

Thinking and Application of Sustainability in Bangladesh in the Lens of Caring for Nature

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Abstract

Caring is a well-known habit but it is often neglected as a practice in real world, particularly for taking care of the natural resources. Global North has taken some progresses in caring for nature by utilizing sustainable consumption behaviour of the city dwellers. However, it is still far beyond of thinking and application of care in a sustainable way in the Global South countries. This often denies the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the Global South, particularly regarding environmental conservation and biodiversity. In this connection, this paper aims to investigate some scholarships to bridge the gap of this approach for sustainability in Bangladesh, a rapidly urbanized country in the Global South. Based on systematic review of literature, this paper shows the implementation of pro-environmental behaviour with creating value of human understanding and caring of nature can be a way of sustainable management of natural resources while the natural resources are depleting rapidly.

Keywords: Care, natural resource, sustainable consumption, sustainable natural management

1. Introduction

Natural and manmade disaster as well as the over consumption of natural resources are creating a living threat to the limited natural resources of earth (Dietz & O'Neill, 2013). We are living in a finite world where the resources are limited for us to use (Kocsis, 2018). At present, mining firms are extracting too many minerals like oil, gas and coal to run our industries (Bardi, 2014). But these continuous extraction are creating enormous pressure on the depletion of natural resources (Khatun, 2021). For this, we should have come forward to save the earth for future generation in considering generational equity (Du Pisani, 2006). In addition, there is an urgent need to think of management of natural resources in a sustainable way. The mismanagement of natural resources because of overuse for overpopulation destroying our living demands (Du Pisani, 2006). We have to understand the value (both economic and non-economic) of the natural resources (Khatun, 2021) and saving this by caring as a pro-environmental behaviour approach for sustainable management of resources.

Sustainability is a striking topic in all sectors in the world for future development and decision making (Broman & Robèrt, 2017). We must think about this with a great importance to save the quality of life of future generation where the population is increasing at a rapid pace particularly in the Global South. However, recent literature has found that over consumption of natural resources by over population is reducing the resources of the finite world (Kocsis, 2018). This is happening in different sectors by the users particularly in the urban areas.

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There is a need to take immediate steps for saving the natural resources. People's attitude and behaviour are important here (Grilli & Curtis, 2021). At the same time, inclusiveness of all sectors in saving the finite resources is also significant here. In addition, the thinking of love and care from single unit to broad scale in a systematic order followed for own with surrounding neighbour, living in a city of a country and in the whole world is also having an impact in doing the sustainable management of resources nowadays.

The aim of this paper is rejuvenating the concept of 'caring' to think for sustainable management of natural resources in Bangladesh. This paper is looking at the concept of 'care' as a tool to apply in the sustainable decision making particularly for saving the natural resources in Bangladesh. Because from my observation I have found that this term is overlooked in our society and policy where it was a quality in our community few years ago. Scholars argued about the over consumption of resources for lack of the care in a way to misuse and unnecessary use of goods.

2. Methods

This investigation is based on the social-psychological understanding of behaviour (consumption behaviour), local sustainable consumptions of natural resources and the role of citizen in saving the earth. This research followed a systemic review of literature with keywords while searching for literature relevant to caring, care for nature, pro-environmental behaviour and sustainable management. In searching for caring 'medical care' and nursing were mostly found. However, after narrowing down the search to be specific to the study, the literature review helped to find a tentative recommendation for application of caring as an approach should be implemented for sustainable management of ruining natural resources in Bangladesh, a country in the Global South facing rapid increase of population and urbanization.

3. Conceptual framework

Key concepts applied in this research are value, caring, conservation and sustainability for the integration of sustainable management of resources. They are briefly described below:

Value is an important thing to know about the care. We have to realise that if we cannot value ourselves in understanding of valuing nature our life on earth will be unsustainable (Khatun, 2021). We must value and taking care of our natural resources. Caring is an understanding of maintaining the quality of life and wellbeing (Jax et al., 2018). Wellbeing is a concept varies from person to person, place to place, economic condition and minimal use of natural resources and avoiding the use of toxic chemical and waste that impact on the future generation (Hayward & Roy, 2019).

