

Ecology of Human Unrest

Alawattagoda Pemadasa.

Arousing and alerting attention on the well established but little understood and ever aggravating crisis of human unrest with a view to accomplishing long lasting ecological, environmental, economic, social and political solutions so creating a world most conducive for human persistence has led to the convergence of a great variety of anthropogenic resources under the umbrella of the United Nations and its associated global bodies during the past five decades. The seemingly collective attempts of the political and bureaucratic masters, collaborative efforts of scientists and intellectuals and co-operative endeavours of non-governmental organizations have provided fora for co-ordination of activities through three basic concepts, in anticipation of extracting some salvation for the majority of humankind which is increasingly subjected to moral, cultural, social, economic and ecological handicaps as a result of victimization by a minority of politicoeconomic and administrative power hunters. These three concepts are popularized and propagandised as *human values*, *human rights* and *human needs*, which may, most arguably, be categorized as the three basic essentialities required to achieve the much needed satisfaction from life. The current concern on the indispensability of these three human concepts in the venture of extracting satisfaction from life appears to have received much applause from an ambitious minority of social strata, but do they really represent a true resolution for the basic dilemma of achieving the satisfaction from life for the majority of humankind undergoing an eternal crisis of unrest? My emphatic answer to this question is a controversial NO! Why am I trying to be so cynical, sceptical and captious about the concepts of human values, human rights and human needs, which most others tend to accept as being pivotal for human salvation? The reasons are

many, of which I wish toⁿ focus a brief attention on a selected sample.

Firstly, what is being preached as human values are hardly practised by the very preachers themselves, so demonstrating the deceptive conceptual approaches of the privileged protagonists, and this had led to the intense and acute disillusionment of the underprivileged majority.

Secondly, what is being popularized as human rights are never materialized for the benefit of the mankind as a whole, for a good majority of endeavours launched to satisfy the so-called human rights requirements are ultimately fruitful for a privileged minority while being disastrous to the remaining handicapped majority.

Thirdly, the so-called human needs are little more than mere fanatic dreams of theoreticians, for in reality a good majority of humans are deprived of the opportunities of satisfying their basic essentialities of life simply because of the inequality and inequity of availability and exploitation of natural ecological resources, including even the living space.

Fourthly, all three concepts are nothing more than mere global gimmicks created by intellectuals and commissioned by the political and bureaucratic mighty for its own survival.

Fifthly, none of these three concepts appears to be in harmony with natural norms required to win the much warranted human unity under diversity and adversity, so that a few have been able to flourish at the victimized expense of the rest who are being left to perish virtually.

Sixthly, the social stratification in the form of international diversity has led to deterioration of human values, destruction of human rights and distortion of human needs, so that powerful global minorities have become the sole dictator who designs,

defines and decides the future of not only the entire humankind but also, and perhaps more significantly, the persistence of the precious mother-nature.

My candid contentions may appear exceptionally eccentric and extremely escalatory, but if one stops to pay a genuine attention on the present day human unrest, it should not be difficult to appreciate the axiomatic ecological truth embodied in them. As I. Berenblum (1961) cleverly summarized, the basic problem has been that, 'man's power over the universe has outstripped his understanding of himself'. How and why did the man become such a notoriously foolish creature? Arther Koestler (1968) was of the most unpopular and mischievous view that the intrinsic constitution of *Homo sapiens* may contain some built-in-error or deficiency that would predispose him to self-destruction. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to test his hypothesis, but it seems to provide some hope for salvation. If there is a way for destruction, there must be a way for construction as well, and what the humankind needs today is to find the latter for they already know and practise the former. This, I believe, is the outstanding challenge that confronts humankind. Understanding the root causes of the predicament of the humankind in general and of the living world in particular is the essential prerequisite to face this challenge confidently and conclusively.

Some root causes of the predicament

The paradoxical dilemma which had led to much of the anthropogenic crises is the failure of the policy makers, decision takers and implementing authorities to appreciate and understand the distinction between ecological and anthropogenic phenomena, so that the political, bureaucratic and intellectual might has made a vain attempt at creating a synonymy between them. In other words, for them the *ecological values* are synonymous with *human values* the *ecological rights* are synonymous with *human rights* and the *ecological needs* are synonymous with *human*

needs. Perhaps, this is the basic deficiency or built-in-error that Arther Koestler tries to advocate! It is my view that this absurd and stupid synonymy, created by the privileged mighty, is the main root cause of the predicament of the suffering majority. More unfortunate, however, is the failure of the humankind to appreciate the parallelism between the ecological unrest and human unrest. This has aggravated the precariousness of the pathos of the suffering majority, so that solving the problem of human unrest has now become the greatest challenge in the history of humankind. The problem of human unrest cannot be solved unless and until the humans are able to appreciate the distinction between the ecological and human values, the ecological and human rights and the ecological and human needs.

Let us, therefore, try to elucidate these distinctions and then to focus attention on remedial steps accordingly.

Ecological values and human values

The authoritatively selfish and self-centred usage of the concept of human values has led to considerable confusion and controversy regarding its fundamental meaning and relevance to the progressive advancement of the humankind, so creating complex varieties of repercussions endangering the very persistence of the entire globe. What are the root causes of this calamity?

