

A Vedic Approach towards Exploring the Education for Sustainable Development for the Contemporary Context

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Abstract—*Humanity and societies have for perpetuity been in close alliance with their surrounding nature. The environments in which societies entrench describe them, its requirements, functions and their eccentricity. Yet the human proceedings, the collective activities of the societies have put nature in an inferior position, for this reason the degradation hence caused to environment can only be understood within the framework of the society supported submissively by the nature. To achieve this balance between environmental health with the social well being, the societies require a sustainably wholesome development. Sustainable development has therefore become a chiefly acknowledged goal of mankind today, and is the indispensable aspect of social development. To achieve the required Sustainable Development, what else but Education can come to the rescue of the humankind. People all over the world have acknowledged that contemporary progress drifts are not sustainable and that public consciousness, development of knowledge, and indoctrination are essential for impelling the civilization in lieu of attaining sustainability. Consequently the much desired resolution; Education for Sustainable Development can be an universal approach to education with the aspiration of spawning a more appropriately worthier planet both for the present and the future generations to come. The required education model being such that it abets in attainment of the awareness, prowess, demeanor, ethics and proficiency fundamental to contour a sustainable tomorrow. This paper intends to present the Vedic Philosophy as a guide towards the much-needed goal of attaining absolute sustainable development. It's a through a rigorous and thoughtful study of the Vedic approach towards Nature and the various dimensions of human existences have always supported and propounded a sustainable way of living. There are excerpts, verses and evidences of supporting the Vedic lifestyle as the original sustainable approach towards nature.*

Keywords: *Environment, Environment Education, Sustainable Development, Vedas, Traditional Knowledge*

1. INTRODUCTION

The biggest threat that our planet is facing today is environmental degradation propelled by the mindless human intervention into the innocent and planned affairs of Nature. No doubt, the so called civilised men and women of today's "modern" world are solely responsible for the impending doom which is sure to cast its spell if the Nature is left to fend

for itself in the wake of this enormous environmental degradation. No doubt, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, droughts, change in weather pattern, etc are have traumatized the planet, but far and above, with his lack of awareness coupled with his greed for more and more, man has held the beautiful earth captive to his ever growing desires. Our false perception that we are the sole possessors of the resources the planet has been extremely detrimental and dangerous to the harmony and peace of the world. Global warming, climate change and the other forms of environmental degradation have their repercussions in every walk of life while badly affecting the economic, social and political existence of the humans, thus eating into the very vitals of culture. Misuse (or, abuse) of land leading to soil erosion and loss of the precious layers of fertile soil, desertification, wild fires, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, mangrove destruction; land, water and air pollution, climate change, sea level rise and ozone depletion are some of the types of human-induced degradation.

If this havoc has been wreaked by our **misdeeds**, it is only logical to assume that the cure is there in our good deeds, thus requiring a drastic change in our perception of the Nature to bring about the much-needed protection of our world. The right kind of education could be the most potent weapon with the help of which we can solve this problem. By inculcating the much required values into the men and women, and thereby sensitizing them towards the plurality of life we can hope to move in the direction of environmental protection. Thankfully, there is a reservoir of wisdom contained in the form of creative literature which can be drawn upon to tide over the impending crisis. Vedas being a reservoir of traditional knowledge since ages are educating the mankind with the values of harmony and co-existence with the nature. Vedas have always been a medium and the guiding force, for shaping our perception in relation to various vital day to day life concepts. The need of the day is to get back to this medium and rope in their resources to our advantage. This study aims at analyzing the power of Vedas and their usefulness in generating the right attitude towards the environment.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS

