



What to do with nature: an approach from environmental ethics

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“Do not cut trees because they remove pollution.”

(Rig Veda 6:48:17)

Abstract

Environmental ethics is the study of the effects of natural and unnatural processes, and of interactions of the physical components of the planet on the environment. It is the study of normative issues and principles relating to human interactions with the natural environment. It comprises an increasingly significant field of applied ethics, crucial for the guidance of individuals, corporations and governments in shaping the principles affecting their lifestyles, their actions and their policies across the entire range of environmental issues. Debates include theories of normative ethics and of meta-ethics, and the adequacy of individualist, holist and eco-feminist stances. It is characteristically concerned with the good of future generations and nonhuman species as well as that of contemporary human beings. The article also briefly considers two critical traditions- ecofeminism and environmental pragmatism and explores some of the difficult environmental ethics questions posed by anthropogenic climate change (Mishra, 2010).

Keywords: *Environmental values, intrinsic value, climate ethics, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, nonhuman creatures, eco-feminism*

1. Introduction

Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings, and also the value and moral status of the environment and its non-human contents. Now a day the word environment is often being used by almost all people around us, on television and newspapers. Everyone is speaking about the protection and pre-serration of environment. Global summits are being held regularly to discuss environmental issues. During the last hundred years, the mutual relationship among environment, social organization and culture has been discussed in sociology, anthropology and geography. All this shows the increasing importance of environment. Besides, it is a fact that life is tied with the environment and we have to obey some rules for protect nature, environment and nonhuman creatures (White, 1967).

2. Objectives of the study

The objectives of the proposed study are as follows:

1. To make good for both environment and human being based on moral value,
2. To know environment property,
3. To arrange for proper protection of environment,

4. To protect natural resources for future generation and to make up the losses for development work for environment.

3. What is environment?

The word *Environment* is derived from the French word “Environ” which means “surrounding”. Our surrounding includes biotic factors like human beings, Plants, animals, microbes, etc. And abiotic factors such as light, air, water, soil, etc. Environment is a complex of many variables, which surrounds man as well as the living organisms. Environment includes water, air and land and the interrelationships which exist among and between water, air and land and human beings and other living creatures such as plants, animals and microorganisms (Kalavathy, 2004). She suggested that environment consists of an inseparable whole system constituted by physical, chemical, biological, social and cultural elements, which are interlinked individually and collectively in myriad ways. The natural environment consists of four interlinking systems namely, the atmosphere, the hydrosphere, the lithosphere and the biosphere. These four systems are in constant change and such changes are affected by human activities and vice versa (Kumarasamy et al., 2004).

4. Components of Environment

Our environment has been classified into four major components: 1. Hydrosphere, 2. Lithosphere, 3. Atmosphere, 4. Biosphere. Hydrosphere Hydrosphere includes all water bodies such as lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and ocean etc. Hydrosphere functions in a cyclic nature, which is termed as hydrological cycle or water cycle. Lithosphere Lithosphere means the mantle of rocks constituting the earth's crust. The earth is a cold spherical solid planet of the solar system, which spins in its axis and revolves around the sun at a certain constant distance. Lithosphere mainly, contains soil, earth rocks, mountain etc. Lithosphere is divided into three layers-crusts, mantle and core (outer and inner). Atmosphere The cover of the air, that envelopes the earth is known as the atmosphere. Atmosphere is a thin layer which contains gases like oxygen, carbon dioxide etc. and which protects the solid earth and human beings from the harmful radiations of the sun. There are five concentric layers within the atmosphere, which can be differentiated on the basis of temperature and each layer has its own characteristics. These include the troposphere, the stratosphere, the mesosphere, the thermosphere and the exosphere (Kalavathy, 2004). Biosphere It is otherwise known as the life layer, it refers to all organisms on the earth's surface and their interaction with water and air. It consists of plants, animals and micro-organisms, ranging from the tiniest microscopic organism to the largest whales in the sea. Biology is concerned with how millions of species of animals, plants and other organisms grow, feed, move, reproduce and evolve over long periods of time in different environments. Its subject matter is useful to other sciences and professions that deal with life, such as agriculture, forestry and medicine. The richness of biosphere depends upon a number of factors like rainfall, temperature, geographical reference etc. Apart from the physical environmental factors, the man made environment includes human groups, the material infrastructures built by man, the production relationships and institutional systems that he has devised. The social environment shows the way in which human societies have organized themselves and how they function in order to satisfy their needs (Kumarasamy et al., 2004).

