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Sustainable Development and Natural Resources Management for Environmental Stability: An Islamic Approach

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Abstract:

Sustainable development has become an issue of great debate and concern in the present era. Today, mankind is facing plenty of ecological issues globally and natural resources are endangered. Several experts, professionals, and scientists are continuously struggling to find ways for ecological preservation and resources development. The ever-increasing needs of mankind have proved to be a threat as resources are finite. To handle this threat and solve the issues, many enthusiastic scientists and scholars are showing interest in religious instructions about natural resources management for sustainable development. This research paper will try to highlight solutions to these issues and environmental threats in the light of revealed injunctions of the Quran and Hadiths. According to the Quran, man is responsible for the proper

use and protection of natural resources provided by Almighty Allah. The notion of sustainable development seems to be modern but its Islamic sequel is ancient, as Islam has integrated sustainable development in the Islamic resources management system. The objective of this paper is to highlight Islamic teachings related to natural resources management for sustainable development such as water, wood, and animals, etc. It will also analyze some of the modern environmental preservation principles such as the “3R principle” and “Common but differentiated responsibility” from an Islamic perspective. At the end of the article, recommendations will be given for ecological and resources preservation that will ultimately result in sustainable development.

Keywords: Islam, Sustainable Development, Management, Water, Woods, Natural resources

1. Introduction

Islam is the universal and revealed religion that provides regulation and guidance for every aspect of life. Humans as superior and honorable creatures of Allah Almighty are given the stewardship of the environment that demands responsibility and care of natural resources. Allah bestowed human beings with natural resources by which he gets services and living assistance but he is not free to use these resources extravagantly, rather as a steward he will be accountable for his actions regarding these resources. In the present era, man is facing many ecological issues and striving for sustainable development of his surroundings. It has become an issue of great debate and concern all over the globe.

2. Research Methodology

In this study, a qualitative research method will be applied while analyzing sustainable development following Islamic injunctions. This is descriptive and analytical research in which modern rules and principles of sustainable development and natural resources management will be investigated under Islamic law.

3. Limitations

Sustainable development has many aspects; two of the major aspects are economic and ecological. This research will focus on the ecological aspect of sustainable development highlighting the natural resources management paradigm.

4. Importance of Research

In the contemporary world, the environment is facing serious threats and issues in many aspects. One of the serious threats faced by the environment is endangered natural resources that halt sustainable development. Today, ecological scientists are struggling to find a solution to contemporary environmental issues such as water scarcity, global warming, endangering

animals, forest cutting and climate change, etc. Even Muslim countries are getting failed in coping with these issues.¹ There is a dire need for research to highlight the Islamic approach to sustainable development and natural resource management. It can provide an exclusive solution to contemporary environmental solutions.

5. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a term that has been defined differently by people belonging to different areas of life such as environmental scientists and scholars etc. In 1987 in the Brundtland Commission report, an "approved" definition of development was devised. The definition of sustainable development states that “humans must exist and satisfy their requirements without damaging future generations' potential to cope using their resources. It is one that ensured human growth not only for a few decades but for the entire planet in the far future.”²

As described by UNESCO, “Sustainable development has four aspects: community, environment, culture, and economics, all of which are interconnected rather than distinct. Sustainability is a mindset about the future that integrates environmental, societal, and economic concerns in the quest for a better standard of living. A flourishing society, for instance, depends on a healthy ecosystem to give food and supplies to its population, as well as drinkable water and breathable air.”³

“Sustainable development provides not only growth in the economy, but must also ensure that economic activity is compatible with ecological, cultural, and intellectual factors.”⁴ It shows that sustainable development not only has an economic aspect but also environmental welfare viewpoints.

Sustainable development, in particular, is a system for managing society and natural resources in such a way that it can continue to function in the long run. This entails considering both ongoing and prospective imperatives, such as ecological and natural resource conservation, as well as economic and social balance.

¹ Monzer Kahf, “Sustainable Development in the Muslim Countries,” no.4 September 2002 (2002): 1–66.

