ISLAM: ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract
The natural environment has suffered from human activity, which requires human beings to improve its conditions. There is a growing realization the increasing deterioration of the environmental crisis that calls for serious examination. This is due to the power acquired by humankind through science and technology, which is a major area to be examined. The paper adopts an Ethico-Religious method. The Islamic environmental worldview is based on five aims of Islamic legal system, called the Shari'ah, which aims to protect not only religion but also life, the mind, offspring, and property. All of these are threatened by our lack of proper appreciation and protection of the environment. Islam is rich in environmental ethics that differ from other conventional environmental approaches, which imply that there is intrinsic value in God, which is the integration of the universe. This view helps to deliver a more comprehensive and holistic approach of environment that is just as damaged to universe and God's verses. Therefore, this approach enables humans to work toward conserving the natural environment for present-day. This paper therefore seeks to address what Islam hin order for environment as to sustain it. The starting point will be to examine the concept of environment and its sustainability, goes further to explore Islamic views on the concept of environment. Some of the spiritual and physical problems to be addressed include obedience to God in preserving all He created, such water; pollution of air; refuse dumps into rivers; the use of firewood; and general cleanliness, as enshrined in the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet. The paper concludes that the human nature relationship should be redefined to establish a more well-intentioned and harmonious one. The paper recommends that the involvement of humankind in any of these acts be considered as tyranny against nature and a transgression of those rights.

Keywords: Islam, Environment, Development and Sustainability.

Introduction
Environmental discourse has been a global issue for a long time. This is because the natural environment has faced serious treatment by human to its condition but remains worse rather than improving. Human beings have been fighting it for making better economic development. The power acquired by humankind in science and technology has threatened the sustainability of the environment; this can be seen when we realize that human beings have been viewing themselves as idols. It is obvious that human beings in modern time do not have the proper and sufficient restraints for their behaviour toward the natural environment. It has been observed that unknown changes in both the physical and natural environment and the

incidence of environmentally harmful events over the last few decades have heightened the need to be aware of threats to the environment and of its capacity to provide a sustainable life for human beings and other creations, which hampers development. As a result, questions are asked and doubts are expressed about the environment's capacity to continue enduring its exploited status.

Some people believe that we cannot continue to use the goods of the world as in the past. Hence they have deduced the human need to strike a more collective bargain regarding our behaviour toward nature and the scientific information about how much we damage the earth instead of improving it. This calls for changes in human behaviour, hence the need for codes of conduct based on environmental ethics of the environment to correct the relationship between man and nature. Humans are faced with the dilemma of how to prevent the overuse and depletion of natural resources when individual desire is to maximize their gains. One notices the challenge of how to get subjects to agree on how to live in accordance with nature.

Benson opined that the literature on behaviour and attitude studies into the roots of environmental degradation is very limited. In fact, there is limited scholarship on the historical roots of the environmental crisis that is related to ethics, in value "ought to" and "ought not to" toward nature. It is not sufficient to mention environmental loss and the need for preservation, where as there is no regard for values and beliefs, in the form of the most possible intensive philosophical and moral ones. It is therefore important to understand ethics in order to understand the crisis that afflicts society today. Most scientists and environmental specialists believe that environmental conservation is an important ethical matter.

Obviously, ethics is concerned with relations between individuals, but the ethics that regulates the natural relations of human with the land, animals, and plants (that is, nature) does not yet exist. Although the ethics concerning human relations with land, plants, and animals remains an evolving opportunity and environmental necessity, Islam, being one of the world's religions, does not leave the issue of the environment un-discussed.

Khalid (2002) has this to say;

> Islam provides a holistic approach to existence. There is no difference between the sacred and the secular, and it has not placed a distinction between the world of mankind and the world of nature. More importantly, Islam encourages people to protect the earth and all life on it and to maintain the balance in nature as created by God. We live, however, in a world of pollution, deforestation, climate change, and desertification, and is this world's environmental concerns often forgotten in favour of economic benefit.

There are several reasons for paying attention to environmental ethics. One reason can be found in the reality that ethical guidelines and worldviews can have significant influence on individual and collective behaviours.

