

Virtue Ethics a Framework for Sustainable Development

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Abstract: Environmental extremity or adversity is one of the dominant problems in world wide. For this, the main concern of ethics is to provide a crucial and a cogent remedy for sustainable development. Due to maximization of certain issues concerning sustainable development this paper intends to demonstrate virtue ethics as a method in terms of which such issues can be minimize. An appropriate structure for sustainable development can be attainable through the application of virtue ethics and its implementation in the daily life of human beings. Here we discuss about the virtue ethics which is considered as the character of human being that helps them in attaining a good life. Therefore, virtue ethics is important to study in order to establish a behavioural and habitual foundation that can be conducive for sustainable development. The prime motto of virtue ethics is to discover the protective and potential character of human being which can be more effective for sustainable development.

Keywords: Environmental Problems, Sustainable Development, Sustainability, Virtue Ethics

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is a set of systematic principle for the sake of human development simultaneously it provides protection to natural resources and our ecosystem (Payne & Raiborn, 2001, 158). Development not only means extravagance but also means prosperity, peace and happiness. If a country concentrates only on economic development and neglects the environment, it can't be called as developed because development and environment are inter-related. To take care of these issues, science is not enough alone and to stay silent is not an approach to achieve sustainable development. Here it is important to analysis and examine Aristotle's notion of virtue ethics in the light of sustainable development to enhance the intrinsic and instrumental value of natural environment.

The problems of sustainable development including social, economic, and environmental are the outcome of human unethical attitudes and behaviour. Since human being occupies the culmination in the society, and regarded as the most powerful creature and also the influence of anthropocentric disposition he started to misuse his power. It results, the environmental degradation, social deterioration and economical imbalance. Therefore, this paper tries to implement virtue ethics as a cardinal principle to maintain a harmonious relationship between the social, economic and environmental domain (Jordaln & Kristjansson, 2015, 13). In this sense there is a necessity of moral resurrection to reconstruct or renovate the human behaviour or tendency for the sake of both the living and non-living being. The present paper

would investigate the issue of sustainable development with special reference to the Virtue Ethics. Virtue ethics highlights the moral importance of habit such as generosity, courage, humility, friendship, love, honesty and other ideals (Axtell & Olson, 2012, 183). These virtues lead us to the ultimate happiness. According to Aristotle the ultimate and heights good is eudaimonia, “a term that is often translated as “happiness” but which is better rendered as “well-being” or “flourishing” (Treanor, 2014, 26). The renowned philosophers like, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle who discussed virtue theory explicitly from classical to contemporary. However, this paper addresses the views of Aristotle’s virtue theory, which directly leads to a pro-environmental behaviour and the moral duty of humans is to use natural environment rationally more intelligently and also protect and preserve the natural environment, which ensure the sustainable development.

2. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH RESURGENCE OF NATURE

There are number of reasons like climate change, global warming, acid rain, green house gas effects, pollution including noise, soil, and air for which we need a resurgence of nature. These above calamities occur mainly due to deforestation although it brings some constructive activities for social development. But it has many destructive activities for this world suffers from certain misfortunes and predicaments like environmental degradation soil eruption, ecological imbalance and so on. In this purpose we should rejuvenated or regenerated nature for sustainable development. Human being mis uses the natural resources for the sake of economic benefits which exploiting the environment. The notion of ‘development’, the word ‘sustainability’ as a wider sense of meaning that we use in our day to day life diversely. The fundamental meaning of ‘sustainability’ is to sustain our natural environment for our future generation and also for ecological balance. However, the concept of ‘sustainability’ has a miscellaneous meaning for which it is very difficult to allocate its definition with reference to a particular sphere. For example, the term ‘sustainability’ denoted two sense of meaning, firstly by the traditional neo-classical economists it is refers to a momentary period of time to manage the economic related issues, secondly, on the other hand, by the new classical economics it means a method to overcome and manage conflicts and confusions related to ecological and environmental discourses which take long period of time. The concept of sustainable development is based upon “socio economic development in line with ecological constraints, the concept of needs (redistribution of resources to ensure the quality of life for all) and the concept of future generations (the possibility of long-term usage of resources to ensure the necessary quality of life for future generations)” (Klarin, 2018, 68). Use and utilization of natural resources for sustenance in the basic condition for life and cannot be gruded in human beings or in any other living being. By virtue of their supreme intelligence, and rationality individuals attempt to make his life comfortable and satiable on this earth. In this ongoing process, less deliberately they affected non-human nature. The effects have summed up to what we call ‘environmental crisis’. In other words, the environmental crisis was nothing but a by-product of the whims of our consumptive and protective activities; aided by what is often called our supreme rational intelligence. Unfortunately, our supreme intelligence could not warn us of the forthcoming crisis. For eons, nature’s danger calls and alert signals have gone unnoticed. The answer most simply put is our increasing distance from nature. Hunting, division of labour, change from subsistence to commercial farming, industrial revolution, technological advancements; in short, every step human being have taken towards development has also dissociated them from nature. More comfortable our lives became; more dependent we became on man-made machines. We started regarding ourselves as separate from and superior to nature. From being a part of nature, we glorified our position and quite unwittingly became the exploiters

