

Cultural Influence on the Utilization of Environmental Resources

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Introduction

Everything in our environment is referred to as the environment. They could be biotic (living) or abiotic (non-living) entities. It includes natural forces including chemical and physical ones. Living things exist in their surroundings. They engage with it frequently and adjust to the circumstances of their surroundings. Animals, plants, soil, water, and other living and non-living objects interact in the environment in a variety of ways. It is important to understand that culture is "a set of unique spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional qualities of society or a social group and that it includes in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, tradition, and beliefs" (UNESCO, 2002). Furthermore, "Cultural systems of meaning determine how people understand climate change and create a historical and sociocultural context within which consequences are experienced and responses are generated."

India has a population of 68 million people, who are divided into 227 ethnic groups and 573 tribal tribes. These 68 million people are all descendants of one of the six racial stocks: Negroid, Proto-Australoid, Mongoloid, Mediterranean, West Breach, and Nordic. These ethnic groups, most of which are tribal indigenous peoples, have long protected and managed their area's biodiversity proximity to forests. These tribes employ both raw and prepared wild food plants and seek refuge in woodlands. When compared to tubers, leaves, and seeds, the flower and fruits are typically eaten raw. Tribes use wood for fuel, forest products, and timber. These tribes have long lived in the forest and have grown to have a special bond with it. Classical Indian myth is replete with similes of man in unison with the

environment. Many of the rituals which to modern society may seem meaningless and superstitious were traditional strategies to preserve the intrinsic relationship between man and nature. The worship of trees, animals, forests, rivers, and the sun, and considering the earth itself as Mother Goddess, were part of the Indian tradition.

Relationship between humans and the environment

To meet needs and maintain health, all people depend on the environment and natural resources. By using natural resources and disposing of garbage, people have the biggest negative effects on the ecosystem. People, animals, plants, waterways, and other elements of the natural world may be harmed by these activities if they are not carefully controlled.

The environment is affected by everyone, although different lifestyles result in different changes. Early humans were gatherers and hunters who ingested a range of plants as well as hunting animals. Early humans had a small population because most ecosystems could only support a relatively small number of hunter-gatherers. Despite this, early humans had a major environmental impact due to the remarkable changes that hunting caused in animal populations. Some archaeologists claim that human killing caused the extinction of numerous big prehistoric species, such as mammoths, kangaroos, and rhinoceroses.

Cultural Influence on Agriculture

The environmental impacts of various human cultures have varied. Some cultures, especially hunter-gatherers and small-scale agricultural ones, have minimal environmental effects. Due to their extensive use of resources as a source of energy, urban and industrial societies have the biggest impact on the environment. The local culture and regulations vary from region to region, with some emphasizing environmental protection while others have not.

Early societies created agriculture to improve the number of calories available from a given area of land when an expanding number of individuals started to stress the environment. The availability of additional calories allowed the human population to expand, having a greater negative impact on the environment. More people degrade the environment by using more resources and producing more garbage. Ecosystems are altered by agriculture itself. Most of the time, clearing the land is necessary, which reduces the diversity of natural plants and removes animal habitats. Native soils are destroyed by plowing, and irrigation uses consume more water than the environment can use. The extensive grazing caused by



domesticated animals can stress native flora and produce wastes that could be dangerous. The effects of humans on the environment are further exacerbated by intensive agriculture and industrial activity.

Cultural Influence on the Industry

The types and levels of pollution that exist today vary widely from country to country. A portion of this can be linked to the types of resources and activities present in a location, and a portion to cultural attitudes and practices regarding the environment. Extensive deforestation, which is the shrinkage of a forest due to human activities, is a striking example.

The significant pollution caused by economic activity in some nations brings to light several cultural distinctions between the West and developing nations. Many locals in other developing countries do not see pollution as an issue or see it as less significant than outsiders. Others contend that since the industrialized nations of today became so by causing pollution, the developing nations ought to have the same rights.

Many nations have discovered through experience that unchecked pollution eventually results in major issues that cost a lot of money to fix. Citizens and authorities urged that industry reduce its pollution output and clean up contamination. Citizens of many other nations have grown accustomed to low pollution levels and low-impact logging, mining, and manufacturing practices after years of living under anti-pollution regulations. Rising sickness rates in developing countries are already a result of environmental devastation. Numerous citizens of these nations are already pressuring their governments to shield them from hazardous pollution and stop the environmental degradation that is sapping their resources.

Indian culture has always placed a high value on living in harmony with the environment. This has been amply reflected throughout the history of the Indian people in a wide range of traditional behaviours, religious beliefs, rituals, folklore, arts, and crafts, as well as in daily life. Almost every nation in the world has long-standing traditions that are rooted in the ethics of preserving the environment. Numerous ancient cultures describe how people in those societies revered the elements that makeup ecosystems, drew their subsistence from natural resources, and simultaneously protected the environment that supported them. These communities lived in harmony with nature. Indigenous people are frequently despised by modern men as being archaic, outdated, and superstitious. They may



be underprivileged, illiterate, and in many other ways disadvantageous, yet they have a profound awareness of ecosystems and the forces that maintain them.

