, it is important to evaluate the advantages of each of these environmental ethics.

**Importance:**

Preserving the environment, wildlife, and resources requires environmental ethics. It encourages individuals to become more conscious of the effects that their actions have on the environment and supports sustainable practises. It highlights how all living things are related to one another and how we should treat them with respect. It inspires us to consider our role in the world and the ways in which we may help to protect the environment. Better connections with nature are facilitated by environmental ethics, which acknowledges nature's intrinsic worth in addition to its practical value. It pushes us to evaluate the long-term effects of our decisions and to look beyond our current demands. It instils in us a sense of accountability for the environment, supporting eco-friendly behaviours that contribute to the preservation of natural resources.

**Significance of the study:**

The present study is an attempt to trace the importance of the role of human society for conservation of environment. Excessive and unjustified use of natural resources, urbanization, industrialization and many prudent causes are responsible for environmental degradation. The paper aims at finding the root causes of the violation of environmental ethics and paves the way for its solution.

**Objective:**

The present study encompasses the following objectives:

1. To study the necessity of maintaining the ethical relationship between people and the natural world;
2. To find out the prevailed condition of morality and motivation for the cause of global environmental protection and ethical justification;
3. To suggest the measures to prevent the massive violation of environmental ethics.

**Research Questions:**

1. What are the causes of deforestation and its impact in human society?
2. What are the measures to prevent the extinction of some species?
3. What are the essentials for the protection and preservation of environment?

**Methodology:**

Descriptive research method is followed in this study. The study is based on secondary data collected from Census of India; and Statistical Handbooks of Assam published by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Assam. The report mostly uses field data and library research. However, secondary data is employed for this purpose, such as information found online, in newspapers, souvenirs, journals, ancient records, and numerous publications. To get at the conclusion, the data is analysed, examined, and described in a sensible and prudent manner.

**Discussion:**

For the sake of human welfare on Earth, the focus of this study project must emphasise philosophical questions regarding various facets of environmental development and conservation. Here are a few pertinent topics that could be covered:

## **Influence of environmental ethics and the acts of God:**

According to the survey, the third world countries have been experiencing an increased number of natural disasters. There are also serious repercussions. Some believe it to be God's handiwork on the citizens of those nations. The ecology has been ruined by them for a very long time. These topics are covered by a few theories. There are a few widely accepted ideas regarding the origins and effects of the natural disaster. According to one theory, there exists a state of equilibrium among continents, ocean basins, mountains, and plains. So, these masses gently adjust to maintain their balance. Another theory is that the earth is getting smaller because it is cooling off. Tremors happen as it gets smaller. According to a third idea, convection currents occur inside the earth's core, causing the cooler, heavier portions to descend and the warmer, lighter parts to ascend. It is said that these factors cause earthquakes. Lastly, some experts think that the original breakup of one continent is the reason why the continents are gradually moving away. It is thought that the movement causes disruptions inside the ground. It is the sole explanation for why people have been causing these issues and environmental injustices. It is a result of the devastation of the planet's ecosystem.

## **The relationship between humans and the nature:**

One of the main concerns of environmental ethics in the global environment is the effects of disrespect for nature. Never mistreat the natural world. We must address this matter in our daily prayers. Who is accountable for the environment, environmental pollution, and environmental degradation? It appears that we already know the solution. That is the result of human activity. Since the industrial revolution, all facets of humanity—educated and ignorant alike—have wronged the natural world. It is solely the responsibility of the industrialised nations of the world. They have been taking money and profits from the world's population. It is necessary to do out deeds towards the environment. Maintaining self-control in daily life is essential to the preservation and growth of the environment. As stated in the link, "speak little but works more," we must follow it. Furthermore, the social contract theory takes into account the ethical concerns surrounding the environment in relation to several aspects such as humans and society, humans and nature, etc. We also need to reconsider how man and nature now interact.