5. Environmental Situations of India

As India prepares to enter a new millennium, the degraded state of India's natural environment cannot escape comment or analysis. Some believe that the deterioration in environment is of such magnitude that all development must cease for the planet to survive. Others dismiss the entire environmental movement as comprise of loony troublemakers who have no right to interfere with the sanctity of private property and private enterprise. Still others berate the environmental movement for being an exclusively middle-class movement that is irrelevant to the class struggle.

Lost in the middle of these antagonistic positions are those who see environmental pollution as a serious issue that affect people cutting across class lines but also recognize the unfairness of the existing order in which the earth's resources and benefits of modern technology are monopolized by a minority of the rich on this planet. For them, issues of environmental degradation must be tackled on a war footing, but they reject solutions that preserve the unfair distribution of the world's product and natural resources. For them, fairness and justice – the idea that there must be progress for all, cannot be sacrificed in the name of “saving the environment”. For them, environmental concerns must be integrated into the general class struggle, and against the tendency of private interests to violate and exploit both people and the environment.

6. Some Effects of Environmental Pollution

There are many sources of pollution and each one has its own effect on the environment and living organisms. This article will discuss the causes and effects of the different kinds of pollution.

In the United States 40% of rivers and 46% of lakes are too polluted for fishing, swimming, and aquatic life. Not surprising though when 1.2 trillion gallons of untreated storm water, industrial waste, and untreated sewage are being discharge annually into American waters.

One-third of the topsoil in the world is already degraded, and with the current rate of soil degradation caused be improper agricultural and industrial practices, and deforestation, most of the world's topsoil could be gone within the next 60 years.

The Great Smog in 1952 killed 8000 people in London. This event was caused by a period of cold weather combined with windless conditions that formed a dense layer of airborne pollutants, mostly from coal plants, over the city.

Of all the above discussion, the most important thing is the Amazon Rainforest Fire. I think the Amazon Rainforest Fire is also the result of environmental pollution.

6.1 Amazon Rainforest Fire

Now in this connection, I would like to introduce the most vital problem across the globe, that is, Amazon rainforest fire. I think the Amazon rainforest fire is the effect of Global Warming. The Amazon forest is the lungs of the earth. At 670 million hectares, the Amazon rainforest is still easily the world's largest rainforest – larger than Western Europe or India. You can wander in it for years, without ever seeing its edge. But in the last few decades, the rainforest shrank by about 20% due to deforestation.

The Amazon is a key component of Earth's climate system. It holds about a quarter as much carbon as the entire atmosphere and single-handedly absorbs about 5% of all the CO₂ we emit each year. But if such rapid deforestation continues, it will foil efforts to keep global temperatures in check. Scientists fear parts of the Amazon could pass a critical threshold and transform from a lush rainforest into dry, woody grassland. And that could bring catastrophic consequences not only for people in South America, but also for everyone around the world. So, we have to solve the problem immediately otherwise the globe will be destroyed for our own misdeeds.

7. Some Ways to Protect the Environment

Since most of the environment is polluted by the people and we must protect the environment as human being. Our Indian Government has already taken some ways to save environment from pollution that is Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA).

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a nation-wide campaign in India for the period 2014 to 2019 that aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, urban and rural areas. The campaign's official name is in Hindi and translates to "Neat and tidy India Mission" in English. The objectives of Swachh Bharat include eliminating open defecation through the construction of household-owned and community-owned toilets and establishing an accountable mechanism of monitoring toilet use. Run by the Government of India, the mission aims to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 100 million toilets in rural India at a projected cost of ₹1.96 lakh crore (US\$28 billion). The mission will also contribute to India reaching Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6), established by the UN in 2015.

The campaign was officially launched on 2 October 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is India's largest cleanliness drive to date with three million government employees and students from all parts of India participating in 4,043 cities, towns, and rural areas. Modi has called the campaign Satyagrah se Swachhagrah in reference to Gandhi's Satyagraha launched on 10 April 1917 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swachh_Bharat_mission, 2019).

7.1 Aims and Objectives of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

The objectives of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan include the following

1. Construct individual, cluster and community toilets.
2. Eliminate or reduce open defecation. Open defecation is one of the main causes of deaths of thousands of children each year.
3. Construct latrines and work towards establishing an accountable mechanism of monitoring latrine use.
4. Create Public awareness about the drawbacks of open defecation and promotion of latrine use.
5. Recruit dedicated ground staff to bring about behavioral change and promotion of latrine use.
6. Change people's mindset towards proper sanitation use.

7. Keep villages clean.
8. Ensure solid and liquid waste management through gram panchayats.
9. Lay water pipelines in all villages, ensuring water supply to all households by 2019.