As I comprehend it, the philosophical, scientific, cultural and political aspects and usage of the concept of human values differ so diversely that it is almost meaningless to attempt at generalizing the conceptual validity of human values! While the philosophers are chiefly concerned with attaching a divine invaluableity to the concept of human values, the politicians are primarily interested in their socioeconomic practicalities and applicabilities for their own politicoeconomic gains. In sharp contrast, the cultural approaches to human values greatly differ

not only between societies but also and, perhaps more importantly and significantly, between generations of the same human race, which has been the major cause of the ever-widening generation gap. Today, the bonds between generations are becoming so aggravatingly weaker that the youth are becoming eccentrically unwilling to ascertain and appreciate the codes of human values laid down by their elders. In fact, as A.D.C. Peterson (1968) mentioned in his book titled *The Future of Education* the slogan advocated by the rebel students at University of Berkeley that '*trust nobody over thirty*' clearly exemplifies and highlights this tendency. One might now argue, quite rightly perhaps, that under fast changing social circumstances it is absurd, if not ridiculously stupid, to advocate concepts of human values with a view to accomplishing social salvation. But why should there be such a vast spatial diversity of human values within a single globe, practised as the so-called international differences, and temporal diversity, manifested as generation gaps within any given society?

Such a vast disparity and intolerable discrepancy may be attributed to contrastingly distinct attitudes and aptitudes of different protagonists, and it is my contention that a rapprochement can only be achieved by a scientific approach to, and an application of, the concept of human values.

Throughout the civilization, humans made painstaking attempts at an evolution of ways and means of exploring, elucidating, evaluating and employing what I wish to regard and recognize as *ecological values* of the *mother-earth* or more correctly and appropriately the *mother-nature*. The concept of ecological values encompasses and embodies a much wider and more apposite perspective applicable to the entire living world, in sharp contrast to the concept of human values which is entirely and exclusively concerned with and confined to the well being of the mankind irrespective and regardless of ecological repercussions which are catastrophic to the complex web of living and

non-living environment. Accordingly, a fully clear distinction must be made between the concept of ecological values and that of human values.

Theoretically, the ecological values are relevant and applicable to every livingbeing, while the human values are only a subset of this universal concept which is extracted by the greedy humans for the sole purpose of their own survival with little concern for their disastrous impact on the rest of the biosphere which may be defined as that part of earth which supports the natural persistence of life.

The essential distinction between the concept of ecological values and that of human values helps us appreciate and assess the root causes of the predicament which has led to the aggravated suffering of the majority of the humankind, in addition to the other livingbeings who have become the innocent victims of the anthropogenic ravishment of nature. For this, the concept of ecological values must be clearly and properly understood.

What do I mean by ecological values?

The realization by the human animal that he is just one of the many billions of living beings, and not the only one or the supra being that he thinks he is, whom mother-nature has to nurture, is the signal basis of appreciating and appraising the concept of ecological values. The interdependence of eternally interacting web of natural forces and phenomena in harmony and symbiotic association with physical and chemical resources for the unimpeded and uninterrupted persistence of the entire living environment, and not just the human animal, is the indispensable natural equality and equity on which the concept of ecological values is evolved. It is imperative, therefore, to appreciate that natural laws, forces and phenomena provide the axiomatic norms with which the humans, like every other living being, must live. The failure to ascertain this fact and act accordingly had led to the distortion, deformation and final destruction of the com-

plex web of activities of mother-nature, which had culminated in creating more acute problems than those resolved by the human animal, hence the aggravation of human unrest which demanded the urgent necessity of exploring the concept of the so-called human rights. Here again, the built-in-error or the deficiency in the intrinsic constitution, advocated by Arther Koestler, seems to have overridden the human wisdom, for the adoption of the concept of human rights exemplifies the tendency of human animal of dissociating from the rest of the ecological web.

As the great Red Indian cheif Seattle emphasized in his famous speach in 1854, man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. The irony is that the so-called scientific man *Homo sepians industrialis* has ignored this axiomatic truth so damaging his own knot in the ecological web.

This brings our attention to the paradoxy of the meaning and usefulness of the concept of human rights and its affinities with the concept of ecological rights.

Ecological rights and human rights

Not only such seemingly privileged social tribes as politicians, bureaucrats, philosophers, scientists and intellectuals, but also the less privileged public at large are primarily concerned with the fulfilment of what they recognize as human rights while disregarding and disrespecting the norm that every living being has the natural right to exist and persist in its own rightful niche. The process of evolution, as we comprehend it today, has created certain axiomatic norms on which the physical and biological environment is believed to design and decide its structure, function and dynamism. The appropriate and conditional exploitation of resources, energy and space is the basis of persistence of living beings. This is nothing but the so called Darwinian struggle for existence. Accordingly, every living being has the right to utilize

its share of resources, energy and space. In practice, every living being except the human beings rarely interferes unnecessarily with the rights of the other living beings. These are the essential fundamentals of the concept of ecological rights, of which human rights are nothing but a subset which the humans have extracted for their own survival with little concern on the inevitable repercussions on the rest of the biosphere. By doing so, the humans have willingly and unwillingly as well as wittingly and unwittingly created their own selection of natural phenomena so that the so-called harmful creatures can be suppressed, eliminated or eradicated and the beneficial ones be protected, preserved or improved. This *anthropogenic selection* is contrastingly different from, and often contradictory with, the Darwinian *natural selection*. The inevitable contradiction and rivalry between anthropogenic and natural selection processes have necessitated the adoption of some of the human rights such as the right of farmers to eradicate pests and weeds, the right of guardians of the law to eliminate the so-called social enemies from the society and the like. But who gave the privileged minority of humans the right of eradicating, for example, the so-called pests, enemies, culprits etc. This does not mean that murderers should be allowed to carry on regardless, for example. But humans should be made to realize that the concept of human rights is not an all purpose omniscient privilege granted to them by the mother-nature.

