



Human Environment, as Introspected by The Sages and Seers in Vedic Age : A Contemplative Scientific Review From *Manusmruti*

S. N. Padhy, S.K. Dash and Ratnaprava Mohapatra

KEYWORDS Vedic Ecology. *Manusmruti*. Socio-ecological Niche. Academic Environment. Family Atmosphere. Social interaction. Salubrity. Ethical Protection for Biological Environment.

ABSTRACT The science and culture in any civilisation is based on its past, stands on the present and looks forward for the future. Vedic culture is the glory of India. *Manusmruti*, the pioneer and highest authority for the formulation of human ethical law book, contains the excerpts of Veda, to guide and channelise the society in right perspective. An attempt is made in this review to bring out the various environmental aspects depicted in the *Smruti*, reflected on facts like (I) Socio-ecological Niche; (II) Academic environment; (III) Family atmosphere, (IV) Social interaction; (V) salubrity and (VI) Ethical protection for Biota. The defined livelihood through the *Varna* division and aspiration for a simple life style, is the basis to determine the socio-ecological niche of an individual. In an academic environment, the importance of the teacher (*Guru*) and respect for the teaching community, is focused as the highest obligation to acquire knowledge and the later is directly proportional to the integrity and conduct of the student. The hardship of the student life is to orient him for an integrated future. Family life commences with proper selection of bride and groom and the marriage system follows their union. The importance of women in family, various code and conduct for females, a basic need for their conservation and preservation for their rights is the cream of happiness in the family atmosphere. The house-holder's conduct, regulated daily life, inter-relationship among family members and hospitality for guests are the additional factors for the sanctity of the family. Inter personality respect and conservation of inter-relationship along with charity and public service is the ethics of a homeostatic social environment. Of course the *Smruti* has abandoned to keep relation with various unsociable elements and also with persons who possess a degraded social status and an unethical earning source in order to maintain the self conservation of an individual. Wholesomeness and salubrity is focused as an environmental necessity. Moreover cleanliness is considered on deep depth from fiscal, mental, physiological, physical and metaphysical points of view. Ingestion of food, dinning environment, quality of the food and its source is much emphasised to avoid any physical and metaphysical contamination. Non-violence to subhuman beings and vegetation from ethical, social, sympathetic, administrative, dietetic and religious points of view, is considered as the basic theme for the conservation of bio-diversity on ecological stand point. Environment is to be considered in toto and the consideration should be more qualitative than quantitative. The basic aim of *Manusmruti*, to create eco-consciousness in every walk of life, is the greatest contribution of this epic to the mankind; and the facts rediscovered in this work can decrystalise any ill opinion and

wrong notion over the thoughts and philosophy of *Manu*, as it is wrongly deemed to be.

Authors' Addresses: **S. N. Padhy** P.G. Department of Botany, Khallikote College (Autonomous), Berhampur 760 001, Orissa, India.

S.K. Dash College of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Mohada), Berhampur 760 002, Orissa, India

Ratnaprava Mohapatra, Ethnobiologists Forum, Anandamaya, Bhaba Nagar, Berhampur 760 004, Orissa, India.

©Kamla-Raj 2001

Human Ecology Special Issue No. 10: 177-200 (2001)

Human Ecology in the New Millennium

Veena Bhasin, Vinay K. Srivastava and M.K. Bhasin, Guest Editors