



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN INDIAN KNOWLEDGE SYSTEM

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Abstract: India is oldest country where huge amount of traditional knowledge, which can reshape, rebuilt India's journey towards prominence. This traditional knowledge either in respect of herbs, crafts, arts, technique or medicinal knowledge is common heritage of environment. India has unique biological hot spots and various national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Further, various traditional knowledge evolves through the flora and fauna of the Indian biodiversity. From ancient time environmental ethics has been a part in human working nature but in the modern era ethics should be adopted in revised concept to maintain the environmental conservation and sustainability.

Keywords: knowledge, environment, ethics, conservation, humans, sustainable.

Introduction: Environmental ethics the relation in between environmental values and surrounding societal attitudes, actions, to protect and sustain biodiversity and ecological systems or in simple words environmental friendly methods or actions associated with societies is known as environmental ethics.

Environmental ethics has been described as having a conscience or moral that reflects one's commitment and responsibility toward the environment as well as present and future generations of people. In essence it refers to human societies living in harmony with the natural world on which they depend for survival and well being. Human beings are a part of the society but we often ignore the fact that even plants and animals are a part of our lives. They are an integral part of the environment and hence have a right to be considered a part of the human life.

Adjusting the relationship between humans and nature is one of the most fundamental issues we face and must deal with today. With the increasing deterioration of ecological systems on which human beings rely and the aggravation of the environmental crisis, human beings have realized that we cannot rely on economic and judicial methods alone to solve the problems of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances; we must also appeal to human beings' limitless internal ethical resources. Only after we have adopted an appropriate attitude towards nature and have established a new ethical relationship between human beings and nature will we be able to love and respect nature automatically as well as conscientiously; and only with the guidance of such love and respect can we successfully deal with the issues of environmental pollution and ecological imbalances.

Environmental ethics in ancient Indian knowledge system:

In ancient time human beings also used environmental ethics in the working system. Regarding ethics it has been observed in various examples like aadi manav used wooden and stone materials for their cooking and shelter purposes when the discoveries not started. After that the empires of various kings mess were used rain water harvesting system by making the structures like wells, bawris and tankas etc. Many examples has been observed for sustainable and organic farming also during this time. Arastu used medicines from plant or plant extracts before the chemical medicines invention. Now days in Ayurvedas we are using the medicines from such methods. Some case studies and stories also related with environmental ethics like few stories associated with Chipko Movement in Rajasthan,

U.P. and South India. So the concept of environmental ethics is not a new but with new practices it can be use for better environmental protection and conservation by humans.

The modern construction of environmental ethics:

We are cutting down forests for making our homes. We are continuing with an excessive consumption of natural resources. Their excessive use is resulting in their depletion, risking the life of our future generations. Is this ethical? This is the issue that environmental ethics takes up. Scientists like Rachel Carson and the environmentalists who led philosophers to consider the philosophical aspect of environmental problems, pioneered in the development of environmental ethics as a branch of environmental philosophy. The Earth Day celebration of 1970 was also one of the factors, which led to the development of environmental ethics as a separate field of study.

Environmental Ethics:

Ethics are important for satisfying basic human needs, creating credibility for organizations, and uniting people and leadership around common goals. An ethical issue is a circumstance in which a moral conflict arises in the workplace; thus, it is a situation in which a moral standard is being challenged. Ethical issues in the workplace occur when a moral dilemma emerges and must be resolved within a corporation. Environmental ethics helps to define man's moral and ethical obligations toward the environment.

Importance of Environmental Ethics:

With the deterioration of ecological systems and the adverse impacts of environmental issues, humans have realized that they cannot fix environmental pollution and ecological imbalances just by economical, technological, and judicial means. Therefore, it can play a critical role in ensuring that our lives function smoothly and those humans and other beings in our environment are treated equally.

Examples of Environmental Ethics:

A. Environment v/s Development:

As the population is increasing, infrastructural development is essential to accommodate the growing demand, a major burden of which will fall on the environment. Mostly, development takes place at the cost of the environment. Improper development and ignorance towards the environment have now raised ethical issues for the human race. The upcoming and younger generations are the least responsible for climate change, yet they will bear the greatest burden of its impact.