² World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). *Our Common Future*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987 p. 13

³ Sustainable Development by UNESCO, <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development/what-is-esd/sd> Accessed: 2021-10-17

⁴ Algimantas Misiūnas and Leva Balsyte, “The Essence of Sustainable Social Development and Possibilities for Measuring It,” *Intellectual Economics* 1, no. 5 (2009): 61–71.

6. Sustainable Development in Islam

Sustainable development is not a recent notion in Islam; the Holy Qur'an and Hadith have carried principles of sustainability for millennia. However, in the Islamic world, the concept of sustainable development may have subsequently been endorsed for state and societal cohesion. The whole of the world, according to Islam, was designed for man and is Allah's gift to mankind. Legalizes the usage of natural resources without incurring excessive damage.⁵

Sustainable Development is interwoven in Resource Management principles provided by Shariah. It is a paradigm for balancing social and environmental crises, which means sustaining our existing pace of growth while preserving sufficient resources for ecological sustainability as per Islamic values.⁶

The notion of sustainable development evolved in Islamic theology in the seventh century, but it was adapted into a contemporary setting in the twentieth century. Qur'an and teachings of the Prophet (P.B.U.H.), for example, admonish extravagantly exploiting natural resources.

7. Significance of Natural Resources

Natural resources are crucial to sustaining human growth and civilization development. Natural resources are classified into two parts: non-renewable and renewable. Throughout Earth, there are a restricted number of non-renewable materials. So, when as a result, as they are extracted from the earth, their stock goes. Just nonrenewable resources can be utilized in an unsustainable way. The size of a non-renewable resource's recoverable stocks in the biosphere, as well as the rate of excavation, determine its existence and availability. Certain reserves, on the other hand, can be recovered and recycled to a certain extent, extending their useful life. Metal source rocks, charcoal, and oil are all types of non-resources.⁷

Natural resources offer the conditions for a pleasant, healthful, and stable lifestyle for everyone on the earth. Humans have made a tremendous change to ecological systems in current years to meet increasing food requirements, freshwater, nutrients, and energy that has worked to enhance the people's lifestyles, but they have also deteriorated nature's potential

⁵ Mohammad Hashim Kamali, "Islam and Sustainable Development," *ICR Journal* 7, no. 1 (2016): 8–26, <https://doi.org/10.52282/icr.v7i1.281>.

⁶ Abdul Majid Noor Hanita and Husaini Ibrahim Udale, "Islam and the Concept of Sustainable," *Medinanet*, no. January (2012): 1–41.

⁷ Sustainable Development - Natural Resources - Renewable, Services, Capital, and Humans - JRank Articles <https://science.jrank.org/pages/6638/Sustainable-Development-Natural-resources.html> Accessed: 2021-10-7

to provide other essential services such as atmosphere and aquatic purification, disaster safety, and medicine availability.⁸

Human cultures and economies are inextricably linked to a continual flow of natural resources, which is an obvious ecological reality. This is especially true with renewable resources in the long run because sustainable economies cannot be supported solely by non-renewable resources. As a result, the only option to accomplish sustainable development is to create an approach based on the intelligent collection and management of renewable resources.