Highlighting the serious concern, Johnson *et al* (1997) define environmental degradation as any change or disturbance to the environment perceived to be deleterious or undesirable. The United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) defines this phenomenon as “*The reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives, and needs*”. To achieve this balance between environmental health’s to the social well being the societies require a sustainably wholesome development. Sustainable development has hence become a chiefly acknowledged goal, and is the indispensable aspect of social development. Sustainable development is a not a straightforward concept to illustrate; it is persistently evolving, one of the novel descriptions of sustainable development is accredited to the Brundtland Commission: “*Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43). The concept of Sustainable Development widened as the different commission, working groups, committees discussed, negotiated, and wrote the 40 chapters of Agenda 21. And preliminary beliefs pertaining to Education for Sustainable Development were incarcerated in Chapter 36 of Agenda 21, “*Promoting Education, Public Awareness, and Training*.” Through the formulation of the concept of Sustainable Development, education turned into the most evident key to accomplish and promote the goals of sustainability. The role of education can definitely have an effect on the management of the natural resource through the inclusion of successful techniques of environmental education. The accurate technique of environment education will provides students, the future generation, with the most sought after knowledge, skills, understanding and experiences to support them to emerge as leaders along with wise consumption of the scared natural resources. The 68th UN General Assembly Reports recommends, “*To most observers, nature is difficult to conceive in a simple, objectifiable way. Given all the interconnections between what is perceptible to our senses and what is only conceivable to the mind, regaining and maintaining harmony with nature will require knowledge not only from scientists, but also from philosophers, poets and others whose studies, imaginations, intuitions, spiritual revelations and inspirations offer insights into the intrinsic value of nature.*” (UN General Assembly Report, 2010). The Earth Charter offered to United Nation in the year, 1972, advocated ethically of the Earth as a “Sacred Trust.” The final Version of the Charter starts with an overview of the present global situation and calls people, “*to join together to bring forth a sustainable global society founded on respect for nature, universal human rights, economic justice and a culture for peace.*” In the Earth Charter one principle emphasizes on knowledge of ecological sustainability, further supporting it with principle to recognize the traditional knowledge and

spiritual wisdoms of all cultures that contribute environmental protection and human well being. The Earth Charter heralds a new global ethic, grounded in two fundamental principles: sustainable development and environmental conservation. Also in support is the other Principle, which recognizes the importance of moral and spiritual education, “*Integrate into formal education and life-long learning the knowledge, values, and skills needed for a sustainable way of life.*” These principles come forward as an extensive benefaction of the Earth Charter, for so much of modern civilization has tried to get the most apt elucidation to present day ecological crisis, notably through edification, of any theological knowledge, at times of any righteous philosophy. Today in this industrialized world one must approbate and acquire ecological consciousness from their universal ethics, their nature-aligned style of living, stationed on environmental spirituality. In accession, it’s worth mentioning that such traditions are based on cosmic scientific facts regarding the Earth. Such knowledge is needed to be acknowledged and implemented in our environment conserving strategies. One such Spiritual, philosophical knowledge evident with human civilization since ages is, the Vedic philosophy. There are excerpts, verses and evidences in support of the Vedic lifestyle as the original sustainable approach towards nature.

3. THE TEACHING FROM THE VEDAS

The Vedas are an extensive manifestation of verses incepted in ancient India. Authored in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts aggregate the primeval encrustation of Sanskrit literature and the original doctrines of Hinduism. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya* human. They are assumed to have been precisely conceded, and thus are called *śruti* (hearing, listening) is, distinctive from other spiritual texts, which are called *smṛti* (what is remembered). The Vedas are considered as the most primitive legendary documentation of Indo-Aryan ethnicity. It is the most sanctified scriptures of India. The derivation of the Vedas can be etched back as far as 1500 BCE, with the emigration of a populous group of rover -Aryans hailing from central Asia, marching towards the Indian subcontinent, while crossing the Hindu Kush Mountains. Vedas were intended to be incantation in eulogize of diverse Aryan deities. The term Veda connotes sagacity, expertise or acuity, and it is apotheosize as the dialect of the almighty in hominid language. The essence of the Vedas is to regulate the social, legal, domestic and religious customs of the Hindus which is meticulously pursued to the present day. Vedas clearly ask you to be simply human. They vehemently condemn any attempt to discriminate among humans on basis of religion, personal belief, region, caste, gender, color etc. Vedas demand that you love entire humanity as you love your own family. Vedas contain seeds of all forms of knowledge - spiritual or physical. Vedas contain no stories, miracles or unscientific claims. On contrary Vedas demand that you believe only in what is rational, logical, and scientific and empowers all humans without discrimination.