of nature. Almost all the revolutions, be it green revolution or the industrial revolution or golden fibre revolution, black revolution and so on but not changed we thought. So, we need a psychological revolution in terms of which we can change the way we perceive and conceive our relationship with nature. And this psychological revolution may come through Aristotelian virtue ethics.

3. HUMAN- NATURE RELATIONSHIP

Human nature relationship is not new to mankind, it is as primitive hills. In the very ancient time this relationship was very much nature-oriented means nature considered as more superior than human being. It's some burning instances are still observed like tree -god, ocean- god, forest -god etc. At that time man worshiped nature and this is roughly considered as teleological or organic relation of man with nature. The introduction of "Cartesian philosophy and its explanations regarding the natural environment and human-nature relationship, the mother metaphor has left its place to slave metaphor" (Yayli, 2015,178. In modern time man started to exploit nature with the influence of science and technology. These anthropocentric tendencies considered as mechanical relation of man with nature. Here man is regarded as more superior than nature. Due to this mechanical relationship between man and nature, environment lost his potentiality and actuality and for this reason man tries to bring a parallel relationship between man and nature in the name of sustainable development. The respect and surrender to nature were solely out of fear and an inability to bring about any transformations in nature. This attitude, however, did not last long. Soon enough humans set about any transformations in nature. This attitude, however, did not last long. Soon enough humans set about conquering their fears: studying nature, developing tools to transform the face of the Earth, and technologies to utilize its resources. From a helpless being they now felt self-reliant and ready to take charge. They now saw themselves as masters of nature, which was to be utilized and exploited as they desired. This attitude too was bound to change as the realization dawned that nature was not an infinite reservoir and by damaging it, we are beckoning our ruin. Unfortunately, the realization dawned only after humans have created enough havoc in nature to bring their own survival at stake. Although a chance has begun, it has not yet been attained to the extent required to save ourselves and our planet. From history, it is possible to chalk out the steps that have been traversed together by human beings and nature, which eventually brought about human rule over nature leading to destruction of nature.

4. PHILOSOPHY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Development is an intangible concept; it has a short history which emerged late nineteenth century. The connotation of 'development' means advancement of financial condition in the community, upgrade of individuals living status, enhancement of social life style. "sustainable development" has denoted an effort to meld concerns for environmental protection, economic well-being, and social justice" (Futrell, 2004, 9). Development is the goal of every individual, society, nation, and this empirical world. Development is a broad and much wider academic concept which has various aspects like socio-economical, socio-political, socio-cultural etc. and its denotation implies different approach.

Though there are various definitions which characterise sustainable development it does not have any particular sense of meaning. We can not find the common and general definition which it refers. So, the term various chaotic and confusing. Sustainable development is based understood as an environmental, social and economical protection policy which also focus on ecological harmony and anti-anthropocentric view. The world commission on environment and development define sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the

