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Changed Human Values in India & Pollution: Analysis of Some Contemporary Issues

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Changed Human Values in India & Pollution: Analysis of Some Contemporary Issues

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I. INTRODUCTION

Environmental Pollution (Pollution) is the word that we are hearing since our childhood but now we realized that Pollution must have started with the birth of life of anatomically modern humans on this planet. So, the problem of Pollution is not new and in fact it is 02 Lakhs years old [01]. So, question arises why this problem, which is not new, but now, getting so much of attention? The answer lies in following facts- all natural resources like water; air and soil are limited in quantity, population of all living objects is increasing (especially humans) and the most important fact is that our modern society is not obeying the natural laws. We believe that we have been polluting the earth since last 02 Lakhs years but as the quantum was not so big so the Mother Nature was kind enough to absorb and accommodate it, but now it seems that we have crossed the limits. Nature has capability to rebuild its own system but this needs time, and with the speed with which we are disturbing this system, it has become very difficult to restore the system. The simple pure natural cycle has been converted to a vicious cycle.

Studies [02] show that there is a strong correlation between population and pollution. Exponential growth of population leads to more consumption of natural resources, toxic wastes generation, depletion of trees and forest lands. Unfortunately, creator of the earth has not provided "User Manual" otherwise that must have indicated *total life bearing capacity of the earth* and so we could stop increasing population and civilization. When we discuss about relation of population and pollution then we must consider the fact that, it is the human behavior that

actually contribute to the pollution. Only human beings have been blessed with the power to sense, think and then act wisdom fully. Our insensible behavior, due to degraded values, is the only cause of pollution. Problem of pollution is not a technical problem because it can be reduced only by reducing the causes that create pollution, and causes of creating pollution are just because of unwise behavior of human beings.

An effort has been made in this paper to throw some light on the contemporary issues of human values on the pollution. This paper is purely a theoretical work on the basis of observations, beliefs and understandings. Suggested outcomes have not been quantified and measured by any means.

In the next section i.e. section-2, we discuss about pollution in the context of this paper. In section-3, issues related to human values in Indian society have been discussed. In section-4, an effort has been made to indicate impact of changed human values on pollution. Section-5 contains conclusion and future work possible. In the last section we have cited references.

II. ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Word Pollution came from Pollute and Pollute means making unclean [03]. So, it is very easy to understand that Environmental Pollution is to make environment unclean by some means. This also means disturbing natural proportion of the elements and also access consumption of natural resources like water and fuel. Wastage of energy and water also leads to environmental pollution.

Very common and easily quantifiable forms of pollution are Air, Water and Soil Pollution. Some other forms are Noise, Thermal and Visual etc. [04].

Continuous pollution causes damage to health and growth of human beings, animals and trees. All natural patterns of air flow, water flow, temperature and rain get disturbed. Pollution affects physically and physiologically to all living objects. Several studies have confirmed poor quality life because of pollution [05] [06] [07].

Various government agencies, national and international NGOs and educational institutions keep on informing and alerting the society, about impact of pollution on environment and hence impact on every living and non-living object on this planet. So, why we do worry when environmental pollution increases? The reason is very simple; our life comes in danger. Then

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why all of us does not do worry about pollution? This is simply because of degraded human values and insensitivity. Is pollution affects only some people? The answer is NO. So, when pollution affects every citizen equally then why only some reacts?

III. HUMAN VALUES IN INDIAN SOCIETY

What are human values? On the basis of our learning, understanding and belief, we can define human values as- *the eternal qualities that an individual must possess for quality life and which does not changes with the change in the society or situation.* However, quality life is a relative term and all of us can not be agree on the same point. Some examples of human values are *Generosity, Kindness (Compassion), Tolerance, Cooperation, Sensitivity, Belongingness and Gratefulness.*

Socialization involves nurturing of these human values [08] [09] [10]. Society grows as a cultured society with the development of human values in individuals. Development of human values in an individual since childhood is greatly affected by the society in which he/she lives.