Secondly, environmental beliefs or worldviews, as an underlying system of attitudes and beliefs about the human – nature relationship, determine behaviour when interacting with the environment. Hence, this paper aims to provide an overview of the fundamentals and common approaches to environmental ethics that is geared towards development from an Islamic view.

Islam is a universal religion whose principles are legally ordained. Anyone who believes and practices Islamic teachings regardless of the race, community, country, or clan he belongs is called a Muslim. Islam is derived from the Arabic verbal root Salima which means

to be safe and sound, secure, peaceful, and obedient. Islam means submission to God's will Q. 3: 20, 85, to bow and obey, Q. 39: 54. This is associated with Ihsan beneficence, charity, performance of good deeds; Q. 4:125, Ikhlas, sincere devotion and frankness; Q. 12:11 Tqwakkul, trust in God. Islam is the opposite of Shirk, idolatry (Raheemson 2020 P. 157).

The Qur'an makes it obvious that there exists an agreement between God and His creation. This agreement is portrayed as a mutual understanding. The Shari'ah, God's law, is presented in the form of commandments to be accepted and implemented by man. God, in turn, made promises of what He will do in the event of man's willingness to abide by these commands and to regulate his life according to them. This covenant of the Qur'an God and man, the man becomes His steward on earth through submission and obedience to His will (Abdulali, 2007).

The establishment of the omniscience and omnipresence of Allah is the objective of Islamic theology. The Qur'an has it that the universe was not created for fun Q. 21:16, 44:38 but for a reason. Central to Islamic theology is the belief that there is a grand divine design for the universe to function, he maintained and sustained from the day man is created to the day of resurrection. This is to fulfill God's divine plan and purpose of creation. The universe is therefore created for the worship of Allah. Hence Allah does not in any way accept any form of worship (Ibadah) from any of His servants save what is pure and clean because He is pure and clean. Man is created to serve as the vicegerent of Allah (Khalifah), to worship Him on earth, in a good environment like the angels in heaven. While man is to worship Allah, he is endowed with intelligence to use and adapt all things around him – good environment – to sustain himself and make his life on earth comfortable.

Man is to be in good health in order to function well. Hence, a good environment is designed for him to eat, drink, move about, have shelter, sleep, and plan for the days ahead, since he is a vicegerent of Allah, to whom the management of the earth is entrusted (Yahya, 2003 p 363). Man is encouraged to understand and appreciate the natural phenomena surrounding him, with a view at developing himself and maintaining the earth-good environment with the guidance of Allah. By extension, the area of land inhabited by man, including all that the land support - plant, animals, lives, water bodies both running and stagnant, and the atmosphere over casting that land constitutes the environment of such a person for his growth and development. Consequently, the development of persons, socially, politically, economically, among others, will not be complete without the realization and observation by man of accompanied divine ethical principles. This has to do with the guiding lights of morality capable of curbing societal environmental challenges, among others.

In order to settle these things, two things come into mind: religion and morality. Scholars have different opinions on these two words, religion and morality. Some are of the opinion that society has inculcated in people sense which and them in doing things, they claim the experience is the best teacher. Constant accumulation of this experience over time brought about a sense of right and wrong. While some say that morality is a product of religion, it is God who puts into people what is right or wrong, thereby bringing about a sense of obligation.

Richardson has this to say:

> The sense of obligation to do that which is believed to be right is in fact, that presumption of God upon every human life (1948 p 125; Raheemson, 2020; quoting Brunner (1947) p. 53) maintained that morality is deeds, the idea of God who has

> imbibed people with action from wrong ones. We therefore agreed that morality and religion are two sides of the same coin and they cannot be detached from one another.

Morality from an Islamic point of view is a demonstration of practical faith in developing a sense of a good environment and a conducive atmosphere for the wellbeing of human society. Islam sees morality as an indispensable reality of human existence, as it helps humanity to overcome ecological and environmental challenges.

