

Human Behaviour and Environment

Abstract

This paper deals with the relationship between human behaviour and environment. The human behaviour has direct impact on the environment. Our positive or negative attitude towards environment will result accordingly.

Keywords: Human Behaviour, Environment, Positive, Negative, Crisis, Man-Made, Pollution, Ozone, Yajna.

Introduction

Thinking has no bounds. It is person's choice to think good or bad, positive or negative, productive or destructive, auspicious or inauspicious. Our good or bad thoughts, words and deeds make our environment which surrounds all living and non-living beings good or bad. In the other words it can be said that it is the human behaviour which affects the environment as both are related to each other. Though it is altogether a different equation as human beings cannot live without nature or environment but for the well being of nature, nature does not require human beings as present environmental crisis is not nature made but manmade.

Today we are facing external and internal pollution. External pollution is contaminated air, water, earth and sky and internal is ego, lust, greed, anger and slander etc. The internal pollution is greater and worst than external pollution and also the root cause of all types of pollution in environment.

In Vedic times Aryans knew this fact very well that their well being is dependent on nature's well being so they considered all forces and energy in nature or environment as deities. In this process the world was divided into three realms. The earth, the atmosphere and the sky being Agni, Indra and Aditya respectively as the presiding deities. All other forces in between were also termed as divinities¹. In Svetashvatara Upanishad in one place it is said that 'it is the God who is in fire, who is in water, who pervades the whole universe, who is in medicines, who is in vegetation, we salute that god².' They paid respect to them and had no feeling to misuse or injure them for selfish motives. In Yajur Veda we find thinking like 'do not injure the atmosphere'³

'Do not cause harm to waters and medicines'⁴.

Moreover they prayed to deities to inspire, enlighten and guide their intellect in the right and positive direction⁵.

They used to do prayers, yajnas and recitation of mantras in open air so that good vibrations of these spread in the atmosphere and purify the external and internal environment. The Swastivachan⁶ -

Oh! God let your eight elements viz the heaven, space, earth, water, medicines, flora, Vshay deva and Brahma spread peace in the universe and ensure the well being of all.

The Peace hymns⁷ -

'The air, sun and clouds will bring happiness and welfare to all'.

also proves that they prayed not for their own well being but for the general welfare⁸.

It is proved true by Reiki healers that our positive vibrations have the capacity to heal all living beings i.e. trees, animals, circumstances and human beings living near or in distant places. As it is also true that in Soliman Islands if they have to cut a tree they do not cut it with axe but simply keep on cursing it and in few days it becomes dry and falls down by itself. This further proves that our good or bad thoughts have ability to do good or bad. As Mahatma Gandhi says 'Man is the product of his thinking what he thinks he will be'.

Today we have worsened our environment ourselves. The various types of pollution like global warming, water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution are proof of it.

Air Pollution

Air was born from the Prana of Param Purusha⁹. so air is the Prana or breath of every human being without it human life is impossible. So the Vedic seers hailed air as-

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'All-around good air is good for our heart, eliminate sickness, and increase our happiness, welfare and age'¹⁰. So they knew that for physical, emotional and mental well being air is essential. They advised 'not to harm the atmosphere' with pollutant thoughts and deeds as air flows in it.

Today prana or air has become impure as the balance of gases has been disturbed by pollutants like industrial gases, human waste, household waste, agricultural chemicals and fertilizers, means of communication and transportation which emit carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogenous oxide, smoke, fine dust particles, carbon dioxide etc. Negative thoughts further aggravate the impurity of the prana or air. For example a street where unethical people conduct their business is believed to emit heavy or negative vibrations whereas an educational institute or a place of worship emits positive and light vibrations.¹¹

Noise Pollution

Noise pollution exists outside in the atmosphere as well as inside within us. Both of this pollution gives birth to mental stress, annoyance, aggression, hypertension, sleep disturbance and hearing loss. The cause of outside environmental pollution is unwanted sound of human beings, animals, vehicles, trains, aeroplanes and machines which disrupts the human life and animal life.

