

CONSERVATION OF ENVIRONMENT THROUGH TRADITIONAL SYSTEM WITH SPECIAL KNOWLEDGE IN BELIEF AND PRACTICES

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Abstract:

The term 'Environment' is derived from French word 'Environner' which means 'to encircle' or 'to surround'. Traditional systems of knowledge and belief have played a significant role in environmental conservation for centuries. Many indigenous and rural communities around the world have developed sustainable practices that harmonize human life with nature. These traditions, rooted in cultural wisdom and spiritual beliefs, emphasize respect for natural resources, biodiversity conservation, and ecological balance. Religion is one of the major ancient systems of protecting and nurturing nature. This is evident in the custom of worshipping of sun, wind, land, trees, plants and water which constitutes the basis of human survival. The preservation of wild life such as birds, lion, peacock, and snake form the essential part of our cultural ethos express through ancient traditions in the form of myths, legends, stories, forests and natural surrounding through indigenous knowledge and wisdom. One of the key aspects of traditional environmental conservation is the sacred value attributed to nature. Many indigenous cultures consider forests, rivers, and mountains as sacred entities and protect them from exploitation. For example, sacred groves in India are patches of forest preserved by local communities due to their religious and cultural significance. These groves serve as reservoirs of biodiversity, providing a safe habitat for flora and fauna. The role of sacred groves for ensuring biodiversity conservation through community participation is briefly discussed here. The present paper will also make brief discussion on conservation of environment by traditional knowledge, beliefs and practices by highlighting causes of degradation. Traditional systems of knowledge and belief offer valuable lessons in environmental conservation. By respecting and preserving these age-old practices, we can create a sustainable future where humans concur with nature in a balanced and harmonious way.

Key words: Environment, Conservation, Tradition. Culture, Degradation etc.

Importance of the Study:

Traditional knowledge plays a crucial role in biodiversity conservation by guiding sustainable use and management of natural resources. Traditional knowledge, often passed down through generations, is a valuable tool in biodiversity conservation. It encircles the wisdom, knowledge, and practices of indigenous communities, developed from centuries of direct interaction with the environment. This knowledge is often specific to a location and includes understanding of local ecosystems, species and their behaviours, and the relationships between different elements of the environment. For example, some communities have traditional hunting or fishing practices that limit the impact on animal populations, or agricultural practices that enhance soil fertility and biodiversity. Traditional knowledge, rooted in indigenous communities' centuries-old experiences with nature, plays a vital role in preserving biodiversity. It teaches sustainable resource use, conserves species through practices and sacred sites, and offers valuable insights for modern conservation. By respecting and learning from this wisdom, we can better protect our natural world. Environmental conservation is vital for maintaining the health and well-being of our planet and all of its inhabitants. It involves protecting natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity from damage caused by human activities such as pollution, deforestation, and habitat destruction. By preserving these resources, we ensure that they will be available for future generations to enjoy and benefit from.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the study are as follows

To know about the of religious preaching, Tradition and custom for environmental conservation

To know about the positive impact of environment conservation.

To know about the problem and challenges of environment conservation.

To know about the role of Government for environment conservation.

Methodology:

This research paper has been prepared on the basis of Primary and secondary data also like information, books, publications, newspapers, journals, library, Government records, and inter-net also.

In many parts of India communities have inherited the rich tradition of love and favourable of nature through ages. Religions preaching traditions and customs have played an important role in this regard. Generally Indian religions have been importance of environmentalism. They compelled to the general people about intimate contact and sense of nature. It became as rites and rituals so that it became a way of their life. Sometime the messages of environment protection and conservation are in a veiled force. Today when the world is undergoing a dangerous crisis of ecological diversity and environmental degradation. So, it is most important for us to know about such traditions.

Vedic period:

In ancient Vedic period the culture of conservation of nature was prevailing. The four Vedas, Rig Veda, Sam Veda, yanjur Veda, Atharva Veda are completely worship to the supremacy of various natural things.