8. Incorporating Sustainable Development and Natural Resources

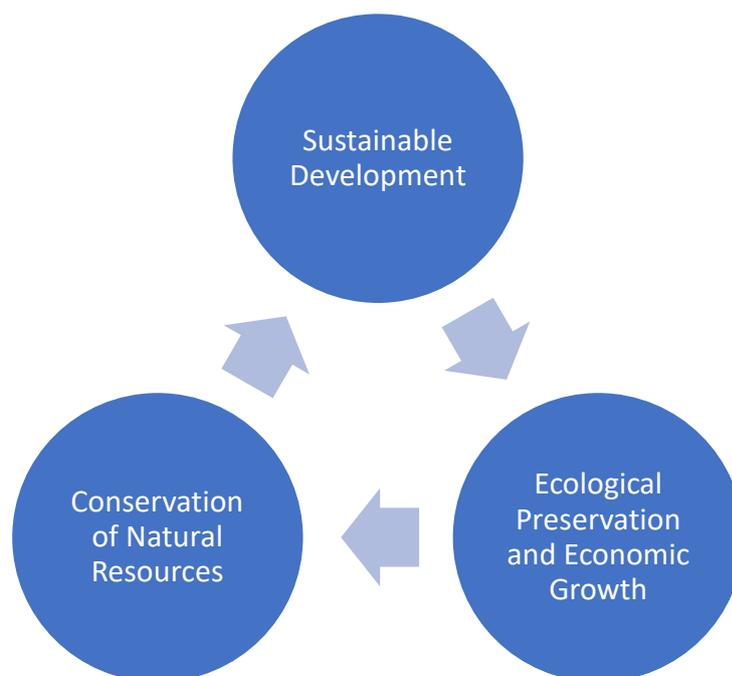
Sustainable development of natural resources stresses the nature preservation and utilization of renewable resources for the interests of humanity and the environment. An understanding and preservation of the nearby ecosystem's species of plants and animals, as well as inorganic material like freshwater and the air, is incorporated into this notion. Sustainable development aims to continue providing resources for the existing population without endangering future generations' access to those resources, and without inflicting environmental degradation that impedes the existence of other creatures and ecological processes.

A system of sustainable development of natural resources must be able to provide a flow of resources for human utilization, but that flow must be able to be unremitting throughout the future. Furthermore, an ecologically sustainable system must be sufficient to support surviving local species communities, functional key ecological regions, and accurate measurements of other environmental attributes that are not traditionally regarded as assets for direct human consumption.⁹

“Natural resources for sustainable development” and “sustainable development of natural resources” both notions are integrated as one is the outcome of the other. Both of these are vital for global environmental conservation and ecological growth. Here is a diagrammed illustration that shows how these three notions are integrated:

⁸ Modern Bamboo Structures, *Sustainable Development*, ed. Dr. Tirumala Vasu Deva Rao (India: Ideal International E-Publication Pvt. Ltd., 2017).

⁹ Sustainable Development - Natural Resources, Economics, Sustainable Development and Sustained Growth, Sustainable Development - Renewable, Humans, Environmental, and Ecosystems - JRank Articles <https://science.jrank.org/pages/6642/Sustainable-Development.html> Accessed: 2021-10-01



9. Sustainable development of natural resources: An Islamic Perspective

All policies and rules relating to creatures and all objects on the globe are covered by Islamic culture and religion. As a result, Islam is comprehensive, including both worldly and theological traits of life.

One of the principles incorporated in Islam is the obligation to preserve the cosmos and all alive creatures, including all sources such as flora and natural resources. So, all breathing creatures in the cosmos are accorded the identical reverence as human beings and are governed by Islamic laws.¹⁰

The link of humans to nature is not depicted in Shariah principles as one of confrontation or discord, rather as one of harmony. The earth and anything that makes it up is represented as Allah's creation, and everything is ultimately harmonious. The reality that humans have been predestined to harvest the fields and that the cosmos's evolution has been positioned at the human service does not diminish the notion of equality between humans and all other kinds of things existent in the World. As mentioned in Quran,

¹⁰ Gottlieb, Roger S. "Religious Environmentalism: What it is, where it's Heading and Why We Should be Going in the Same Direction." *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture* 1.1 (2007)

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَكُمْ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْفُلْكَ لِتَجْرِيَ فِي الْبَحْرِ بِأَمْرِهِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الْأَنْهَارَ. وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ الشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ دَائِبَيْنِ وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ"

Allah is the One who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky, then brought forth with its sustenance for you from the produce, and subjugated for you the ships, so that they may sail in the sea with His command, and subjugated for you the rivers ;and He subjugated for you the sun and the moon, moving constantly, and subjugated for you the day and the night.

Men are granted the ability to care for and nourish what Allah has entrusted them, the entire planet and everything on it. This position, nevertheless, ought not to be misconstrued or overused. The authority of humans to preside over the universe must be considered with caution. Islamic teachings warn us of our duties to the world and the universe. Men's presence on this planet is crucial to the sustainability and advancement of not only present cohort and present habitation but also future generations.

