



Environmental Ethics and Social Perspective

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Abstract: *Nature is a safe guide to wisdom and goodness. It is the Environment that encompasses the interaction of all living species. We are continuing with an excessive consumption of natural resources. Their excessive use is resulting in their depletion and this is risky for our future generation.*

Throughout history never at a time has our planet earth witnessed the magnitude of ecological crisis as we are experiencing today. The carrying capacity of the earth has been over stressed as water, air and land are been polluted on a daily basis. The environment is an important issue because earth is the only home that human have and it provides air, foods and other needs to satisfy everyman's needs but not every man's greed. The rapid growth of concern for the natural environment over the last third of the twentieth century has brought the welcome re- introduction of the nature as a significant topic of aesthetics. Nature is a safe guide to wisdom and goodness. It is instinct with the irradiating presence of divine.

The natural environment encompasses all living and non- living things occurring naturally on earth or some region thereof. It is an environmental that encompasses the interaction of all living species. The concept of the natural environment can be distinguished by components:

- Complete ecological units that

function as natural systems without massive human intervention, including all vegetation, microorganisms, soil, rocks, atmosphere and natural phenomenon that occur within their boundaries.

-Universal natural resources and physical phenomena that lack clear cut boundaries, such as air, water and climate, as well as energy, radiation, electric charge, and magnetism, not originating from human activity.

The natural environment is contrasted with the built environment, which comprises the areas and components that are strongly influenced by humans. A geographical area is regarded as a natural environment if the human impact of it is kept under a certain limited level.

Environmental ethics is the part of environmental philosophy which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including human to including the non-human world. It exerts its influence in large range of disciplines including law, sociology, economics and ecology. Environmental ethics believes in

the ethical relationship between human beings and natural environment. Human beings are the part of the society and so are the other living beings. When we talk about the philosophical principles that guide lives, 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 as a part of the human life. On these lines, it clears that they should also be associated with our guiding principles as well as our moral and ethical values. According to Arne Naess, "every being, whether human, animal has an equal right to live and blossom. He called this "sciosophy," which he defines as follows: "By a sciosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium."

There are many ethical decisions that human beings make with respect to be the environment. For example:

-Should we continue to cut forests for the sake of human consumption?

-Should we continue to propagate?

-Should we continue to make gasoline powered vehicles?

-What environmental obligations do we need to keep for future generations?

-Is it right for human to knowingly cause the extinction of a species for the convenience of humanity?

We are cutting down for making our homes. We are continuing with an excessive consumption of natural resources. Their excessive use is resulting in their depletion, risking the lives of our future generations. According to Rachel Carson's environmental ethics have four parts:

"Life in harmony with nature preserves and learns from the natural places of the world. Minimise the impact of manmade chemicals as natural system and consider the implications of human actions on global web of life".

Is this ethical? This is the issue environmental ethics takes up. Scientists like Rachel Carson and the environmentalists who led philosophers to consider the philosophical aspects of environmental problems, pioneered in the development of environmental ethics as a branch of environmental philosophy.

Simple ways to save the Environment- If each of us plants one little tree, it can amount to a great amount of afforestation making the environment healthier. Increasing the use of bicycles or making a habit to walk down short distances can contribute to reduction in air pollution. We should try to minimize the use of vehicles and use CFC free products; maintain our vehicles, clean their exhaust pipes and keep the pollution they cause under strict control.

One of the most important constitutes of environment is water. We should prevent the wastage of water and curb water pollution. Recycling is one of the best measures for saving the environment. We should minimize the animal products which involve their killing. Animal fur and ivory are some of the excessively used products that are gradually leading to the extinction of the animals that provide them. We should resolve not to hunt animals. Activities like composting can be of great help in recycling of garbage into

useful manures. We should avoid an extensive use of fertilizers and synthetic nutrients. Natural manures are a better option for farms and gardens.

When industrial processes lead to destruction of resources, is it not the industry's responsibility to restore that depleted resources? Moreover, can a restored environment make up for the original 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 used for cleaning the land for agriculture.

Most of 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 environment is being used for human inhabitation.

Thus, human beings are disturbing the balance in 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. According to Naess, "every being, whether human, animal or vegetable, has an equal right to live and to blossom. Naess states that through self-realization humans can become part of the ecosystems of Earth, in distinction to becoming only themselves. "What we are doing to the forests of the world is but a mirror reflection of what we are doing to ourselves and to

one another."

The Social ethic primarily relates to local purchasing, normal purchasing, the sustained and efficient use of renewable resources, the moderation of destructive use of finite resources, and prevention of harm to common resources such as air and water quality, the natural functions of a living earth, and cultural values in a built environment.

Ecological Extension:Category of ecological extension places emphasis not on human rights, but on the recognition of the fundamental interdependence of biological (and some a - biological) entities and their essential diversities, whereas libertarian extension can be thought of as flowing form of a political reflection of the natural world. Ecological extension is best thought of as a scientific reflection of the natural world.

Conservation Ethics- Martials category of conservation of ethics is an extension of use - value into the non-Human biological world. It focuses only on the worth of environment in terms of its utility or influence to humans. It contrasts the intrinsic value ideas of the deep ecology hence, is often referred as shallow ecology and generally argues for the prevention of the environment on the basis that it has intrinsic value - instrumental to welfare of human beings.

Anthropocentrism: Anthro pocentrism simply places humans at the centre of universe: the human race must always be its own primary concern. It has become customary I the western tradition to consider only our species when considering environmental ethics of a

situation. Therefore, everything else in the existence should be evaluated in the terms of utility for us. All environmental studies should include an assessment of intrinsic value of non-human beings. What anthropocentric theories do not allow for is the fact that a system of ethics formulated for a human perspective may not be entirely accurate: humans are not necessarily the centre of reality. The Philosopher, Braun Spinoza argued that we tend assess things wrongly in terms of their usefulness to us. Spinoza reasoned that if we were to look at things objectively, we would discover that everything in the universe has a unique value.

Environmental ethics is about including the rights of non-human animals in our ethical and moral values. They have a right to get their fair share of existence. We, the human beings, along with other forms of life make upon society. We all are a part of a food chain and thus closely associated with each other. We together form our environment.

Environmental ethics brings about the fact that all the life of forms on earth has a right to live. By destroying the nature, we are depriving these life forms of their Right to Live. We are going against true ethical and moral values by destroying 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 behaviour on a set of ethical values that guide our approach toward the other living beings in nature.

"Those who contemplate the beauty of earth, find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely hurdling in the repeated refrains of nature the assurance that dawn comes after night and spring after winter." 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 ethics. The field received impetus when it was first discussed in the academic journals in USA and Canada. Around the same time, this field also emerged in Australia and Norway. Today, environmental ethics is one of the major concerns of mankind. In India, conservation has taken off in a big way.

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