Every one from the pupil to the teacher, from the preacher to the practitioner, from the protagonist to the propagandist, from the proclaimer to the prosecutor and the rest of the public to the politician appears to fight to win what are called human rights, but very few preach, let alone practise, the fact that ecological rights are indispensable for the persistence of the entire biospheric environment, of which the human animal is only a notoriously mischievous tiny component.

This attitude and approach of human animal had been an inevitable outcome of the misconception that other living beings and the entire physicochemical environment are created for the

sole exploitation, utilization and consumption by the human beings, a contention effectively discredited and disproved by the theory of evolution which clearly and doubtlessly explains that every organism was, and is, a product of a complex of natural phenomena collectively regarded as the process of evolution and not a product of creation. However, the so-called scientists themselves have deviated from this natural truth so helping the politicoeconomic power hunters to change the nature, more particularly the other living beings including the very human beings themselves. This has created calamitous situations where the human animal himself became the victim of the venturesomeness of his own scientific endeavours which were metamorphosed into politicoeconomic and socioeconomic ventures. The utter selfishness of the human animal compelled him to attempt changing the axioms of nature and norms of life, simply because he was concerned primarily with the concept of human rights disregarding the universal indispensability of the ecological rights. This absurd authoritarianism allowed him to deprive a good majority of not only the other living beings but also, and perhaps more disgustingly, some of the human beings themselves of their ecological rights.

The attempts of anthropogenic selection to override natural selection is no less foolish than attempting to paint new designs on butterfly wings in order to improve their beauty, for it inevitably destroys the natural beauty and balance. Who granted the human animal the rights of painting new designs on butterfly wings? Do the butterflies not have the right of enjoying and protecting their own ecological rights so preserving their own beauty? Yes, they do indeed! Similarly, does every human being not have the right of enjoying his own ecological rights. Yes, they do, provided they do not interfere with the rights of anyone else. But do the so called policy makers, decision takers and implementing authorities recognize the indispensability of this natural axiom? NO! If they do, then, a minority would not be able to

dictate, design and decide the concept of human rights, which the remaining majority would have to accept and respect willingly or unwillingly.

But what is happening today is that a minority of power hunters enjoy the privilege of deciding everything for everyone else. Why should this be so? Should this not be regarded as a violation of rights of human beings themselves?

The entire humankind is so interrelated, interlinked and interdependent that no human being, however powerful he or she is, can be expected, or can hope, to live in complete isolation. Every individual human-animal influences, and is influenced by, the behaviour and activities of every other member of his or her commune. Similarly, the communes are socially, economically, culturally and politically intermingled so that each society is a manifestation of a complex of sociopolitical interactions leading to the erection of priorities and trends creating what is normally regarded as the cultural evolution. Thus, the ever-changing cultural priorities and phenomena in association with socioeconomic, agrotechnical and politicobureaucratic tendencies determined and decided by political leaders, bureaucratic decision-takers and theoretically-motivated intellectual pundits are the final dictators of nature, structure and functions of the anthropogenic web which is the final decider of the destination of any human society.

The anthropogenic web is entirely a creation of man himself, and its constituent strands are social justice, economic liberty, political freedom and cultural integrity which should be intermingled harmoniously to form the knots that maintain the dynamic equilibrium of the web. If even a single knot is disturbed, then the entire web undergoes a succession of repercussions culminating in anthropogenic unrest. Thus, the so-called human rights violations are the results of disturbance in one or many knots of the anthropogenic web.

The entire humankind is the weaver of the anthropogenic web, and the social, economic, political and cultural strands creating the man-to-man bonds are themselves the ultimate deciders of the stability of the web. Although the anthropogenic web has been an outcome of cumulative and collective efforts of countless numbers of past generations, its stability today is decided entirely by the priorities of a minority of power-hungry manipulators who are nothing less than dictators monopolizing the tendencies and trends of the entire humankind. Thus, the majority of human-animals have been compelled to exist as mere effigies !

Accordingly, the concept of human rights should be regarded as nothing more than a paradoxical dilemma, for which the preachers and the practitioners, the leaders and the pleaders and the politicians and the public must join hands to find a long lasting solution. For this objective to be fulfilled, the humans must know what they exactly need in order to achieve satisfaction from life, and how these can be won without interfering with the satisfaction of the others.

This leads us now to open our attention on the concept of human needs, and a proper understanding of this should be expected to provide a foundation to ascertain the secrets of human unrest.

Ecological needs and human needs

In his outstandingly original monographic thesis titled *Ecological Theatre and Evolutionary Play* Evelin Hutchinson (1964) theorized the ecological niche as a *multidimensional hypervolume* in which each dimension is delimited by the upper and lower limits of a factor of the physicochemical and biological environment which determines the existence of a given organism. For example, every organism has upper and lower limits of temperature, of hydration, of food consumption and of energy

utilization, outside which it cannot survive let alone thrive. As much as extremely high or low temperatures are intolerable sometimes even fatal, malnutrition and over-nourishment are equally lethal to any organism, and human animal is no exception, though he has failed to realize it!

