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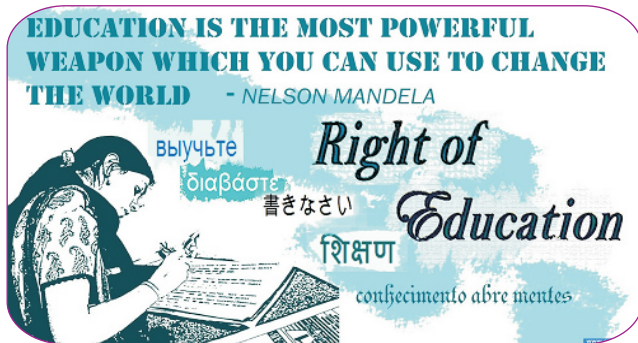
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## HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION TOWARDS THE PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT

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### ABSTRACT :

India has a unique environmental heritage. It represents almost all type of habitats of the world and almost all types of ecosystem such as mountains, deserts, coastal areas, mangroves, landmass, water bodies, forests and islands. However our development processes that are based on intense utilization of natural resources and energy intensive technology, along with pressure of population and poverty have caused a great damage to environment and resources. India's rivers are heavily polluted; even groundwater system are polluted and the water levels are falling. Our forest cover is much below the target area stipulated by National Forest Policy of 1988. Our industries that consume most of our resources are throwing poisonous effluents and emissions, polluting air, water and soil. Our agriculture though made us self-sufficient in food has adopted a strategy that demanded heavy use of fertilizer and pesticides. This led to water and soil pollution. As Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer points out that, "technological intoxication and glittering growth at all costs have victimized natural resources poisoned the biosphere and depleted the

Third World into deeper impoverishment." The present study analyse how to create a healthy environment through the Human Rights Education.

**KEYWORDS** :unique environmental heritage , landmass, water bodies, forests and islands.

### INTRODUCTION

The term "Environment means something (or) everything surrounds us. According to sec. 2 (a) of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, "Environment includes water, air and land and the interrelationship which exists among and between water, air and land and human beings, other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property".<sup>2</sup>

Pollution has been defined as an undesirable change to the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of air, water and soil which may (or) will adversely affect all life. Pollution has been an off-shoot (or) rising numbers, urbanization and industrialization and it has been also augmented by deforestation and other ill-planned (or) unplanned human activities.<sup>3</sup>

### RIGHT AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Indian culture evokes respectful and positive attitude towards protection of environment and manifests a great concern if the ecological balance is disturbed. Healthy, clean and pure environment is a precious gift of nature to the humanity. The environment which is made up of the layer of air above the surface of the earth and water and soil on the surface of the earth is the habitats of man as it is for all other living things. Like many other living organism, man has to depend for his life on his environment. He receives this basic necessities like water, air, food and shelter from it. Everyone of us has an equal right to live in a healthy and clean environment. The environmental health of a country is in fact, an indication of the quality of life of the people. But it is observed that man's unlimited and ever increasing demands led to the degradation of the natural environment.<sup>4</sup>

The continued degradation of the human environment is the gift of the modern living, technological advancement, industrialization and

urbanization. The economic development now enjoyed by the developed states without the preservation of the environment. The irony of the situation is that the more the economic and industrial development in the world, the more danger to the environment.<sup>5</sup>

The Right to Life means a life of dignity, to be lived in a proper environment free from the danger of disease and infection. But because of faster economic growth, destroying his life's support system.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, man's capability to transform his environment can bring benefits of developments and also an opportunity to enhance the quality of life. But wrongly applied, the same power can do incalculable harm to natural environment and consequently to human life. This happened in the recent natural disaster in the coastal areas by Tsunami.

Every industry has some wastes to dispose off. In the process of manufacture there arises solid, liquid, and gaseous wastes. The gases are let off through chimneys and the other are thrown into nearby water sources like sea, river, lakes and ponds. Pollution of the water courses is so high that person falling in the river might not die of drowning if he is saved, but he is bound to die of poisoning for a drinking man purps the polluted water. Industries are thus the biggest source of environmental pollution.<sup>7</sup> Unplanned industrial complexes make the city literally a modern gas chamber, where people are made to forget even the fragrance of the fresh air. So environmental pollution is a dragon that hovers over the cities. Under its spell people suffer various sickness and die prematurely.

