ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

What are environmental Ethics?

Environmental ethics is a branch of ethical thought that focuses on the relationship between human and their natural environment. It is a holistic approach to understanding and evaluating our moral obligations to protect and preserve the enviroment. Environmental ethics seeks to bring together the interests of both humans and the environment, recognizing that both are interdependent and have intrinsic value.

A variety of ethical theories, including consequentialism, utilitarianism, and virtue ethics, define environmental ethics. These ethical theories provide a framework for understanding the moral obligations we have to the environment and how we should act to protect it. Environmental ethics also draws upon the fields of philosophy, economics, ecology and law providing a comprehensive approach to understanding and evaluating the moral implications of human actions.

Types of Environmental Ethics

- Libertarian Extension: Libertarian extension is a type of environmental ethics that focuses on an individual's right to do whatever they want with the environment and its resources.
- Ecological Extension: Ecological extension is a type of environmental ethics that focuses on preserving the

natural environment and its resources in order to maintain the balance and health of the ecosystem. This concept stresses the importance of humans working with nature in order to sustain it for future generations.

- Conservation Ethics: Conservation ethics is a type of environmental ethics that focuses on preserving natural resources for future generations by ensuring that current resources are not depleted or damaged beyond repair. The concept encourages individuals to use natural resources responsibly and judiciously so there will be enough for future generations.

Importance of Environmental Ethics

- Environmental ethics is essential for protecting the environment, species and resources.
- It promotes sustainable practices and encourages people to become more aware of the impact their actions have on the environment.
- Environmental ethics help to build better relationship with nature, recognizing its intrinsic values, not just its instrumental value.
- It encourages us to think beyond our immediate needs and consider the long-term implications of our actions.
- Environmental ethics are also promotes better public polices and laws, which help ensure that our environment is properly cared for.

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Example of Environmental Ethics

One example of environmental ethics in action is using renewable energy sources. Renewable energy sources are sources of energy that are naturally replenished and can be used without depleting natural resources. Example of renewable energy sources include solar, wind and hydropower.

Renewable energy sources are seen as an ethical choice, as they do not cause pollution or deplete finite resources.

Principles of Environmental Ethics.

1. Ecological sustainability: We must strive to use resources responsibly and with an eye to preserving ecosystems and biodiversity.
2. Human responsibility: We are responsible for our own actions and decisions and their consequences for the environment.
3. Human equity: We must strive for a just world where the rights and needs of humans, animals and plants are respected and protected.
4. Precautionary Principle: We should take precautions against environmental harm, even when scientific evidence is inconclusive.
5. Right to know: individuals have the right to access information about invironmental issues.
6. Right to participate: Citizens have the right to participate in environmental dicision-making processes.

WASTELAND RECLAMATION

Wasteland: The land which is not in use is called waste land. The wasteland is unproductive, unfit for cultivation, grazing and other economic uses. About 20% of the geographical area of India is wasteland.

Type of Wasteland

Wasteland can be divided into two types.

1. Uncultivable wasteland
2. Cultivable wasteland.

1. Uncultivable wasteland: These lands cannot be brought under cultivation.

Examples: Barren rocky areas, hilly slopes, stony or leached or gully land (or) sandy deserts. etc.

2. Cultivable wasteland: These are cultivable but not cultivated for more than five years. Cultivable wastelands are important for agricultural purposes.

Example: Degraded forest lands, gullied lands, water logged and marsh lands, saline lands. etc.

Cause of Wasteland formation.

Due to soil erosion, deforestation, overgrazing, water logging, salinity.

The increasing demand for fire-wood and excessive use of pesticides.

Over-exploitation of natural resources.

By the sewage and industrial wastes.

5. Mining activities destroy the forest and cultivable land.
6. Growing demand for fuel, fodder, wood and food cause degradation and loss of soil productivity.

Objectives or Need of Wasteland reclamation.

1. To improve the physical structure and quality of the soil.
2. To prevent soil erosion, flooding and landslides.
3. To avoid over exploitation of natural resources.
4. To improve the availability of good quality of water for agricultural purposes and industrial operations.
5. To conserve the biological resources and natural ecosystem.
6. To provide a source of income to the rural poor.
7. To supply fuel., fodder and timber for local use.

Methods of Wasteland reclamation

1. Drainage: Excess water is removed by artificial drainage. This process is used for water-logged soil reclamation.

. Leaching: Leaching, is the process of removal of salt from the salt affected soil by applying excess amount of water. Leaching is done by dividing the field in small pots. In continuous leaching 0.5 to 1.0 cm water is required to remove 90% of soluble salts.

. Irrigation practices: High frequency irrigation with controlled amount of water helps to maintain better water availability in the land.

4. Green - manures and biofertilizers: Application of green manures is found to improve the saline soils.

5. Application of Gypsum: Soil sodicity can be reduced with gypsum. Calcium of gypsum replaces sodium from the exchangeable sites. This process converts clay back into calcium clay.

6. Afforestation Programmes: The National Commission on Agriculture (NCA) has launched several afforestation shemes. The National Development Board has decided to bring 5 million hacres of waste land annually for firewood and fodder plantation.

7. Social Forestry Programmes: These programmes involve strip plantation on road, canal-sides, degraded forest land, etc...