The ancient sacramental treatise of the Vedas reveres a universal and anapestic cosmogonic approach. They symbolize the primitive, the most cautiously cherished, the most intricately rationalized and the most tenderly conserved sonant customs in the archives of the cosmos. Exclusive in its context of era and arena, their reminiscent poesy is a jubilant and impromptu assertion of vitality and nature. Hindu ideology has forever had a benign and decorous demeanor towards the saintliness of all life, and that mortal are none other than one link in the collegial string of soul and knowledge. Philosophers of the Vedas have diagnosed varied texts and liturgy which glorify the various elements of Nature; Mother Earth(Prithivi), atmosphere (Bhuvah), air (Vayu), space(akash), water (Aapa), and fire (Agni), all together known as *Pancha Mahabhutas*. The notion that Earth being the sustainer of all life and that human activity should not devastate the equilibrium the evident leitmotif of the Vedas. In an article on the Earth Charter and Hinduism, Kamla Chowdhry talked of Hinduism and Environment, "Hindus regard everything about them as pervaded by divine presence. The rivers, mountains, lakes, animals, flora and fauna, are all manifestations of God, and therefore there is a deep respect and gratitude felt towards nature." Continuing further, "In the Vedas, Mahabharat, Upanishads, Puranas and The Vedas are an extensive manifestation of verses incepted in ancient India. Authored in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts aggregate the primeval encrustation of Sanskrit literature and the original doctrines of Hinduism. The Vedas are *apauruṣeya* human. They are assumed to have been precisely conceded, and thus are called *śruti* (hearing, listening) is, distinctive from other spiritual texts, which are called *smṛti* (what is remembered). The Vedas are considered as the most primitive legendary documentation of Indo-Aryan ethnicity. It is the most sanctified scriptures of India. The derivation of the Vedas can be etched back as far as 1500 BCE, with the emigration of a populous group of rover - Aryans hailing from central Asia, marching towards the Indian subcontinent, while crossing the Hindu Kush Mountains. Vedas were intended to be incantation in eulogize of diverse Aryan deities. The term Veda connotes sagacity, expertise or acuity, and it is apotheosize as the dialect of the almighty in hominid language. The essence of the Vedas is to regulate the social, legal, domestic and religious customs of the Hindus which is meticulously pursued to the present day. Vedas clearly ask you to be simply human. They vehemently condemn any attempt to discriminate among humans on basis of religion, personal belief, region, caste, gender, color etc. Vedas demand that you love entire humanity as you love your own family. Vedas contain seeds of all forms of knowledge - spiritual or physical. Vedas contain no stories, miracles or unscientific claims. On contrary Vedas demand that you believe only in what is rational, logical, and scientific and empowers all humans without discrimination.

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Ancient Vedas have various citations in them on environmental preservation, ecological balance, and climatic phenomenon related subjects like, rainfall, weather etc cycle indicating the huge alertness of seers and Vedic civilization. The key teachings of Hinduism in Vedic text, encloses abundant citations to the adoration of the celestial in nature also consisting of hymns in reverence of oceans, mounts and ranges, flora and fauna, and the Mother Earth. The text also encompasses the primordial practical philosophy for conservation of environment. Nature has never been mediated as an adverse aspect to be vanquished. Rather, it's the mankind who is vetoed from capitalizing on nature. The Four Vedas are the elementary texts of the metaphysical and theological memoirs of the ancient culture of worshipping nature.

The Vedic scriptures have enormous indication underlining the central thought of environment preservation: *All is God, all is divine, all is to be treated with reverence and respect, and all is sacred*. They bestow us with the most basic messages for conservation of environment and natural equilibrium. . Efflorescent buds, feathered creature- birds, animals and humans partaged one existence, surfacing the same anguish and soreness of the aloft tribulation; amuse the equivalent emotions and fondness in the sacred writs.

4. CONCLUSION

The first sentence of the preamble of Earth Charter clearly warns us stating, "We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. In an array to fabricate a sustainable universal society, we must focus on the rudiments Earth-Human dainty and righteous liaison, and to appreciate what precisely the Man-Nature bond means in order to arbitrate the possible human obligations to concoct a green future. The revered Nature of all varmint has abysmal ecclesiastical parentage in the philosophical teachings of the seers of Vedic civilization. Vedas are the prosperity assemblage consisting of ethical ideology encompassing all aspects of human existence. Vedic discourse with its metaphysical aphorism has stood the catechism of era and is the most superlative theological dominion for all tiers of

Hindus in specific and for humanity in general. Therefore it becomes imperative to timely disseminate the Vedic teachings amongst the humankind and hence aid in development of a society

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