

A VEDIC PERSPECTIVE ON ETHICAL VALUES AND SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract: Ethical values in Environment generally distinguish between right and wrong. What is right for human being as a whole and wrong? Fortunately our ancestors were well aware of this fact to love the nature and respect the nature. Unfortunately our present generation is generally forgotten the ethical values of environment and nature which creates a lot of problem for the human being or the planet as a whole. We are facing numerous types of problems like Global warming, Drought, Floods, Avalanches, Landslides, Psunamai and Earthquake etc.

It is an open secret that forest, air and water are very important for human being and planet also. We know this fact from the very ancient time and our young generation is also aware of these facts but unfortunately their practical contribution in this direction is not significant on the other hand our less literate or illiterate people are very sensitive to protect the environment and preserve the ethical values. The paper discusses about the ethical values amongst the youngest particularly the college students and the study was based on the answer the question based on ethical value on nature and environment.

Keywords- sustainability, ethical values, Rig-veda, Yajur-veda and Ather-veda.

I. INTRODUCTION

The need for prolonged development for the human being is the primary necessity but now a days we are facing an acute problem of pollution, solid waste disposal, depletion of forest cover, degradation of environment etc. which results loss of biodiversity global warming, depletion of ozone layer, changing climate have made every one concern of environment and its related issues. If we want to survive in this world then we must be careful about environment and try to protect it in all levels, otherwise the civilization will be on the verge of extinct. Our forefathers were very much concern with ethical values particularly relates to environment they not only protect them but also adore and worship them for instance trees like

Pepal, Banyan/Bargad, Tulsi/Basil etc. these were very near and dear to them. Their philosophy likes to accept the development parallel to nature not even a step against nature. But now a days situations just adverse and though the young generation know the importance of ethical values of environment but on ground level they are not making any major head way in this regard.

Actually environmental ethics have a close relationship between people and the nature. Environmental Ethics is not a new concept but it gives a new aspect to the conservation of nature and natural resources and it is consider as a matter of lively hood for mankind. In other words it is a mutual relationship between human beings with the environment. Environmental ethics entertain the rights related to ecology and all the ecosystems living creatures. We have to follow the standards that are necessary for long term conservation and protection of natural resources. Sustainability with ethics is expansion in caring of environment than only environmental protection. Sustainability within the environment is not a one side process it is always two way relations there is a shared endeavor from the economists and ecologists by equivalent caring and preserving for the ecosystem and for the human being [1].

According to the ethical values environment and its sustainability are precious and its human being's duty that he/she not allowed to destroy or deplete. It's our prime duty to preserve natural resources for the future generations. Environmental ethics emphasized on all development decisions that must simultaneously consider aspects of Economy, natural resources and Equity. If we wants to maintain a sustainable environment then we have to conserve the bio diversity, more utilization of alternative energy sources, promoting more awareness in people and

should include the global partnership. Role of environmental experts becomes more important here due to the involvement of all intellectual, philosophical and ethical perspectives for considering the environmental ethics they can enable them to think properly about the environmental problems with scientific, economic, political and ethical aspects. Thus sustainable development can be defined the development needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The aim of this study is to find out the knowledge of students related to the ethical values basically based on environment and sustainability and to know how the young generation thinks about the environment synchronize with in a balanced way.

A. Aim

- To understand the Environmental awareness in our Vedas.
- To understand the present environmental condition in terms of air, water and forest resources.
- To include the ethics in students' life by making awareness.

II. RELEVANCE OF ENVIRONMENT WITH VEDAS

According to the Hindu mythology our ancient culture had a caring and dignified view of the blessedness of all life creatures and humans were the connections in between the nature and materialistic life. In ancient history of India all the rishi's Muni's always had a attraction and respect towards the nature. In their Gurukula's they developed a environmental friendly culture and they considered the protection of nature as a Dharma. They regarded the earth as mother and all their creatures as a symbols of God, they always tried to conserve the flora, fauna and all the natural resources in other ways they actually worshipped them. In earlier time peoples were responsible for their surroundings they believed in ecological responsibility [7].