This universal axiom takes us to the concept of ecological needs of organisms, which determine their uninterrupted and successful sustenance. The living world is pivoted on three fundamental needs, namely, space for existence, resources for sustenance and energy for maintenance of vital activities. These three basic needs can be further divided and expanded to elaborate the demands that every organism places on its own environment for its persistence. For example, the resources may be categorized to include those required for construction of living tissue, reproductive material, erection of some shelter and so on. In theory, such basic needs are common to all living beings, so that concept of ecological needs is a universal axiom derived through the process of evolution. What man has done was to comprehend these hidden secrets of nature and to employ them for the betterment and upliftment of his own self. This is what is popularly known as civilization or more precisely *cultural evolution*.

The process of cultural evolution created the most notorious distinction, or more precisely the most explosive cleavage, between human beings and rest of the living beings, which led to virtual dissociation of the humankind from the rest of the living world so causing a complex succession of unlimited repercussions.

The cultural evolution is the result of transfer of knowledge and experience of one generation to another, a capacity which the human beings have acquired through the process of communication which had eventually developed into what we know today as education. The capacity of man to receive and reproduce the

cumulative knowledge of countless previous generations through education has made him the outstanding heir to what should be referred to as a double evolution - *the biological evolution and a cultural evolution*-which no other organism has so far had the privilege to acquire.

During the biological evolution, the knowledge embodied in the genetic constitution is transferred from one generation to another through reproduction; the carriers of this knowledge are scientifically known as the genetic material, the 'genes' being the 'words' which embody and encompass the basic biological information. During the cultural evolution, the knowledge acquired by one generation is transferred to another through education, the material which carries the cultural knowledge is the 'words' which the human vocabulary uses for communication. Only man is equipped with this outstandingly unique educational and communicational ability which enables him to transfer his knowledge and experience to his offsprings who, in turn, can reproduce, restructure and revise it for their advancement. Jullian Huxley (1958) summarized it as follows; "Man's characteristic and most unique attribute is this capacity of transmitting experience and the fruits of experience from one generation to another." This remarkable capacity made possible the metamorphosis of the *wild human animal* into the *civilized human animal* which was the inevitable outcome, or more precisely the repercussion, of the cultural revolution. The cultural evolution made the man a civilized animal, while the civilized man made the cultural evolution possible. Then why do I regard it as a repercussion?

The cultural evolution enabled the man to expand his abilities and extend his activities through the process of education which led to the expansion of his knowledge and experience and, in turn, to the inflation of his ecological niche, a goal that can only

be won by proliferating ambitions and intensifying expectations. It was this inflation of human ecological niche that created greater suffering and consequent unrest, for the proliferation of expectations invariably and inevitably leads to diminishing fulfilments, a universal truth that The Gutama Buddha highlighted thus: *Desire begets sorrow*. In simple ecological terms, unlimited ambitiousness and over-anxiousness have created greater unrest and insecurity within the mankind. But that was not the only repercussion of cultural evolution.

The inflation of human ecological niche necessitated the extension of upper and lower limits of ecological factors through the process of increasing and intensifying, what are generally called, human needs. In actual fact, the progress of civilization was the outcome of increasing fulfilment of human needs and the increased fulfilment of human needs was the invariable repercussion of progressive civilization. But the sad truth is that human beings failed to realize that this cause-and-effect rat-race cannot continue indefinitely. Why? Because the three basic ecological needs, space, resources and energy, are not only limited on earth but are also, and perhaps more precariously, diminishing rapidly. Is this not a basic reason for the intensification and aggravation of human unrest?

Evelin Hutchinson's concept of ecological niche embodies two basic components, namely, the *fundamental niche* and the *realized niche*. The fundamental niche is the theoretically possible niche that a particular organism has the potential to occupy. In practice, however, no organism is allowed to occupy and exploit the entire fundamental niche because of constraints enforced by the physicochemical environment and by the interaction of the other organisms. Accordingly, any organism is capable of occupying only a fraction of its fundamental niche, and this is called the realized niche. The realized niche is, therefore, expected to be smaller than the fundamental niche.

But human animal seems to be an exception to this natural axiom, for through the phenomenon of cultural evolution he has acquired the ability to expand his web of needs and to extend the process of exploitation of space, resources and energy, so that he now has the ability of occupying a larger realized niche than his fundamental niche. In actual fact, this apparent contradiction is the cause of most of the present day ecological, economic, social and other crises.

It may, therefore, be concluded that human needs have overridden the ecological needs, and this is undoubtedly the nucleus of much of the present day catastrophes. Within this nucleus are many driving forces which have individually and collectively contributed to the intensification of suffering and consequent unrest, international and national segregation of social strata with unequal human rights and needs being the most significant and critical.

Any attempt at elucidating and evaluating human rights is incomplete if these facets of the crisis are not given proper consideration.

International stratification of humankind and human rights

Man constructed the world map and divided the earth into five or six continents, each of which was further subdivided into what are known as countries, each belonging to an interrelated complex of human beings collectively recognized as a nation. The geographic boundary of none of these countries, however, can be demarcated by a particular climatic, edaphic or any other natural ecologically distinctive feature, so that the anthropogenic creation of boundaries on mother-earth would appear meaningless, if not ridiculous. But then, such a division into physical entities called countries seems necessarily useful and also inevitable, for otherwise different groups of humans would not be able

to enjoy the pride and privilege of having an identity determined and defined by the so-called culture, the evolution of which can be proved historically and archaeologically. In fact, the discontinuous, but contemporaneous, evolution of civilizations among early human beings in different parts of the earth was the beginning not only of the demarcation of physical entities called countries but also of the division of humankind into cultural groups subsequently recognized as nations.

