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**SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT FOR FUTURE
GENERATIONS: INSIGHTS FROM AN
ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

In the contemporary world, many environmental and social crises such as climate change, pollution, resource depletion, energy waste, deforestation, desertification, extinction of species, environmental racism, forced migration, waste trafficking, hazardous waste dumping, environmental injustice, etc. are cumulatively threatening the existence of humans and the planet itself as a result of irresponsible and immoral natural resources exploitation. Sustainable use of natural resources is a normative approach that advocates for responsible and wise use of natural resources to meet the needs of present and future generations. In Islam, the idea of sustainable use of natural resources is not new as the religious scripture Al-Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet

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Mohammad (PBUH) instructed us to use the resources wisely in limits.

Islam advocates for a harmonious and respectful relationship between humans and nature. Every element of the universe including humans is created by the Almighty one and only Allah in balance with a purpose. Humans are provided with everything needed to survive and flourish from nature by Allah but as vicegerent of Allah, they bear a special responsibility to take care of His creations. Islam advocates for sustainable use of natural resources so that natural resources can be distributed with justice and equity among generations and the natural equilibrium stays intact.

This paper unravels the teachings of Islam regarding natural resource usage and shows how it promotes sustainable use of natural resources for future generations. In this paper, it will be shown that the Islamic perspective on natural resource usage can serve as a foundation to mitigate pollution, resource depletion, energy wastage, and other environmental crises prevailing in the current time and motivate the present generation to be cautious, moral, and responsible regarding natural resource usage.

Keywords: Quran, Prophet, Tawhid, Mizan, Vicegerent, Natural resources, Environmental crisis, Sustainable, Future generations.

1. Introduction

Natural resource exploitation is a global concern at present times. Advancements in modern science and technology have provided us with everything needed to lead a comfortable and luxurious life. However, these advancements have also brought many challenges, such as environmental crises. Scientific

knowledge and technological tools give us the unique capability to predict the outcomes of our actions and to mold our future. Unfortunately, profusion of knowledge could not stop humans from perpetrating actions that threaten not only the existence of humans but also the health of the planet.

Our thoughtless actions are destroying the balance and order of the natural ecosystem. The outcome of unwise and irresponsible resource exploitation is evident in the present environmental crises, which manifest in various forms, such as climate change, pollution, resource depletion, energy waste, deforestation, desertification, and the extinction of species. Consequently, social issues like environmental racism, forced migration, waste trafficking, hazardous waste dumping, and environmental injustice, etc. emerged.

Despite the knowledge of the consequences of our actions, we continue to inflict irreversible harm on nature and future generations. The sheer incompatibility between our knowledge and actions introduced intertwined and compelling ethical dilemmas, highlighting the frailty of our generation. In the early 1970s, environmental ethics arose as a concern for the environment. Long before the environmental movement Islam provided a complete guideline manifested in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of Prophet Mohammad (PUBH) for how to use natural resources to live an ethical, sustainable, and worthy life on earth.

Many thinkers are optimistic that modern science and technology will solve these problems. But it is a paradox as to some extent advanced technology is responsible for the overexploitation of natural resources. Moreover, the issue of

overexploitation of natural resources is complicated and requires united efforts from all sectors of society. Religious teaching can play a vital role in constructing values, beliefs, attitudes, and ultimately influencing behavior. Therefore, Islamic teachings and guidelines can be fundamental in constructing a respectful and responsible approach to nature.

The purpose of this paper is to motivate people to be wise, responsible, and moral regarding resource use for a sustainable future by applying the teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. In this paper, I will endeavor to theoretically analyze and recapitulate why and how the Islamic perspective on resource usage can serve as a foundation for mitigating pollution, resource depletion, energy waste, and other environmental crises that prevail in our current era.

2. Exploitation of Natural Resources: Factors, Impacts and Management

Natural resources are those energy sources and raw materials such as air, water, wind, land, fossil fuels, metals, etc. that we get from the earth and occur naturally. These resources are prerequisites for the survival of any human and non-human member on this planet. Natural resources can be classified as potential or actual; abiotic or non-living and biotic or living; ubiquitous and localized; renewable and nonrenewable etc. Potential resources exist in the present time but cannot be used at present while actual resources are limited in quantity and are used at present time. Abiotic or non-living resources are sunlight, water, air, land, and minerals. Biotic resources mean fish and other marine organisms, birds and their products, forests, and products from forests. Ubiquitous resources mean natural resources available

everywhere on earth such as sunlight, air, water, etc.. Resources like metal ores are localized resources which can be found only in specific areas. Contrary to non-renewable resources which once depleted can not be replenished and are not infinite, renewable resources are supposed to be continuously available and can replenish or reproduce quickly.