The right of man to populate the Planet's surface also encompasses the right of mankind to exist, thrive, and utilize the natural resources on earth as he deems proper, provided that this use does not impede on privileges of nature. This freedom of use should be appropriate for the circumstances and must be employed following the potentials that the Maker has imbued in man's fundamental nature (fitra), notably compassion and equity. As mentioned in Quran,

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ سَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مِمَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمِمَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَأَسْبَغَ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَهُ ظَاهِرَةً وَبَاطِنَةً¹¹

Have you not seen that Allah has subjugated for you what is in the heavens and what is on the earth, and has perfected His blessings on you, both outward and inward?

The Holy Qur'an provides humanity with a complete moral and religious direction. Humans are to conduct honorably and not to be extravagant or frivolous. They are not to upset the natural balance or change God's creation.

10. Environmental Sustainability in Islam

The Islamic approach to environmental sustainability differs significantly from how the majority of humanity approaches these concerns. Islamic sources, for instance, do not employ

¹¹ Ibrahim 14:32-33

¹² Lukman 31:20

the same environmental vocabulary that modern environmental scientists are familiar with, rather express ecological problems in a manner that highlights their significance to the Muslim religion. Islamic scriptures, for example, take the word "pollution" as "corruption. As stated in Quran:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ¹³

Calamities have appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of the people have earned, so that He (Allah) makes them taste some of what they did, in order that they may return (to the right way).

Any kind of Pollution or damage to natural resources can be referred to as “Fasad” (فساد) Corruption. Modern ecological scientist stresses “ecological balance” as a principle of sustainable development. But Islam gives the not only notion of scale (موازن) and justice (عدل) but also harmony (احسان) with nature.

Throughout the Quranic verses, Islam encourages humans to take care of the natural resources of the environment. Several verses are devoted to nature, warning about the dangers of pollution and environmental degradation. So many outlined guidelines for how humans should interact with the environment, urging Muslims to maintain and safeguard it at all means. Islamic texts describe how ecological conservation is a religious imperative.

كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعْثَوْا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ¹⁴

Eat and drink what Allah has sustained, and do not go about the earth spreading disorder.

It is explicitly shown by this verse that Almighty has ordered us to not only safeguard the environment but also to refrain from disrupting the Earth's components, which were formed in perfect harmony. Here the word "مفسد" refers to the people who corrupt the natural resources and cause degradation in the environment. Corruption is a term broader than degradation or pollution, which comprise many wrong things humans do. Allah dislikes the people who mischief in the land and destroy the natural resource. As he says in Quran,

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يُعْجِبُكَ قَوْلُهُ فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا وَيُشْهَدُ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ مَا فِي قَلْبِهِ وَهُوَ أَلَدُّ الْخِصَامِ وَإِذَا

تَوَلَّىٰ سَعَىٰ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُفْسِدَ فِيهَا وَيُهْلِكَ الْحَرْثَ وَالنَّسْلَ وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْفُسَادَ¹⁵

Among men there is one whose speech, in this life, attracts you; he even makes Allah his witness on what is in his heart, while he is extremely

¹³ Rome 30:41

¹⁴ Al-Baqarah 2:60

¹⁵ Al-Baqarah 2:205

quarrelsome. Once he turns back, he moves about in the land trying to spread disorder in it, and to destroy the village and the stock; and Allah does not like disorder.

Moreover, Allah says clearly,

وَلَا تُطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الْمُسْرِفِينَ الَّذِينَ يُفْسِدُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا يُصْلِحُونَ¹⁶

And obey not the command of the extravagant, who make mischief on the land and who do not set things right.

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ¹⁷

Do not make mischief on the earth after it has been set in order. Supplicate Him in fear and hope. Surely, the mercy of Allah is close to those who are good in their deeds.