Caring for nature connects the concept of ecofeminism and indigenous knowledge of care as well as anthropocene, human-nature relationship (Jax et al., 2018). Ecofeminism is a concept arrived from the movement in the global south showed the caring for nature. Whereas indigenous ideas of caring for nature have been working for long decades with modern conservation policy for natural resources. In addition, the well-known environmental movement for caring the nature are Chipko movement in India (Shiva &

Bandyopadhyay, 2019) and Green belt movement in Kenya (Maathai, 2003). These two green movements in Global South were remarkable and shook the Global North in thinking and searching for the management of natural resources more sustainably than before. The main theme of these movements was conservation of natural resources by care and love for nature as well as for their survival in local area with nature.

Conservation of natural resources by care is to keep the nature at a good state for future (Jax et al., 2018). Human nature relationship can be a substantial way in conservation process. Human nature relationship is significant because we take our living elements from nature. Therefore, we had to take care of nature before it is getting ruined. Moreover, pro-environmental approach in a way of changing the attitudes of people for the conservation and consumption of natural resources for sustainable management (Grilli & Curtis, 2021). Pro-environmental can be promoted by educational institutes and training centres (Yusliza et al., 2020). The behavioural change in individual case is influenced by beliefs and commitment to the environment and natural resources. The individual commitment arises by the psychological connection to nature. Overall, there is a linkage of value, care and attitudes of users in sustainability and managing natural resources.

Finally, the significant concept applied in this article is sustainability in a way of sustainable lifestyle, anti-consumption behaviour and sustainable or green consumption of resources those are argued by scholars in different time (Barr & Gilg, 2006). Sustainable lifestyle means green or eco-friendly lifestyle depends on the individual practice and behaviour. This will be helpful for sustainable or green consumption in daily life i.e using biodegradable bags instead of plastic. However, anti-consumption means less use or reducing overuse of resources where necessary. This concept will be further discussed in the discussion section.

4. Results

In the time of applying these conceptual frameworks for Bangladesh perspective, I have found an interesting result from the existing data in my study. The results are described in focusing on the meaning and understanding of care, education and training for care, the need for appreciation and willingness to incorporate care in the mainstream.

4.1 Meaning and understanding of care

The meaning and understanding of care were found contested but depend on the knowledge and attitude of individual person. Actually, love and care are connected and care begins from love to an object or a person. From my experiences of living many years in Global North, for example Netherlands and New Zealand, I have observed that people are caring for nature. Both of the countries are vulnerable to natural disasters (i.e. flooding and earthquakes). They have given high value both in the primary level decision making as well as in the tertiary level policies for caring for the nature. Scholars are arguing about going back to previous time to follow their practice in everyday life. In this connection, policymakers are promoting nature-based solution (Nbs) in policy making for sustainable decision making and climate change adaptation and mitigation (Seddon et al., 2020).

Bangladeshi policy documents (i.e. Perspective Plan, Delta Plan 2100 and 8th Five Year Plan) show some update in the process of implementing nature oriented planning and policy making. The Voluntary National Review (VNR) (Volume II, 2020) prepared by General Economics Division of Bangladesh Planning Commission has shown the progress and challenges of sustainable consumption of resources (SDG-12) (General Economics Division, 2020). However, it still has some back log in the process of implementation of caring in the policy and decision-making process, only consumer behaviour change and sustainable lifestyle are recommended by awareness building. Education and training for caring of natural resources also need to be included in the policy making process.

4.2 Education and training for care

Education does not mean here only the institutional education but also education at home and outside typical textbook education. Educating the care for nature is overlooked in our family life practice. One of the reasons is parents are busy in work, particularly in the urban area, so they have less time to spend with their kids and nature. Another reason is lack of practice and options for spending some quality time with nature in Bangladesh (Hasan, 2021).

In Bangladesh, training is often overlooked in starting a new work or activities. People who are entering or doing any unknown activities without any proper training will create mess. Caring for the nature is missing in our daily life training activities. Training should be started from early life say at the age of three when children begin to understand their surrounding nature. Kids should be trained about creating understanding using the finite resources of earth. This training will have a great impact in their younger age when they lead the policy and decision-making process. There should be an integration between policy and institutional approaches. This will ensure sustainability of resource management process by inclusiveness and equity. At the same time, appreciation of younger generation will enhance their enthusiasm in taking care of nature.