Tawhid (Unity of God)

The unity of God (Tawhid) is the main pillar of Islamic faith. Allah creates, maintains, governs, and orders everything in due proportion without a helper. Allah is the creator of the universe and all it contains (including the natural environment) and also the All-encompassing al-Muhit, who pervades and permeates all creations by determining and endowing them with their inherent as well as essential qualities (natural). Thus, willy-nilly, they all obey His divine laws. The Qur'an has it that there is balance in (the entire creatures) and purpose for every creation "The earth". We caused all kinds of things to grow therein in due balance. Nothing is created in vain but for set objectives (Q.15:18).

Christianity, as a major religion in the world, also holds that God is the creator of all things but urged man to take charge by supervision. God says in the Bible:

> Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fowls of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all creeping things that creep upon the earth.

God spoke in Gen. 2:16 "of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat…." Meaning that there are trees to be reserved for future generations. Going contrary to God's instruction is against His instruction and can bring punishment for man, which is the genesis of our suffering today. It is on this note that God commanded man to hearken to His voice and be blessed (Deuteronomy 28:2).

African traditional religion also keeps to rules governing them, even though it has no written text. There are taboos to be respected, and contrary to it the Supreme Being strikes the offender. There is time for planting and harvest. The deity in charge of fertility is appeased accordingly so that the crops can yield. Going contrary to it means low harvest. There are certain trees that cannot be cut without the involvement of the priest of that deity e.g iroko tree (Orji-Ikwerre). Hence certain trees are still preserved.

Concept of Environment

Environment is defined by the free Dictionary (2010) as the circumstances or condition that surround one; surroundings. It is the totality of circumstances surrounding and organism or group of organisms especially the combination of external physical conditions that affects and influences growth, development, and survival of organisms, the complex of social and cultural conditions affecting the nature of an individual or community. Environment means what surrounds a thing or an item according to Answers (2009). The environment is the surroundings; it could be a physical element- physical environment that includes the built environment, natural environment – air, condition, water, land, atmosphere. It could also be a human environment – people surrounding the item or thing. This is also known as the social environment, which includes elements such as the spiritual environment, the emotional environment, home, family, etc.

Aliyu (2004 p 9) asserts that environment is the whole sum of the surrounding external conditions within which an organism, a community, or an object exists. Ogungbile and Olademo (2020) quoting Olasuyin (2002 p1) adduces that environment is the whole sum of the surrounding external conditions within which an organism, a community, or an object exists.

Religious Value Orientation

Many people hold the opinion that separation between worldly living and religion is the cause of the environmental crisis. Without mincing words, religion helps to shape our attitudes towards nature. Religion provides a proper guide on how humans can treat other humans and how we can relate to nature. Thus, religions shape world views and ethics that underline fundamental attitudes and values of different cultures and societies. Religious values and ethical beliefs form behaviour towards others, including our relationship with all creatures such as plant and animal life. Therefore, some people believe that the environmental crisis is in fact, a religious or moral one of which religious tradition has the solution. New science and technology actually played part with regard to environmental preservation. For example, Nasr believes that there is no sensitive link between science and ethics. Moreover, current ethics, mostly Christian, is compatible with the world view of the new science in the present new world.

Under these circumstances, the results can be seen in an environmental crisis, whereas dominant scientific world view could not produce satisfactory result and all efforts to formulate proper environmental ethics have little effect on preventing the environment from being damaged. Since two decades ago, the world view point has changed, and religions are now considered effective in solving environmental problems. Proofs show that people are willing to abide by and adapt to religious principles and teachings more than in the past. Therefore, there is a need to evaluate religious teaching as to detect, among religions, which one is actually chasing the environmental crisis with its ethics. This takes us to another centre of value, “Theo-centrism”. Theo-centrism is a God-centered approach to the world. It comes from those religions that believe in only one God as the centre of creation and sustainer of the earth, such as Islam, Christianity, and Judaism.

In Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, taking care of the environment is a matter of concern. However, there are those who believe that these religions are important and anthropocentric, and view nature as being of secondary importance. Followers of these religions might say that the particular attributes of human beings do indeed place him/her on a different plane from other creatures, but this gives human beings a separate and special responsibility toward the natural environment. Through responsibility, will not certainly ignore possible consequences for other living organisms in decision-making for the environment.