Man must promote sustainable development of the environment since it is Allah's work and reflects his authority. Allah created man to become a guardian of nature, to coexist peacefully with all species, and to be his successors on Earth, as per the Holy Qur'an.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ

الدِّمَاءَ ۗ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ¹⁸

(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, I am going to create a deputy on the earth! They said, Will You create there one who will spread disorder on the earth and cause bloodshed, while we proclaim Your purity, along with your praise, and sanctify Your name? He said, Certainly, I know what you know not.

The Qur'anic title "Khalifa," which means vicegerent, envoy, or steward, sums up mankind's rights and duties toward the ecosystem and its preservation. Humans are thus God's stewards and caretakers on Earth, charged with living and behaving ethically and concerned for the environment. As a result, human beings are tasked by God with preserving and maintaining the material phenomena, responding to its requirements, and at the very least attempting to inflict no damage or devastation. Islam states that everything in the universe has an equilibrium, a reason, and a perfect measure.

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) addressed a wide range of environmental issues, such as conserving natural resources, land restoration, pollution control, and much more. The teachings

¹⁶ Ashua'ra 26: 151-152

¹⁷ Al-Ara'af 7:56

¹⁸ Al-Baqarah 2:30

of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) are much concerned about natural resources conservation and sustenance such as water, land, and animals, etc. Here are some significant teachings of the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) about these resources:

10.1. Water

Water is a great blessing of Allah Almighty and the most essential element of the biosphere, without which life cannot be imagined. One of the key rules for the sustainable development of natural resources is water conservation and management. Even if the water is in excess, man is not entitled to waste it or pollute it. 'Abdullah ibn Amr narrated:

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَرَّ بِسَعْدٍ وَهُوَ يَتَوَضَّأُ، فَقَالَ: "مَا هَذَا السَّرْفُ؟" فَقَالَ: أَفِي
الْوُضُوءِ إِسْرَافٌ؟ قَالَ: "نَعَمْ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ عَلَى نَهْرٍ جَارٍ"¹⁹

“The Messenger of Allah (P.B.U.H.) passed by Saad bin Amar (R.A) while he was performing ablution. He (P.B.U.H.) said: What kind of extravagance is this? Saad (R.A) asked: Is there any extravagance in ablution? The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: Yes, even if you are sitting on the bank of a flowing canal.”

Water was abundant and overflowing but still, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) ordered not to pollute. Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used to utilize a particular amount of water for purification.

أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ كَانَ يَغْتَسِلُ بِالصَّاعِ وَيَتَوَضَّأُ بِالْمُدِّ²⁰

“The Prophet ﷺ used to wash with a sa'a (of water) and perform ablution with a Mudd (of water).”

This shows that Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) always applied explicit methods for sustainable development and water conservation.

10.2. Animals

Animals are signs of Allah's majesty and sympathy for human beings. Animals are the productive resource of the environment as they provide food, dairy, clothing, transport, and other services to human beings. In Holy Quran, Allah Almighty has mentioned animals many times in different contexts.²¹ Quranic verses show the significance of animals as natural resources and creatures on many occasions. Such as in surah An-Nahal Allah mentions,

¹⁹ Ibn-e-Maja, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazeed bin Maja Al-Qezwaini, Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, The book of Purification and its methods, Chapter 48, Hadith 425

²⁰ Sunan Abu Dawood, The book of Purification, Chapter 44, Hadith 92

²¹ A List Of All The Animals Mentioned In Quran | The Last Dialogue

<https://www.thelastdialogue.org/article/list-of-all-animals-mentioned-in-quran/> Accessed: 2021-10-01

وَالْأَنْعَامَ خَلَقَهَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا دِفْءٌ وَمَنَافِعُ وَمِنْهَا تَأْكُلُونَ وَلَكُمْ فِيهَا جَمَالٌ حِينَ تُرِيحُونَ وَحِينَ
تَسْرَحُونَ. وَتَحْمِلُ أَثْقَالَكُمْ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ لَّمْ تَكُونُوا الْبَالِغِيهِ إِلَّا بِشِقِّ الْأَنْفُسِ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ لَرَءُوفٌ
رَّحِيمٌ²²

He has created cattle in which there is warmth and other benefits for you, and from them you have food; and in them, there is a beautiful look for you when you drive them home in the evening and take them out to graze. And they carry your loads to a city where you were not able to reach without putting yourselves to arduous labor. Surely, your Lord is Very-Kind, Very-Merciful.