India is the country with rich historical culture and strong social values. However, our strong values and culture has been polluted now due to several reasons:

- *Not Believing in Ourselves* - So most of us do not know, what is correct?
- *Westernization* - Not adopted but actually we have started copying culture and life style of western countries in the race of so called modernization.
- *Intense Use of Technology* - Telephone, Television and Internet has several advantages to the society; however they are harming the society more instead of providing benefits.
- *Long Period of Outside Rulers* - This period was enough to destroy the culture of whole society; however our deep rooted values could protect it partially. Unfortunately, technology is now harming society and destroying culture.

Changed behavior of the society greatly affects the human value. How human values get propagated in the society? Some of us are responsible for this [11]: Parents and the home environment, Teachers and the Schools, Religious Authorities, Peers, Government Agencies, the Work Environment, Mass Media, literature and Law. It is worth mentioning that each of us does not get identical values. This is because human values get cultivated in an individual due to his/her wisdom along with exposure, experience and social environment [11]. So when an individual behaves erratically (unsocial) ultimately it affects the society. The more intense the impact of an individual, society gets affected more. If we ponder over reasons of pollution, we can easily conclude that a harmony between human being and the

ecological system has been disturbed due to human-made systems and society. The next section deals with impact of changed human values on pollution specifically.

IV. HUMAN VALUES AND POLLUTION

How human values affect the environment? The reason lies in the meaning of an environment. Environment is all about surrounding but it is not only surrounding, it contains all living and non living objects on the earth (Figure-1). So, to protecting the environment is about protecting all living and non-living objects on this planet. This is also very necessary for our survival. Treating environmental elements; Soil (earth), Water and Air as friend are the teaching of India's great culture.

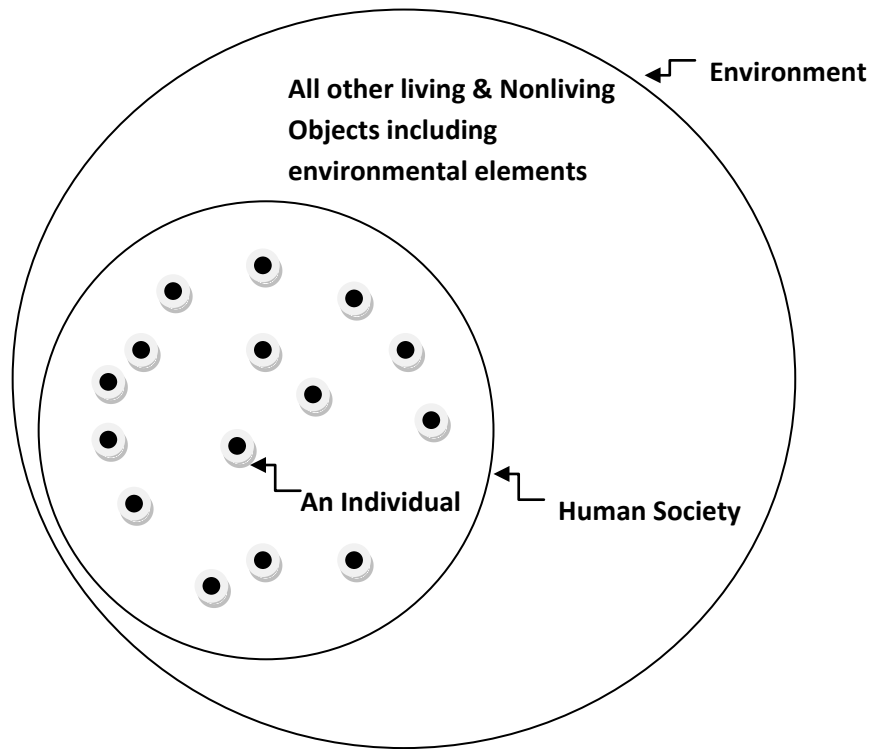


Figure 1 : Perception of Environment in the Context.

Some of the teachings of Rig-Veda [12] [13] clearly shows that we must respect environmental elements just as we treat our close relatives and friends. Some examples from Rig-Veda are [12] [13]- *“Heaven is my father, brother atmosphere is my navel, and the great earth is my mother”, “The earth is my mother and I am Her son”, “The person who pollutes waters of ponds, wells or lakes goes to hell”, “O Air! You are our father, the protector”.*

The problem of pollution created, when we as human being forgot considering environment as one of the friend of our family and society. We consider environment as the property of government or something which is free and comes in abundance. Our changed human values (some reasons we have discussed in previous section) towards our eternal and closest friend environment have created the problem of pollution. Pollution is now biggest threat to the society.