## **Impacts of technology on the nature:**

Science and technology have contributed to the modern era, and society is now reliant on it. There are also noticeable negative effects of information technology and technology on the environment (Thomas, 2006). More than ever, technology is a part of society. The majority of human services are supplied by this device, although it goes without saying that some unpleasant activities have been carried out on the Mohammed 10389 environment, which have had a significant negative influence on it. Technology does not come without drawbacks, even though it offers benefits. Internet hacking is a result of the well-known detrimental effects of internet communication on the environment. It alters people's perspectives on the environment in general. Instead of destroying ecological ethics, we should protect the natural world. It is our responsibility as humans to respect and protect them (Velasquez, 2006).

The majority of writers on these topics believe that morality, ethics, and legislation all intersect significantly, including in the corporate world (Brooks and Paul, 2008). Morality is said to be the foundation, test, conclusion, and component of law. While ethics emphasises the social structure within which these values are implemented. It is utilised in various ways depending on the viewpoint. Both business and nature use it. Globally, a large number of writers have made significant contributions to environmental justice and ethics. All religions, conscience, justice, self-awareness, natural law theory, and theological massaging are examples of morality. Justice for all, including the flora and fauna, is another meaning of it. The values that direct people's actions are the subject of ethics. It outlines what we should and shouldn't do in relation to many issues, such as environmental issues. No one could be content unless the right people were in charge. Numerous conclusions and recommendations have been made by the study projects on these topics. For the sake of a productive and healthy environment on Earth, we must take such works

into consideration. These in particular have a significant impact on the natural surroundings and arrangements in the realm of our everyday existence.

### **Environmental ethics and Climate change:**

The world community has produced some significant tools to protect the environment, and the topic of the global environment has been explored. Because of its direct effects on the environment and development, climate change is actually one of the major worldwide problems. According to others, the results could stem from a failure to abide by climate change laws and policies, including the Copenhagen Accords, the Kyoto Protocol, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). Unquestionably, environmental ethics have been disregarded, and the effects are evident everywhere in the world.

### **Environmental ethics and sustainable development:**

Respect for life is the goal of all ethics, especially environmental ethics. Both the best naturalistic and the best humanistic justifications for valuing ecosystems are necessary for the comprehensive environmental ethic. Ecosystems create and sustain life, maintain strong selection pressures, enhance local fitness, and permit compatible species to emerge in sufficiently contained environments. It instills in us the proper regard for all earthly beings, living and non-living. It preserves and guards against all forms of human interference with the natural world. It might have a significant impact on the development of concepts and viewpoints, offering a fresh approach to international administration that will benefit both people and other living things. The Brundtland Report, which states that "humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs," popularised the idea of sustainable development. The concept's use of "humanity" could guarantee ethical problems with the environment. If people exercise and uphold environmental ethics, it may have an impact on ending poverty and establishing fairness, public involvement, culturally relevant tactics, and ethical ideals of justice, equity, and wisdom, among other things, with regard to the environment. Every person on the planet has the right to good health and a safe environment for all living things, including non-living ones. However, the majority of powerful people on the planet undermine these rights. They are free to disregard everything in favour of their own pleasure and self-interest. They've been acting as they please. To combat their polluting environmental politics, we must reconsider in the interest of environmental justice (Hesperian, 2010).

### **Environmental ethics and ethical issues:**

It is a broad and ambiguous topic that can differ amongst organisations depending on policies meant to define appropriate conduct for individuals within a specific association, group, or occupation. A code of ethics typically addresses social concerns and the environment by focusing on things like not harming others, stealing, engaging in sexual activity, using inappropriate language, abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs, murdering living things, being unchaste, and using intoxicants, all of which are pertinent to environmental ethics. We use the word "ethics" quite loosely to refer to nearly everything that is good for society or other people. The goals of moral standards are to uphold goodness and forbid evil, to reward virtue and discourage vice, to prevent injury to others and to advance their benefit. Generally speaking, moral standards take into account the interests of society as a whole as well as the self-interest of the individual. At the level of the individual, the group, or the state, moral standards that advance the welfare of others or the common good can be upheld.

### **Environmental ethics and religious context:**

Islam is a prominent proponent of environmental ethics, which are grounded in Islamic law and philosophy. It never harms the environment and educates us to lead healthy lives. In either case, the offender will face both internal and outward punishment. It is impossible for anyone to avoid the consequences of causing harm to the environment.

