



Comparative Study of the Relationship between Human and the Environment in Sustainable Development Thought and Islamic Thought

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Abstract

Environmental crises are one of the major challenges that human community is facing. Different schools have expressed different solutions to solve these crises, for example: Conservationism, Preservationism, Social Ecology, Animal Rights, Land Ethic, Ecofeminism, Stewardship, Sustainable Development etc. Sustainable development is a recent solution of human society proposed in response to inappropriate human exploitation of the environment. Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from Our Common Future, also known as the Brundtland Report: «Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs.»

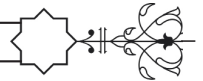
All definitions of sustainable development require that we see the world as a system—a system that connects space; and a system that connects time. In the extensive discussion and use of the concept since then, there has generally been a recognition of three aspects of sustainable development: Economic: An economically sustainable system must be able to produce goods and services on a continuing basis, to maintain manageable levels of government and external debt, and to avoid extreme sectoral imbalances which damage agricultural or industrial production. Environmental: An environmentally sustainable system must maintain a stable resource base, avoiding over-exploitation of renewable resource systems or environmental sink functions, and depleting non-renewable resources only to the extent that investment is made in adequate substitutes. This includes maintenance of biodiversity, atmospheric stability, and other ecosystem functions not ordinarily classed as economic resources. Social: A socially sustainable system must achieve distributional equity, adequate provision of social services including health and education, gender equity, and political accountability and participation.

However, there are still environmental crises and pollutions in the world, and failure to fulfill its

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goals would be owing to the roots and fundamental view of this approach to the human and environment as well as the relationship between human and the environment. Therefore «Human» should be studied in Western Philosophy.

Islam Religion has also recommended specific procedures for the use of nature and human relationships with it. The Holy Quran, The Sunnah, wisdom and Consensus are four fundamental sources of rules and laws. They contain provisions on how to best handle the environment and ensure sustainable development. God Almighty made all other creatures and blessings in the universe (e.g., water, air, animals, plants, inanimate creatures, the earth, sun, moon) accessible to human beings. That means that human beings are entitled to utilize and search for these resources to build their own lives and the universe, in accordance with God's instructions.

Methodology

This article compares these two thoughts (Sustainable Development of Islamic religion) through a descriptive-analytical method. The methodology of this research is descriptive-analytical. The present article first investigates the relationship between human and the environment during classic era (Ancient) and Middle Ages and also its evolution to the Modern Ages and then, implies to the Sustainable development and its characteristics. Next, human and the environment are defined in Islamic philosophy and texts, and the relationship between them will be also explained. Finally, the relationship between human and the environment will be compared under these two thoughts.

Results

It has been shown in the present research that changing in the concept of human and the replacement of human with God in the Universe is one of the causes of environmental crises. The solution to overcome this problem is changing the people's attitude to the concept and position of modern human. Sustainable development accepts the so called definition of Human during Renaissance, and then focuses on the sketchy concepts regardless of the causes of these crises. Sustainable development wants to fight against the pollution and environmental degradation through those ruling patterns causes such environment for human, and wants to get the help of the same methods and procedures of destructive development.

Thus, From the perspective of Islam, nature is a living existent, intelligent with reason; although it has been created for human, but human is not allowed to use it all that wish, because it is trusted to human and human, as the "Steward of God" must be trustee to the other creations of God and do all its assignments. While the focus of sustainable development is regarding the fact that nature is a place for the growth and development of human and it must be also used by the next generations. Meaning that, nature is not respectable by itself, but also it is important due to its function. This is why it is not clear how to use it and human community has different interpretations of exploitation of the nature, since there are different views on the human prosperity and development. The results show that there is a need to the revolution and changing conceptions of human and also re-illustrate nature and human relationships to resolve these crises. The place of nature and human within the universe must also be revised.

Keywords: Human, Environment, Islam, Sustainable Development.