Furthermore, there are rich resources for rethinking views of nature in the convened tradition, in the vicegerency concept of the Qur’an, the sacrament theology of the Hebrew Bible, and in incarnation Christianity. In Islam, the true owner is God, and anything owes its existence to Him. Besides, human behavior toward the natural environment is evaluated based on the following God’s command; as a result, the center of value in Islam is directly related to theocentrism. Hence, intrinsic value belongs to God, and the values of other things are defined in relation to Him. The all lives and inanimate objects possess value, and humans are then responsible for taking care of nature and its components.

The evaluation criteria for an act can be defined by deontology. Human action is ethically right when she/he does his/her duty just according to God's commands. Behaviour towards nature based on divine command is a clear case in Islam in which humans are asked to regard the environment. Hence, human behaviour towards the natural environment can be evaluated based on such commands.

The Islamic worldview is characterized by a specific attribute of centricity, in which God encompasses everything. Based on this concept, explaining environmental ethics can establish a more comprehensive ethical approach for human nature interaction (Godspel Image) in the Qur'an confirmed this reality. For instance, and whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth is Allah's, and Allah encompasses all things (Qur'an 4:126).

The relationship between God, human beings, and nature is also useful to mention in Ordan's ideas. He suggested two major worldviews about environmentalism that include intervention modes, or techno-centrism, in which human ingenuity and the spirit of competition dictate the terms of morality, and a nurturing mode, or a metaphor for morality (how to behave).

Islamic Principles of Environment

Islamic views the environment as a gift from Allah to humankind; hence it must be properly taken care of by individuals and communities. Article 3 of the Islamic Declaration on Sustainable Development states that "individuals and communities are all duty bound to take care of it and to promote all its natural resources, including air, climate, water, seasons, flora, and fauna, and to refrain from any act likely to cause pollution or damage the ecosystem or disturb the balance therein."

In an Islamic perspective, the concept of human needs is based on the principles that all the individuals and components of the surroundings are Allah's creations; hence, human beings have two basic needs: spiritual, which is fulfilled through belief or faith in Allah, and physical, which is met by making the best use of all resources which Allah created for him. These essential needs of like such as food, water, air, light, heat, moisture, the percentage of oxygen, and the elements of soil are in exact proportion to enable man to live and to practice in orderliness (Makinde, 2020).

Islamic Concept of Environment

Islamic concepts of the environment have to do with the protection of human beings, animals, plants, land, and air (Abu-Sway, 2004). For one to understand Islam as it concerns the environment adequate terms need to be used such as *fitrah* – which refers to creation as an original natural order, *tawhid* – the unity of creation, which tells us that all things in the world are related to one another and Allah's signs, Mizan – balance, state of orderliness and *Khahfah* which refers to the role of mankind as trustee of creation.

FITRA

Fitrah refers to creation as an original natural order. This is the natural pattern of creation itself and the Qur'an locates humankind within it.

> So set thou thy face toward the religion, being upright the natural pattern in which Allah has made mankind. There is no change in Allah's creation. That is the right religion; but most men know it not.

Allah created humans as part of His original creation to function within its primordial pattern. Humanity cannot escape Allah's immutable laws. The unity of God (*Tawhid*) as has been said, means that God is one and that no other good is to be worshiped. The Qur'an 30:25-26 says, "To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and all obeying His will, and it is He who originate creation." Heavens and Earth are extensions of Allah's throne, conveying the idea that creation was designed to function as a unity.

Khalid (2002) opines that mankind was created within the natural patterning. This defines the ecology of our place in the natural order. He puts his position thus:

> Allah created humankind as parts of original creation to function within His original scheme. We were then subject to Allah's unchangeable laws, as was the rest of creation, making us – at the biological level equal partners with the rest of nature. The different elements of the universe working together keep nature in balance. We can modify the environment to suit our purposes, up to a point, but we cannot change its basic makeup. The difference elements of the universe working together keep nature in balance. We can modify the environment to suit our purposes up to a point, but we cannot change its basic makeup. The environmental problems we experience today could be describe ad adjusting mechanism that keeps the earth in order. Like the human body, the earth is a self-healing entity, and it will tend to close the wounds inflicted upon it. Also, like the human body, the earth will react drastically to the deeper levels of injury we keep subjecting it to. But we have yet to understand these processes.