As a solution, I thought of some means that is as follow:

7.2.1. Use Reusable Bags

Plastic grocery-type bags that get thrown out end up in landfills or in other parts of the environment. These can suffocate animals who get stuck in them or may mistake them for food. Also, it takes a while for the bags to decompose. Whether you are shopping for food, clothes or books, use a reusable bag. This cuts down on litter and prevents animals from getting a hold of them. There are even some stores (such as Target) that offer discounts for using reusable bags! These bags are useful for things other than shopping as well. I have heard of people using reusable bags when they move! If you forget your bags at home, buy a new one. Better yet, keep a couple bags in your car so you never leave home without them (just make sure you remember you put them there)! If you are in a position where you need to use the plastic bags, reuse them the next time you go shopping, or use them for something else. Just do not be so quick to throw them out! There are some states that are outlawing or charging extra for using plastic bags. Using reusable bags helps the environment AND your budget!

7.2.2. Print as Little as Necessary

We have all had that teacher that wanted us to have a copy of every single reading when we come to class, or that professor who wanted a hard copy of the ten-page paper that is due next week. These are fine but it seems as if they do not understand that using so much paper is detrimental to the environment. What can you do? Ask your teacher if you can bring a laptop or an e-reader to class so that you can download the reading onto that and read it from there. If not, print on both sides of the page to reduce the amount of paper used. If you need to turn in a long paper, ask the professor if it is okay to print on both sides of the page and explain why you're asking. Most teachers care about the environment as well and would be willing to allow you to do so.

7.2.3. Recycle

Recycling is such a simple thing to do, but so many people don't do it. Many garbage disposal companies offer recycling services, so check with the company you use to see if they can help you get started! It is as simple as getting a bin and putting it out with your trash cans for free! Also, check with your RA to see if recycling options are offered in your dorm. Another way to recycle is to look for recycling cans near trashcans. Instead of throwing recyclables in the trash with your non-recyclables, make a point to take an extra step to locate recycling cans around your campus.

7.2.4. Use a Reusable Beverage Container

Instead of buying individually-packaged drinks, consider buying a bulk container of the beverage you want and buying a reusable water bottle. Not only will this help the environment, but it will

also help you save money since you are buying a bulk container. Many campuses offer water fountains designed for drinking as well as for refilling reusable water bottles. Make use of these fountains throughout the day when you finish off the initial beverage. Along these lines, many restaurants offer reusable containers for drinks. If you go to a certain place a lot, consider buying one of these containers to help minimize waste. A lot of coffee shops even offer a discount to customers who use a reusable container for their drinks. Starbucks, as an example, offers a small discount for customers who do this. Saving the environment and money?

7.2.5. Don't Throw Your Notes Away

At the end of the semester, students are often stuck with notes they don't need anymore, especially from General classes that had little, if anything, to do with their major. The good news is that teachers that teach General classes have to keep their material consistent with guidelines from the college/university. This means that students next semester will be learning basically the same material you learned from a class. If you took great notes, ask your teacher to connect you with students in a future class so that you can give them your notes. These notes will help students by being able to read what they are learning in the words of another student. It is beneficial to read things that are worded differently than what the teacher said. You may need to find a student on your own, depending on the teacher's load for the semester. It will feel great to help others taking the same class! You can list your notes on online college boards. While some may be willing to buy the notes at a price, it will feel just as good giving them your notes for free since you are helping them out! Also, other student organizations may appreciate notes. At the community college I attended, the Veteran's Club had a separate building for resources. They had an area for textbooks used by students, and they could check the books out for a semester, and many people would bundle notes in with the books. Ask around to see if any organization has something like this. If you can't find anyone to give the notes to, at the very least, recycle the paper you used.

7.2.6. Save Electricity!

Use energy-efficient light bulbs instead of regular bulbs. They last longer, which will save you a bit of money (every little bit helps on a college budget, right?). Make you turn off lights, the TV, and other appliances when you are not using them. Lower your air conditioning or heat when it's not necessary. This is especially true for between seasons. Open your windows in the early fall or layering your clothes in the early fall.

7.2.7. Save Water

Water is wasted more frequently than we can see. Turn off the faucet as you are brushing your teeth. Don't turn your shower on until you're ready to get in and wash your hair. Limit your water usage as you wash dishes. Changing old habits will be good for both the environment and your wallet!

7.2.8. Avoid Taking Cars or Carpool When Possible

Cars are harmful to the environment. Taking public transportation, walking, or riding a bike to class are better options that help the environment and your budget, as well as getting some exercise in! If you do need to use your car, compare schedules and places of residency with those in your classes. You can split the cost of gas and have alternating schedules for who drives when.

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