

ENVIRONMENT MAINTENANCE KEYS WITHIN OUR SCRIPTURES

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Abstract

Living in harmony with nature has been fundamental part of Indian culture. This has been abundantly reflected in a variety of our scriptures like Vedas and Upanishads, our traditional practices, religious beliefs, rituals etc. The present day global concerns for sustainable development and conservation of natural resources are the important for human being. It is interesting to know that the Vedas have several references in them on environment conservation, ecological balance, weather cycles, rainfall phenomena, water cycle etc. indicates that high level of awareness of seers and people of that time better than today. The Vedas described the worship of God in natural elements such as Air, Water, fire, wind etc. By worshiping them they try to express gratitude for survival of creatures. In this paper I want to draw attention to our ancient knowledge and practice of environment conservation which may be become helpful today.

Objective of the Study:

- To explain the relevance Vedic literature in present time.
- To know about types of solution to environmental crisis from Vedic period.
- To explain scope of implementing the Vedic knowledge to the current scenario.

Environmental conservation concept of Vedic period:

Human beings have closely related with the environment which consisting of earth, air, water, plants and animals. Environmental imbalance is a great problem of the present time. Environment conservation is the biggest problem all over the world. Now days every country of the world has showed a deep concern in the protection of the environment. But during the Vedic period the people were very much concerned about the protection of the environment which reflects in Vedic literature. The Vedas have several suggestions on environmental protection, ecological balance, weather cycles, rainfall phenomena, hydrologic cycle etc, that directly indicate the high level of awareness of the ancient people.

For the people of India, environmental conservation is not a new concept. Traditionally, the protection of nature and wildlife was reflected in the daily lives of people, preserve in religion, arts, and culture. Some of the basic values of ecology was engrossed in the Indian culture and reflected in the ancient scriptural text, the *Isopanishad*, said:

*om īśāvāsyamidam sarvam yat kimcajagatyām jagat ,
tenatyaktena bhūñjitha, ma gṛdhaḥ kasyasvidhanam (1)*

It says, “This universe is the creation of the Supreme Power meant for the benefit of all his creation, individual use the natural elements without attachment of it and enjoy it.” Modern people may seem worthless and irrational many of our rituals and traditional approaches to protect the essential relationship between man and nature like worship of trees, animals, forests, rivers, and the sun, and considering the earth itself as Mother Goddess, were part of the Indian customs.

The Vedic prayers request to divine involvement to bliss and protect the environment. The people in Vedic times regarded environment in a holistic manner and valued each of its elements by carefully preserving them. There are so many hymns seeking the blessings of the five elements of life or the Panchamahabhoota of nature: akasha or firmament, vayu or air, tejas or fire, apahh or water and prithvi or earth. It was understood that the well-being of mother earth dependant on the preservation and sustenance of the environment. Do not harm the environment, the rishis said that earth is my mother, I am her son.

Mātā bhūmiḥ putro aham pruthivyaḥ (Atharva. 12-1-12)

Today, we should make people to understand this relationship of human being with mother Earth and reason behind it that this feelings makes us to protect her from all kind of threats which pollute it, harm it. In Veda we find that they assume everything in the world has life whether it is living or non-living. In Veda worship of Gods of nature, This clearly reveals that in Vedic period the mankind had clear concept of environment .The rishi said that the earth has a tremendous capability :

maspravirūm bhūtarm pruthivām aysavṣomdiV(Atharva. 1-2-1)

As, we know that all our needs are fulfilled by mother earth, it gives us all necessary things for our life so the seer said that it has unlimited wealth.

