

Islamization, Ethics and Values in Science and Technology

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By

*Islamic Values and Ethics in Engineering Sciences Research Group
(IVEES-RG)*

International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

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RIGHT TO A HEALTHFUL ENVIRONMENT IN ISLAM: AN EXPOSITORY STUDY

Abdul Haseeb Ansari
&
Parveen Jamal

INTRODUCTION

Right to a healthful environment, which is also known as a clean and healthy environment, a decent and healthy environment, or an adequate environment, is a fundamental right to man.⁷⁴ This right is vital for ensuring right to life, for without a healthy environment it will not be possible to sustain a normal quality of life or even life itself. There is no definite meaning to this right; but for ensuring this human right, conservation of the environment and its processes is sine qua non. It is for this reason that this right should be understood as a right to have the present environment in its sustainable form so that it could serve the purpose of the present generation and of all generations to come.⁷⁵ Some exhaustible natural resources, like forests, thus, have to be in a sustainable manner so that they do not deprive all coming generations also. This requires that deforestation and reforestation must go hand-in-hand. Some other exhaustible natural resources, such as fossil fuels, have to be used with paramount efforts to discover alternatives to them so that energy needs of all coming generations are fulfilled. Guaranteeing this right and its proper enforcement is imperatively required for achieving environmental justice also.⁷⁶ There are a number of international legal instruments that guarantee human rights, in effect, and at the same time, also ensure right to a healthful environment as they are not separable. The best example is the right to life. Conservation of the environment and its processes enhance right to life; on the contrary, a degraded environment and its deleterious processes will certainly impair the quality of life, and a highly polluted environment or highly imbalanced environment may even take lives. There are some international legal instruments which guarantee right to a healthful environment. The paper briefly discusses about these international legal instruments. It also examines the Tehran Declaration on Human Rights and the Environment and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. In order to have

⁷⁴ The author is of the opinion that all words and phrases, in effect, mean right to a healthy or healthful environment.

⁷⁵ See Patricia Birnie and Alan E. Boyle (eds.), *Basic Documents on International law and the Environment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 188-189; Abdul Haseeb Ansari, "Right to A Healthful Environment as a Means to Ensure Environmental Justice: An Overview with Special Reference to India, Philippines and Malaysia", [1994] 4 *Malayan Law Journal* (MLJ) xxv.

⁷⁶ See *Ibid.*