Each nation was characterized by its unique culture so that parallel evolution of cultures led to the development of a characteristic complex of human rights which enabled the human societies cohabiting a given country to coexist with little conflict and confrontation. These concepts of human rights subsequently metamorphosed into traditions, laws and the like, which everyone was obliged to follow.

But unlimited ambitiousness and anxiousness motivated certain groups of nations to conquer the others so disrupting the traditional human values and destroying their characteristic human rights. Gradually stratification began to develop from the powerful conquerors downwards to the powerless colonials where the former enjoyed a privileged set of human rights which enabled them to exploit the latter who had to be satisfied with a contrastingly underprivileged set of human rights laid down by the conquering masters.

From this highly generalized summary of the history of the evolution of a hierarchy of international human rights during the last two centuries, one should be able to ascertain the deterioration of ecological values and ecological rights and the development of a hierarchy of human needs and rights which are now prevalent not only between nations but also between different social strata of the same nation.

The recognition of the importance of maintaining collaborative harmony and symbiotic association for the coexistence of different nations, from the mighty super powers to the insignificantly tiny Islands like ours, cohabiting the mother-earth, led to the creation of the so-called United Nations after the second world war, which went on to adopt on 10 December 1948, what is now known as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The major theoretical objective of the Universal Declaration is to protect, preserve and promote persistently the right of every human being to live his own life without being depressed, suppressed and oppressed by another.

This piece of paper is one of many thousands of documentary achievements of the United Nations, but does it serve anything more than being just another piece of policy declaration? I feel privileged to say NO! Why? because what has happened since 1948 and what is continuing to happen even in the tail decade of this century provide an abundance of evidence that powerful nations care little about the human rights of other nations. If the socioeconomic and military mighty enjoys the privilege and power of dividing nations which had been in existence for centuries, such as Korea, Vietnam, Germany etc., of destroying the traditional cultures such as those of the South African Black nations and of the present Zimbabwe and of interfering militarily with the internal affairs of, for example, Panama, Chilli, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Poland and our own motherland, then what is the mighty idea of having a well detailed document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights supposedly applicable to the entire universe not only to our own globe?

Having a document full of Clauses is one thing but practising its contents is entirely a different matter. It is my view that blank papers are more useful than documents which are not put into practise, because the former can be used for scrabbling, at least, while the latter is utterly useless!

Why am I so combative? Let me explain very briefly.

International stratification and ecological deterioration

The failure of the Universal Declaration to accomplish its objectives has led to the deterioration of the ecological values and ecological rights of not only the human beings but also of the entire living world. Since the present Treatise on Human Rights focuses its attention primarily on human rights let us concentrate on the problem of how the ecological deterioration caused by a minority of privileged nations handicap the majority of less privileged nations.

For example, it is well known that destruction of rainforests, industrial exploitation of resources and pollution, Greenhouse Effect or more popularly the global warming and ozone crisis are threatening the very existence of the entire globe, but little attention has so far been focused on the culprits and remedial steps except the highly publicised pronouncements that the under-developed and developing nations must exercise greater care to prevent further environmental destruction in their development endeavours. Is this not analogous with the so-called attitude of mother crabs asking the little ones to walk straight? Are we not trying to block the movement of ants while keeping elephant corridors wide open? Is this the way of maintaining equality and equity of human rights? Is it not obvious who is trying to cheat whom?

Who are the culprits of endangering the very existence of our earth? The socioeconomic, industrial and military giants, who else? Why do I say so?

According to statistics from the World Fund for Nature (formerly the World Wildlife Fund), about half of the world's tropical forests have disappeared since the 1940s and of about two billion hectares left, upto 16 million hectares are felled each

year. Appalling indeed, is it not? But who are the beneficiaries? The industrial and economic giants of the world, of course! Statistics reveal that more than 90% of the world's timber is being consumed by the developed nations like the United States, the late, (**the word late is used purposely**) Soviet Union, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Japan and Germany; the annual timber consumption of Japan exceeds 50% of the total annual production, or more precisely, extraction of timber. But, then, who are the nations who have to suffer as a result of deforestation? The poor nations who export their timber, who else? Why? Because deforestation leads to intensified floods, prolonged droughts and other climatic calamities which eventually destroy the ecology and disrupt the economy of these poor nations. In the end they are forced to live on loans from the rich nations. Can anyone not see how ecological deterioration creates and widens international stratifications?

Clearly, preaching for the equality of human rights is meaningless, when powerful nations are allowed to exploit the powerless nations, the repercussions of which are more deleterious on the latter than on the former. For example, according to Yoichi Kuroda, Co-ordinator of the Japan Tropical Forests Action Network, Japan continues to allow trade in twelve endangered species including whales despite signing an international treaty in 1988 calling for their protection, and also imports more than 50% of the world's timber, in 1988 alone the value of wood imports being 7.062 billion US dollars, up from 3.703 billion in 1985. While Japan is flourishing, the timber exporting nations are forced to perish virtually. Should this not be regarded as a good example for exploitation of down-trodden nations by the economic giants who preach and proclaim the importance of equality of human values, of human needs and of human rights?

If the developed nations continue to over exploit the natural resources of poor nations, what future can anyone expect

for the latter? Is there any fruitful meaning of preaching about human rights and propagandising Universal Declarations?