Humans require natural resources in every sphere of life for energy, food, clothing, housing, etc., and development. We use natural resources with little modification or as raw materials for the production of goods and services. Natural Resources should be accessible through technology, economically feasible, and culturally sustainable. Natural resources are not infinite. Unfortunately, humans are extracting natural resources without considering the impact on non-human elements and future generations. It is disheartening that, instead of responsibly extracting natural resources to accomplish our needs, these resources are being recklessly exploited.

2.1 Factors of Resource Overexploitation

The conundrums related to resource exploitation are indeed multidimensional (Uddin, 2004, p. 2). We often overlook the intrinsic value and rights of non-human elements to fuel economic growth, failing to consider the consequences of our actions. Factors such as advancements in science and technology, human chauvinism, greed, selfishness, exponential growth of the human population, belligerent business competition and the prevalent culture of consumerism, etc. are fundamental contributors to thoughtless resource exploitation. We will now briefly discuss some of the fundamental factors responsible for the overexploitation of resources.

2.1.1 Anthropocentric Approach to Nature Stemming from Religions

How we perceive our relationship with nature is one of the fundamental factors for irresponsible resource exploitation. Traditionally our perception of nature is anthropocentric where we see nature as inferior to us which can be dominated and exploited as much as we want. Many environmentalists such as American historian Lynn White Jr. (1967) and Australian environmentalist John Passmore (1980) blame the anthropocentric ethical tradition stemming from religions as the root cause of our exploitative approach to nature. In white's seminal essay 'The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis' he indicates that the dominion approach to nature arising in the religious tradition is the fundamental factor for resource exploitation and environmental crises (White, 1967, p. 1203). Religion plays a very important role in shaping human behavior, belief, perspective, morality, etc. So, White contends that our exploitative approach to nature is deeply rooted in religious teachings, stating: "Human ecology is deeply conditioned by beliefs about our nature and destiny—that is, by religion" (White, 1967, p. 1205).

The creation theory shared by Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) posits that, in God's transcendence of nature, Humanity occupies a great share. Humans are not merely a part of the natural process; rather, they are seen as superior to other beings. According to these beliefs, God created only man in his image and granted them the authority to name all things of the earth, placing them at the pinnacle of creation and bestowing dominance over all other beings (White, 1967, p. 1205). White refers to the Bible:

And he said: Let us make man to our image and likeness: and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and the beasts, and the whole earth, and every creeping creature that moveth upon the earth. (Old Testament, 1:26)

Moreover, these teachings suggest that all creations exist solely to fulfill human purposes, they do not have any individual purpose to fulfill. Only man has intrinsic value and everything else is valued by the utility of them to man, that is except man all other elements of nature have only instrumental value. This perspective seems to justify humanity's right to dominate nature and exploit natural resources as per God's will (White, 1967, p. 1205).

However, many thinkers focus on selective religious texts, attempting to blame religion for uncontrolled natural resource exploitation. Both Intentional or unintentional misinterpretations, along with ambiguities, and apparent contradiction in religious scriptures, leads some to believe that religious beliefs and ideas are harmful to the environment. But, almost every religion emphasizes a respectful relationship between humans and nature.

2.1.2 Modern Sophisticated Technology

Many environmentalists and thinkers, such as Iranian-American philosopher, theologian, and Islamic scholar of contemporary time, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1990) believe that the desacralization of nature due to modern science and technology is responsible for our exploitative attitude towards nature. While various applications of modern science and technology have made our lifestyles comfortable, they have also, in some ways, frittered away our mental peace. Nasr, in his work, *Man and Nature: The*

Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man, argues that secularized science and technology are significant factors in the overexploitation of natural resources and the resulting environmental crises. As he writes-

[...] scientific view of man and nature which cuts man from his spiritual roots and takes a desacralized nature for granted while expanding its physical boundaries by billions of light years. (Nasr, 1990, p. 7)

