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Ethical Perspective of Women towards Environment

Mrs.S.Velanganni* & Mrs. M. Aaakina Barveen** Dr. D. Jeba Selvi Anitha***

[Women are prone to play vital role in the management and sustenance of environment. Their active participation in ensuring judicious use of natural resources is almost a sine qua non for achieving sustainable development. Almost every woman in rural area maintains a kind of relationship with environment. Domestic chores performed by rural womenfolk such as water, fodder, fuels etc are fulfilled by working in the forests and fields. Undoubtedly, the life style of women in urban area is different from rural area; nevertheless, they are also engaged in harnessing water and energy resources for domestic resources. This makes women developing peculiar relationship with environment. Women have closer relationship to the nature than men which makes them more significant agents of preserving the eco-system in a proper way. Ed.]

Economics and ecology are interrelated subjects and ecology is regarded as the permanent economy. The development of all nations is dependent on the proper utilization of nature (Environment) and Economics. Adam Smith, the father of Economics says that 'Economics is a science of wealth.' That means how wealth is produced, exchanged and distributed. He says that, out of self-interest, man earns wealth and individual's wealth becomes nation's wealth.

Likewise, environment is a multidimensional subject. It is closely connected with economics, business, ethics and culture. Business makes employment opportunities available to an individual and wealth to a nation. "Environment is always helpful to Economics, but Economics is always harmful to Environment". Today's business is carried out based on self-centered and self-interested attitude. In this paper, the authors have made an attempt to present their views on the perception of women towards economics and environment.

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Importance of sustainable development

Oxford dictionary says that "the development is a stage of growth or advancement". It is mentioned as an act or an instance of developing or a process of being developed. That means, development is a process by which people meet their requirements and improve their living conditions only when such development leads to social, economic and cultural betterment that satisfies the needs and values of all interested groups, not only for the present but also for the future by conserving natural resources and through diversity of life, it becomes sustainable.

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) has stressed that the world's desire is sustainable development. This can be attained by the policies and the programmes carried out on the basis of equal emphasis on economics and environment. Such policies can be framed only by understanding the consequences of the depletion of natural resources and the faster growth of industries. The outstanding women environmentalists' perceptions have to be considered while framing and implementing such national and international policies.

Economics and Environment

"We want to have infinite growth out of finite

resources of nature." Human life cannot exist in isolation. The life depends on the nature (environment). The economic life, social and cultural activities of mankind are shaped by environment. "Mother nature is beautiful in giving all the resources to be shared by all living beings on this globe. She gives the gifts freely. At the same time, economics is the science which tells about utilization of resources given by the nature for the development of humanity.

Professor Lionel Robins has stated that the wants are unlimited but means are limited. So the man has to find out and select alternative choices to use the limited resources without destroying them. Proper utilization of economic and natural resources is very essential in this competitive world.

Besides utilizing the resources for the production of materials, the production process pollutes nature by emissions and wastes. There must be a proper trade transaction between economic development and exploitation of resources without impairing the ecological balance. Factors like mushroom growth in special economic zones, rapid industrial development, rapid pace of urbanization due to migration of rural population to urban and semi urban areas etc have contributed to the loss of cultivable land.

Infrastructural development to accommodate mega industrial projects and expansion of rail and road transport has further contributed to shrinking of agricultural land. Development without affecting the nature is the only viable and acceptable solution for sustainability. But it is not an easy job. That will take much time, and it needs the co-operation among business people, academicians, economists and ecologists. They have to frame such policies and those policies have to be supported and suggested by the government bodies.

Women and ecology

Women have vital roles in environmental management and development. Their full participation is essential to achieve sustainable development. Every woman in rural area has a kind of relationship with environment. Their daily routine requirements such as water, fodder, fuels etc are

fulfilled by working in the forests. But the life style of women in urban area is different from rural area. Women particularly living in pastoral background have peculiar relationship with environment. Women have closer relationship to the nature than men which makes them to manage the eco system in a proper way.

Rural area covers nearly 2/3rd of the total population in India. The rural women have more chances to be with nature. Women are very close to life-supporting system like water and fuel; though they get credits for nurturing these life-supporting systems, concurrently it leads them to a big problem when the environment is polluted.

In addition to that, women are affected by the environmental degradation. It is mentioned in journal *United Nations Chronicle* that breast cancer, abortion and skin problems are the outcome of much usage of pesticides. Another serious problem which is mentioned in the '*Daily Thanthi*' is that, around 415 new born children have been identified with various diseases in Tirupur district recently.

Tamil Nadu Health Ministry says: "If we don't take the matter seriously it will result in increasing number of disabled children in future. Waste Effluents from the dying industries are the causes for such diseases." It has been mentioned in *Dhinakaran* (daily) that 600 persons have been affected by various diseases in Thane, Maharashtra, due to improper management of chemical Industries' waste management system.

Following are the perceptions of some of the outstanding women Environmentalists:

- Wangari Mathai, the Nobel Prize winner who started the Green Belt movement has coined a slogan that "Ecology is the permanent economy".
- Chendi Prasad-led Chipko Movement that emphasized on preservation of trees for maintaining eco-equilibrium.
- Rachel Carson, a scientist-writer and ecologist, has written a book titled *Environment, Silent Spring*. In her book, she has warned that

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जागरूकी

यानी भूकंप से निपटने की तैयारी



झुको, ढको, पकड़ो



जैसे ही भूकंप के झटके लगें :

- फौरन किसी खुले स्थान की ओर दौड़ें
- यदि यह संभव न हो तो तुरन्त झुक कर अपने डेस्क या मेज के नीचे चले जाएँ
- अपने सिर को किसी मज़बूत चीज़ या अपने बस्ते से बचाएँ
- दौड़ कर किसी कोने में खड़े होकर अपने आप को बचाएँ



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