



Mains Practice Question

Q. What is meant by Environmental ethics? Illustrate with examples. (150 words)

13 Oct, 2022 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Describe in brief about environmental ethics.
- Describe the Importance of environmental ethics.
- Elaborate with the various examples of environmental ethics.
- Conclude accordingly.

Introduction

Environmental ethics is a branch of applied philosophy that studies the moral and ethical relationship of human beings to the environment. Environmental ethics helps to define man's moral and ethical obligations toward the environment.

Body

- **Importance of Environmental Ethics:**
 - With the deterioration of ecological systems and the worsening of environmental issues, humans have realised that they cannot fix environmental pollution and ecological imbalances just by economical, technological, and judicial means. Therefore, it can play a critical role in ensuring that our lives function smoothly and that humans and other beings in our environment are treated equally.
- **Examples of Environmental Ethics:**
 - **Environment v/s Development:**
 - The world's population was said to be around 2.5 billion during the 1950s. By the year 2050 it is expected to have grown to between nine and 10 billion. As the population is increasing, infrastructural development is essential to accommodate the growing demand, a major burden of which will fall on the environment. Mostly, development takes place at the cost of the environment.
 - Unmindful development and ignorance towards the environment have now raised ethical issues for the human race. The upcoming and younger generation are the least responsible for climate change, yet they will bear the greatest burden of its impact.
 - **Policy Initiatives with respect to environmental ethics:**
 - The environment is no longer to be considered as a sector to be managed exclusively by the environmental authorities, but rather a theme to be incorporated into different policy areas - whether energy, transport, agriculture, industry, or trade.
 - For instance, in India, to balance the development and environment, the policymakers have established institutions like NGT, Central Pollution board, National Ganga River Basin Authority, National Biodiversity Authority, and many others.
 - **Environmental Ethics & Sustainable development:**

- Creating a healthy balance between development and the environment is the major factor for obtaining the sustainable development goal.
- Sustainable development implies harmony on human-environment interactions and inter-generation responsibility, with emphasis on a harmonious relationship among population, resources, environment and development.
- The role of environmental ethics toward sustainable development is that it not only harmonises the relationship of population, resource, environment and economic development, but also guide behaviour selection, push social and political system transformation, strengthen the legal system, and raise environmental awareness of the public.
- **Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA):**
 - It is a process of evaluating the likely environmental impacts of a proposed project or development, taking into account inter-related socio-economic, cultural and human-health impacts, both beneficial and adverse.
 - Which has made it mandatory for various projects such as mining, thermal power plants, river valleys, infrastructure to get environment clearance.
 - EIA makes sure that the developmental plan is environmentally sound and within the limits of the capacity of assimilation and regeneration of the ecosystem.
- **Climate Ethics:**
 - Climate ethics is an area of research that focuses on the ethical dimensions of climate change (also known as global warming).
 - The recent prolonged Heatwave in North India or the Devastating floods along with unprecedented landslides in Assam are the severe outcome of climate change in India.

Conclusion

While the world is divided on the basis of ideology, nation-states, religion, language, etc, environmental ethics has united this divided world. The challenges posed by global warming, climate change, deforestation, desertification, etc., affect people irrespective of any boundaries, so it requires a unified effort.

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