**ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

**Environmental ethics**

─ The study of the ethics of human interactions with and impacts upon the natural world and

natural systems; the branch of ethics concerned with practical issues (such as pollution and

biodiversity preservation) and matters of principle arising from such interactions.

**Anthropocentrism (human centered)**

─ A stance that limits moral standing to humans, confines the scope of morality and moral

concern to human interests and regards nothing but human well-being as valuable intrinsically.

─ This theory holds that only humans have moral value; we do not have direct responsibilities to

the natural world.

**Non-anthropocentrism**

─ This theory grants moral standing to such natural objects as animals and plants.

─ This theory upholds animal rights and taking care of threatened extinction of many plant and

animals species.

**Holistic theory**

─ A theory which locates independent value in wholes (such as specie or ecosystems or society as

a whole) rather than in individual organisms or members of society.

─ We have moral responsibilities to collections of individuals rather than those individuals who

constitute the whole.

─ Our ethical duties are drawn to collections or ‘wholes’, e.g., species, populations, ecosystem,

etc.

**ECO-FEMINISM ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND FEMINISM**

Concerns of environmental ethics.

− Humanity’s relationship to the environment.

− Understanding of and responsibility to nature, and obligations to leave some of nature’s

resources to posterity.

− Environmental ethics is the study which makes awareness of human duties toward the

nature as well as how to resist disaster.

**Environmental ethical**

**theories**

**Anthropocentrism**

• Men dominated ethics

• We have duties to human only

**Non-anthropocentrism**

• Moral standing to living and non-living beings

• We have direct duties to animals and plants

**Eco-feminism**

• Critical to male domination society as well as environment

• Concerns of feminism and concerns of environmentalism

are intertwined

**Eco-feminism**

− Eco-feminism originated from the term “ecofeminisme”, first introduced by Fancoise

d’Eubonne in 1974.

− Eco-feminism is the position that there are important connections between the domination

of women and the domination of nature, an understanding of which is crucial to both

feminism and environment.

− Eco-feminism is a synthesis of feminism with environmentalism.

− The synthesis arises from the idea that the domination of women reflects the same

patterns of thought and behavior as the domination of nature.

− Some of the most important connections between the domination of women and the

domination of nature are conceptual.

− There exists a conceptual framework to dominate women and nature.

Conceptual Framework

− A conceptual framework is a set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions which

shape and reflect how one views oneself and one’s world.

− It is a socially constructed lens through which we perceive ourselves and others.

Oppressive Conceptual Framework (OCF)

− An oppressive conceptual framework is one that explains, justifies and maintains

relationship of domination and subordination.

− Patriarchal oppressive conceptual framework explains, justifies and maintains the

subordination of women by men.

Two features of oppressive conceptual framework

− The first feature is that the OCF tends to interpret the world by means of value dualism Ñ

opposed pairs of concepts, one of which is traditionally valued as superior and the other as

inferior.

**Value dualism**

Superior values Inferior values

Culture Nature

Reason Emotion

Male Female

Mind Body

Human Nature

Normal Deviant

− The second feature of OCF is called a logic of domination which is used as justification of

subordination.

− The logic of subordination is stated in the following way.

(i) Humans do, and plants and rocks do not, have the capacity to consciously change the

community they live.

(ii) Whatever has the capacity to consciously change the community in which it lives is

morally superior to whatever lacks this capacity.

(iii) Thus, humans are morally superior to plants and rocks.

(iv) For any X and Y, if X is morally superior to Y, then X is morally justified in

subordinating Y.

(v) Therefore, humans are morally justified in subordinating plants and rocks.

− This 1st set of argument is pointing to logic of subordination between human vs. nature.

− The 2nd set of argument is between man vs. women.

(i) Women are identified with nature and the realm of the physicals; men are identified

with the human and the realm of the mental.

(ii) Whatever is identified with nature and the realm of the physical is inferior to whatever

is identified with the human and the realm of the mental (which is superior).

(iii) Thus, women are inferior to men (the superior).

(iv) For any X and Y, if X is superior to Y, then X is justified in subordinating Y.

(v) Therefore, men are justified in subordinating women.

− Combining these two features, we arrive at the idea that culture in general is justified in

dominating nature in general or that men in general are justified in dominating women in

general.

− Eco-feminism holds that the logic of domination that is used to justify the domination of

humans by gender, racial or ethnic, or class status is also used to justify the domination of

nature.

− Therefore, eco-feminism brings change in traditional feminist issues and includes naturism

as a legitimate feminist issue.

− Feminism is the movement to end sexist oppression.

− It involves the elimination of all factors that contribute to the systematic domination or

subordination of women.

− A feminist issue is any issue that contributes in some way to understanding the oppression

of women.

Feminist Issues

− Equal rights concerning education, property, food and work and wages, marriage and

divorce and child custody.

− Feminist issues are believed to be conceptual ones.

− Environmental degradation and exploitation are feminist issues because an understanding

of them contributes to an understanding of the oppression of women.

**Eco-feminists:**

− Begum Rokeya, Karen Warren, Val Plumwood.