4.3 The need for appreciation

Appreciation is a valuable step particularly for the young people in doing any task. There is a lack of thanking for people in Bangladesh who is doing hard job to fulfil the given target. If anyone caring for nature, there is a tendency to highly discourage them. There is a need for appreciation both for persons and institutions who are doing their best for caring the nature around them (Carlson, 1979). There is a need to change the attitude of people's appreciation. Ecofeminism approach can be applied here where female member of a family shows the maximum caring responsibilities in the society. Kids learn first from their mother then get training from father. Therefore, appreciation for any task should come from the family first. In the same way, willingness is a vital step to move forward in the process.

4.4 Willingness to incorporate care from all

Willingness is the most important trigger and inspiration in doing any good initiative or policy making for environmental management and caring natural resources in a society and community (Padilla-Bernal et al., 2018). There is a malpractice in Bangladesh of paying less or not interested to pay for natural resource conservation, particularly, in the

so-called high society people. This malpractice is also found in the middle- and upper-income family can be mentioned as cultural or ego problem by high officials. This creates the lack of understanding of the value and care for natural amenities. Moreover, this unwillingness of activities and care is evident in the institutional level and decision-making processes where top-level officials are fully dependent on their junior officials though top-level officials are often trained from abroad but share less from the lesson learned. However, there should be practicing willingness by young and young adults while creating the ownership mentality among them to feel and care their own benefit. Willingness should be incorporated in all levels by government organizations, NGO's (both local and international) and institutions in their policy and strategies.

4.5 Problem, issues and challenges of caring from the daily life experiences

Sustainable lifestyle is suggested by scholars incorporating green consumption, waste recycling, saving energy and conservation of water (Barr & Gilg, 2006) for a behavioural change among the residents in a city. In this connection, the following sections discuss current problem issues and challenges of waste management, recreation and daily life activities of the city residents in Bangladesh as evidence in this research paper for future policy consideration in sustainable management of resources.

Waste management

In Bangladesh, people in urban area are dependent on the waste management service of the city corporation but they rarely follow the basic cleaning and storing the waste in exact place (Khan, 2018). Dhaka City dwellers are less aware of separating waste in different bin, i.e. kitchen waste in green bin, recyclable goods in yellow bin and rubbish in red bin. As mentioned before, recyclable products like papers and clothes are dumped in the wrong way create waste in the long run. There are no initiatives from the city corporations regarding the separation of these waste (Khan, 2018). Only some community-based organizations are doing the separation of waste in residential areas. The most important thing is needed to change the behaviour of households and taking care of the surrounding environment by helping the waste collector and the person responsible of transfer service. Particularly the plastic bags are creating enormous pressure not only on the land but also in the drainage system blocking the regular flow of water (Hasan, 2021).

Moreover, Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) are dumping the solid waste without any treatment in the Amin Bazar landfilling site which is now overused and creating environmental degradation there (Khan, 2018). There is again shouting the responsibilities of government organization about the taking care of natural resources (i.e. water and ecosystem) in that site and surrounding area.

Recreation

Recent news showed that people of all levels (students and professionals) are visiting frequently to Saint Martin Island, the only Coral Island of Bangladesh (Uddin, 2022). The area is limited to serve for huge amount of people with huge pressure of services like food, transport and recreational activities like paragliding, skydiving. People are creating noise at night for the BBQ night challenge the ecosystem i.e. turtles hatching (Kuddus & Uddin, 2023). There is an absence of valuing the natural system and appropriate consumption behaviour of the users. More shockingly, the misuse and overuse of

resources are by highly educated tourists. Therefore, it is being very difficult to make them understandable about the sustainable consumption when they ignore intentionally.

This has been declared ecologically critical area in 1999 by government (Uddin, 2022) but the area is destroying by the government organization by violating the environmental rules here (Editorial, 2023). Some structures are building for the amusement of the tourist without any permission whereas local residents could not repair their house with the help of administration here (Kuddus & Uddin, 2023). They are also living in vulnerable condition though environmental experts suggested to evacuate them and transfer to a safer place away from the island. However, the concerned authority is Department of Environment (DoE) showed ignorance in their responsibilities to conserve this ecologically critical area (Kuddus & Uddin, 2023).