Worse than this outside pollution is inside pollution which is present in the human beings in the form of desires, bad ideas, vices like anger, jealousy, lust, greed, guilt, aversion etc. which keeps on rising constantly in the mind and takes away the peace of mind. All this takes away peace of mind, gives negative feelings and affects physical health. Without stopping negative feelings we cannot improve the pollutant environment because thoughts create the atmosphere good or bad. The mind can remain in peace only when positive thoughts and good vibrations are generated. So in Vedic times in Shanti path peace was desired for 'heaven, sky, earth, water, herbs, trees, for all gods and for all be in peace.'

Water pollution

Water is essential for plants, animals and human life, without it there is no life. The Vedas praised it for healing powers¹².

But today water is contaminated with industrial effluent, sewage and septic waste, chemicals, fertilizers, pesticides and solid waste and so it has lost its healing capacity. Water covers more than 70 percent of earth's surface while less than 3 percent of this water is drinkable as the source of water like rivers, lakes, ponds are all polluted.

Rivers, the main source of water in India were highly praised in Vedic times and considered holy till today. Many Indians who cannot go to take dip in holy rivers daily every morning chant the hymn-

That 'the waters of Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmada, Sindhu, and Cauvery come and mix with bathing water'. So that plain water become pious and gives the same benefit.

The sanctity associated with them converted it in pilgrimage places. According to a report of National Environment Engineering Research Institute all the fourteen big rivers are badly polluted. They

cover 85 percent of the surface flow of water in the country. The cause of it is our negligent behaviour. Industrial waste, the fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals used by agriculturists and household trash and sewage directly or indirectly coming into the water. For example river Yamuna in Delhi receives 6000 kg of dissolved solids, 3000 kg of heavy metals and 200 kg of detergent every day. In its 48 km stretch around Delhi, Yamuna gets polluted through 17 drains that bring toxins, acid and a number of chemicals that affects the health of the river and consequently of all those who depend on it for drinking and other uses. This is a major cause of many skin diseases and other ailments for the people living on the banks of rivers¹⁴.

Besides this, as rivers are considered pious so many samskaras like mundan ceremony, cremation and many other ceremonies are performed on their banks and above all people take a dip in holy water to get rid of their sins but all these rituals and ceremonies are polluting more by doing selfish acts. Holy rivers will only curse us instead of letting us to get rid of our bad deeds.

Global Warming

After the Industrial Revolution, development started in the world but it altogether is a different matter that some countries developed earlier and some lagged behind. This led to increase in human activities, so forests regions were cut down, rivers were tamed by making dams, numbers of vehicles, aeroplanes, satellites, missiles have been increased and use of sleek technology increased the amount of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and nitrous oxide in the atmosphere. This led to the rising of average temperature of earth's atmosphere and oceans and its projected continuation is called global warming. Besides this, depletion of the ozone is also a cause of temperature increase as atmosphere contains many gases mainly of two Nitrogen and also Argon Oxygen and Argon, Carbon dioxide and other miscellaneous gases including ozone. Though ozone is an insignificant component but at the same time very important also as it has the capacity to absorb solar radiation or ultra violet rays from coming to earth as these are harmful for human beings.

In the last 100 years, earth average surface temperature has increased by about 0.8% with about two thirds of the increase occurring over the last three decades. An increase in global temperature will also increase sea level as it leads to melting of glaciers, permafrost and sea ice thus creating the problem of scarcity of water. Further it increased more frequent occurrences of the extreme weather like heat waves, heavy rainfall, and droughts. The examples of it are the present changes in the environment of the world. The occurrence of floods have been increased in America in recent past, there occurred devastating hurricanes like Katrina (2005) Rina (2011) Irene (2011) etc.