The whole stress of ancient vedic scriptures was that human beings cannot separate themselves from natural surroundings and Earth has the similar relationship with man as the mother with her child. Our ancient legendary scriptures like Ramayana, Mahabharata,

Vedas, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas and Smriti have a clear cut indication about the preservation of ecology and environment for maintaining the harmonious relationship between the human and nature.

Our ancient Rishi's, Muni's were believed that God is in all the living creatures, he is always surrounds us.

Our Vedas are the first ancient texts for the human being. They are considering the most valuable treasure of Indian heritage in all over the world. The Vedas deal with knowledge, the knowledge of all gods, flora and faunas, all the medicines all the rituals and Yoga etc. Our four Vedas Rig-veda, Sama-veda, Yajur-veda and Ather-veda cover the knowledge of both physical and spiritual fields

Our Vedas are the ancient source of knowledge that was based on the realistic approach. For example the Rig Veda demonstrates the celebration of nature and in this text main hero is the God of Rain. All four Vedas are a series of sacred texts used in religious rituals and sacrifices. The Vedas are essentially representative poetry of high literary value [2]. Our ancestors were deeply concerned for the betterment of the environment and this could be easily seen in the oldest scriptures of the world i.e. Rig-veda, Yajur-veda and Ather-veda. Rig-veda which is the oldest one in all four Vedas are very much concern with the importance and the benefit of the environment. The environment could be seen in all the ten mandels of the Rig-veda. Our Sents were concerned with different layers of the environment particularly ozone layer which filters the sun rays and check mate with bad particles to percolate on the earth.

The medicinal values of the plants are well known factors to our ancient Rishi's (Scientist) and in a new way (Oldest one) to cure the human being was developed i.e. the Ayurveds. This paper mainly concern with the ethical value in environment and the importance of the environment could be traced back from the oldest scriptures of the world i.e. Rig-veda onwards.

Rigved [3]

२४८. अस्व१ नारमृतमसु शेषजमपामुत प्रशस्तये । देवा भवत वाजिनः ॥१९॥

“Water is just like ambrosia and it has the medicinal value too. Oh God you may appreciate such water and gets the inspiration and enthusiasms”. Our modern Doctors and Scientist all are agreed on the importance of pure water but since the Rig-veda our Rishi's had

already smell out the importance of pure water and according to them it could benefit the human being physically and spiritually.

१४१. इयं ते यज्ञिया तनूरपो मुञ्चामि न प्रजाम् । अथ होमचः स्वाहाकृताः पृथिवीमाविशत
पृथिव्या सम्भव ॥१३॥

Oh earth your body (area) is the right place for the Yagya. We must denunciate polluted water in this pond and useful essence is good for the subjects (people). This action is helpful to get rid off from the sins. According to this mantra polluted water should always be discarded and put into the pond for filtration (for biological purification in separate oxidation pond).

Our ancient Sents/Rishi's were well aware the fact that earth is surrounded by naturally by natural atmosphere which protect us from the harmful radiations/ particles from the sun and outer universe. This mantra tells us about the protection of ozone layer. It should be protected from the harmful pollutants.

Ather-veda [4]

६७. सं सं स्रवन्तु सिन्धवः सं वाताः सं पतत्रिणः ।

इमं यज्ञं प्रदिवो मे जुषन्तां संस्त्राव्येण हविषा जुहोमि ॥१॥

This mantra explains the importance of rich biodiversity. Rich biodiversity have a balanced ecosystem in the environment it shows the harmonious relationship in among the abiotic and biotic components of the environment. It also gives us the message of unity to work together for the nature. All the rivers, wind and birds are flows /move together means it is a symbol of harmony.

Yajur-ved [5]

१४१. हिरण्यवर्णाः शुचयः पावका यासु जातः सविता यास्वग्निः ।

या अग्निं गर्भं दधिरे सुवर्णास्ता न आपः शं स्योना भवन्तु ॥१॥

In Ather-veda our ancient Sents also emphasize the importance of water reputedly that pure water is just like the gold or even more which could save us from several diseases and also provide peace and pleasure.

