

Environmental Ethics: Scope of Environmental Ethics, Importance of Environmental Ethics, Environmental Pollution

Q.1. What is environmental ethics?

Ans. Environmental ethics is a branch of applied ethics which studies the moral relationship between human beings and the natural environment.

Q.2. Name two theories regarding environmental ethics.

Ans. Anthropocentrism and eco-centrism are the two theories regarding environmental ethics.

3. What is environmental pollution?

Ans. Environmental pollution is the introduction of contaminants into the environment that cause harm to humans or other living organisms or that damage the environment, which can come in the form of chemical substances, or energy, such as noise, heat or light.

4. What is Environmental ethics? What are the issues involved in Environmental ethics?

Or,

Discuss central issues of environmental ethics.

Ans. Environmental ethics is a branch of applied ethics which studies the relation of human beings and the environment. Environmental ethics believe that humans are a part of society as well as other living creatures, which includes plants and animals. These are very important part of the world and are considered to be a functional part of human life. Environmental ethics is concerned with issues of responsible person's conduct with respect to natural landscapes, resources, species, and nonhuman organisms. It is a cluster of beliefs, values and norms regarding how humans should interact with the environment.

There are several environmental issues that have threatened our environment and human life. The following are some of the issues involved in environmental ethics-

Consumption of natural resources: With the rapid increase in world's population, the consumption of natural resources has increased several times. This has degraded our planet's ability to provide the services our human need. The consumption of resources is going at a faster rate than they can naturally replenish.

Deforestation : Big industries and multinational companies from the major section which exploits forest's unsustainably. However, the brunt of the destruction is faced by the poor and tribals who are the inhabitants of the forests. It leads to the loss of biodiversity, habitat and extinction of plants and animals.

Environmental pollution : The actions of human lead to the environmental pollution. The excess demand for resources is also a factor that contributes to the problem as we all need food and shelter. When these things are so desired and need to be fulfilled, the natural balance is disturbed. Engineering developments are resulting in resource depletion and environmental destruction.

Equity: People living in the economically advanced parts of the globe use greater amount of resources and energy per individual and also waste more resources. This is at the cost of poor people who are resource-deprived. The inequitable use of resources is disturbing environmental balance.

Animal rights: The plants and animals that share the earth with humans have a right to live and share the earth's resources and living space. Animal welfare is relevant to environmental ethics because animals exist within the natural environment and thus form part of environmentalists' concerns.

Industrialisation: The massive industrialisation has caused pollution and ecological imbalance. If an industry is causing such problem, it is not only the duty of that industry but all the human beings to make up for the losses. But how long an artificial and restored environment will be able to sustain? Will it be able to take the place of natural resources? Environmentalists are trying to find answers to these questions, and all these together are termed environmental ethics.

To cope up with the issues of environmental ethics, human beings must reach some value consensus and cooperate with each other at the personal, social, national, regional, multinational and global levels. Global environmental protection depends on global governance. An environmental ethics is, therefore, typically a global ethics with a global perspective.

Unit-II

Types of Environmental Ethics, Eco-feminism, Deep Ecology, Social Ecology

Q.1. Who coined the term 'Eco-feminism'?

Ans. It was Francoise d'Eaubonne who coined the term 'Eco-feminism'.

Q.2. Who coined the term 'Deep Ecology'?

Ans. The term 'Deep Ecology' was coined by Norwegian environmental philosopher Arne Naess in 1973.

Q.3. Who first spoke about 'Social Ecology'?

Ans. The American social theorist Murray Bookchin talked about 'Social Ecology' for the first time.

4. What is eco-feminism?

Ans. Eco-feminism is understood as an analysis of environment from a feminist point of view. Eco-feminism is both an approach to environmental ethics and an alternative feminism. The term 'eco-feminism' was coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne. A feminist theologian Ruether describes eco-feminism as the symbolic and social connection between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. Eco-feminism is a convergence of ecology and feminism into a new social theory and political movement. It addresses gender relations, social and economic systems, the use of science, the formation of cultural values and human self-understanding in relation to the natural world.

5. What is deep ecology?

Ans. The term 'deep ecology' was coined by the Norwegian environmentalist Arne Naess in 1973. Deep ecology holds the view that all living things are intrinsically valuable of their pragmatic value for mankind. Deep ecologists maintain that people must recognise that animals, plants and the ecosystems that sustain

them are valuable in and of themselves apart from any use or instrumental value they might have for human beings.