As per Nasr's point of view, the harmony between nature and humans is disrupted because harmony between man and God has been destroyed. Nasr (1990) argues that modern science, which is the fruit of Renaissance humanism, serves as the intellectual and historical root of the ecological crises. Scientism and scientific progressivism are responsible for the disequilibrium of the natural ecosystem and ecological crisis. Nasr points out that the desacralization of nature, secularized science and technology, disappearance of genuine cosmology in the West, and metaphysics being reduced to rationalistic philosophy have all encouraged people to disrespect nature and exploit natural resources to satisfy their wants and to accumulate wealth. He believes that the manifestations of modern humanity are far from pleasant. Their "secularized and urbanized" existence threatens not only their own existence but also their overall health of the natural world. (Nasr, 1968, pp. 6-17)

2.1.3 Dominating Nature of Humans

The dominating nature of humans, which stems from chauvinism, greed, and selfishness, is a primary cause of irresponsible resource exploitation. Humans often possess a sense of superiority that gives rise to the concept of speciesism, leading

them to arrogance and the perception of nature as inferior, valued only for its instrumental worth. This mindset posits nature as their servant and natural resources are allowed to be extracted as per their desire. While natural resources should be used for the fulfillment of human needs, they often exploit those resources to accomplish their greed. Arrogant and selfish humans, driven by their desires, are willing to disrupt natural equilibrium for short-term gains, neglecting the well-being of other non-human elements of nature.

2.1.4 Culture of Consumerism Promoted by Business Corporations

One of the distinct features of modern developed society is the culture of consumerism, which is promoted by competitive business corporations. An insatiable desire for material goods without necessity poses an obvious and serious threat that can cause irreversible harm to our climate and environment. American ecologist and cellular biologist Barry Commoner (1974), in his renowned book *The Closing Circle: Nature, Man and Technology* asserts that the consumerist mindset of people prevalent in modern and industrially developed countries is a key factor contributing to resource exploitation and environmental problems. The culture of consumerism is fostered by large business industries seeking profit at the cost of the environment.

To achieve rapid economic growth, business industries often extract natural resources unsystematically to minimize production costs and maximize production. On the one hand, consumers, driven by the desire to acquire more, continue to increase their demand for products. On the other hand, businesses, in their quest to meet and further stimulate this demand, produce

more and more products. This escalation places immense strain on the environment, often without regard for its integrity and sustainability. Persuasive marketing strategies and attractive advertisements are employed to entice customers, boosting sales and consumer demand. Businesses capitalize on human susceptibility to promote consumption based on desire rather than necessity.

2.1.5 Overpopulation

The human population is increasing rapidly and uncontrollably. American biologist and writer Paul Erlich (1968), in his influential book *The Population Bomb*, argues that the scenario of exploitation of natural resources has worsened significantly due to uncontrolled population growth. An increasing number of people requires more food, housing, clothing, and other products and services. Consequently, the demand for more products and services leads to a greater requirement for natural resources, resulting in resource overexploitation, pollution, and other environmental crises. The situation is further exacerbated when individuals strive to maintain a consumer-driven lifestyle promoted by competitive business societies.

2.2 Impact of Unwise Natural Resource Exploitation

Irresponsible and reckless exploitation of natural resources has significant environmental, social, economic, and health impacts. Environmental Crises, such as climate change, resource depletion, energy waste, ozone layer depletion, pollution (air, Water, land, etc), water shortages, deforestation, global warming, desertification, loss of biodiversity, species extinction, sea level rise, soil degradation, and many more are

the consequences of unwise and reckless extraction of natural resources. This exploitation also raises social issues, including environmental racism, unequal distribution and access to natural resources among generations, hazardous waste dumping, waste trafficking, climate refugees, forced migration, etc. As a result of overexploitation of natural resources, many resources become scarce and some even face extinction. Conflicts driven by resource scarcity arise, leading to increased commodity prices as a consequence of natural resource exploitation. Furthermore, numerous health issues emerge due to pollution of air, water, and land.

We have the ability to comprehend the consequences of our irresponsible exploitation of natural resources and to shape the future. It is our misfortune that our greed, selfishness, and hunger for economic growth drive us to imprudent natural resource exploitation. As a result, future generations will be deprived of equal access to natural resources to fulfill their survival needs. Irrespective of time, people of every generation have the moral right to equal access to natural resources.