It shows that animals are a crucial natural resource on this earth, created for human beings for the welfare of Allah Almighty. Man is entitled to do great care of animals because they are not only natural resources but also living creatures of God. Allah use the word “umam” for animals, as mentioned in Surah Al-Annam,

وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا طَيْرٍ يَطِيرُ بِجَنَاحَيْهِ إِلَّا أُمَّمٌ أَمْثَالُكُمْ مَا فَرَّطْنَا فِي الْكِتَابِ مِنْ شَيْءٍ
ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّهِمْ يُحْشَرُونَ²³

There is no creature moving on the earth, nor a bird flying on its two wings, but they are all communities like you. We have not missed anything in the Book. Then, to their Lord, all of them shall be gathered.

It is obvious that Allah is the creator of both, human beings and animals, and has imparted certain rights to both. Islam gives animals the right to live and the killing of even a small bird unlawfully is forbidden in Islam.²⁴ Islam allows the slaughter of certain animals for food purposes but that too, with certain limitations. It condemns unlawful killing and torturing of the animal. Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said:

عَنْ أَبِي وَاقِدٍ قَالَ قَالَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ "مَا قُطِعَ مِنَ الْبَهِيمَةِ وَهِيَ حَيَّةٌ فَهِيَ مَيِّتَةٌ"²⁵

Abu Waqid narrated that: The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Whatever is cut off of an animal when it is alive is dead.

Islam even takes care of minor birds as Abdullah ibn Masood (R.A) narrated that:

²² An-Nahal 16:6-8

²³ Al-Ana'am 6:38

²⁴ An-Nisai, Abu Abd-ar-Rehman Ahmed bin Shoaib, Sunan Nisai, The book on rulings and issues of hunting and slaughter, Chapter 34: Statement of abstinence from white food, Hadith 4354

²⁵ Abu Dawood, Sulaiman bin Ash'et Al-Sajistani, Sunan Abu Dawood, The book of hunting, Chapter 3: Explaining the command to cut off any part of the body of a living prey (animal), Hadith 2858

كُنَّا مَعَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فِي سَفَرٍ فَأَنْطَلَقَ لِحَاجَتِهِ فَرَأَيْنَا حُمْرَةً مَعَهَا فَرْخَانِ فَأَخَذْنَا
 فَرْخَيْهَا فَجَاءَتِ الْحُمْرَةُ فَجَعَلَتْ تَفْرِشُ فَبَجَاءَ النَّبِيُّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ "مَنْ فَجَعَ هَذِهِ
 بِوَلَدِهَا رُدُّوا وَلَدَهَا إِلَيْهَا". وَرَأَى قَرْيَةً نَهْلٍ قَدْ حَرَّقْنَاهَا فَقَالَ "مَنْ حَرَّقَ هَذِهِ". قُلْنَا نَحْنُ. قَالَ
 إِنَّهُ لَا يَنْبَغِي أَنْ يُعَذَّبَ بِالنَّارِ إِلَّا الرَّبُّ النَّارِ"²⁶

In an expedition, we were with Allah's Prophet. He went to take a relaxation. We came saw a bird with her two babies and were able to seize them. When the mother bird expanded its wings in sorrow. Prophet (P.B.U.H.) asked, who grieved this for its young ones? Return her babies. He also noticed an ant town that had been set ablaze by us. He inquired, "Who burned this?" We responded, "We." He stated, "It is improper to chastise with fire unless the Lord of Fire is present."

Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) prohibited slaughtering a lactating animal.

عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ أَتَى رَجُلًا مِنَ الْأَنْصَارِ فَأَخَذَ الشُّفْرَةَ لِيَذْبَحَ
 لِرَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. "إِيَّاكَ وَالْحُلُوبَ"²⁷

It was narrated from Abu Hurairah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to a man from among the Ansar who had picked up a knife to slaughter an animal for the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said to him: "Avoid those that are lactating." (i.e., those from which milk is received).