### CONSTITUTIONAL APPROACH FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Though India is not as highly industrialized as some of the western countries, it is one of the worst affected state by the polluted environment. So international and national efforts have been made to check environment pollution. The United national Conference on the Human Environment was held at Stockholm in June 1972.<sup>8</sup> It evolved the principles that, "man has the fundamental rights to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being. Also, man bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve an environment for present and future generations". Further, on December 15, 1972, U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution emphasizing the need of active co-operation among the states in the field of human environment. The resolution also designated that June-5 of every year as the World Environment Day.<sup>9</sup>

The constitution of India, originally, did not contain any direct provision regarding the protection of natural environment. But careful analysis of various provisions of the constitution reveals that three articles, Article-47-Improvement of Public Health, Article-48-Organisation of Agricultural and Animal Husbandry on Modern and Scientific Lines, Article-49-Protection of National Monuments from spoliation, disfigurement etc., relate to environment. They are in Part-IV of the constitution which enshrines "Directive principles of State Policy".<sup>10</sup> Anyhow the 42nd Amendment of 1976 made it a Fundamental Duty to protect and improve the natural environment. Article 48 (A) states that, "the state shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country". Like that Article 51-(A) (g) in Part-IV of the constitution provides, "It shall be the duty of every Citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes rivers, wild life and living creatures".<sup>11</sup>

### JUDICIAL APPROACH TOWARDS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In a developing country with uneducated masses, where the awareness of socio-economic and ecological • problem is alarming, the Judiciary must forward actively to make good the deficiency and meet inter alia the challenges of the problems of pollution. The Supreme Court of India got an opportunity to consider issues relating to environment and ecological balance which are of great significance to the welfare of the people in the country. For example: when a public interest case came in the Supreme Court Known as Wardhi Chand Case<sup>1</sup> from Ratlam Municipality, the then Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer and Justice O. Chinnappa Reddy, observed, "public nuisance because of pollutants being discharged by big factories to the determinant of poorer section is a challenge to the social justice, component of the Rule of Law."<sup>12</sup>

## EDUCATION FOR HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Education should aim at inculcating value system and make children more sensitive to their surrounding. Inculcating human values and life skills are more essential. Education should not give room for the children and youth to grow up with aggression in their minds and heart. Technology is a big and powerful tool. Education should try and open as many constructive doors as possible so as to enable students to develop their skills in valuing and analyzing things about new developments in science and technology.

Science and technology must aim to protect and improve human environment. The present society has been benefited in various aspects by science and technology. At the same time one should not forget the abuses of science affect Human Rights too.<sup>13</sup> For example: electricity benefits man in many ways. But it is misused for torturing people, including giving electric shock to the prisoners. Education should also cast its eye on industrial activities.<sup>14</sup> A knowledge of healthy environment is the most needed one for the human development. Forest conservation is contributing to heavy erosion of top soil, erratic rainfall and recurring flood. As forests indirectly build up environment, special care should be taken to safeguard forests:<sup>5</sup>

The Humanities and social sciences which occupied the pride of place in the value education, were gradually displaced by the pure and applied sciences. But recently they were neglected to the background by professional and technical subjects like medicine and engineering.<sup>16</sup> Academicians feel that the neglect of the social sciences will ultimately spell disaster for humanity.

To educate and create awareness the concept of "Right to Live" among the student community, the introduction of environment courses as a compulsory paper for the school curriculum, B.A., B.Sc., B.Com., B.E., M.B.B.S. and other undergraduate courses and the corresponding postgraduate courses in a systematic planning." Another one possibility of introducing the course is through recasting of the syllabi of the subject in the light of environmental concerns:<sup>8</sup> For instance, a course in history should contain separate chapter (or) as a part of a unit in a lesson the historical significance of environment-how the human civilizations faced the problem of extinction of certain species due to neglect of environmental concern. Similarly which is to be implemented in other courses also. This was already implemented in Annamalai university, and "Environmental Science" is a part of its curriculum in all the courses.

## CONCLUSION

We are in the "Decade of Human Rights Education (1995-2004)" launched in 1991 by the World Non-Governmental Organization's Coalition. It may also be noted that we have just completed the United National Decade on cultural development launched in 1983. The introduction of environmental education has become mandatory after the judgement of the Supreme Court by Justice Ranganath Mishra, Justice G.N. Ray and Justice A.S. Anand. They directed the Union and State Governments through their educational agencies like University Grant Commission to take up the responsibility of creating awareness of the environment through the 'medium of education'. They delivered this historical judgement by invoking Art 51 A (g) of the Constitution and stated that it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment. To solve the problem the course is to be offered in a most practical way so that the student can learn about the environment and apply the knowledge and skills gained through the process of education to protect it and enrich it. This fundamental duty of the citizen calls for a practice oriented education and not an ordinary liberal degree.

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