The so-called global warming (Greenhouse Effect) and ozone crisis are chiefly the outcome of accumulation, in the atmosphere, of such industrial gases as carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, chlorofluorocarbons etc, the culprits of this ravishment being the United States, the (late) Soviet Union, European Nations, China, Japan and India whose collective contribution to the annual accumulation, for example, of 5000 million tons of carbon dioxide exceeds 3500 million tons. These are the industrial giants who use automobiles in excess, utilize petroleum and other natural energy sources in excess, enjoy the luxury of using air - conditioners and refrigerators emitting chlorofluorocarbons in excess and destroy the atmospheric gaseous balance by releasing other noxious gases in excess. But who are the major victims of global warming, for example? Small nations like the Maldivé Islands and poor countries like Bangladesh, for as a result of the rise in sea level caused by global warming, these countries are anticipated to disappear from the world map. This was what President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom had to say at the United Nations in 1988: "The greenhouse effect of certain human and industrial activities and the global warming effect will thermally expand the oceans and melt the polar ice caps. World sea level will rise with a significant impact on coastal and Island nations. In just over a hundred years the Maldives could be virtually submerged." The President made an emotional plea to the developed nations to help serve the Maldives, but what was their response? A mere indifference!

Many Universal Declarations including the famous Montreal Protocol have been prepared with a view to taking long-term remedial steps to combat global warming, but these declarations too are nothing more than pieces of documents, for the industrial giants have already opposed certain recommendations made by

scientists. For example, at the UN sponsored 34 Nation Environment Ministers' Conference held in 1989 in Norway, the United States, United Kingdom and Canada have opposed any fixed date for limiting carbon dioxide. Similarly, the United States has opposed a clause in the final declaration calling for additional funds to assist the developing nations phase out chlorofluorocarbons by the end of the century. These are the very ravishers of our atmosphere, who now try to virtually abscond from their responsibilities in the endeavour to combat the disastrous global warming. Under such circumstances do they have any valid reason to preach human rights, human values and human needs?

The repercussions of destruction of natural vegetation, environmental ravishment, industrial pollution and over-exploitation of resources will be more detrimental and deleterious to poor nations because they do not possess the socioeconomic, scientific and technological capabilities essential to remedy the disastrous effects whilst the developed nations will be least affected because they can afford the extremely high expenses of combat operations. Such disruption of ecological balance would further aggravate the predicament of the already down-trodden under-developed nations so accentuating their unrest. Is it not clear, therefore, that human unrest in the Third World is primarily a repercussion of ecological destruction and ravishment caused by a minority of powerful nations by way of over exploitation of nature leading to environmental deterioration?

If comparable human rights are maintained, then, such inequality and inequity of resource utilization and disparity in exposure to adverse effects can be alleviated, but, unfortunately, the very preachers of the so-called human rights protocols seem to deviate from their international liabilities and this is undoubtedly a primary cause of human unrest aggravating throughout the world.

Until and unless every nation is prepared to collaborate in the long over due endeavour of normalizing the human rights requirements of the mankind, little progress can be expected and nothing worthwhile would be achieved.

But international collaboration and co-ordination would help to resolve only one facet of the problem, and combating the other one requires maintenance of comparable human rights within nations where communal conflicts and confrontations, caste rivalries, Apartheid crises and the like have already reached their zenith. Such crises have created considerable unrest in many countries, which have led to the deterioration of human values, distortion of human rights and disruption of human needs. It is, therefore, essential to focus our brief attention on this aspect of the problem as well.

Intranational stratification and ecological deterioration

Subsequent to colonial exploitation during the past few centuries, many Third World countries are now handicapped by the aggravating social unrest caused and created by the ecological deterioration during the colonial regimes. This fact can be easily exemplified and elaborated by referring to a report titled *Apartheid Devastating South African Environment*, published by Alan B Durning in 1990. According to this report, "Industrialized racism has polluted the air and water, pillaged the bed rock and ripped away the earth in wide regions of South Africa." But which regions of South Africa? This is what Durning says: "Apartheid has turned the homelands where half the black population is forced to live into ecological wastelands."

More awful and appalling is that natural forests are being destroyed at a rapid rate so intensifying the threat of desertification. Acid rains and air pollution by local industries endanger the

remaining forest patches, aquatic ecosystems and croplands, and have also undermined the residents' health in black townships.

In sharp contrast, the elite white minority enjoys the privilege of living a healthy, luxuriant and almost harmless life with little concern about the awful sufferings of the black majority undergoing immense socioeconomic and ecological hardships and long-term health hazards created by the destruction and ravishment of the environment resulting from the greedy exploitation by the white racists and industrialists.

Alan B Durning demonstrates how ecological problems forced by inequity in South Africa could apply to other societies as well, thus: "Apartheid as an extreme form of social injustice, found so pervasively around the world reveals, with few exceptions, clearly the way unfairness within the human estate extends its damage into the natural estate as well." Is it not clear, therefore, how environmental degradation and ecological deterioration resulting from inequity and inequality within nations could lead to human unrest, primarily because of lack of respect on human values and on human rights?

As long as such intranational inequity and inequality are tolerated, preaching about equality of human rights has no acceptable meaning at all.

The Apartheid minority in South Africa had been successful in brutal and awful oppression, suppression and exploitation of the black majority with concomitant ecological and economic repercussions, highlighted by Allan B Durning, because the powerful elites in the developed world remained dumb, deaf and blind towards these deplorable injustices. If that is the reality, then, does the black majority in South Africa have any justifiable hope for equality in human rights and human values, let alone human needs?