6. Distinguish between 'deep ecology' and 'shallow ecology' Ans. The Norwegian environmentalist Arne Naess has drawn a distinction between 'deep ecology' and 'shallow ecology'. In deep ecology, one needs self-realisation and true understanding of nature in order to act, while shallow ecology is pragmatic. It focusses on immediate changes and through this action a deeper ecology may evolve.

The shallow ecology stresses the desirability of conserving natural resources, reducing level of air and water pollution, and other policies primarily for promoting the health and welfare of human being. Deep ecology, on the other hand, holds that all living things are intrinsically valuable of their pragmatic value for humankind.

7. What is social ecology?

Ans. The American social thinker Murray Bookchin was one who for the first time spoke about social ecology. Social ecology is a philosophical theory which studies the relationship between ecology and social issues. Social ecology is an approach to society that embraces an ecological, reconstructive and communitarian view on society.

8. Write a note on Eco-feminism.

Ans. 'Eco-feminism' may be understood as an analysis of environment from a feminist point of view. Eco-feminism is both an approach to environmental ethics and an alternative feminism. The term 'eco-feminism' was coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne. Ruether, an advocate of eco-feminism, describes eco-feminism as the symbolic and social connection between the oppression of women and the domination of nature. She suggests that the women's movement must unite with the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socio-economic relations and the underlying values of society. Eco-feminism is a convergence of the ecological and feminist analysis and movements.

Eco-feminism is a third wave of feminism. In the third wave of feminism there is a convergence of ecology and feminism into a new social theory and political movement. It addresses gender relations, social and economic systems, the use of science, the formation of cultural values, and human self-understanding in relation to the natural world. Feminist theorists originating from liberal, cultural, social, radical and postmodern critiques reflect distinctly on the relationship between women and the natural world. In addition, eco-feminist positions embrace distinct ecological paradigms including resource-based environmentalism, social ecology, deep ecology etc.

Ecological feminism is considered as feminist because of its commitment to the recognition and elimination of male gender bias and the development of practices, policies and theories that do not reflect this bias. It is ecological because of its understanding and commitment to the valuing and preserving of ecosystems.

Environmentalists should be feminist and feminist should be environmentalist. Eco-feminism is the combination of the two.

9. Write a note on Social Ecology.

Ans. Social ecology is a philosophical theory which studies the relationship between ecology and social issues. The American social theorist Marry Bookchin was one who for the first time spoke about social ecology. Social ecology is an approach to society that embraces an ecological, reconstructive and

communitarian view on society. This ideology seeks to reconstruct and transform present outlooks on both social issues and environmental factors while promoting direct democracy.

Social ecology claims that the environmental crisis is a result of the hierarchical organisation of power and the authoritarian mentality rooted in the structures of our society. The core principle of social ecology is that ecological problems arise from deep-seated social problems. Ecological problems cannot be understood without facing social issues. The ecological damage done by our society is more than the harm it inflicts on humanity. Social ecology emphasises that the destiny of human life goes hand-in-hand with the destiny of the nonhuman world. The advocates of social ecology believe that factors like racism, sexism, third world exploitation are responsible for deforestation of rain forests. Bookchin claims that environmentalists focus on the symptoms of the problems instead of underlying causes. Instead of changing society fundamentally for a comprehensive solution, environmentalists are engaged in singling out particular problems like overpopulation and deforestation.

Social ecology lays emphasis on the importance of establishing a more egalitarian social system that is driven by equality and cooperation rather than individual profits. Collective action and equal concern for all aspects of life are fundamental to this form of ecology. It is important to understand that social ecology views human beings as merely very intelligent primates. Despite beings highly intelligent, humans are still part of ecology and should by no means be considered a 'special case' either among mammals or animal life in general.

Social ecology has continued to have a strong influence over society and views on environmental issue into the 21st century and will likely to continue to be important as concerns increase over ongoing problems, such as global warming and deforestation.

Unit-III

Theories of Environmental Ethics : Anthropocentrism, Ecocentrism, Biocentrism

Q.1. Name two theories regarding environmental ethics.

Ans. Anthropocentrism and eco-centrism are the two theories regarding environmental ethics.

Q.2. Name two anthropocentric ethicists.

Ans. John Passmore and Kristin Shrader are the two anthropocentric ethicists.

3. What is anthropocentrism?

Ans. Anthropocentrism is a theory regarding environmental ethics. It is the view that all environmental responsibility is derived from human interest alone. Anthropocentrism holds that humans are morally significant and have direct moral standing. Anthropocentrism considers nonhuman natural entities and nature as a whole to be only a means for human ends.