The other example of it is the most powerful earthquake to hit Japan was the 2011 earthquake of the Pacific coast of Tohoku of a magnitude of 9.0 (Mw) occurred on 11 March 2011. This earthquake triggered powerful tsunami waves that reached the heights of up to 40.5 metres. The tsunami caused a

number of nuclear accidents. The eleven reactors of nuclear power plants of Fukushima, Onagawa and Tokai were automatically shut down following the earthquake. Cooling was required to remove decay heat after a reactor has been shut down. The backup cooling process is powered by emergency diesel generators at plants. But at Fukushima tsunami waves overtopped seawalls and destroyed diesel backup power system, leading to explosion and radiation leakage.

On 30 Jan. 12 in Latin American countries, in Chile wildfire broke Mexico suffered with worst drought in 70 years and Columbia faced heavy rains.

The shifting temperature led to species extinction and change in crop yields. The Indian Institute of Parvati has estimated that 3 degree c rise in temperature will result in a 15 to 20 percent loss in annual wheat yield. All these changes are occurring because of human desire to amass more and more by all means.

Solutions from Vedic Values

Positive Thoughts

To improve the environmental pollution it is important to increase positive thoughts and keep away from bad or ill-will feelings, wrong and unethical deeds like theft, cheating, jealousy, speaking lie etc. Thoughts are the magnetic signal which come back to us parallel as the vibrations of mental forces are the finest and most powerful in existence¹⁵. As Satapatha Brahmana also says that 'What we think, so we speak
What we speak, so we do
What we do, so we become'.

Attitude of Gratitude

The present crisis of outer and inner pollution is that we do not have the attitude of gratitude towards nature, fellow beings and what we have. Instead of being grateful to everything we have, we keep on grudging and complaining for what we do not have. By doing so we simply forget that gratitude is absolutely the way to bring more into the life¹⁶.

Yajna

Performing of yajnas means devapuja, sangatikarana and daan is another solution for purification of environment. The ecological imbalance caused by industrial development, urbanisation, deforestation, ozone-depletion, air and water pollution have disturbed and destabilised the natural harmony of human, animal and plant life. Experimental studies have shown that the incidences of physical ailments and diseases become less in the houses where the yajna is regularly performed because it creates a pure, hygienic, nutritional and healing atmosphere. It renews the brain cells, revitalises the skin, purifies the blood and prevents growth of pathogenic bacteria. It is rightly said 'Heal the atmosphere and the healed atmosphere heals you.'¹⁷

Yajnas has the sound therapy aspect also. The Mantras which are pronounced in yajna in accordance with the prescribed methods and rules has the capacity to treat human beings at physical, psychological and spiritual level¹⁸.

There are examples of farming done with recitation of Mantras or performance of yajnas periodically which is giving good results.

Use as much as required

The nature has given us in abundance the air, water, heat, light, rain etc. but due to the human nature of lust or amassing hordes of money we ourselves are destroying our nature with our negative thoughts and deeds. The result of it is in front of us in the form of increasing earth's temperature, increasing level of water, hurricanes, tsunamis, earthquake etc. This can be prevented only if we become more considerate, satisfied and have a feeling of gratefulness towards the nature. If we do not change our attitude only chaos, scarcity of water, impure air, disease and pollution will be left for generations to come. It does not mean that we do not use it but use it with sacrifice¹⁹ or only that which is required and essential and leave the rest for generations to come. So that the entire environment will remain auspicious not for me but for everyone.

Thus it proves that though the environment is polluted by external factors but internal negative thoughts, feelings and deeds create more powerful negative vibrations which to some extent bring natural calamities. The proof of this is the growing number of earthquakes, floods, tsunamis, wildfires, heavy rains etc in all over the world. This situation will not improve only by organizing World Environmental Summits but also by changing our behavioural attitude and becoming a positive person. Then only Peace will fall on 'heaven, sky, earth, water, herbs, and trees, on all gods, on Brahma and on all living beings'²⁰.

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