The Principle of *Mizan*

In this view, Allah has created the world and the universe perfectly in proportion, measure, and balance as a life-supporting system. Islamic environmental ethics is based on the concept that human relationships are established on justice and equity: "Lo! Allah enjoins justice and kindness" (Q. 16: 90). The universe is balanced as it was created by Allah and functions carefully as measured. The balance of the universe is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

> "Has taught (you mankind) the Qur'an. He created man. He taught man eloquent speech. The sun and the moon run on their fixed courses (exactly) calculated with measured out stages for each (for reckoning etc). And the herbs (or stars) and the trees both prostrated. And the Heaven He ahs raised high and He has set up balance. In order that you may not transgress (due) balance, and observe the weight with equity and do not make the balance deficient (q. 55;1-9.).

Qur'an 15:21 says, "There is not a thing but that with us are the stars thereof; and We send it down except in appointed measure."

The Principle of *Khalifah*

Khalifah which means representative of Allah, man is therefore a vicegerent of Allah in the affairs of the earth. A *Khalifah* inherits a position, a power, a trust, who holds it responsibly and in harmony with its bestower – in this case, Allah. He should not violate the trust. *Khalifah* in its verbal root, means "he came after, followed, succeeded; and holds with despite, be at variance with and offend against, violate or break a rule, command or promise."

This is why Eugene opines that "When Allah made mankind His vicegerent, He gave us stewardship (*Al-Khalifah*) to exercise over the earth, preserve and protect the natural environment. The universe is created by Allah with a defined purpose and time frame. In order to utilize the natural resources (ni ' *Matullah* – gifts of Allah) is so sacred because it is a trust vested on mankind. Man, therefore, is a manager and not a landlord; he is a beneficiary and not a disposer. The Qur'an sees the Islamic nation as a nation of moderation, the nation that does not engage in excesses in things (*Ummatan Wasatan*). Hence Muslim are bound to make use of the earth so as to benefit humans by reserving it for the use of future generations for continuity (Eugene, 2020).

Since human beings are perceived as the trustee of the earth, it means that man is not supposed to cause corruption in any form on earth (the environment). Accountability is require4d on earth while performing a given responsibility. Reward then follows punishment. The Qur'an says:

> It is He who has made you (His) vicegerents, inheritors of the earth: He raised you in ranks, some above others, that He may try you in gifts. He has given you: for your Lord is quick in punishment; yet he is indeed oft – forgiving, most merciful (Q. 6L 165).

Sustainable Development

There is no univocal definition for sustainable development. Jordan (1995 p. 166). Sustainable development is a development that meets the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Olajuyin explains thus:

> In recent times, a joint publication by the World Resources Institute, the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nation Development Programme, and the World Bank defines 'sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without understanding the resource and ecological base for future generations."

In this regard, Jordan (1995) agreed with this definition with an amendment. According to him Olajuyin was not specific enough to guide effective action. He said that resources should meet the needs of the present, defining exactly what the exact needs might be difficult. However, Aliyu (2004) had an insight when he said that:

> Sustainable human development is a development that not only generates economic growth but also distributes its benefits equitably. It regenerates the environment rather than destroying it; that empowers people rather than marginalizing them.

Sustainability in its broad sense is to promote collaboration both local and international level with respect to the maintenance, protection, and recovery of Earth's ecosystems. It also

supports economic development. Environmental degredation are causes of poverty as a result of underdevelopment. People began to find means of survival economically.

Environmental Ethics Approach

Two questions abound with regard to environmental ethics: namely, questions about the "Centre of Value" and the basis of evolution. It is possible to distinguish a spectrum of approaches in which the types of right and wrong behaviour towards the natural environment are defined. These approaches should be considered as manifestations of efforts to expand moral standing to nature and the non-human world. Common among these approaches are conservationism, preservationists, social ecology, animal rights, land ethic, deep ecology, eco-feminism, stewardship, sustainable development, and sustainability.