4. What is eco-centrism?

Or,

What does eco-centrism means?

Ans. Eco-centrism is a theory regarding environmental ethics. It is a philosophy or perspective that places intrinsic value on living organisms and their natural environment, regardless of their perceived usefulness or importance to human beings. Eco-centrism is a term used in ecological political philosophy to denote a nature-centred system of values. It is that holistic environmental theory according to which not only living beings, but the whole ecosystem, including the abiotic part of nature, is worthy of moral consideration.

5. What is biocentrism?

Ans. Biocentrism is the view that both human and nonhuman living things have moral worth in themselves, and our responsibility to protect the environment derives from both. Biocentrism asks us to give equal priority to all other living organisms when making moral and ethical choices.

6. Explain Anthropocentrism as a theory of environment. What are its limitations?

Ans. Anthropocentrism is the theory which states that all environmental responsibilities are derived from human interests alone. Anthropocentrism literally means 'human centredness'. An anthropocentric ethic grants moral standing exclusively to human beings and considers nonhuman natural entities and nature as a whole to be only a means for human ends. In one sense, any human outlook is necessarily anthropocentric, since we can apprehend the world only through our senses and conceptual categories.

In the mainstream of the Western cultural tradition, only human beings have been treated morally. Thus, for those working in that tradition, anthropocentrism is the most conservative approach to environmental ethics. John Passmore and Kristin Shrader-Frechette were among the first to advocate a strictly anthropocentric approach to environmental ethics. Shrader-Frechette says that it is hard to think of an action which would do irreparable harm to the environment or ecosystem, but which would not also threaten human well-being. Some of the damages that people have done to the environment certainly does threaten human well-being. Global warming and the depletion of ozone layer are some of the notorious examples. Since the environment is crucial to human well-being and human survival, we have an indirect duty towards the environment. Thus, an anthropocentric ethic claims that we possess obligations to respect the environment for the sake of human well-being and prosperity. We must ensure that the earth remains environmentally hospitable for supporting human life and even that it remains pleasant place for humans to live.

Despite their human-centredness, anthropocentric environmental ethics have nevertheless played a part in the extension of moral standing. This extension has not been to the nonhuman world though, but instead to human beings who do not yet exist. The granting of moral standing to future generation has been considered necessary because of the fact that many environmental problems, such as climate change and resource depletion will affect future humans much more than they affect present ones. Moreover, it is evident that the actions and policies that we are contemporary humans undertake will have great impact on the well-being of future individuals. In the light of these facts, some philosophers have founded their environmental ethics on obligation to these future generations. If we make our conception of human well-being both wide and long as anthropocentric ethics hold, there will be no need to develop newfangled non-anthropocentric environmental ethic.

While the history of Western philosophy is dominated by this anthropocentrism, it has come under considerable attack from many environmental ethicists. Those thinkers have claimed that ethics must be extended beyond humanity, and that moral standing should be accorded to the nonhuman natural world. Some have claimed that this extension should run to sentient animals, others to individual living organisms, and still others to holistic entities, such as rivers, species and eco-systems. Under these ethics, we have

obligations in respect of the environment because we actually owe things to the creatures or entities within environment themselves.

7. Explain Eco-centrism as a theory of environmental ethics.

Ans. Eco-centrism is a philosophy or perspective that places intrinsic value on living organisms and their natural environment. Eco-centrism is a term used in ecological political philosophy to denote a nature-centred system of values. It holds that ecological collections, such as ecosystem, habitats, species and populations are the central objects for environmental concern.

Eco-centrism is a holistic environmental theory' which attaches moral consideration not only to living beings but the whole ecosystem, including the abiotic part of nature. This way of understanding nature develops from the conviction that ecology plays a vital role in our understanding and valuing of nature. Eco-centrism maintains that an adequate eco-ethics must include our relations with ecological systems, processes, along with non-living natural objects. The environmentalists who subscribe to this eco-centrism contend that these things have intrinsic value and not mere instrumental value. And so they owe a direct moral obligation to us.

Eco-centrism finds inherent values in all of nature. It takes a much wider view of the world than does anthropocentrism. Eco-centrism is the broadest of world views. It goes beyond biocentrism by including environmental systems as whole, and their abiotic aspects. It goes beyond zoo-centrism by explicitly including flora and ecological contexts for organisms. Eco-centrism can be considered as umbrella that includes bio-centrism and zoo-centrism, because all three of these world views value the nonhuman.