B. Environmental ethics with policies:

The environment is no longer to be considered as a sector to be managed exclusively by the environmental authorities, but rather a theme to be incorporated into different policy areas – whether energy, transport, agriculture, industry, or trade. For instance, in India, to balance the development and environment, the policymakers have established institutions like NGT, Central Pollution board, National Ganga River Basin Authority, National Biodiversity Authority, and many others.

C. Environmental Ethics & Sustainable development:

Creating a healthy balance between development and the environment is the major factor for obtaining the sustainable development goal. Sustainable development implies harmony on human-environment interactions and inter- generation responsibility, with emphasis on a harmonious relationship among population, resources, environment and development. The role of environmental ethics toward sustainable development is that it not only harmonizes the relationship of population, resource, environment and economic development, but also guide behavior selection, push social and political system transformation, strengthen the legal system, and raise environmental awareness of the public.

D. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):

- i. EIA is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
- ii. This has made it mandatory for various projects such as mining, dams, thermal power plants, river valleys, infrastructure to get environment clearance.
- iii. EIA makes sure that the developmental plan is environmentally sound and within the limits of the capacity of assimilation and regeneration of the ecosystem.

E. Climate Ethics:

- i. Climate ethics is an area of research that focuses on the ethical dimensions of climate change or global warming.
- ii. The recent prolonged Heat wave in North India or the Devastating floods along with unprecedented landslides in Assam are the severe outcome of climate change in India.

Solutions to Environmental Issues:

- Avoid single-use plastic.
- Promoting clean and affordable energy.
- Go for sustainable agriculture.
- Reduce food waste.
- Plant more trees and go paperless.
- Promote green innovations.
- Conserve water and electricity.
- Use reusable products instead of disposable ones.
- Judicious use of 5P's (Paper, Power, Petrol, Plastic and Potable water)
- Benefits of a tree – 5 P's (Food, Fiber, Fuel, Furniture, Fresh Air)
- 3R's Philosophy adoption (Reduction, Reuse and Recycle)
- Environmental Justices – All Sufferers due to environmental disaster or environmental cause should be given proper justice, not only monetary help. Before sighting on Industry, Visualize who is will justify it uses and cause.
- Eco-Tourism
- Farmers about – Biofertilizers, Agrochemicals.
- Environmental friendly habits – Both side use of paper, walk for short distance , car pooling or public transport use for office work
- Environmental friendly materials – Use of cotton bags, discourage use of plastic bags.
- Everyone should get equal opportunities for living is also a part of environmental ethics
- Industrialist about – Industrial Waste, Industrial disaster and Air, Noise and Water.
- Environmental Impact Assessment and Social Impact Assessment should be done before any project.

Conclusion:

Today, environmental ethics is one of the major concerns of mankind. When industrial processes lead to destruction of resources, is it not the industry's responsibility to restore the depleted resources? Moreover, can a restored environment make up for the originally natural one? Mining processes hamper the ecology of certain areas; they may result in the disruption of plant and animal life in those areas. Slash and burn techniques are used for clearing the land for agriculture. Most of the human activities lead to environmental pollution. The overly increasing human population is increasing the human demand for resources like food and shelter. As the population is exceeding the carrying capacity of our planet, natural environments are being used for human inhabitation. Thus human beings are disturbing the balance in the nature. The harm we, as human beings, are causing to the nature, is coming back to us by resulting in a polluted environment. The depletion of natural resources is endangering our future generations. The imbalance in nature that we have caused is going to disrupt our life as well. But environmental ethics brings about the fact that all the life forms on Earth have a right to live. By destroying the nature, we are depriving these life forms of their right to live. We are going against the true ethical and moral values by disturbing the balance in nature. We are being unethical in treating the plant and animal life forms, which co-exist in society. Human beings have certain duties towards their fellow beings. On similar lines, we have a set of duties towards our environment. Environmental ethics says that we should base our behavior on a set of ethical values that guide our approach towards the other living beings in nature. Environmental ethics is about including the rights of non-human animals in our ethical and moral values. Even if the human race is considered the primary concern of society, animals and plants are in no way less important. They have a right to get their fair share of existence. We, the human beings, along with the other forms of life make up our society. We all are a part of the food chain and thus closely associated with each other. We, together form our environment. The environment is not the property of the humans alone. Humans exist because of all other nonliving elements of the environment. Therefore conservation of natural resources is not only the need of the day or time but also our prime duty it requires a unified efforts equally.

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