According to Bremmam and Yeuk-size (2992) conservatism and preservationism are often associated with resources. Resources has generally been described as a set of utilitarian ethics, which sees the maximization of human welfare as the basis of good action. It includes all ethical positions that see nature as a vast resources reservoir for human use. In conservationism, various components of the environment need to be protected only when, or because, they have known economic value. Conservationism is thus guided by cost-benefit analysis and market imperatives. Preservationists, unlike conservationism, reject strict economic valuation of nature. This ethical position prescribes natural preservation for the purpose of ensuring species diversity and maintaining a beautiful natural system.

Social ecology emphasizes present ecological problems, and these problems cannot be clearly understood, much less resolved, without resolutely dealing with problems within society. Social ecology informs us that nature and society are interlinked by evolution into nature, which consists of two differentiations: first, "butic" nature, and second, human alienation from nature, employing the instrument of critical theory. According to this view, alienation is caused by a narrow positivist conception of rationality as an instrument for pursuing power, which critical theories would replace or reconcile with the aesthetic, moral, sensual, and expressive aspects to human nature.

Animal Rights Attaches Intrinsic Value to Life

This ethical view proposes whether we should respect animals and what kinds of animals should be possessed in respect and ethical consideration. Some environmental ethicists suggest that the notion of rights and dallies should be extended to the animal or biological kingdom. Supporters of animal rights argue that, like humans, some non-human animals have consciousness or self-awareness and the capacity for reasoning. They, having defended the ethical rights of some animals, have believed that fault should be found in the system which allows seeing animals like resources for us, whereas animals have rights as the same humans. The Holy Qur'an says: "There is no animal or bird that flies on its wings but forms part of communities like you" (Q6:38).

By virtue of being vicegerent of Allah on earth, man is the custodian of nature. He made all other creatures subservient to man. This is confirmed in the Holy Qur'an (22:36).

> And the camels, we have made them as signs appointed by Allah for you therein is much good. So, mention the name of Allah on them standing in a row. Then, when they fall down on their sides, eat of them and feed the contented are a beggar. Thus,

> we have made them subservient to you that you may be grateful. Therefore, it behooves man to take care of the lower beings in his care by upholding and preserving the signs of Allah.

All living species of plants and animals found in the wild environment are regarded as wild. They are found in thick forest, such as the rain forest, and in the grass, and they include species like lion, zebra, giraffe, leopard, elephant, and some species of birds. Presently, wild populations are rapidly in decline due to the high rate of poaching for pure economic reasons. Men have hunted wildlife into extinction in a bid to use animal skins for making leather and fabrics, or tusks for ornaments (Ezeeli, 2022).

Islamic View on Animals

The preservation of animals is an ordained practice in Islam since the time of Prophet Nuhu, when the Almighty Allah commanded him to take along with him in his ark one pair of each animal. From that period, would have greatly increased, if not for the fact that many have devised several wicked methods of catching wild animals and their young ones. The Prophet Muhammad forbade cruelty to animals when he said: "If you must kill an animal, kill without torture."

Some sayings of Prophet Muhammad enjoining Muslims to show kindness to animals and hence preserve them include the following:

> The Holy Prophet Muhammad forbade inciting animals to fight each other. A party of men tied up a hen and was shooting arrows at it. Ibn Umar passed by them angrily. "Who has done this?" the Holy Prophet had forbidden this kind of thing (Muslim, Hadith 48:13).

The Prophet further said:

> A prostitute was forgiven by Allah because she passed by a panting dog near a well and saw that the dog was about to die of thirst. She took off her shoe and trying it with her scarf, drew out some water for the dog; so Allah forgave her.

From the above quotation, Islam regards the animal kingdom as a community that must be nurtured and preserved. Kindness to animals is of the utmost concern to Islam; and Muslims are enjoined to forsake using animals as games, a practice regarded as the devil's work (Q5:90).

Land ethics states that we need not to act upon conscience between people, but the problem is the need to generalize conscience from individuals to land in this approach, the role of Homo sapiens changes from conqueror of the land community to plan member and citizen of it. It implies respect for the community as such.