So now an analysis has been made here showing impact of changed human value on environmental pollution, by considering environment as one of the important element of a family.

a) *Changed Human Values and Pollution*

In this section an analysis has been done by considering environment as a friend (or close relative) and effect on environment due to changed human values.

Some important human values we have considered for the analysis are:

- *Generosity*
 - Great Indian values always insits on to show geneorosity, not only for our family members but for every single object on this planet.
 - When we becomes generous, we share.
 - Our selfishness stops us in sharing of natural resources and hence causes wastage/unutilization.
- *Tolerance*
 - Tolerance means acceptance.
 - When we accepts our surroundings and every living and non-living thing then we understand their advantages (strength, positive attributes) and disadvantages (weakness, negative attributes).
 - Technological innovations have made our life more comfortable and made us intolerable to the natural variations.
- *Sensitivity*
 - Sensitivity helps in understanding the current situation/condition.
 - Understanding- Why this has happen?
 - Helps in identifying the problem or sensing severity of the problem.
 - Sensing pain of others.
 - We are unable to sense severity of problem of pollution.



- *Belongingness*
 - We do care of ourselves, our house and our properties with great involvement.
 - When we do not feel belongingness then we don't take responsibility.
 - Who owns this environment? Who is responsible to the problem of Pollution?
- *Gratefulness*
 - When we get something from someone that is very precious to us, then we must be thankful and feel grateful to him.
 - All natural elements are very precious to us and the most important fact is that, they can not be reproduced.
 - We must express our gratefulness to the Mother Nature.

Table 1 : Summarizes the analysis made here in the context of this paper.

Human Value	Changed Human Value	Impact on Environment
Generosity	Selfishness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selfishness causes improper and wasted utilization of natural resources. • In selfishness we just think about our progress, growth and comfort by compromising of our friend environment. • Our insatiable appetite for growth, civilization and comfort is causing great harm to our environment and showing our selfishness. • Selfishness inhibits us for sharing and optimizing resources that could have saved lot amount of fuel and other natural resources.
Tolerance	Intolerance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All natural elements (including us) are governed by principle of nature. • When we do not accept it, then nature reacts. • Modern life style has made us, intolerable to natural seasonal variations. • We cannot imagine our life without AC, Heater and Refrigerator, which are the major source of environmental pollution.
Sensitivity	Insensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not feel pain in wasting & polluting water, polluting air, cutting tree, poisoning soil, littering and creating noise. • We don't bother about severity of problem pollution. • Our insensitivity for other living–non living objects of the planet has disturbed equilibrium of the nature.
Belongingness	Irresponsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We care our belongings but <i>who owns the environment?</i> Does not environment belong to us? • Who will take care the problem of pollution, is this problem is of only government? Who is responsible?
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have to own the environment also, and have to feel that this belongs to us.
Gratefulness	Thankless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have become thankless to the nature. • A fresh air, pure water and fertile soil are the gift of nature to us, but our thankless behavior has destroyed its purity. • We are thankless to the Mother Nature and don't hesitate in cutting trees, making soil; water and air impure.

We can now establish very easily to the fact that our values decides our action. Our actions with degraded values are the reason to disturb natural equilibrium. This can be seen with some examples below:

- Cutting of trees (shows our insensitivity and thankless behavior).

- Unwise utilization of Plastics (shows our insensitivity).
- Inefficient use of fuel of any form (shows our selfishness).
- Pollution of natural sources of water through several means at domestic and commercial level (shows our insensitivity, Irresponsibility and thankless behavior).

V. CONCLUSION

A theoretical study carried by us clearly shows that problem of pollution is not the technological problem. This problem is purely behavioral problem. Changed (degraded) human values have affected our actions and hence it has disturbed equilibrium of the nature. No technology can stop it. Only human behavior and actions, which are the outcome of values, can reduce pollution. This can be achieved only with restoring great Indian values by considering environment as a member of the family. In future, a quantitative study can be carried out for identifying most important human value that contributes more for the protection of environment and also how these values can be maintained/ sustained in our society.

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