2.3 Currently Practiced Method for Resource Management

Nowadays, most people are aware of the consequences of the over-exploitation of natural resources, which is evident in many environmental crises. The present generation is not the only generation who owns the earth and has the right to natural resources. Future generations, who will inherit the earth from us, also have a moral right to equal access to these resources. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that our current actions do not lead to harmful consequences in the long run. Therefore, the present generation must use natural resources sustainably so that

future generations can fulfill their needs without compromise. If we fail to do so, we will portray our generation as irresponsible, unwise, and immoral.

To grapple with environmental challenges, we must use natural resources wisely and responsibly so that future generations do not have to compromise to meet their needs. In pursuit of this goal, people are adopting various eco-friendly natural resource management methods, such as Adaptive Resource Management or Environmental Assessment and Management, Community-Based Natural Resource Management, Integrated Natural Resource Management, Gender-Based Natural Resource Management, Sustainable Development among others.

However, natural ecosystems are intertwined and interrelated, meaning that a change in one factor can affect the entire system. Moreover, natural resource management is a multi-dimensional and complicated issue involving both human and non-human stakeholders. Therefore, none of these practiced models is indisputable. Among these approaches, sustainable development is widely accepted as a holistic normative framework for natural resource management. In 1987, the Brundtland Commission defined Sustainable development in its “Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future” as follows:

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. (WCED, 1987, p. 37)

This definition gained popularity after it was endorsed by the UN Conference on Environment and Development in 1992. This definition captures the essence of sustainable development

and emphasizes the importance of balancing present and future resource needs. Sustainable use of natural resources refers to the utilization of these resources in the most productive and efficient manner to meet human needs while preserving the natural environment of the earth. It aims to use natural resources to flourish human civilization as much as compatible with the earth's capability of maintaining its steady, long-term productivity.

Sustainable development approach focuses on economic growth and equity in society without compromising the environment. It has a long-term societal goal focusing on intergenerational justice. Intergenerational justice concerns the fair distribution of resources, ensuring equal access to natural resources among generations. This principle posits that the present generation carries a distinct obligation and duty of care toward those who will inherit the earth from us.

3. The Islamic Approach to Sustainable use of Natural Resources

Sustainable resource management is essential for ensuring the long-term viability of ecosystems and human societies. This approach emphasizes the responsible use of natural resources to meet the present generation's needs while ensuring that future generations can also fulfill their needs. By integrating ecological principles with economic and social considerations, sustainable resource management seeks to balance environmental health with human development. Research indicates that adopting sustainable practices can lead to significant reductions in environmental degradation and resource depletion. Moreover, engaging local communities in resource management decisions enhances the effectiveness of sustainability efforts, as these

communities often possess valuable traditional knowledge and a vested interest in the health of their local environment. Thus, a holistic approach to resource management is crucial for fostering resilience and sustainability in both natural and human systems.

Islam, as a comprehensive philosophy of human life, was initiated by the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) as a messenger of Allah. Through him, Allah has revealed the complete way of life for humankind in the sacred Qur'an. The Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) provided guidance to Muslims, based on the Quran, on how to live their lives. His teachings and Instructions have been compiled in Hadith. Muslims refer to the Quran and Hadith for guidance on every aspect of their social, economic, political, and personal lives. The principles, commands, laws, instructions, advice, and teachings found in these two sources construct perspectives and guidance for every action of humankind.

As a complete guide to human life, Islam also offers guidance for the entire ecosystem and natural environment, including the use of natural resources. Sustainable use of natural resources for future generations is not a new idea in Islam. In Islamic ecology, the conviction for sustainable resource use derived from the teachings of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Mohammad (PUBH). Now, I will briefly discuss the fundamental aspects of the Islamic Ecological perspective.

3.1 Fundamental Aspects of Islamic Ecological Worldview

3.1.1 Oneness of Allah (Tawhid)

Every human has physical needs that must be fulfilled to survive on this earth. According to Islam, everything required (air, water, natural resources, energy, etc.) to meet these physical needs and

sustain life on earth is provided by Allah as a gift to humanity. Natural resources are essential for human survival, serving as the primary sources for the production of goods and services to satisfy these needs. While humans may utilize these resources, they do not possess any ownership of them; only the Almighty Allah is the creator and owner of all sovereignty. Consequently, humans are not permitted to exploit, misuse, pollute, destroy, or waste these resources.