This, in fact, is the precarious plight of many Third World countries which had been under the colonial exploitation, and another good example is Sri Lanka.

Ecology of human rights in Sri Lanka

The problem of violation of human rights associated with human unrest in Sri Lanka has aroused the emphatic attention of many international organizations, in addition, of course, to influential foreign powers, and this was a result of aggravation of terrorist conflicts and accentuation of subversive and other atrocities leading to inconceivably considerable loss of life, property and natural resources culminating in irreparable socioeconomic catastrophes and irrevocable ecological calamities. An abundance of conclusions and controversies is available on this topical issue, much of which is centred on the political, social and economic repercussions supposedly resulting from the abuse, misuse and over-use of power and privileges by the intellectual policy makers, political decision takers and bureaucratic implementing authorities, during this century.

It should, however, be clear that much of the human unrest in Sri Lanka has been an outcome of lack of proper accomplishment of human needs, for if the basic needs are satisfied, then, human frustration can be minimized, disillusionment prevented and unrest restricted. If the basic needs are not satisfied, then, the suffering masses would exercise little care to maintain human values, for nobody can be expected to appreciate divine preachings when the three fundamental requisites - space to live, resources to build life and energy to maintain living activities - are hardly fulfilled. Once the human mind dissociates itself from the importance of human values, then, not much can be expected from anyone to protect human rights. The inevitable repercussions of this complex succession of purely anthropogenic phenomena would be to stimulate the depressed human strata to act more and

more selfishly and foolishly, and that, in fact, was what Sri Lanka had experienced during the last two decades or so. This calamity should not, however, be regarded as a sudden outburst, but rather an anti-climax of the reprisal resulting from the aggravated frustration of the suffering masses caused by long lasting oppression and suppression.

But what are the root causes of this complex of crisis, social calamities and economic disasters, which are interrelated and interdependent like the threads in a cob web? The most popular, widely propagated and propagandised answer to this question has been that inequity and inequality of human rights, values and needs caused and created by malpractitioners of authority leading to the widening of gap between 'haves' and 'have nots' were the major root causes of aggravating crises of Sri Lanka . It is my contention, however, that this popular hypothesis is only a mere description and not an explanation of the problems and their consequences.

Then, what explanation can I offer to these problems?

I strongly and firmly maintain that inequality of utilization of space, of exploitation of resources and of consumption of energy, which had become the rule in this country, had been the major root cause of human unrest culminating in violation of human rights and destruction of human values.

My contention may appear rather eccentric and, perhaps, unacceptable, but let me give a brief ecological history of some salient events, which could help us understand how environmental destruction through the inequality of the use of space, resources and energy had led to economic disruption culminating in social instability and insecurity among the poor masses and especially the youths.

Environmental devastation aggravates human unrest

A clear parallel can be seen between the social unrest in South Africa caused by the Apartheid devastation of the environment of the black homelands and how the destruction of environment by colonial masters and their local followers had created a succession of crises leading to the present day anarchy in Sri Lanka. Let me briefly outline some of the events that led to this calamity.

Our Island enjoys a pleasant tropical climate conducive for the persistence of a remarkable assemblage of flora and fauna, chiefly because of the presence of south-central mountains covered with forests and other vegetation providing the catchment of most of the rivers which are the main source of water for cultivation of paddy and other crops that constitute the backbone of the livelihood of the majority of Sri Lankan peasants who make our agro-economy sustainable and viable. It must be emphasized that bare mountains cannot maintain a rain climate conducive for cultivation. In actual fact, it is the forest-cover which helps to promote monsoonal rains and provide inter monsoonal rains, or more correctly the traditional *Akvesa*

Now, if the forest-cover is destroyed, not only the rain climate but also the entire environmental complex would be modified drastically with almost irreparably disastrous repercussions on cultivations and agro-economy of the country. Is it necessary to emphasize that outcome of such a calamity would be to destroy the livelihood, disrupt the economy and devastate the life of millions of down-trodden peasants and their handicapped families? Yes, of course! Why? Because this fact of reality has received little attention of a good majority of our authorities, bureaucrats and even the so-called intellectuals.

How did environmental degradation caused by forest destruction lead to the further aggravation of the social and economic conditions of the Sri Lankan poor?

Introduction of tea and rubber to satisfy the human needs of colonial masters led to the sacrifice of 4650 km² of Sri Lanka's 12320 km² of forest-cover on mountains. In other words, 38% of the mountain vegetation had to be destroyed to obtain land for planting tea and rubber. Now, one might argue that tea and rubber are the pillars of our economy. But who were the beneficiaries of this newly introduced plantation economy? The colonial masters and their local lackeys, for those cultivations were under their exclusive control so that much of the income was transferred to them automatically. How the colonial and local privileged class exploited the precious land on our mountains had been comprehensively detailed by Michel Roberts (1979) in his article titled *Elite Formation and Elites 1832-1931* which he contributed to the treatise titled *Collective Identities Nationalism and Protest in Modern Sri Lanka*.

That the colonial rulers sold Sri Lanka land to their kith and kin, at the rate of 5 shillings per acre, is very well known, so that by 1860 more than 372800 acres (1490 km²) belonged to the privileged colonial minority. By 1889, nearly 83700 acres (334 km²) had been sold to about 20 locals so that the per capita land ownership was no less than 16 km². Gradually, the colonial monopoly of land ownership was transferred to the local privileged class so that by 1927 about 154000 acres (616 km²) of Sri Lanka was distributed among 66 locals, the per capita land ownership being 9.3 km². In sharp contrast, a good majority of the poor was virtually landless, and had to live under extremely appalling social, economic and ecological conditions.