Dairy is the need of human beings and excessive slaughtering of a lactating animal can cause loss of this natural resource. So, as a precautionary measure, Prophet (P.B.U.H.) made it unlawful.

These illustrations from Quran and hadiths show that Islam is the religion of reasonableness and kind-heartedness. It provides protection and rights to animals as they are a significant natural resource that helps continue environmental equilibrium and sustainable development.

²⁶ Sunan Abu Dawood, The book of Jihad, Chapter 122: Regarding The Abhorrence Of Burning The Enemy With Fire, Hadith 2675

²⁷ Ibn-e-Maja, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Yazeed bin Maja Al-Quezwaini, Sunan Ibn-e-Maja, Chapters on Slaughtering, Chapter 7: Prohibition of slaughtering lactating animals, Hadith 3180

10.3. Plants and Woods

Plants are indeed the earth's natural lungs, and maintaining them is essential if we are to preserve the earth's biodiversity and combat climate change. Allah has cited many plants, vegetables, fruits, and trees in Quran. Many studies show the magnitude of sustainable conservation of these natural resources in Islam.²⁸ Islam not only orders to preserve plants as a resource but also as a natural resource management tool, it orders and encourages to grow more plants.

The significance of growing plants in this world and hereafter is explicit in Islam. It is narrated on the authority of Anas that the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) said:

إن قامت الساعة وفي يدا أحدكم فسيلة، فإن استطاع أن لا تقوم حتى يغرسها فليغرسها²⁹

If the Hour (day of judgment) is near, and one of you has a small palm tree in his hand. If he can bury it before the Hour comes, then he must bury it.

It illustrates the worth of plant cultivation as it benefits human beings and other creatures of Allah. Narrated Anas bin Malik: Allah's Apostle said,

ما من مسلم يغرس غرساً أو يزرع زرعاً فبأكل منه طير أو إنسان أو بهيمة إلا كان له به

صدقة³⁰

There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it but is regarded as a charitable gift for him.

It shows that a plantation is an ongoing act of charity. The grower has the mercy of Allah as long as living things benefit from it. Plants and trees, as renewable natural resources, provide food, wood, shelter, and other benefits to human beings. They are vital for ecological sustenance and to cope with contemporary global warming, pollution issue, and environmental challenges.

10.4. 3R Principle and Islam

3R principles (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle) have gained so much importance in the contemporary world for the sustainability of natural resources. This principle was developed in the twentieth century but Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) employed this, centuries ago. He gave rules to reduce the use of natural resources. He (P.B.U.H.) provided conditions and methods of

²⁸ Muhammad Ayaz, "Sustainable Conservation of Forests : Islamic Guidelines," n.d.

²⁹ Al-Baani, Muhammad Nasir-ud-Din, Silsila Ahadees-e-Sahiha, Statement of sale and purchase, earnings and asceticism, Chapter 764, Hadith 1121

³⁰ Al-Bukhari, Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Ismail, Sahih Bukhari, The book of cultivation and agriculture, Chapter 1, Hadith 2320

water purification. Jurists have discussed a great deal of these methods from a fiqh perspective.³¹

10.5. ‘Common but differentiated responsibility’ and Islam

Common but differentiated responsibility (CBDR) is a principle of sustainable development. As a tool of sustainable development, the notion of international law known as "common but differentiated responsibility" states that various countries have varied competencies and obligations when it comes to solving cross-border environmental challenges such as climate change. It maintains the following equilibrium:

1. The requirement for each state to accept personal concern for environmental devastation and remediation.
2. The acknowledgment that states are neither equally responsible for the problem or capable of reacting to it.³²

It supports the idea that developed countries can play a vital part in environmental conservation and emissions reduction as compared to developing countries. It also asks advanced nations to deliver much-desirable technical and financial assistance to poor countries so that they may strive toward both fiscal and communal growth and alleviating scarcity while also protecting the environment. CBDR suggested that the urge for financial and technical assistance may be used as a negotiating tool to persuade these rising nations to proactively manage environmental change.