In city area, people are overusing parks and playground because of overload of users and misuse of management and care of the playgrounds (Hasan, 2020). There is also a shortage of open space and green space particularly in Dhaka city (Hasan, 2021). These spaces are being used for different purpose all the year round no rest for the ground (Hasan & Khan, 2010). In addition, the lakes in the Dhanmondi, Gulshan and Uttara are not using properly by the residents rather in a polluted condition observed there. Moreover, same avoidance of authority's responsibilities found in maintaining canals of Dhaka city.

Daily life

Over consumption of food, water, energy, transport, papers, clothes are found in daily life by people particularly in the high-income area. They are defined as "Throw away society" (Barr & Gilg, 2006). Foods are misused in the festivals and events organized but it should be supplied to the people who have less opportunity to eat three times or even once a day.

Power use is another important thing to take care of by changing the behaviour in sustainable consumption to create just in the society. There is also another habit of city residents to use more cars on the streets instead of public transport as there is huge shortage and discomfort of passengers particularly for children, women and senior citizens (Munira & San Santoso, 2017). Cars are emitter of greenhouse gases and responsible for the heat island in cities (Hasan, 2021). These are examples of over consumption behaviour of the city residents from their daily life in Dhaka. This study needs more discussion and recommendation at the final stage of the research.

5. Discussion

This study was conducted to rejuvenate the concept of caring for natural resources and sustainability in perspective of Bangladesh, a country of the Global South. The following section will discuss about the anti-consumption behaviour of people and sustainable consumption of resources.

5.1 Anti-consumption behaviour

As we have discussed earlier this behavioural change should be applied on the high-income area where people are overusing the materials and generate waste from them. Pro-environmental behaviour (Grilli & Curtis, 2021) means less consumption in turn

reducing overuse of resources. Nowadays, people are encouraging sustainable lifestyle in reducing power or energy use, water use and even less use of park and playgrounds where there are over demand.

In addition to that, rejection, reduction and reuse (3R) should be applied for sustainable management of resources (Black & Cherrier, 2010). Rejection here recognized as all same resources are not necessary to use so we can reject them. In transport, when options are available using bus instead of car will reduce the emission and more eco-friendly (Hasan, 2021). While reduction is valued as reducing resources to minimal level to use them. For example, using more rail service instead of plane to reduce the travel expenses and carbon emission where possible. At the same time, reuse of papers, clothes, hard plastic by city residents where applicable.

5.2 Sustainable/green consumption

Sustainable Development Goal-12 is about sustainable consumption and production of resources in Global North and Global South (Hayward & Roy, 2019). Alam (2017) mentioned about green consumption in the policy of Bangladesh sustainable development. Voluntary National Review, volume-II showed that the progress, way forward and challenges of SDG-12. VNR report showed the policies had been taken to mainstream sustainability in the high school and college level education and curriculum (General Economics Division, 2020). However, policies should be incorporated the stakeholders and their integration about caring in resource management. Green growth and over exploitation of resources are currently focusing for the sustainable management of resources around the world (Khatun, 2021).

Grilli and Curtis (2021) suggested five types of pro-environmental approaches where behavioural incentives and insights is one of them. Moreover, other treatments are awareness building by education, social influence and relationship building. The example in the Saint Martin Island shows that this approach is urgent in the spot where the concerned authorities are either unwilling to perform their duties and responsibilities or they have no accountability and also there is an absence of transparency.

6. Conclusion

In these days of modern technologies people are concentrating more on the industrial development and profit-making business but less focusing on the care for the surrounding natural environment. People want to enjoy but less care about the natural resources. This has caused serious impact of the degradation of environment as well as depletion of natural resources. This study shows the example of current malpractices of mismanagement of natural resources of city residents from Bangladesh, the rapidly urbanized and overpopulated country in the Global South. After critical review and analysis, this research recommends that learning from the young age, and example shown by adults in the sustainable lifestyle practice (anti-consumption to avoid wastage of resources) and pro-environmental behaviour (green consumption and more eco-friendly consumption) can be a way of creating value and care for sustainable management of the limited resources on earth to save them for the future generation.

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