

essential for... environment (Simon, 2010).

CONCEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

The concept of environmental ethics brings out the fact that all the life forms on Earth have the right to live. By destroying nature, we are denying the life forms this right. This act is unjust and unethical. The food web clearly indicates that human beings, plants, animals, and other natural resources are closely linked with each other. All of us are creations of nature and we depend on one another and the environment. Respecting the existence of not just other humans but also the non-human entities, and recognizing their right to live is our primary duty. With environmental ethics, morality extends to the non-human world.

✓ **WHAT ARE ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS?**

Environmental ethics is a branch of ethics that studies the relation of human beings and the environment and how ethics play a role in this. Environmental ethics believe that humans are a part of society as well as other living creatures, which includes plants and animals. These items are a very important part of the world and are considered to be a functional part of human life. Thus, it is essential that every human being respect and honor this and use morals and ethics when dealing with these creatures.

✓ **As per Nature.com,** "Environmental ethics is a branch of applied philosophy that studies the conceptual foundations of environmental values as well as more concrete issues surrounding societal attitudes, actions, and policies to protect and sustain biodiversity and ecological systems."

✓ **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy** -Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of, the environment and its nonhuman contents.

✓ **Jordan (1995)** says environmental ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned with the moral relations between humans and the natural world.

According to Wikipedia, "Environmental ethics is the part of environmental philosophy which considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including humans to including the non-human world. It exerts influence on a large range of disciplines including environmental law, environmental sociology, ecotheology, ecological economics, ecology and environmental geography.

✓ Features of Environmental ethics

1. Environmental ethics is the scientific looking of various issues related to the rights of individuals on the environment.
2. It is the moral relationship of human beings with the environment.
3. It is concerned with do's and don't's of the human beings to the environment.
4. It deals with ecological rights of all creatures present today as we fruitful as those which will come next to live on the Earth.
5. Ethical standards are necessary a long - term conservation and maintenance of nature and its resources.
- eg. 6. A mango tree bears mango fruit to propagate its kind. Man plucks the fruit and eats it. But we should do justice to the tree. After eating the flesh of the fruit, don't throw away the seed. Sow it in a safe place and nurse it to grow into a tree. This is environmental ethics.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Environment ethics has produced around environmental philosophy. Many scientists have taken up the belief of philosophical aspect of environmental hazards thus giving rise to environment ethics. Currently environment ethics has become the major concern for the mankind.

Industrialization has given way to pollution and ecological imbalance. If an industry is causing such problem, it is not only the duty of that industry but all the human being to make up for the losses. But how long an artificial and restored environment will able to sustain? Will it be able to take the place of the natural resources? Environmentalists are trying to find answers to these difficult questions and all these together are termed as environment ethics.

It is the responsibility of all to ensure that environmental ethics are being met. It is somewhat difficult to make adjustments that are necessary to ensure that you are following all environmental ethics. Ethics plays an important role in our society today, and

environmental ethics and business ethics must be considered. This has become more prevalent in today's society.

Both oil and coal are bad, but not only for the environment, but for all living creatures, including plants and animals. Both are highly toxic in their natural raw state. They pollute the air and ground and water, and whether or not they are helping to create these natural disasters should be irrelevant. They are both finite, and will not last forever, and the sooner we rid ourselves of the need for these two demons, the better. While oil and coal companies continue to promote their products, and the best yet is clean coal, which is an unethical definition of something that just isn't possible, their ethics come into question, especially environmental ethics. Most of the world's ills are derived from both of these, with oil spills, mining accidents, fires, and now climate change and global warming.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AS A FIELD

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. This field received impetus when it was first discussed in the academic journals in North America and Canada. Around the same time, this field emerged in Australia and Norway. Scientists like Rachel Carson and 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. Today, environmental ethics is a widely discussed topic. It covers aspects such as ethical principles that guide our use of natural resources, our duty to take efforts towards environmental protection, and our moral responsibility towards animals.

✓ Issues in Environmental Ethics

1. **Consumption of Natural Resources :** Our natural environment is not a storehouse to rob resources from. It is a reserve of resources that are crucial to the existence of life. Their unscrupulous depletion is detrimental to our well-being. We are cutting down forests for making our homes. Our excessive consumption of natural resources continues. The undue use of resources is resulting in their depletion, risking the life of our future generations. Is this ethical? This is an environmental ethics issue.
2. **Destruction of Forests :** 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 original one? Mining processes disrupt the ecological balance in certain areas. They harm the plant and animal life in those regions. Slash-and-burn techniques are used for clearing land, that leads to the

destruction of forests and woodland. The land is used for agriculture, but is the loss of so many trees compensated for?

- ✓3. **Environmental Pollution** : Many human activities lead to environmental pollution. The rising human population is increasing the demand for nature's resources. As the population is exceeding the carrying capacity of our planet, animal and plant habitats are being destroyed to make space for human habitation. Huge constructions (roads and buildings for residential and industrial use) are being made at the cost of the environment. To allow space for these constructions, so many trees have to lose their lives. The animals that thrive in them lose their natural habitats and eventually their lives. However, the cutting down of trees is seldom even considered as loss of lives. Isn't this unethical?
- ✓4. **Harm to Animals** : Due to habitat loss, animals may enter human settlements, thus posing a threat to the people living there. In some cases, these animals are killed. Secondly, animals serve as food sources of humans, for which they are killed. Also, animal studies cause harm to animals and even their deaths. This destruction has led to the extinction of many animal species. The reduction in the populations of several other animal species continues. How can we deny the animals their right to live? How are we right in depriving them of their habitat and food? Who gave us the right to harm them for our convenience? These are some of the ethical environmental issues that need to be addressed.