In “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change United Nations” 1992, there has been an agreement among groups that they will “Take into account their common but differentiated responsibilities, as well as distinct national and regional development aspirations, goals, and conditions”³³ This notion states that developed-country actions must come first to pave the path for emissions reductions and environmental conservation.

The idea of "Common but Differentiated Responsibilities" is based on a prominent Islamic precept. Through the Holy Qur'an and the sayings of Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H.),

³¹ Wan Ainaa Mardhiah Wan Zahari, Et. al., “Water Treatment and Purification in Fiqh Perspective,” *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)* 12, no. 2 (2021): 594–603, <https://doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i2.913>.

³² OCS Blog - OXFORD CLIMATE SOCIETY <https://www.oxfordclimatesociety.com/blog/what-you-need-to-know-about-common-but-differentiated-responsibility> Accessed: 2021-10-01

³³ United Nations, “United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change United Nations,” *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, 1992, https://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXVII-7&chapter=27&Temp=mtdsg3&clang=_en.

Islam encourages us to assist in virtues and sincerity and forbids us from crime and transgression.

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ³⁴

"Cooperate in righteousness and warding off (evil), but not in immorality and disobedience. Fear Allah. Surely, Allah is severe at punishment."

This is evident that Lord has entrusted us with the responsibility of being virtuous and devout in all of our interactions. We need to concentrate on what is essential to achieve our shared goal. In the above-mentioned verse, Allah makes no indication of who we are to engage with (Muslim or non-Muslim, rich or poor, etc.), thus the verse can embrace any act of goodness imaginable as long as it serves a greater good. It's an encouragement to serve the general welfare and shared environment conservation responsibility to the best of our abilities.

11. Recommendations

- Protecting the ecosystem is the responsibility of every human being for the sustainable development of society. A sense of responsibility should be developed among the masses for well-adjusted use of natural resources, from which not only he can benefit himself, but the whole society and coming generations.
- A miscomprehension exists among masses about natural resources that for religious purposes such as ablution and bat etc. water can be excessively used, as we need proper purification. But hadiths show that even Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) used a limited amount of water for ablution and other purposes of purification. Hadiths related to this issue can be cited for public awareness.
- Some resources can be recycled and reused, too. For example, water can be recycled as there are many technologies and strategies today by which used water can be purified and reused.
- In the present age, the role of the state in natural resources management cannot be denied. The state must provide effective legislation for environmental stability and preservation of natural resources, such as animal welfare acts, etc.
- While making policies for sustainable development and natural resources management, approaches based on guidance from Quran and Sunnah can also prove effective.
- Modern technologies must be used for the sustenance of environmental balance and compensating ecological damage.

³⁴ Al-Maida 5:2

- Educating the youth and coming generations can also improve their attitudes toward consuming natural resources. Such as solar panels are getting popularity that is resulting in less use of coal, fuel, and other natural resources.
- Digital tools such as social media should be used for disseminating information and awareness regarding ecological preservation and moderate use of natural resources.
- Islam encourages the application of the methods, equipment, strategies, and technologies in compliance with Shariah, for the betterment of humanity and natural resources. The application technology will modernize the conservation and management of natural resources that will ultimately result in sustainable development.

12. Conclusion

Allah, the Creator of the universe, who is excellent in all admirable traits and free of all imperfections, sent his prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) to promote the message of human stewardship and environmental responsibility all over the globe. Islamic approach towards sustenance and management of natural resource management is universal and extensive. Islamic injunctions on the ecosystem and sustainable development guarantee the flow of life on earth. Islamic approach towards natural resources and environment develops a sense of stewardship among humans that they will be answerable to Allah Almighty for their actions towards the environment and its resources. The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) advocated moderation and discouraged excessive spending, extravagance, and opulence, which reaffirms the Holy Qur'an's teaching that humans have been entrusted with environmental stewardship. The modern rules and laws of natural resources management and sustainable development such as “common but differentiated responsibility” and “3R principle” seem to be relatable with Islam. The need of the time is to incorporate these rules with revealed Islamic teachings that will surely result in sustainable development.



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