Man is commanded to govern nature and is placed apart from it in the Judeo-Christian tradition; nevertheless, this attitude has been modified to one of stewardship. Oriental faiths, on the other hand, take a more comprehensive approach and see people as an essential component of the natural world. Views held by contemporary philosophers range from egocentrism and biocentrism to anthropocentrism. It is advised to adopt a practical approach. Islam has addressed this matter in a variety of ways, and we must adhere to the moral standards established by the sacred Quran (Mollah and Dastagir, 2010).

### **Philosophical standpoint:**

Classical Greek philosophy held that the world was rationally constructed and uncomplicated, and that it was unnecessary to complicate ecological composition and its significance. Plato asserts that the mediaeval belief that "love of nature detracts from love of God" is based on his theory that "the natural world is an illusion." According to Theophrastus and Aristotle, there are a few exceptions. Theophrastus may be regarded as the first ecologist since he recognised the relationships that exist between living things and their environments. On the other side, the emperor and stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius declared that living in harmony with nature was desirable and right in and of itself, and that the universe was a single living entity made up of a single substance and a single soul. It contributes significantly to sustainable development. Indeed, moral philosophy has a significant influence (Susan and Botzlor, 1993).

### **Environmental ethics and good governance:**

One of the main institutions of a democratic society that addresses environmental issues and sustainable development is good governance. Participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive, and compliant with the law are only a few of its components. It might be referred to as green governance. The way in which these components are applied in society determines how a government develops. Additionally, it adapts to the demands of society both now and in the future. Indeed, there is a direct or indirect relationship between environmental ethics and effective governance, which addresses these challenges for the benefit of society.

### **Human rights and the environmental ethics:**

The following environmental ethics-related issues may be taken into consideration in the study to some extent in relation to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on the Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, etc. the fundamental principles of the UDHR—inherent human dignity, non-discrimination, equality, justice, universality, etc.—have always and everywhere been applicable to all people. It guarantees the advancement of amicable international relations (Darryl, 2005). It functions as a global norm for all countries. Numerous legal concerns have been created to address these ideals. It makes an effort to bring about world peace. Their obligations to the UN are affirmed under its charter. As one of the millions of species that still exist on Earth, humans have formed an environmental ethic as a result of our interactions with other living things and the environment. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) General Conference of 2005 adopted the Universal Declaration of Bioethics, which acknowledged this in its declaration with the following sentence: "Due regard is to be given to the interconnection between human beings and other forms of life, to the importance of appropriate access and utilisation of biological and genetic resources, to respect for traditional knowledge and the role of human beings in the protection of the environment, the biosphere and biodiversity."

### **Environmental ethics and the global development:**

The following are some significant issues relating to environmental ethics in the context of development that can be found in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG, 2000) declaration: values and principles; freedom,

equality, solidarity, tolerance; respect for nature; shared responsibility; peace, security, and disarmament; development and poverty alleviation; protection of our common environment; human rights; democracy and good governance; protecting the vulnerable; and fighting against the degradation and destruction of our shared home.

### Results and conclusion:

It is a fact that environmental degradation and a disaster have been our reality. It's an inconvenient truth, according to former US Vice President Al Gore (Beauchamp, 2009). Ethics, human behaviour, and values about the environment are all concerns that need to be managed, respected, and never disregarded (Jose et al., 2011). We must comprehend the character and extent of nature. Being a part of nature, humans must acknowledge their limitations and abilities. Based on the foundations of Islamic law and philosophy, we are the best of all creatures of nature. We have a great deal of power to accomplish here on Earth. However, its application must be limited. Anything that directly or indirectly contradicts nature must also naturally contradict the person. Every citizen of the world must follow the ethics of environment for its conservation. Necessary awareness should be created by engaging the government agencies to ensure proper and justified use of natural resources for its sustenance. According to Newton's theory, every action has a reaction. You will receive affection from others in the community and society if we do the same for them. The requirements and needs of society must be taken into account. We must not restrain from our spiritual bond. We must live according to the precepts of all religions, including Islam, as well as the ideals and principles of national and international human rights, humanitarian laws, and pertinent policies and practises.

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