

The Concept of Value in Environmental Conservation

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper is to point out the importance of Value in environmental conservation. The concept of value is actually important aspect in the environmental conservation of contemporary issue. In this research paper, the descriptive method and the evaluative method are used to present the relationship of Value and environmental conservation. The environment is valued for all living organisms (biotic factors) and non-living variables (a-biotic factors). Like all other living beings, humans have clearly changed their environment. Man must search for a way of life that will satisfy man's material, social and spiritual needs, conserving the nature. He needs to be aware of the ecosystem and values the environment. Therefore, value is important for environmental conservation because only if the man values the natural surroundings, he will not destroy them and try to conserve them.

Keywords: value, environmental conservation and philosophical concept

Introduction

Human beings live in two worlds, namely, natural and cultural world. Natural world means natural surrounding or natural environment, such as forests, mountains, rivers, seas, streams, lakes, etc. Cultural environment is man-made, and it comprises two components - tangible and intangible. Both natural and cultural surroundings are essential and indispensable to man. As a matter of facts, man, nature and culture are inseparable spheres in which philosophers explore what "reality" or "truth" is. To fulfill both physical and spiritual needs, man depends on natural surroundings. We can get raw materials such as bamboo wood from forests and mountains to build shelters as required. So forests and mountains are benefactors of mankind. Men must try not to destroy these natural surroundings to be able to live sustainably. The environment is valued for all living organisms (biotic factors) and non-living variables (a-biotic factors). Like all other living beings, humans have clearly changed their environment. Man must search for a way of life that will satisfy man's material, social and spiritual needs, conserving the nature. He needs to be aware of the ecosystem and values the environment. Therefore, in this paper, why value is important in environmental conservation is presented.

Aim

The aim of this research paper is to point out the importance of Value in environmental conservation.

Research Methods

In this research paper, the descriptive method and the evaluative method are used to point out the importance of Value in environmental conservation.

Research Question

"Why is 'Value' important in the environmental conservation?"

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Literature Review

Value is the philosophical term for ethics. Value theory is used in at least three different ways in philosophy. In its broadest sense, "value theory" is a catch-all label used to encompass all branches of moral philosophy, social and political philosophy, aesthetics, and sometimes feminist philosophy and the philosophy of religion—whatever areas of philosophy are deemed to encompass some "evaluative" aspect. In its narrowest sense, "value theory" is used for a relatively narrow area of normative ethical theory particular, but not exclusively, of concern to consequentialists.

Human beings and all living organisms cannot be capable of living without their environment since they need food, water, clothing and shelter which are indispensable for their survival. Man is capable of understanding and appreciating the value of his surroundings - fauna, flora, the climate and the entire biosphere. Everything that exists in these surroundings has a specific meaning and is useful in its own way. Their usefulness is their value.

Environment is the sum total of all conditions and influences that affect the development and life of all organisms on earth. Each organism has its own environment.¹

Mukherjee (2002) mentioned the importance and value of nature or earth in "*Environment Management and Awareness Issues*" as follows:

Nature and wildlife are of definite economic value and components of an environment of which Man is a part and on which he is directly or indirectly dependent.²

A variety of environmental problems now affect our entire world. As globalization continues and the earth's natural processes transform local problems into international issues, few societies are being left untouched by major environmental problems. Some of the largest problems now affecting the world are Acid Rain, Air Pollution, Global Warming, Hazardous Waste, Ozone Depletion, Smog, Water Pollution, Overpopulation, and Rain Forest Destruction.

Nowadays, the Earth along with all its inhabitants is being threatened by changing weather conditions and natural disasters. The main cause of all these weather changes and natural disasters is Man. They create the various types of pollution emanating from the numerous industries. As a consequence, other living creatures, especially rare animal species, are in danger of extinction. Environmental researchers have adduced a wide variety of human attitudes and practices to account for the perceived deterioration. Environmental ethics can be cultivated from now on so that it can be part of the lifestyle of the present and future generations.

In Eastern Ethical thought, the Buddha teaches us that "Man must avoid the three unwholesome deeds such as those of greed (*lobha*), anger (*dosa*), and illusion (*moha*). For instance, Man should avoid overdoing of any kind such as that of being over-greedy, over-ambitious, and over-industrious. If man can avoid 'over

¹ Dr. Roma Mukherjee. (2002). *Environmental Management & Awareness Issues*. New Delhi: Published by

Sterling, Publishers Pvt. Ltd, p.315

² Anil & K.D. Arnal. (2001). *Environmental Studies*. New Delhi: New Age International Limited Publishers, p.1

doing' or "being extreme", the earth becomes more beautiful and more desirable to live.

Findings

By studying the literature and observing, it was found out that if the people value the nature, they conserve it. For example, the Chinese people are famous for their art. Their paintings express the beauty of nature and clearly indicate how Chinese people value it. They also conserve the nature. Similarly, westerners notice the deterioration of forests, so they activate the green movements. In Myanmar as well, the environmentalists try to make the green and clean cities in Myanmar. Nowadays, due to the social media, people notice the environmental issues and are aware of the value of natural surroundings. Therefore, they become interested in environmental conservation.

Ethics or 'morality is an indispensable and essential in the study of humanities in which philosophers are really interested since the ancient time. From the perspective of cultural philosophy, Man has three fundamental or basic needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Beside these basic needs, Man has more of other needs which may be called spiritual needs or mental needs such as aesthetic needs. In its more technically epistemological perspective, it is defined as the study of subjective and emotional values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste. More broadly, scholars in the field define aesthetics as "critical reflection on art, culture and nature". The human being needs to try to fulfill basic needs as well as spiritual needs. He also needs to follow ethical rules. The earth is possessed not only by the human being but also by all other living beings. He must understand the value of nature, the value of all living beings and the value of living together harmoniously. Only if he knows these values, he will be able to conserve the natural environment.

Today, the human being is faced with indisputable fact that the natural environment has been devastated. He is the most responsible person for the environmental deterioration. So he must repair and restore the Earth. The question concerning to repair the damage and prevent and control further depletion of the natural resources cannot rely on science and technology alone. There is a great need for man to change his behavior towards the environment. Man must search for a way of life that will satisfy man's material, social and spiritual needs, conserving the nature. Man must understand that he is not being asked to abandon development, but to aim for long-term, authentic development. Thus it is vital to change the entire mindset of the modern people. All the people need to search a new way of life that is socially, morally and environmentally good. This can be regarded as the sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Discussion

Moral obligations extend beyond our fellow human beings, present and future, to encompass other forms of life and the world itself. It is simply not enough to save the earth in order to save ourselves. We need to live in harmony with nature because we are not apart from it but part of it. Therefore, "Value" is important in environmental conservation, and it is necessary to change the mindset of the people to be able to value the natural environment. To reach the goal of sustainable development, people must understand the value of the environment and natural resources.

Conclusion

The philosophical attitude concerning environmental conservation is really important to establish wholesome and comfortable surrounding for all human being. Hence people should make our Earth become a desirable and convenient place to live in by maintaining and safeguarding all of its beautiful surroundings. People should live together in harmony and make use of the natural resources wisely and equally with other human beings as well as with all other non-human forms of life. Man must control his actions and live by his wisdom to safeguard bio-diversity. This means recognizing that Earth is not just the property of the individual but a place to be shared with all other living creatures that make the world more colorful. A happy life depends on the environment and we must change the situation only for the better. Environmental problems are very serious and difficult but humanity can cope and preserve the planet for future generations.

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