Rig- Veda

The Rig- Vedic hymns refer to. In the Rig-Vedic period people worshiped many Gods and Goddesses like Sun, Moon, Thunder, Lightning, Snow, Rain, Water, River, Stream etc. Glorified and worshipped as gives of health, wealth and prosperities. The rain- God Indian has largest number of hymns attached to him. In Vedic worship period Sun worship was a vital importance. The Sun looks worshipped in various name like Surya, Martanda, Usa, Pusan, Rudra etc.... Probably in ancient people well understood and realised about the solar energy was the main sources of energy that regulates the energy flow through the food chain derives various nutrient cycles and then controls the ecosystem all over the Earth. In Rig-Veda, the Gayathri mantra. It is also known as the Savitri mantra is a sacred mantra from Rig-Veda dedicated to the Vedic deity Savitri. The Gayatri mantra is a sacred chanted that demonstrates the unity that underlies manifoldness in creation. This mantra is chanted on every auspicious occasion, is full of praise for the sun. Guru Granth Saheb states, Air is Guru, water is father and earth is the great mother of all.

Atharva- Veda:

In Atharva Veda glorifies the medicinal value of many herbs like Kalpavrksa, Parijat in which is mythical powers Pipal trees, which is known as Bodhi trees, became a folk tree ritual and Pipal trees was called the king of trees of Brahma purana. Beal, Ashoka, sandal wood, coconut, Tulsi, Banayan are significance in various religious rituals. Mahabharat, the Ramayan and in Kalidas Meghdutt, Abhijnanasakuntalam, provide colourful portrayal all of tree, creepers, animals and birds conversing with people and sharing their joys and sorrows. In dharma sastra texts watering the plants is considered as greatly reward. Kautilya said it is offence and punishable due to cutting trees. In ancient period the tradition of sacred groves was also common which is still practiced by folk and tribal communities.

Sacred groves:

Sacred groves were considered as the abodes of Gods and Goddesses so procted with greatest care. This tradition of sacred groves could be matched with the contemporary nation of biosphere reserves. Sacred groves (SG) are age-old traditional nature conservation practices

adopted by the communities all over the world. Sacred groves are tracts of forest which are regenerated around places of worship. Some patches of forest are left untouched because of social fencing by local people. These types of forest are regarded as “sacred groves”. India has an abundance of sacred groves, which are known by several names. The conservation practices used in the groves vary in different states according to their nature, distribution and local beliefs. Sacred groves help in the protection of many rare, threatened, and endemic species of plants and animals found in an area. India is well known for worship of nature, and this plays an integral role in the lives of many communities. Religion and cultural practices are closely linked with forests, and this helps in conservation. Resources that are traditionally obtained from flora and fauna located in sacred groves include fodder, fruits, dry fallen wood, seeds, soil fertilizer and Ayurvedic and general medicine. Sacred groves are the repositories of rare and endangered species. These groves also represent an age-old tradition of environmental conservation and serve as the natural treasure houses of biodiversity and house a large number of endangered and rare species. The process of deforestation is strictly prohibited in this region.

North East India Dimasa society (Taboo): Taboo refers to a religious or social practice that restrict a certain behaviour activity. Taboo is taboo to go near or cut down a certain kind of tree, because it is believed that in doing so the spirits are sure to inflict punishment upon the person and upon his/her dynasty in many ways. Biodiversity not only helps in maintaining the balance of the environment but also adds to the natural resources. Biodiversity has also added to the natural beauty of the earth. But if a species is destroyed or an ecosystem is damaged, it will never be replenished and it is impossible to reproduce it. Biodiversity conservation helps in the smooth running of the ecosystem based on the preservation of natural heritage. Biodiversity is declining due to human intervention. Which has made the question of biodiversity conservation important. If biodiversity conservation leads to tourism development, including the region as a vulnerable region will help protect the region. Biodiversity conservation and development will not be taken seriously unless the importance of biodiversity is realized. Biodiversity adds to the natural beauty. Also, due to the importance of plants in use. Human life is in harmony with the environment. This is a small effort to disseminate information about biodiversity conservation and tourism development in the Kaas Plateau and to promote biodiversity in order to stop the rapid depletion of biodiversity and prioritize tourism development through conservation

positive impact of environment conservation:

we can show some positive impacts of environmental conservation:

Improved Human Health:

Clean Air and Water: Conservation efforts, such as reducing pollution and promoting sustainable practices, lead to cleaner air and water, directly impacting human health by reducing respiratory illnesses and waterborne diseases.

Reduced Exposure to Toxins: By protecting natural ecosystems and reducing the use of harmful chemicals, conservation efforts minimize human exposure to toxins, further improving public health.

Biodiversity Preservation:

Protecting Species: Conservation efforts are crucial for safeguarding biodiversity, preventing species extinction, and maintaining healthy ecosystems. **Maintaining Ecosystem Function:** Diverse ecosystems are essential for providing vital services like pollination, water purification, and climate regulation, all of which are threatened by environmental degradation.

Climate Change Mitigation:

Carbon Sequestration: Healthy ecosystems, particularly forests and wetlands, play a vital role in absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, helping to mitigate climate change.

Reduced Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Conservation efforts, such as promoting sustainable energy sources and reducing deforestation, can significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, further contributing to climate change mitigation.

Economic Benefits:

Sustainable Resource Management: Conservation promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, ensuring their availability for future generations and supporting economic stability.

Ecotourism and Recreation: Protected natural areas can attract tourists and provide recreational opportunities, generating economic benefits for local communities.

Social Benefits:

Improved Quality of Life: Access to clean air, water, and natural spaces enhances the quality of life for individuals and communities.

Cultural and Spiritual Significance: Nature holds cultural and spiritual significance for many communities, and its preservation is essential for maintaining these values.

Long-Term Sustainability:

Ensuring a Healthy Planet: Environmental conservation is essential for ensuring a healthy planet for future generations, providing them with the resources and ecosystems they need to thrive.

Promoting a Circular Economy: Conservation efforts can help promote a circular economy, where resources are used efficiently and waste is minimized.

problem and challenges of environment conservation:

Environmental conservation faces significant challenges, including unsustainable practices, political and economic obstacles, and a lack of public awareness, which hinder efforts to protect ecosystems and biodiversity.

Unsustainable Practices & Consumption:

Overexploitation of Resources:

Human activities like deforestation, overfishing, and unsustainable mining deplete natural resources faster than they can be replenished.

Pollution:

Industrial and agricultural activities release pollutants into the air, water, and soil, harming ecosystems and human health.

Climate Change:

The burning of fossil fuels and deforestation contribute to rising global temperatures and extreme weather events, disrupting ecosystems and threatening biodiversity.

Waste Management:

Inadequate waste disposal and recycling practices lead to pollution and resource depletion.

Political and Economic Obstacles:

Economic pressures and political priorities often overshadow the long-term consequences of environmental degradation.

Lack of Funding and Enforcement:

Insufficient funding and weak enforcement of environmental regulations hinder conservation efforts.

Corruption and Lobbying:

Corruption and powerful lobbying groups can undermine environmental protection policies.

International Cooperation Challenges:

Addressing global environmental issues requires international cooperation, which can be difficult due to conflicting interests and priorities.

Societal and Cultural Factors:

Lack of Awareness and Education:

Many people are unaware of the severity of environmental problems or the importance of conservation.

Population Growth:

A growing human population puts increased pressure on natural resources and ecosystems.

Consumerism and Materialism:

A culture of excessive consumption and materialism can lead to unsustainable practices.

Social Injustice:

Environmental problems often disproportionately affect marginalized communities, creating further inequalities.

