

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ECOCRITICAL APPROACH

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Abstract:

Sustainable development is the organizing principle for achieving human development objectives with the sustainable maintenance of ability of natural systems to provide natural systems and ecosystem. Gender equality is prerequisite for achieving the aim of sustainable development. The awareness and practice of equality is important for the achievement of objective of sustainable development.

Key Words: *Sustainable development, principles, equality, ecosystem.*

Multiple factors contribute for current high level of inequality and low level of opportunities. The distortions and perversions of our economic system are enormous. Wealth at the top is derived from the rules of the game and rent seeking. We must change the rules of the game to bring equality in practice. Government too often instead of spending its valuable resources for the welfare of poor people spends its valuable financial resources for the welfare of corporations. The rules of the game must benefit all people equally. We all benefit from a well-functioning of democracy and society. The rules of the game should favour the consumers rather than favoring the banking institution only.

Political system and economic system should ensure participation of the people equally in the development strategies. Political system will be strong if it is based on the firm ground of economic equality of the people. Twenty first century is often called as the century of the environment. Ecocriticism is a coherent and broadly based movement. Without biosphere and planetary conditions human life could not exist. Ecocriticism challenges too much postmodern critical discourses as well as to the critical systems of the past. Our perceptions of nature are necessarily human constructed. Nature plays a vital role in shaping human attitudes and behavior. Literary work has the environmental context. Charles Darwin asserted in *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* that humans are descended from earlier forms of life. Human differ in degree only from other animals. Literature is related to nature and human life. Humans have to take prompt and vigorous actions to check the pollution and spoliation affecting the planet earth. Our efforts should be strong to protect the Earth's ecosystems to safeguard our future on the planet. Political leaders should understand the depth of the environmental concerns for the sustainable development of the country. We should not assess our wellbeing just in economic terms. We should assess progress not just in terms of fiscal loss and gain but in terms of earth's biological and cultural loss. It will be more accurate assessment of human success.

Ecocriticism draws the attention of the world to the crucial issues of environmental degradation through the forum of literature. Nature and culture are inclusive terms. Ecocriticism is committed to make the world less unjust. Well-conceived and sincerely implemented policies can make difference to people. High economic growth rates do not at all mean inclusive growth. The present policies in India are ill equipped to correct chronic poverty. Policies and institutions are central to a country's ability. The nation is fed up with corruption. A human society based on inequality decays in the course of time. It aims at creating the harmonious relationship between Nature and human nature. It is against the exploitative development. The ecological analysis of the human life reflected in literature has been called ecological Criticism or Ecocriticism. The critical theory deals with the relationship between the human life and the

nature. It transcends the exclusive categories of centre and periphery. It is the high time now to ponder over the evil consequences of industrialization and mechanization, globalization, privatization and liberalization. It is the study of the interrelationship between nature and human life.

The environment nurtures, uplifts our senses and sustains our existence. Wendell Berry explores the political and moral implications of degrading and neglecting place in the novels such as *The Memory of Old Jack* (1976). In the United States the environmental literature includes poetry, fiction, and drama that scrutinize the relationship between humans and the natural environment. The consciousness of the ethical component of literature is an important principle of the new ecological literary criticism or Ecocriticism. The writers such as Berry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams, Rick Bass, Robert Michael Pyle, Scott Russell Sanders, Wendell Barry, Gary Snyder and other environmental writers achieve not only aesthetic brilliance but also an understanding of human society's relationship with the planet.

Literary artists consider that values are at the heart of their work. Literary scholars give the utmost importance to the issues of human values and attitudes. Environmental writers create interest among their readers. They present a long term vision of our relationship with the planet. They stimulate ethical reformation.

We have approached the 21st century. It has become clear that the model of free economy, Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization does not work. The problems of environmental degradation, poverty and domestic inequality have begun to threaten the very existence of the society and nation. They are threatening the quality of human life and security of nation. The model has proved ultimately self defeating, as it threatens the beneficiaries of the so called progress. The world needs an alternative approach. The new approach is of Sustainable Development. The development pattern should create social cohesion rather than social inequality.

The development pattern should aim at the improvement of the quality of life. Environmental degradations affect the quality of life. In absence of healthy environment people are victimized by various types of diseases. Future generations feel insecure. Economic development pattern is responsible for the present problems. The problems are endemic not incidental. We need to reassess what we mean by economic and social progress. We should introduce fundamental changes in the economic and social development to achieve genuine development.

Poverty is the mother of all ills. Poverty is responsible for the rise in crimes, anti-social behaviour. The shadows of globalization and deregulation markets have made even middle class vulnerable and insecure. Unequal society cannot stand the challenges, it breaks down. The middle class instead of solving the problem of the decay of the society want to evade the responsibility. They try to find peace and security within the four walls of their home. The people confront fear and tension and anxiety in their homes too. The sustainable development is the best model of development which improves the standard of life for all. The market economy has belittled the governments in the various countries of the world. It has caused anarchy in some African countries like Nigeria.