Eco-centrism through its recognition of human's duty towards nature, is central to solving our unprecedented environmental crisis. It expands moral community from being just about ourselves. It means that we are not concerned only with humanity; we extend respect and care to all life. Ecocentric care for life has been an important theme for many individuals and societies for ages. So, there is no philosophically or scientifically sound justification why moral concern should not be extended to all of the ecosphere both its biotic and abiotic components. Eco-centrism reminds us that the ecosphere and all life is inter-dependent and both humans and non-humans are absolutely dependent on the ecosystem processes that nature provides. An anthropocentric conservation ethic alone is not adequate for conserving biodiversity. The advocates of eco-centrism maintain that a transformation towards an ecocentric world view, and corresponding value system is a necessary path towards the flourishing of life on earth, including that of our own species.

Unit-IV

Animal Ethics : Respect of Animal & Ecology, Animal Rights

Q.1. Name two animal rights activists.

Ans. Dogan and Tom Regar are two animal rights activists.

Q.2. Which theories deny moral rights to animals?

Ans. Kant's deontological theory and utilitarianism deny moral rights to animals.

3. What is animal ethics?

Ans. Animal ethics is a branch of applied ethics which examines human-animal relationship, the moral consideration of animals and how nonhuman animals ought to be treated. It is the applied ethical discipline that deals with moral features of human behaviour to the nonhuman animals. The fundamental principle of equality means equal considerations of interests. This is the basic moral principle which holds good in case of both man and other animals.

4. What is animal ethics? Do animals have rights as man?

Ans. Animal ethics is a branch of applied ethics. It examines human-animal relationships, the moral consideration of animals and how nonhuman animals ought to be treated. It deals with the moral features of human behaviour to the nonhuman animals. The fundamental principle of equality means equal considerations of interests. This is the basic moral principle which holds good in case of both man and other animals. It also provides the principle to make humans committed to act on this principle in their relation to the nonhuman species.

There is a controversy revolving round the issue of whether animals to be granted rights in the same way as humans have rights. The advocates of the animals rights movement argue that animals to be granted rights, which would limit the manner in which they are used. On the other hand, animal rights opponent deny rights to animals and assert that human beings are the only creatures who deserve rights due to their higher moral status. Ethical theories like utilitarianism and Kant's deontological theory have demonstrated that animals do not deserve similar rights as humans do.

According to Kant's categorical imperative theory, for a creature to be afforded rights, it has to be able to act as a moral agent. According to Kant's theory, the ethical agent is one that follows the rules at all times regardless of the consequences of the action. Animals lack the ability to follow rules since they are driven by desires and often act on impulse. Due to this lack of ability to act as moral agents, animals cannot be granted autonomy since they do not have a moral status. Utilitarianism also holds the same view. For the utilitarians, the ethical action is the one that causes maximum benefit for the highest number of people. According to utilitarianism, killing animals is right since it benefits many people.

Virtue ethics theory also supports denial of some rights to animals. According to this theory, the ethical is one that is done with good motive or without vicious motives. The character of the agent who carries out the action is analysed to assess the ethical nature of the action taken. The virtuous action might, therefore, require the extermination of animals that pose a threat to human existence. A denial of animal rights and liberty often leads to better outcome for the animals.

Advocates of animal rights believe that animals have rights and a moral status similar to human beings. Tom Regan, a staunch animal rights philosopher, argues that animals have rights based on moral obligation of human beings not to inflict unnecessary suffering and death, upon animals. Animal rights advocate declares that rights should not be dependent on the mental or cognitive capacities of creatures. Instead each creature has inherent rights that should be respected by others. The advocates of animal rights assert that the denial of animal rights has an adverse impact on human morality. While the rights of animals are disputed, there is general agreement that all human beings have certain rights. Human beings are required to act in a manner that does not violate the rights of others and any behaviour that might encourage the violation of human rights is undesirable. Denial of human rights lead to inhuman treatment of animals. One of the extreme expressions of this inhumanity is animal cruelty.

In spite of different views concerning the existence or lack of animal rights, opponents and supporters both agree that animals have value. However, this is not equal due to the significant differences between humans and animals.

Unit-V

Bio-Ethics: Meaning and nature of Bio-ethics, Importance of Bio-Ethics in Contemporary Society

Q.1. What is the meaning of bioethics?

Ans: Bioethics is the study of ethical, social, and legal issues that arise in biomedicine and biomedical research.

Q.2. What is an example of bioethics?

Ans: Examples of topic areas that have been the focus of bioethics for a long time are organ donation and transplantation, genetic research, death and dying, and environmental concerns.