This Vedic prayer explains about various types of land like rocky, sandy, gravelly and consists gold within itself:

*Śilā bhūmirśmā paṁsuḥ sā bhūmiḥ samdhrutā dhrutā,
tasyai hiranyavakṣhase pruthivya akaram namaḥ*

(Atharva. 12-1-26)

The vedic seer said that all living and non living depend on the earth and the Earth holds them carefully:

Tvajjātāstvayi caranti matryāstvam bibharsī dvipadastvam catuṣpadaḥ

(Atharva. 12-1-15)

The Earth holds entire sea area, rivers and other water resources; it produces crop plants and provides food materials for living being:

*Yasyām samudra uta sindhurāpo yasyāmannam kaṣṭyaḥ sambabhūvuh,
yasyāmidam jinvasi prañdejat sā no bhūmiḥ pūrva peye dadhātu*

(Atharva. 12-1-3)

This mantra proves that why we call her ‘Mother’, it gives us life. The seer said that by doing yajna, improve land fertility, maintain rainfalls, agricultural productions and no of trees are increased as shown in the following mantras:

*Pruthivī ca me ygnen kalpantām,
kruṣiṣca me vruṣiṣca me jaitra ca me audibhadyam ca me yagyen kalantām*

(Yaju.18-9)

We can put it into the practice, by doing yajna we can increase rainfall and clean atmosphere too.

The seer asked for forgiveness to Mother Land if by mistake he injured her at her bottom when he digging land for agricultural purpose and taking out wealth from it:

*Yat te bhūme vikhanāmi kṣhipram tadapi rohatu,
mā te mama vimrugvari mā te hrudayamarpipam*

(Atharva. 12-1-35)

In this mantra we can see the worry of seer to protect mother earth anyhow and not harm her for own selfish purposes like to fulfill all needs of our life.

The Rig Veda explains divinities like Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Maruts and Aditya that are responsible for preserving all entities of nature like hills- mountains, lakes, heaven and earth, forest or the waters. The indra, surya and agni are the representations of the watery atmosphere, the source of heat and light and fire. Likewise the dawn, the wind, The assemblage of moving power and some of the natural phenomenon are incarnated as ushas, vayu and maruts etc. Vedas perceive that any change in the nature caused due to injudicious human activities could result in imbalance in weather, pollute earth, air, water, change the rainfall patterns, affected on crop plants etc.

Clean and fresh air is important for our long and healthy life so seer said :

*Vāt ā vātu bheṣajam śambhu myobhu no hrude ,
Pra ṇ āyuṣi tāriṣat (Rig. 10-186-1)*

fresh air blowing and makes our life free from pollution:

Śanno vāto pavatām (Atharv.36-10)
)

The *vedic* age *yajnas* were conducted for purification of the environment, perfumed haven materials, cow dung and ghee were used during these *yajnas*. Wherever Vāyu is requested, he is asked to become so pure that no impure things will ever dare to enter into the layers of atmosphere and seer said that make it pure with *yajnas*:

Samidhāa'gni duvsyata dhrutairbodhayatātithim,
Asmin hvyā juhōtana (Yaju.3-1)

Dhyāvāpruthivībhyam svāhā (Yaju.4-6)

We should put it into practice now days and purify our atmosphere with this Vedic suggestions. We should perform *yajna* as early as possible.

The seer addresses in *Rig-veda* to plants and vegetables as mother, ‘O mother! hundreds are your birth places and thousand are your growth

Śatam vo amba dhāmāni sahasramuta vo ruhḥ (Rig. 10-97-2)

Thus the Vedas put emphasis on that the plants and trees are the assets for generations. It is amazing that the people in Vedic times considered nature and the environment in a divine manner and revered each of its elements and entities by carefully protecting them.

Conclusions:

In this way Vedic literature provides lots of knowledge about each and every aspect of environment. Ancient people were very much aware about the ecology and sustainability. It helps in solving environmental problems. But unfortunately, we have forgotten those valuable principles which can be very helpful in now days. To have a balanced, peaceful life, we should not create instability to our surroundings. We should make extensive efforts in planting trees, conserving soil, protecting biological diversity, and finding new ways of producing natural energy could help to a greater extent in maintaining a balanced environmental harmony in our current world. We should make people to follow our traditions which are useful to protect our nature.

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