The land ethic enlarged the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals or collectively, the land ethic view. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. Deep ecology separates all efforts to environmental preservation into two distinct of shallow and deep. The former movement is aimed at preserving the environment, first against pollution and the dissipation of resources, to increase the health and affluence of people in the developed countries. Deep ecology claims that it is more useful than shallow ecology, and accepted that moving towards deep ecology is an obligation. This ecology principle rejects human domination over nature, biosphericality, egalitarianism, biodiversity, and co-existence;

it pasture, fight against pollution and resource dissipation, and also promotes local autonomy and decentralization. Deep ecology seeks self-realization through unity with other things and claims that an individual can form unity through species, ecosystems, and landscapes.

Stewardship (*Al-Khahfah/Ubundimyah*)

Stewardship emphasizes human stewardship toward all of God's creations and the preservation of them. There is a general knowledge among all believers that the earth and its resources are from God. This ethical approach confirms this; besides, it also argues that we are not landlords on earth and that our domination over the earth has not been absolute. Rather, we have only been given the responsibility to take care of creation "in holiness and wisdom" as God would. When we fail to do so, the earth suffers. In stewardship, human are responsible for conserving resources that are being utilized on a daily basis. This calls for the use of natural resources in a sustainable way so that others (humans and non-humans) are able to use in a good way.

Niger Delta Experience

The Niger Delta is the world's third largest wetland, after Holland and Mississippi, and the world's biggest remaining mangrove. It is the site of most of Nigeria biodiversity and the area where the main oil reserves are found. It comprises nine of the thirty-six states that make nine of the thirty six states which make up Nigeria (Maier, 2000).

Oil was first found in commercial quantities at Olobiri in 1956. The main multinational oil companies in the region today are Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mobil, Chevron, Agip, Elf and Texaco (Kilani, 2008). There are lots of illegal refineries in Rivers State that affect nature, the air, water, humans, and animal. Land cannot yield to its capacity, and fishermen can hardly get fish except those in the Atlantic. Lives are lost every day because of this illegal refinery and bunkery. The air is polluted, water and the general environment. The outcome is soot all over the Niger Delta, Rivers State in particular (Ezeeli, 2022).

These are deliberate actions by man to cause a crisis in the environment. From the viewpoint of Islam, God has given us this thing called the environment, and it must be properly taken care of by man (individuals and community). This is more reason why article 3 of Islamic declaration on sustainable development states that individuals are bound to take care of it as to promote its natural resources, including air, climate water, seas, flora and fauna, and refrain from any act likely to cause pollution or damage the ecosystem or disturb the balance thereof (Ezeeli, 2022).

In an Islamic perspective, the concept of human needs is based on the principle that all the individual components of the surroundings were created by Allah, and that human being has but two basic needs: spiritual need – belief or faith in Allah and physical need, which is achieved by making proper use of the resources created by Allah and given to man freely. Everything God created was in order and still as He created them. It is on this note that one should know that the Islamic concept of the environment has to do with the protection of human beings, animals, plants, land, water, and air.

Conclusion

The paper has shown that Islam has principles on the environment and sustainable development. The paper wishes to conclude that Islam position on the environment is based on the fact that Allah is the creator, sustainer, and owner of all creation. Hence, humankind is the trustee on earth, and humans are accountable to Allah for his or her deeds on earth, with a reward or punishment.

In fact, every created thing has inherent values, either ecological value or utilization value, both spiritual and material sustenance. It is therefore important that humankind's rights over nature be rights of sustainable utilization based on moderation, balance, and conservation so that the incoming generation to also preserve it. These of nature include rights to protection from misuse, degradation, extravagance, and waste. When an individual or group involves themselves in any of these acts, it is considered tyranny against nature and a transgression of those rights. The reason for conservation and development of the environment in Islam is for the universal good of all created beings. There is a need to plan for environmental development and sustainability.

Recommendations

1. The government should enact laws against any form of damage done to the earth by discouraging environmental degradation, to ascertain that God's created environment is for the good of both human beings and animals.
2. The amount of illegal activities in the Niger Delta region should be discouraged because it affects the health of its citizens.
3. Government should create employment opportunities for young graduates or engage them by empowering them with skills (entrepreneurship) in order to curb these problems.
4. Enact laws that will checkmate excesses.

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