III PRESENT ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF NATURA RESOURCES

In present scenario peoples are forgetting the duty or sense of belongingness towards the environment as a

६८०. इममूर्णायुं वरुणस्य नाभिं त्वचं पशूनां द्विपदां चतुष्पदाम् । त्वष्टुः प्रजानां प्रथमं
जनित्रमग्ने मा हिंसीः परमे व्योमन् । उष्ट्रमारण्यमनु ते दिशामि तेन चिन्वानस्तनवो
निषीद । उष्ट्रं ते शुग्च्छतु यं द्विभस्तं ते शुग्च्छतु ॥५०॥

result our natural resources are getting depleted. Rapid industrialization, urbanization and materialistic life have become a prime cause of environmental degradation. In all around the world environmental degradation is defining itself in the form of loss of fertile soils, desertification, depleting forest, contamination of fresh water and its availability, and an tremendous loss of biodiversity. These are very serious consequences, and have effects on the country's economy and its development. Table 1. and 2. below gives some impacts of development activities on environment.

TABLE 1. CHANGE IN FOREST COVER OF STATES/UTS BETWEEN
2013 AND 2015

S. no	States	Total Forest cover (2013)	Total Forest cover (2015)	Change in forest cover (Sq.km)
1	Arunachal Pradesh	67321	67248	-73
2	Assam	27671	27623	-48
3	Bihar	7291	7288	-3
4	Chattisgarh	55621	55586	-35
5	Meghalaya	17288	17217	-71
6	Mizoram	19054	18748	-306
7	Nagaland	13044	12966	-78
8	Telangana	21759	21591	-168
9	Tripura	7866	7811	-55
10	Uttarakhand	24508	24240	-268

Source: India State of Forest Report [6]

According to the India's National Forest Policy 1988 country has to cover about 33% forest cover geographically. Table 1 shows the tree cover estimation in various states. According to the forest report of 2015 forest coverage area was maximum in the west costal area of country where as Himalayan reason have least coverage area as a natural cover. It is evident from the tabulated data that from 2013 to 2015 there is a large depletion of forest cover. The maximum loss was in Mizoram (306 Sq.km) and after that Uttarakhand region 268 Sq. Km, Telangana 168 Sq. Km and Nagaland 78 Sq. Km lost their forest cover respectively.

TABLE 2: SHOWING STATUS OF AIR POLLUTANTS IN MAJOR 10 STATES.

S. no	States	SO ₂ Max $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	SO ₂ Ave. $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	NO ₂ Max $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	NO ₂ Ave. $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	RSPM Max $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	RSPM Ave. $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$	NAAQS Stand. SO ₂	NAAQS Stand. NO ₂	NAAQS Stand. RSPM
1	Andhra Pradesh	54	7	79	21	293	73	50 Residential, Rural and other Areas 20* Ecologically Sensitive Area	40 Residential, Rural and other Areas 30* Ecologically Sensitive Area	40 Residential Rural and other Areas 40* Ecologically Sensitive Area
2	Delhi	46	5	224	65	892	220			
3	Jharkhand	42	21	57	38	273	155			
4	Kerala	48	4	75	14	273	46			
5	Maharashtra	155	16	167	34	660	105			
6	Meghalaya	60	5	27	10	170	57			
7	Tamil Nadu	40	11	73	21	289	65			
8	Uttar Pradesh	41	11	91	29	592	182			
9	Uttarakhand	30	26	33	29	392	147			
10	West Bengal	153	7	344	51	411	104			

