

Ecological Consciousness In Ancient India

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This research paper primarily focuses on certain ideas of environment conservation and management ingrained in ancient India. The natural resources such as forests and forest products were found as basic source of survival for living organisms during the initial period. In the beginning, natural resources were the primary assets for the growth of agriculture, industry, urbanization etc. Later, the environment started degrading slowly and steadily due to increased anthropogenic activities. Indian civilization, one of the oldest living civilizations, has staunchly believed in being in harmony with the nature. Our ancient religious texts such as Vedas (the Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda), Aranyakas(forest works) Upanishad and Smritis contain many descriptions on the environmental conservation and management as an implicit theme. According to the Vedic traditions, every village will attain wholeness only when certain types of forests are present (e.g. Mahavan, Shrivani and Tapovan). The concept of environmental conservation and management was also prevalent in ancient India. Several Indian trees and shrubs were regarded as sacred because of their medicinal/aesthetic/natural qualities as well as their proximity to a particular deity. Religion was probably used in ancient India as a tool to protect environment and natural resources. All these probably highlight the conservation and management ethos of ancient Indian people.