present without compromising the need of future generation to meet their own needs” (Joseph, 2009, 212). The term development is universally described as commercial and technological growth. Consequently, a new and a convenient world view was announced, where all the people of the earth were to move along the same track and aspire to only one goal development. And, the roar to “development” was clearly defined by the statement: “Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace” (Sachs, 1992, 275). Economic growth and economic development were inter related words in and before 1960s. However, economists like Schumpeter, Hincks, Maddison, Kindleberger, enunciated a distinction between economic development and economic growth. They implied ‘growth’ to developed countries as these countries have already solved problems related to the basic social needs like food, clothing and shelter; and ‘development’ to developing and underdeveloped countries which are striving for food, shelter, clothes, basic education etc. despite that, it is not the case that a country with high precipitate income is developed. In the present scenario, the concern of the developed nations is to maintain a higher economic level and a better standard of living. There is an upliftment in socio-economic status, that is economic development raised in a better way after the two world wars. Very after the governments of various countries achieved a full phase involvement into the path of economic growth, so that countries could be able to fulfil the basal objectives for sustenance of life. Economic growth is a process of qualitative, quantitative and structural changes, with a positive impact on economy and on the people’s standard of life, whose tendency follows a continuously ascendant trajectory. There is a partial and irregular in the economic distribution which led to a state of nepotism for which rich is becoming richer and poor is becoming poorer. The notable two downsides of the present economic system are: discrepancy in income distribution and destructive exploitation of plant’s resources.

5. ROLE OF VIRTUE ETHICS WITH REGARDS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Judgments of character such as kindness, generosity and honesty are initial for virtue ethics which is a normative ethical theory. These are the established characters and essential conditions for human flourishing and wellbeing (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). In contrast, the judgment of action is an initial for the adversary ethical theories of Consequentialism and Deontology. Virtue ethics spotlight the character of the human being however the rival ethical theories notify us what to do. A virtuous person should take care of nature for their own sake but not as causative to human flourishing. An ethics always should be a value-based ethics. Always doing the right for the personal benefits is more virtuous. Ethics is not that human love and enjoy and what gives us happiness, it is about what is right and what ought to do, whether it is like or not. Furthermore, these should may not generally lay on any semblance of the other human or on what elevate character. Virtue ethics is keener on character improvement, and keeping in mind that we can ascribe characteristic incentive to the “respectability, security and magnificence” of the biotic community, it remains a human action that will be assessed from a human-in-nature point of view. We are esteeming human greatness as well as the place from which it emerges. It isn't as though we find characteristic incentive in the realm of nature and human esteem is an extra to it. Human value is recorded inside the genesis of nature; you can't appropriately value one without the other. Living admirably and the exercises that advance the great life result from natural affectability. Collaboration exemplified by high minded activities saves a place for human support and eventually a place-based personality befitting human improvement.

Environmental virtue ethics always starts from human interest. Environmental virtue ethics stipulate the norms of character we have the relation with the natural environment which is an approach to normative environmental ethics. Human beings and natural environment are both interdependent with each other. The study of the ethical affiliation between them is called as Environmental ethics. It develops a proper understanding of the human-nature relationship, determines the norms and generates supervision on environmental issues by using those norms. Here we are talking about environments virtue ethics which is the part of environmental ethics for which judgment of character are foundational. Environmental ethics deals with human ethical responsibility towards the nature, that is flora and fauna, which is good for our environment in today's concern. Environment should be treated as greater love and caring in nature. In the context of environmental virtue and vice, people are different in nature on the basis of their consign, educational values and good deeds. In case of environmental issues, human being must be attentive about the ecology. Our primary duty is to protect and promote the eco-system, discuss more about it in the educational institutions as well as in public. For all the environmental issues, the effectiveness is to promote the ecological sustainability. Natural environment helps to develop physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually and also provides health and aesthetic benefits. These natural benefits are more available to some people who love the experience of nature and relate to it. Natural environment is a source of nurturing, renewal, knowledge and joy for those people.

6. CONCLUSION

Virtue ethics motivates human beings to develop their character to be moral, kind and respectable towards the whole biotic community. In every situation the practice of character building should be implemented as a means of a particular attribute because in present time it is necessary to give attention on environmental problems and to save nature from disaster. Moreover, the environmental issues also demand proper and optimum use of the natural resources to balance the eco-system. That is why we have to use the resources of nature in such a way so that it can fulfil the needs of our present generation without comprising the needs of the future generation. Therefore, we need to create awareness about the serious environmental concerns among people and have to unite and work together across the world in order to save our environment. Aristotelian virtue ethics upholds such virtues which are related to human character, and moral virtues through which we can develop our character and save our biological community.

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