Specific Challenges:**Biodiversity Loss:**

Habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change are driving species extinction and reducing biodiversity.

Deforestation:

The clearing of forests for agriculture, logging, and urbanization leads to habitat loss, soil erosion, and climate change.

Water Scarcity:

Overuse of water resources, pollution, and climate change are leading to water shortages in many regions.

Oceans and Marine Life:

Pollution, overfishing, and climate change are harming marine ecosystems and threatening marine biodiversity.

Schemes for Environmental Conservation (Taken by Government)

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is implementing National River Conservation Programme, sub-schemes of Conservation of Natural Resources and Eco-Systems, National Afforestation Programme & Green India Mission, National Coastal Management Programme, National Mission on Himalayan Studies under Climate Change Program under the Central Sector & Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Government of India. These schemes act as remedial measures for conservation of environment and sustainable development of various ecosystems. The umbrella Scheme on Conservation of Natural Resources and Eco-systems through its different sub-schemes formulated for protection of corals, mangroves, biosphere reserves, wetlands and lakes conserve the natural resources and these eco-systems of the country. The sub-scheme of National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems aims at conservation of all aquatic eco-systems including lakes and wetlands of the country. National Afforestation Program and Green India Mission contribute towards regeneration of degraded forests and their adjoining areas in the country. National River Conservation Program facilitates in improving water quality of polluted stretches of rivers by

preventing pollution loads reaching the rivers through various pollution abatement works. National Coastal Management Programme ensures livelihood security to fishing and other local communities to conserve and protect coastal stretches and promotes coastal development based on scientific principles. National Mission on Himalayan Studies aims at focusing on conservation of Himalayan Ecosystem and sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan Region. The Ministry also monitors implementation of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and has been carrying out enabling activities and other obligations of the Convention. The program aims at networking and forging strategic partnerships among relevant Scientific Institutions and stakeholders for enhancing knowledge data base and scientific inputs in reporting and revising desertification and land degradation. Collection, collation and storage of subject specific database on environmental issues for future retrieval and dissemination to all concerned for sustainable quality of life for future generations, is achieved through an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) Program of the Ministry.

The funding under the Central Sector Schemes is 100 percent from the Government of India. Under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes, as per the revised funding pattern from 2015- 16 onwards, the Government of India's share is 50 percent for rest of India and 80 percent for the North Eastern States and 3 Himalayan States i.e Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand in environment sector. The share of the Government of India is 60 percent for rest of India in the schemes related to forestry and wildlife and 90 percent in respect of North East. This information was given by Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Anil Madhav Dave, in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha today.

Suggestion: Protected natural areas can attract tourists and provide recreational opportunities, generating economic benefits for local communities

Jadav Payeng:

Payeng has created which is maybe the largest man-made forest by one man on this planet. He kept on planting trees near where he was born, a place called Arunachapori, near Kokilamukh, Jorhat for over 30 years, before the world discovered and embraced him as the 'Forest Man of India'. He is awarded many times for his activities like, Padma shri, the 4th highest civilian honour in India. Sanctuary wildlife service award, Commonwealth points of light award, swami Vivekananda karmayogi award, Sat paul Mittal National Award. Upendranath Brahma Souldier of Humanity award etc.

Molaikathoni is the forest planted over four decades by Javav Payeng. It is now harbours megafauna like the Royal Bengal tiger, Indian Elephant, Indian Rhinoceros, deer and hundreds of species of birds, including endangered vultures,

Conclusion:

Conservation of environment is most important for the world so we need to keep an open mind with regard to the interests of various stakeholders. We need to accept that people will act with their own best interest as the priority like Jadav Payeng of North East India. But the realisation that such selfish goals will lead to misery for a large number of people and a total destruction of our environment is slowly growing. Going beyond laws, rules, and regulations, we need to tailor our requirements individually and collectively, so that the benefits of development reach everyone now and for all generations and led to live the whole generation of the world.

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