

Environmental Laws of Manu: A Concise Review

Sachidananda Padhy¹, Santosh K. Dash² and Ratnaprava Mohapatra³

1. Department of Botany, Govt. Science College (Lead), Chatrapur 761 020, Orissa, India

2. College of Pharmaceutical Sciences (Mohada), Berhampur 760 002, Orissa, India

3. Ethnobiologists Forum, Bhaba Nagar, Berhampur 760 004, Orissa, India

KEYWORDS Environmental Laws. Manu. *Manusmruti*. Ethical Dictum. Offensive Dictum. Penance

ABSTRACT It is evident from the depictions of *Manusmruti* that Vedic age Indians were much more conscious of the environment. They had formulated Environmental Laws to overcome problems of pollution and contamination and as well for the conservation of the biodiversity. The environmental laws of the then time were more of ethical significance and didactic, used to pursue subjects not to commit any offence of spoilage (wrong doing) of the ecology. There is another category of the laws which provides an option to a committer to undertake penance for a default. The aim of the penance was to make some one conscious of his misdeeds thereby preventing him to repeat the mistake with an internal theme of self realisation. However, the king was also empowered to punish offenders, acting against the environmental principles. The environmental laws of Manu, formulated during more than 5000 BC, is of beyond imagination comparing with that of the modern era, the later came to perception only during the recent century i.e. the 2000 A.D. The most important feature to be focussed here is that the then environment was free from pollution and contamination with much less population, free from unwanted cruelty towards biodiversity. The formulation of the environmental ethics so minutely based on observations being watched during that time, it was indicating; rather highlighting on the strong foresight of the Vedic people. Most probably, they had formulated the laws and environmental ethics not only for themselves; but with a futuristic i.e. all time consideration and hence of value even under the present environmental scenario.