



Mains Practice Question

Q. Discuss the concept of biocentrism in environmental ethics and its implications for ecological conservation. (150 Words)

15 Feb, 2024 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Write a Brief introduction to biocentrism in environmental ethics.
- Mention the implications of biocentrism for ecological conservation.
- Write a conclusion.

Introduction

Biocentrism is an ethical belief that all living things have equal moral standing and deserve equal moral consideration. It is a school of thought in environmental ethics, which is a philosophical discipline that examines the relationship between humans and the environment. Recognising the significance of biocentricism the Supreme Court, in Animal Welfare Board of India vs A. Nagaraja and Others case that every species has a right to life and security, subject to the law of the land, which includes depriving its life out of human necessity.

Body

By prioritizing the well-being of ecosystems and the organisms within them, biocentrism offers a holistic approach to environmental protection.

- **Ecosystem Integrity and Resilience:**
 - Biocentrism recognizes ecosystems as complex networks of interdependent life forms.
 - Emphasizes the importance of preserving ecosystem integrity to maintain ecological balance and resilience.
 - Advocates for conservation strategies that prioritize the protection of entire ecosystems rather than individual species.
- **Biodiversity Preservation:**
 - Acknowledges the intrinsic value of every species, regardless of its utility to humans.
 - Calls for the preservation of biodiversity as essential for ecosystem health and functioning.
 - Supports conservation efforts aimed at safeguarding habitats and protecting endangered species from extinction.
 - For example, recognizing the crucial role played by various species in the ecosystem, India has launched species specific conservation measures such as Project Tiger and Project Elephant.
- **Ethical Treatment of Non-Human Animals:**
 - Biocentrism extends moral consideration to non-human animals, recognizing their capacity to experience pain, pleasure, and intrinsic value. Example: Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960
 - Advocates for ethical treatment of animals in conservation practices, such as minimizing habitat destruction and avoiding unnecessary harm.
 - Example: Sea turtles, such as the loggerhead, green, and leatherback, are ancient

reptiles that play a crucial role in marine ecosystems. They face threats from habitat loss, pollution, and accidental capture in fishing gear.

▪ **Sustainable Resource Management:**

- Promotes sustainable use of natural resources to ensure their availability for future generations. Solar power is clean, versatile, and can be harnessed anywhere there's sunlight. However, its effectiveness depends on weather conditions.
- Encourages practices that minimize environmental degradation and depletion of ecosystems. Hydropower harnesses the energy of flowing water (rivers or dams) to generate electricity. It's renewable, but proper management is essential to avoid disrupting ecosystems and habitats.
- Supports initiatives aimed at promoting renewable energy sources and reducing carbon emissions to mitigate climate change.
- For example, India launched LiFe initiative to promote an environmentally conscious lifestyle that focuses on 'mindful and deliberate utilisation' instead of 'mindless and wasteful consumption'.

▪ **Interconnectedness and Interdependence:**

- Biocentrism highlights the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life forms within ecosystems.
- Emphasizes the need for collaborative conservation efforts that transcend political and geographical boundaries.
- Encourages partnerships between diverse stakeholders, including governments, communities, and conservation organizations, to address global environmental challenges.

▪ **Cultural and Spiritual Dimensions:**

- Recognizes the cultural and spiritual significance of nature in diverse human societies.
- Values traditional ecological knowledge and indigenous wisdom in conservation decision-making.
- Promotes a deeper connection with nature and a sense of stewardship towards the Earth among individuals and communities.

Conclusion

Biocentrism offers a new perspective on ecological conservation, emphasizing the inherent value of all living beings and ecosystems. Embracing biocentric principles can lead to more effective conservation strategies, promoting harmony between humans and nature. The Supreme Court of India upheld biocentric values in a case involving the endangered Great Indian Bustard, requiring the installation of bird diverters on power lines to protect them. This ruling highlights the significance of eco-preservation and supports biocentric ideals.