Islam shares the Judeo-Christian theory of creation mentioned in the Old Testament and New Testament, but the Qur'anic Theory of creation is more advanced and refined. According to the Qur'anic version, the entire universe, including humans, is created by the All-wise Allah. He set humans in the center of creation with a specific purpose. Though natural resources and other elements are created for the utilization of humans, this is not their sole purpose. The Holy Quran reveals that non-human creations (the moon, the sun, the trees, the stars, the hills, the beasts, etc) glorify and express gratitude to Allah in their own way. This is manifested in the Quran as follows:

The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory: there is not a thing but celebrates His praise; And yet you understand not how they declare His glory! Verily He is Oft-Forbear, Most Forgiving! (Al-Quran, 17: 44, p. 587)

There is not an animal (that lives) on the earth, nor a being that flies on its wings, but (forms part of) communities like you. Nothing have we omitted from the Book, and they (all) shall be gathered to their Lord in the end. (Al-Quran, 6:38, p. 264)

As a fundamental principle of the Islamic ecological perspective, Tawhid recognizes that the core of this principle

is that the one and only Almighty Allah is the creator, owner, and sustainer of the entire universe (Gueye and Mohamed, 2022, p. 4). Humans should not disrespect the creator through irresponsible actions such as resource exploitation.

3.1.2 Balance and Order Set by Allah (Mizan)

In the Quran, it is stated that the omnipotent Allah is the originator and ruler of the universe. He establishes laws and order in nature, which every living and non-living creation follows. In the end, with humans, they will also be gathered before Allah. We have the obligation to uphold the natural law set by Almighty Allah Himself. Humans must adhere to the universal laws set by Allah to maintain balance or equilibrium in the natural system and avoid creating any chaos. The Quran encourages humans to observe the order of creation to recognize the greatness of Allah. Allah has created everything in due balance and regulated quantities. He commands in the Quran to maintain the balance of the universe that He has created. The universe operates meticulously to uphold the measurements and balance set by Allah. The following Quranic verses reflect this:

He has created man: He has taught him speech (and intelligence). The sun and the moon follow courses (exactly) computed; And the herbs and the trees - both (alike) prostrate in adoration. And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), In order that you may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. (Al-Quran, 55: 2-9, pp. 1151-1152).

Every single thing is before His sight, in (due) proportion. (Al-Quran, 13: 8, p. 508).

And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet); set thereon mountains firm and immovable; and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance. (Al-Quran, 15: 19, p. 536)

And there is not a thing but its (sources and) treasures (inexhaustible) are with Us; but We only send down thereof in due and ascertainable measures. (Al-Quran, 15: 21, p. 536)

Verily, all things have We created in proportion and measure. (Al-Quran, 54: 49, p. 1150)

From these verses, it can be concluded that every element of the natural world created by Allah is interconnected, as He has designed the natural world in a systematic way. By overexploiting the natural resources we risk destroying the balance that Allah has established.

3.1.3 Man is the Vicegerent of Allah

The Quran reveals that Allah has created humans and placed them at the center of creation to serve and worship Him as prescribed. Humans have a moral and social responsibility to care for other creatures. They also have the duty to maintain a harmonious and respectful relationship with nature as vicegerent of Allah. Humans are the Khalifah (viceroy or steward) of Allah on earth, as Allah has endowed them with the special ability to choose between right and wrong. They are capable of having knowledge and have the ability to comprehend. Because of these special abilities, humans are entrusted to take care of the other creations as a vicegerents. In the Qur'an, the idea of stewardship is emphasized significantly. This is evident in the following Quranic verses:

It is He Who has made you (His) agents, inheritors of the earth; He has raised you in ranks, some above others, that He may try you in the gifts He has given you; for your Lord

is quick in punishment, yet He is indeed Oft-forgiving, Most Merciful. (Al-Quran, 6:165, p. 303)

Behold, your Lord said to the angels: 'I will create a vicegerent on earth.' They said: 'Will You place therein one who will make mischief therein and shed blood, while we do celebrate Your praises and glorify Your holy (name)?' He said: 'I know what you know not'. (Al-Quran, 2:30, p. 9)

Prophet Mohammad (SAW) proclaimed that:

The world is sweet and green, and verily Allah is going to install you as vicegerents in it in order to see how you act. (Sahih Muslim-2742, Book-49, Hadith- 12)

[...] each of you is a shepherd and each of you is responsible for his flock. (Mishkat al-Masabih- 3685, Book-18, Hadith- 25)

The ecological worldview of Islam recognizes that nature is created by Almighty Allah. Nature is sacred and the natural world is interconnected as order and law in the natural ecosystem set by Allah with due measure. Each creation functions according to the will of Allah which has a purpose and deserves to be respected.