Indigenous people in many countries attribute supernatural powers to plants, animals, rivers, oceans, mountains, the wind, the sun, and the moon. Respect for nature is inherent in many religious faiths.

Some examples of cultural influence on the environment

Numerous Hindu gods are seen riding on animals. Hindu and Buddhist cultures have always revered and safeguarded sacred trees and woodlands. The idea that God created nature and all of its parts and gave humanity the duty of protecting it is the foundation for environmental conservation in both Christianity and Islam. The unity of all life on earth and the responsibility of humans to take care of it have been proclaimed by numerous religions and moral philosophies.

The earliest pictorial portrayal of human interest in, love for, and reverence for nature in India may be found in the 10,000-year-old cave paintings at Bhimbetka in Central India, which depict birds, animals, and people living side by side in harmony. Evidence of human interest in nature dates back to the Indus Valley civilization and is found on seals with images of rhinos, elephants, bulls, and other creatures.

The preservation of select plots of land or forests as "holy groves" dedicated to a god or a village God, safeguarded, and worshipped, is one of the best examples of ancient traditions in India based on religious faith that have profoundly contributed to nature conservation. These can be found all over India, but are particularly common in areas of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Maharashtra as well as along the western coast and the Western Ghats. There are numerous small snake-only jungles in Kerala (Sarpakavu, Sarpa meaning snake, kavu meaning jungle). There are also Ayyappan kavus devoted to Lord Ayyappa, the most well-known of which is the holy hill of Sabarimala with an Ayyappan temple, visited by millions of worshippers every year.

The peepal tree is one of the best examples (*Ficus religiosa*). The Khejdi tree (*Prosopis cineraria*) and the banyan tree (*Ficus 'Benghalensis*) have historically been venerated and never cut down. Other trees and plants that are protected in other places and cultivated on temple grounds are also thought to be sacred.

The sandalwood tree, beetle nut, palm, neem, coconut palm, juniper, Champa, lotus, tulsi, pepper, etc. are a few examples of them. Even though they are grounded in religious belief, these conventional cultural attitudes have greatly aided India's efforts to preserve and spread a variety of tree and plant species.

Numerous Hindus and other groups revere and hold many animals in high regard; as a result, they have long been protected. The Bengal region protects the blue rock pigeon, which Saint Hazrat Shah Lal considers sacred and which is never hunted since it is sacred to Lord Karttikeya.

In Rajasthan's renowned temple to the goddess Karnimata, rodents are revered and permitted to reproduce. Despite being immensely feared, the tiger and the cobra are given protection for ethical reasons. The Jatakas, or tales of the Buddha's earlier life, are rife with Bodhisattva animal incarnations in Buddhist mythology. Of the twenty-four Tirthankaras revered by Jains, 18 have an animal as their cognizance.

To order to guarantee rain, he is shown convincing people to worship the mountain. A concern for the preservation of forests and wildlife is also represented by Krishna devouring the forest fire. Stone and metal sculptures independently or as a component of temples, palaces, and historical structures reflect the idea of vana devatas (tree goddesses), vehicles of gods and goddesses, sacred trees, tree and animal worship, etc. There have been several depictions of the love and admiration of nature in literature and scripture:

Tribes practice ecological prudence by following environmental conservation guidelines when harvesting edible plants. edible plant tubers, such as those of the *Dioscorea* spp. when the vine's leaves turn yellow and have reached physiological maturity, are harvested by tribal people. The natural tubers are carefully dug without harming related species.

Bishnoi community in Rajasthan, northern India This diverse area is highly known for its environmentally conscious, outdoor-oriented culture and activities. The Bishnoi people also adhere to the concept of orans, or sacred groves, in their communities. The concept of orans is thought to have originated in India during the hunter-gatherer era. In the 1800s, it was properly documented. As a result, the communities in their villages have a particular non-human place that is separated from where people live and is treasured because they believe this specific piece of ground has spiritual importance. The entire biodiversity is



conserved here since it is believed to be the celestial residence of gods and ancestral spirits. It is typically forbidden to hurt animals, cut down trees, or acquire materials in these areas. These areas are host to several threatened bird and animal species, as well as precious medicinal plants, unusual types of crops, and other plants that sustain a healthy ecology. These trees occasionally also hold untapped water supplies, which are essential in Rajasthan's dry areas.

Conclusion

Traditional ethics of nature conservation could be viewed as a source of inspiration and direction for the future at a time when people all over the world are troubled by the destruction of the environment and the tragic implications of this.

In India, many cultures and religious beliefs regard over a hundred of these species of trees and plants as sacred. Nature and wildlife are frequently depicted in Indian painting, sculpture, architectural embellishment, and decorative arts, conveying love and reverence and, therefore, the ethics of conservation. Indian miniature paintings and sculptures provide a variety of depictions of woods, vegetation, and animals. The life of the Hindu god Krishna is a common theme in miniature paintings, and it emphasizes the value of ecological harmony.

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