Table 2 also shows the changes in air quality states wise. Actually our atmosphere is composition of several gases but in a proportion but due to anthropogenic activities this ratio is getting deplete day by day. In this table it is clearly evident that three air pollutants SO₂, NO₂ and RSPM showed a great variability. Table 2 shows the 3 major air pollutants status in 10 big states. In case of SO₂, fortunately the average value of SO₂, are below the average value, the average value is 50 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for residential area and 20 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ for the country side but in Uttarakhand the value is more than the average value of rural side i.e. 26 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Uttarakhand is very sensitive ecological area on the map of India where we see the beautiful range of Himalayas which are full of biodiversity and very valuable from the human point of view for example Nanda Devi biosphere is highly sensitive area and it is luckily not disturbed much by the interferences of the human being. The some precaution should be undertaken for the other forest area of Uttarakhand. The standard value of NO₂ is 40 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ residential rural and other areas and 30 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in ecological sensitive area but the high level of Delhi, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Maharashtra are great concern and the areas of UP and UK which are highly ecological sensitive now on the verge of alarming stage so before situation may be worsen, corrective measures may be taken in this regard. In case of particulates matter the average value for ecological sensitive area is same showed a extreme values in all

10 states. Delhi showed the highest value of RSPM 220 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ that comes under the category of poor air quality.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the study to assess the importance of ethical values among the students and how much they concern with environmental values of their past great epic like Vedas. We have framed a few questions which were based on the conservation of environment and nature. This paper is based on survey of students. This survey was based entirely on Enginnering and MBA students from different colleges.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The fundamental research questions to be answered by the students of B.Tech. and M.B.A in which they answered very confidently. All these questions were based on simple questioners and correlated one to another and create a web to know and follow the realistic approach of the life in harmonious relationship with environment.

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After due observation of ethical values in connection with nature it was found that young generation are still mentally attached with trees and the beauty of flora and fauna. Though practically they generally not much involved for the preservation and sustainable growth

of the environment but simultaneously they are aware of the adverse effect of ignoring the nature and its treasure. According to table 3, more than 85% of students love the beauty of nature and also admire and appreciate too. The nature which is a creation of Almighty, and if it disturbs the 95% of the youth are quite concern also with it. They also felt that so many disease can be kept away if the nature is enriched and blessed with its original shape and it is also observed by all that our ancient scriptures are full of nature and so many lines enlighten the nature.

The majority of the young generation also full energetic, creative and worth while they remain with the nature and serve for conservation. All the students were also agreed that our ethical values are very helpful to provide a safe protection and sustainable growth to the nature. They also agreed that surrounding of nature leads to positivity in temperament and attitude, which could have a major positive impact in their personality as a whole.

TABLE 3: SHOWING THE PERCENTAGE OF RIGHT ANSWERS OUT OF 200 STUDENTS.

S.No.	Asked questions	Percentage of right answers
1	The beauty of nature lies in the hand of Almighty.	85%
2	Each one of us is sensitive enough to concern with environment.	95%
3	Is there any provision for wood land in the vicinity of every town and village in Uttarakhand	10%
4	To preserve the forest also increased / helpful to enhanced the economic growth.	90%
5	We can get rid of so many diseases if the nature is enriched.	95%
6	The general health of the people is concerned with environment.	95%
7	Our ethical values are helpful to protect the nature.	99%
8	Our ancient holy books emphasized the importance of nature	100%
9	Have you made a little affords to protect the nature?	60%
10	Are you feeling energetic and happy in the lap of nature?	95%
11	Your temperament have a positive impact as an when you surrounded by the nature.	95%

VII CONCLUSION

The relationship of human being and nature is unique in this world as we could seen in our past but at present scenario it is going fade day by day. The present situation demands some immediate action from the human being particularly our young generation should be more concern towards the conservation of nature. It's the time to rejuvenate our ancient culture and tradition we have to follow the path of sustainability with latest technology or green technology.

Our great Rishi were very much concern about the peace not only from one side, peace comes from universe and earth, peace comes from healthy water, medicinal herbs and all the Gods. Almighty may establish peace in the whole planet and we also get eternal peace. It means peace is possible if the natures will rich with health biodiversity thereafter peace prevail throughout planet as well as individuals. This process further demands the assimilation of the ethical values and conservation of nature in the overall framework of environmental education at the educational level and social involvement.

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