THE INHERENT VALUE OF NON-HUMAN ENTITIES

Instrumental Value

An important point that the field of environmental ethics is concerned with, is whether non-human beings only have an instrumental value or whether they also have an intrinsic value. Aristotle said that "nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man", which means non-human beings only have an instrumental value; they are meant to serve as 'instruments' for human beings. From an anthropocentric point of view (which lays emphasis on human beings), the use of other living elements in nature by humans is only right. Causing them harm or destroying them is wrong only because it eventually affects human life. With this view, cruelty to animals is wrong because it develops insensitivity, and not because animals should not be harmed. Or the felling of trees is wrong because it eventually causes loss of food sources for humans, and not because it is simply unethical.

Intrinsic Value

Historian Lynn White Jr. published an essay in 1967, in which he criticized Judeo-

It is important to study environment ethics as it brings us closer and the help us understand the relationship. It will help in many ways :

- Provide better quality living to current generation
- Protect environment for future generation through regulated use of environment
- It will help spread awareness among people and thus protect the environment
- It sustains other species as well which is moral responsibility of one species i.e. humankind towards all others

✓ **Environmental ethics is maintained by the following methods**

1. Equitable utilization of natural resources.
2. Equity among the people of rural and urban areas.
3. Equity for males and females.
4. Conservation of resources for future generations.
5. Environmental rights of animals.
6. Environmental education.
7. Conservation of traditional value systems.
8. Prevention of sacrifice of animals to poojas.
9. Prevention of ecoterrorism.
10. Use of ecofriendly items.
11. Keeping the environment neat and clean.
12. Avoid carry bags and plastic items.

✓ **APPROACHES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

Environmental ethics approaches, in its broader context, takes into consideration of relationships between human beings and nature as a whole. Governments, states and international organizations have started to propose solutions to environmental problems as they become perceived and evoke awareness from the 1970s onwards. The implementation of protective environmental policies have been begun to be implemented. These developments which inform the cognition of environmental problematic have been differentiated among themselves (Turgut 2009: 28). It is possible to determine these approaches as egocentric, anthropocentric, biocentric and ecocentric approaches.

ego centric

1. **Ego-centric Approach:** This approach is an extreme anthropocentric approach which presumes that human ego is the most important component in cognizing environmental problematic (Turgut 2009: 29). Accordingly, no matter how nature is being harmed, the only entity that should be protected is always human being. In that respect, the only entity that deserves an ethical behaviour is proposed to be human being (Turgut 2009: 29). Ego-centric approach that sees nature as a resource to be used limitlessly by humans dates back to Renaissance and structures its eventual stage through the Industrial Revolution. Hence, it is admitted to put forward the perception categories of industrial societies (Ertan 1998: 135).
2. **Anthropocentric Approach:** Nature has been considered only indirectly in anthropocentric approach putting human beings at the focus (Ferry 2000: 24-25). In this approach, the aim of human activities is to compensate human necessities regardless of their costs (Turgut 2006: 29). Although it is accepted that biotic and abiotic entities other than human beings should be protected, this acceptance only exists to protect human interests. Hence, these entities are valuable only due to their provision of benefit for human beings. Likewise, the reason to value nature is to once again protect human interests. The understanding behind this approach is stated not to comprise any questioning on ethical and economical perspective particular to industrial society (Turgut 2006:29).
3. **Biocentric Approach :** This approach is based on the acceptance of necessity to regard every biotic entity other than humans as subjects of law and the necessity these entities to be treated based on this understanding (Ferry 2000: 25). Accordingly, the mentioned biotic entities are described as all the entities that are able to feel pain and pleasure (Ferry 2000: 25). Biocentric approach emphasizes the importance of all the biotic entities, consisting of human beings, animals and plants in natural life, but it does not foresee an integrated approach to environment. The understanding behind the biocentric approach criticizes toxic chemical waste that threaten the health, beauty and security of urban and rural regions and ruin human environment; soil, air and water pollution; the development of built environment against natural resources at the coastal and urban areas; nuclear stations; the thinning of ozone layer and searches for alternatives for the human beings and other biotic entities to improve their lives (Ünder 1997: 83-84).
4. **Ecocentric Approach:** Ecocentric approach regard biosphere and biotic organisms as important as human beings. Hence human beings are not taken into consideration as focal in ecocentric approach. Complementarily, the demand for right of nature on the whole including trees and all forms of vegetative and mineral structures lays the foundation of this approach. Ecocentric approach has

not only become the dominant ideology of alternative environmental movements but also put forward the problem of questioning humanism once again and necessarily by using radical terms (Ferry 2000: 25). Ecocentric ethical approach comprises various movements such as deep ecology, ecofeminism, social ecology, eco-fascism. Aldo Leopold from the U.S, Hans Jonas from Germany and deep ecology approach have been effective in the emergence of ecocentric ethical approach.

Deep ecology approach reflects the basic philosophy of ecocentric approach. Deep ecology founds on the criticism of the scientific understanding based on dominance of human beings on nature. The essence of the approach is that all entities including human beings are equal components of the living community on earth and hence human kind has no superiority than other entities (Turgut 2006: 29). Deep ecology claims that mechanical world view causes ecological problems and organic world view could solve them (Görmez 2003: 99). Deep ecology, as contrary to reformist (modern) environmentalism, puts nature to the focus, not human beings particular to the ecocentric perspective. Ecocentrism grounds the thought of protection of nature and variety within nature with the value embedded in nature itself, not the benefits of nature to be brought to human beings (Önder 2003: 96).

Points to Remember