3.2 Stewardship of Nature For Sustainable Resource Management

Sustainable development approach promotes the concept of stewardship. The notion of stewardship implies that human beings are not the owners of the world; rather, they hold it as a trust. This idea of stewardship of nature originated from religious teachings, which assign humans the responsibility to take care of the earth and hold them accountable if they fail to fulfill their duties as trustees (Attfield, 2014, p. 21).

Stewardship of nature aligns with the Islamic ecological perspective advocating for the care of non-human creations as vicegerent of Allah. It is said that great power brings great responsibility. Allah has created man with the highest dignity and significant responsibilities. While He has created other beings to assist humans in surviving and flourishing, He does not permit their exploitation. Stewardship of nature is a responsibility by which humans are evaluated based on their good deeds, whether their actions aligns with Allah's purpose, serve humanity, or involve caring for other creations under their supervision. As Gueye and Mohammad (2023) states in 'An Islamic Perspective on Ecology and Sustainability' that:

[...] metaphysical exaltation of humans is linked to a weighty moral burden to adhere to a code of action reflecting the best social behavior and highest ethical values. (Gueye and Mohammad, 2023, p. 4)

Being a true Khalifah or steward does not mean domination or exploitation, it means carrying out the responsibilities as vicegerent of Allah. While humans can use natural resources to meet their needs, they must treat nature with "appreciation, reverence and respect" (Jardins, 2013, p. 43), recognizing it as a gift from the creator. Destroying nature or wasting resources would dishonor God's generosity and beneficence. Thus, We can utilize natural resources for survival, we must not destroy nature. Professor of Philosophy at St. John's University in Minnesota, Joseph R. DesJardins (2013) aptly writes in his book *Environmental Ethics: An Introduction to Environmental Philosophy* that: "Humans have dominion over the world but are not entitled to destroy or ruin it. Dominion is not domination." (Jardins, 2013, p. 43)

Therefore, we can say that true stewardship is fundamentally not about dominion, mastery, or control over any aspect of creation. It is centered on responsible trusteeship. We must cherish and fulfill the capabilities entrusted to us with humility and unwavering obedience to the Creator's laws in all our endeavors (Gueye and Mohamed, 2022, p. 4).

The sustainable development approach and the Islamic ecological approach share objectives and goals aimed at achieving a sustainable future. Both uphold a holistic view of nature, grounded in ethical and moral values. However, the Islamic ecological approach is strongly based on an ethical framework that emphasizes the sacredness of nature and seeks to integrate spiritual, social, and environmental dimensions. While the sustainable development approach advocates for the stewardship of nature based on practical reasoning, the Islamic ecological approach considers stewardship to be a divine obligation.

4. Teachings of Islam on Sustainable Resource Use for Future Generations

Islam provides practical guidelines concerning the human approach to non-human creations. These guidelines are relevant, important, and useful in addressing the environmental crisis we face today due to reckless natural resource exploitation. Active participation and environmental awareness among citizens are vital for responsible resource use. Islamic ecological ethics advocates for a harmonious and ethical relationship between humans and nature. In Islamic tradition, it is considered a religious duty to take care of the creations of Allah as a vicegerent on Earth. Rediscovering Islamic teachings and practices can play a

crucial role in motivating our generation to respect nature. Many verses of the Holy Quran offer guidance regarding resources use and environmental stewardship.