Q.3. Why is bioethics important?

Ans: Bioethics not only provides a guideline to medical professionals about clinical decision-making, advancements in medical technologies, but also playing vital role in policy changes and legislation in recent years.

Q.4. What are the principles of bioethics?

Ans: The four principles of biomedical ethics as outlined by Beauchamp and Childress have become the cornerstones of biomedical ethics in healthcare practice. These principles, which we shall look at more closely in this post, are autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence and justice.

Q.5. What is the nature of Bioethics?

Ans: Bioethics is a broad interdisciplinary field that uses ethical, legal, and policy analysis to predict and resolve issues raised by the use of medical and biological technology. As such, it is often concerned with issues that involve disability. For example, bioethicists debate about screening the genetic codes of embryos for disabling conditions, the use of cochlear implants for deaf children, and the refusal of life-saving treatment by the newly disabled. Cognizance of the research by disability scholars can enrich these debates by incorporating empirical evidence and nuanced frameworks to understand the lived experiences of people with physical, emotional, and cognitive disabilities.

The application of ethical principles to humans and animals is part of the general subject of science and engineering ethics as this is just another area where knowledge is generated and used for

benefit. This applies not only in the way humans relate to animals and the way humans relate on a one-to-one basis with other humans, but also in cases when humans operate in the societal state. It is clearly a vast subject and is the matter of many learned tomes.

Bioethics impinges on the promulgation of science in the use of humans and animals for experimental purposes. Such issues have been dealt with in great detail by bodies set up to monitor, regulate, and control such activities. Codes of behavior have been written and are widely distributed and used, as exemplified by the Declaration of Helsinki: World Medical Association, revision of Hong Kong 1989.

Other bioethical issues concerning humans abound. Abortion, contraception, eugenics, euthanasia, homosexuality, infanticide, heroic medicine, prophylaxis versus therapy, informed consent, resource allocation, harassment, and discrimination are all issues that are under constant review in popular and specialist journals. In addition, there are the issues referred to earlier dealing with our ability to manipulate genomes and cells where the latter can become human embryos.

Q.6. What is the most important principle of bioethics?

Ans: Principle of non-maleficence. Not harming the patient, which is part of the Hippocratic Oath, is considered to be of the highest importance.

Q.7. What are the applications of bio ethics?

Ans: **Areas of bioethics research that are the subject of published, peer-reviewed bioethical analysis include:**

- Abortion.
- Alternative medicine.
- Animal rights.
- Applied ethics.
- Artificial insemination.
- Artificial life.
- Artificial womb.
- Assisted suicide.

Q.8. What is the importance bio ethics in contemporary society?

Ans: Bioethics is crucial in contemporary society because it provides a framework for ethically navigating complex medical and biological advancements, ensuring that new technologies are used responsibly and with consideration for patient rights, social justice, and the potential impact on

human life, especially as these fields rapidly evolve with issues like gene editing, organ transplantation, and end-of-life care.

Key reasons why bioethics is important today:

- **Addressing ethical dilemmas:**

As medical technology advances, new ethical questions arise regarding issues like assisted reproductive technologies, genetic screening, euthanasia, and brain-computer interfaces, which bioethics helps to analyze and guide decision-making on.

- **Patient autonomy and informed consent:**

Bioethics emphasizes the importance of respecting patient autonomy and ensuring they fully understand the risks and benefits of medical procedures before making decisions, promoting informed consent.

- **Resource allocation:**

With limited healthcare resources, bioethics can help guide decisions about who should receive treatment and how to allocate scarce resources fairly.

- **Research ethics:**

Bioethics establishes ethical guidelines for medical research, including the protection of vulnerable populations and ensuring research is conducted with integrity.

- **Social and cultural considerations:**

Bioethics encourages dialogue and reflection on the social and cultural implications of new medical technologies, considering diverse perspectives and values.

- **Promoting public trust:**

By providing ethical frameworks for medical practice, bioethics helps to build public trust in healthcare systems and research endeavors.

Examples of bioethical issues in contemporary society:

- **Genetic engineering:**

Ethical considerations around modifying human genes for therapeutic or enhancement purposes

- **Embryonic stem cell research:**

Debates regarding the use of embryos for research and potential ethical implications

- **End-of-life care:**

Decisions surrounding withdrawal of life-sustaining treatment, advance directives, and physician-assisted suicide

- **Organ transplantation:**

Issues related to organ allocation, donor consent, and potential exploitation