In the present model of market economy people have developed distrust over the political institution which governs them. Democracy needs to be strengthened in the real manner. Deregulated Market mechanisms are responsible for the breaking down of the traditional cultural values. People are feeling the loss of a sense of a community. The market economy has proved self defeating. The supporters of market economy had claimed that it will solve all the problems. But instead of solving the problems it has generated severe problems before the society which are the threatening the very existence of society. The present model of development has given rise to violence and alienation among the people. Equality and inclusiveness strengthen the community. It creates the bond between individuals and the society. The society at large is united in the true sense.

The supporters of globalization said that the path of globalization will reduce poverty but globalization actually widened the gulf between the rich and the poor. We need a new direction of

development. The new direction of such a type which will not give rise to division in the society but it will create cohesion in the society. Conventional economic and social policies are creating the problems instead of solving them. The quality of life is declining: The problems of availability of drinking water, homes, jobs, security have become severe. There is the rise in crimes all over the world. The poverty and inequality within the society has been threatening the very security of the nations. The people have developed disaffection for the politicians and the politics as an institution. Because politicians have become very selfish, they do not have commitment for the inclusive development. They have made the business of politics for their own selfish interest. Ecocriticism addresses these interlocking problems. The Real World offers the vision for the twenty first century which is appropriate for every nation and every century:

Our vision is of a Britain in which a reduction in inequality and an increase in both collective and individual security provides everyone with the opportunity to fulfill their potential, in which greater social cohesion strengthens both national and local communities; in which cultural diversity is celebrated; in which the improved provision of social goods raises everybody's quality of life even as material consumption falls to sustainable levels; in which a thriving democracy allows all to participate (*The Politics of the Real World*, P. 125)⁶

Ecocriticism is a vowedly political mode of analysis. It enables us to analyze and criticize the world in which we live. Culture is something lived, part and parcel of one's everyday existence. The authentic culture must be natural. Radical changes have taken place in the study of literature during the last decades of the twentieth century. The human beings themselves have done a lot of damage to the nature and ultimately to themselves. The harmony of humanity and nature enhances the quality and standard of life. It is closely related to history, philosophy, psychology, art history, and ethics. It is a political mode of analysis of literature, as the comparison with feminism and Marxism suggests. It draws much from the environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. It sees a synthesis of environmental and social concerns. The theory is moral and political oriented.

John Passmore has made a distinction between 'problems in ecology' and 'ecological problems'. According to him problems in ecology are scientific problems which need hypothesis, experiment they need scientific analysis but ecological problems have arisen out of our dealing with nature. Ecocriticism helps to define, explore and resolve ecological problems and other consequent problems. Structuralism and post-structuralism dealt with the linguistic function of the signs that relate to each other. They do not refer to the real things, events and incidents on the earth. It is an interdisciplinary approach that draws on literary and cultural theory, philosophy, sociology, psychology and environmental history and ecology. It has profound moral and political significance in 21st century.

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human. It analyses the human life in the context of nature. Ecocriticism supports indigenous ways of life as potential models for a harmonious existence on the earth. It explores human life in the scenario of globalization, privatization and liberalization. Environmental crisis poses severe threats to the values, political, economic and cultural life of the people in various nations of the world. Ecocriticism began in the 1990s. It has historical background. From ancient times various people have been expressing concerns about the natural world. Ecocriticism takes a strong ethical stand. It has a commitment to the natural world as an important thing rather than as an object of study only. It is the very young school of Literary Criticism or Movement. It explores how to use the stored energy of literature into effective political action for solving the contemporary problems.

Lawrence Buell published *The Environmental Imagination*, where he defines "Ecocriticism as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in the spirit of commitment to natural environment. It explores environmental issues and its influence on the human life. It takes an ethical stand for effective change in the world. Ecocriticism is not only a critical approach to analyze literature but also a movement towards a sustainable development on the earth. It expresses the need for a

cultural change in the world. It broadens the view of life to include nonhuman life forms and the environment as a part of the global community. Glotfelty rightly said that traditional criticism failed to address “green” issues. It is an important literary theory.

Evolution of Ecocriticism in Literary Studies

William Rueckert is the first person to use the term Ecocriticism. In 1978, Rueckert published an essay titled *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. He made an important suggestion to apply ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. Ecologically minded individuals and scholars have been publishing progressive works of ecotheory and criticism since the explosion of environmentalism in the late 1960s and 1970s. However there was no organized movement or school to study the environmental aspect of literature. They were scattered and categorized under different subject headings: Pastoralism, Human Ecology, Regionalism, American Studies etc.

British Marxist critic, Raymond Williams wrote a seminal critique of pastoral literature in 1973, *The Country and the City*. He professed decidedly a Green Socialism. Another early ecocritical text is Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* published in 1974. He made an argument that environmental crisis is caused primarily by a cultural tradition in West of separation of Nature from Culture. The argument dominates Ecocriticism and Environmental philosophy. Ecocriticism analyses representation of nature in literary genres. Early efforts made by the critics were disunited. Ecocriticism crystallized into a coherent and organized movement in 1990s in the United States of America.

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