The basic principles of Islamic environmental ethics are equity and justice. Natural resources are gifts from the most righteous and kind Allah to humans across all generations. We are permitted to consume these resources in a manner that allows for sustainable use without depriving others. Allah is the supreme judge, so He commands justice for everyone. This is expressed in the Holy Quran through the following verses:

Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality with and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that you may receive admonition. (Al-Quran, 16: 90, p. 569)

And the Firmament has He raised high, and He has set up the Balance (of Justice), In order that you may not transgress (due) balance. So establish weight with justice and fall not short in the balance. (Al-Quran, 55: 7-9, p. 1152)

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasized that Allah has prescribed equity in all things: Verily Allah has prescribed *ihsan* (proficiency, perfection) in all things. (Sahih Muslim 1955a, Book-34, Hadith-84)

In the Quran, humans are warned not to cross limits and to remain humble, as Allah does not love those who overstep boundaries. When we exploit natural resources beyond limits and distort the natural balance, we violate Allah's commands, as indicated: "Call on your Lord with humility and in private: for Allah loves not those who trespass beyond bounds." (Al-Quran, 7: 55, p. 318)

Islam teaches that every creation has its own value. While we can use natural resources to fulfill our survival needs, unnecessary exploitation is prohibited. The Quran instructs us not to waste resources:

O Children of Adam! wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer: eat and drink: But waste not by excess, for Allah loves not the wasters. (Al-Quran, 7: 31, p. 310)

Allah himself is the sustainer of the Earth. We can gain benefits by using resources gifted from Allah but must not interfere with and create an imbalance in the natural ecosystem through uncontrolled resource exploitation. As revealed in the Quran-

There is no moving creature on earth but its sustenance dependeth on Allah: He knows the time and place of its definite abode and its temporary deposit: All is in a clear Record. (Al-Quran, 11: 6, p. 448)

The world is considered a testing ground for followers of Islam. Every action will be judged, as humans have been created with a conscience. They will be rewarded or punished based on their actions. Other non-human creations have the right to live and flourish on Earth. In Islam, if anyone who serves any living being will be awarded, while anyone acts unjustly he will be held accountable by Allah. The Prophet Mohammad instructed that even after the war, we should not harm animals, destroy crops, or cut down trees. It is said in hadith:

[...] there is a reward for serving any animate (living being). (Sahih Al-Bukhari 2466, Book- 46, Hadith No. 27)

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. (*Ibid*, 2320, book-41 , Hadith No. 1)

In Islam, nature is regarded as sacred because it is created by Allah. Allah created everything to assist humans and charged them with the responsibility of taking care of these creations. Humans are part of the cosmic universe with a purpose that extends beyond their personal lives. Our ancestors, we, and the future generations are part of this continuous cycle. The doctrine of divine creation and the regulation of the universe suggest an ongoing process of conveying God's faithfulness and mankind's duty to serve God, creating a network of obligation or responsibility. As our actions have repercussions, we must choose them wisely. If we perform good deeds, we will be blessed as promised by God, and if we commit misdeeds, we will incur curses and cause suffering. Therefore, humans should live in harmony with nature and respect it. By taking care of the natural resources of the environment, we preserve their value as manifestations of Allah, as they are created by Him.

5. Concluding Remarks

The current state of the planet's natural environment reveals a troubling lack of equilibrium within the natural ecosystem. The environmental crisis has emerged as a global concern, primarily due to thoughtless resource exploitation. Since natural resource exploitation is a multidimensional and pragmatic issue, its solution requires combined efforts from all sectors of society.

From the Islamic ecological perspective, it is evident that the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad

(PBUH) provide clear guidance on the sustainable use of natural resources. These teachings advocate for a respectful and balanced relationship between humans and nature, emphasizing stewardship that acknowledges the intrinsic value of all creations. While humans are permitted to consume natural resources, they are also entrusted with the responsibility for ensuring that their use is prudent and sustainable, reflecting their role as vicegerent of Allah. The Islamic doctrine emphasizes that humans are at the center of creation, endowed with dignity and significant responsibilities. As stewards of the Earth, it is their duty to protect the social, economic, and environmental rights of not only their own generation but also that of future generations.

In conclusion, sustainable natural resource management, viewed through an Islamic lens, underscores the profound ethical and moral responsibilities that humanity bears. It is imperative for the current generation to utilize natural resources responsibly, ensuring that future generations inherit a balanced and thriving environment. By integrating Islamic principles into modern resource management practices, we can foster a culture of sustainability that meets present needs while safeguarding the rights and welfare of future inhabitants of the Earth. This holistic approach is essential for achieving our goal, i.e. to make this planet habitable for all.

Note

1. Quranic Verses in this paper has been taken from AL Quran (Arabic-English) published By Ministry of Religious Affairs Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Online pdf, <http://www.quran.gov.bd/quran/pdf/ae/fae.pdf>
2. Hadith in this paper has been taken from <https://sunnah.com/>

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