Accordingly, the monopoly of plantation economy allowed a minority of power hunters to exploit the common resources and devastate the environment, but who were the innocent victims of this exploitation? The under privileged poor masses who else? Why am I arguing so?

As a result of destruction of vegetation and ravishment of mountains, the rainfall of Sri Lanka had dropped drastically, and my own statistical analyses have revealed a reduction of upto 25% during the period 1920-87. Such a reduction would inevitably create prolonged droughts and unexpected dry-spells leading to crop failures, and such crop disasters have now become the rule in Sri Lanka. Does anybody require an additional brain to realize that it is the peasants who have become the inevitable victims of environmental devastation caused by the privileged minority. Is it not clear, then, that the thriving planters enjoyed a privileged set of human rights at the sacrifice of the perishing peasants?

The reduction of rainfall and intensification of droughts can easily be associated with destruction of forest-cover. According to statistics of Forestry Department, a forest-cover sheltering upto 70% of our Island in 1900 had dwindled to about 50% by 1950, and by 1981 it was even less than 24%. Some may argue that such a dramatic clearing of forests was necessary for the progressive expansion and intensification of socioeconomic development. Quite true, indeed! But where are the fruits of this so-called development? Are they not being distributed among the privileged minority, whilst the poor masses are left almost high and dry?

Very little of the forest clearing in the recent past should have been sacrificed for techno-economic, socioeconomic or agro-economic development projects. Much of the felling is known to have been caused by illicit timber dwellers, with or without the blessings of the authoritative people in power, and, therefore, be regarded as politico-economic ventures. But the experts including certain ecologists and conservationists blame the poor chena-cultivators for destroying natural vegetation, for these protagonists are replete to propaganda that traditional chena

cultivation is a major cause of environmental degradation. It is my view and experience that chena cultivators are, in fact, conservators and not destroyers of our environment, whilst the timber dwellers and the politicobureaucratic mighty sheltering the other ravishers are the real culprits of devastating our ecology. In the end, however, it is the poor peasants, chena-cultivators and the other poor masses who have to face the bitter consequences of environmental degradation caused by a privileged minority.

What are the other socioeconomic repercussions of such a degradation of rain climate? It was my experience that the prolonged and unprecedented drought during 1985-87 caused irreparably devastating effects on coconut plantations and fruit trees in home gardens, chena and paddy cultivations, livestock and inland fishery in seasonal tanks in the Districts of Matara, Hambantota and Moneragala. This led to the mass death of nearly five hundred thousand coconut trees in addition, of course, to jack, mango, cashew-nut and other fruit trees. It was not the 'haves' but the 'have nots' who suffered as an inevitable result of this environmental devastation. But had any long-term remedial actions been taken by the authorities to help the poor masses of these Districts by way of rehabilitation? Is this the way of satisfying human needs? Would the disillusionment created by such indifference and negligence of the authorities not cause frustration and eventual unrest of the poor masses. It would certainly! How can then one preach about human values when the very preachers ignore them?

Parallel with environmental impact on cultivation, the cultivators had been handicapped further by the so called modernization and mechanization of agriculture, which necessitated the introduction of agrochemicals and machinery, so that the poor peasants had been forced to sacrifice much of their income to meet increasing costs. It is a well known secret that the so-called

modernized green revolutionary techniques were introduced to the Third World by the global multinational companies with the primary objective of expanding their monopolized market of agrochemicals and machinery, and Sri Lanka was just one of many victims of this global gimmick. Here again, it was the privileged minority who assisted the global giants to exploit the local poor, with the blessings of the so-called experts who masterminded the propaganda campaign to popularize the modernization of agriculture using the imported agrochemicals, technology and machinery.

It is true that at the introductory phase the cost of agrochemicals and machinery was very low. But today, the skyrocketing cost of cultivation has already put a good majority of our cultivators in the doldrums, whilst the local agents of multinational companies have been able to flourish by exploiting the poor peasants through price hikes, at will, of agrochemicals and essentialities. The inevitable outcome of this multinational green revolution was the retrogressive metamorphosis of poor Sri Lankan peasants into mere debtors, while the privileged local agents of foreign companies have been flooded with opportunities of becoming virtual creditors. Is it not clear, then, that the so-called modernized green revolution has also led to an indirect violation of human rights?

One might, perhaps, argue that the modernized agricultural technology was introduced with the humane objective of preventing mass starvation by meeting the increasing demand for food, which cannot be accomplished with the local methods using traditional crop varieties. But has the introduction of the green revolution been able to alleviate the problem of malnutrition and starvation and to improve the economy and ecology of cultivable land? The answer to these questions is an emphatic NO! In actual fact, the poor peasants have become poorer with considerable disruption of their economy and devastation of the ecology of

their land which led to diminishing returns. In addition, the skyrocketing price of commodities has intensified the cost of living, and this has further aggravated the dire predicament of the poor masses. Is it not fair, therefore, to argue that the eventual outcome of this succession of introduced events, master minded by foreign and local experts, was to create an economic and ecological instability in Sri Lanka which had contributed greatly to an unrest in the peasant society? Should such unrest be not regarded as an attempt at re-winning the lost ecological rights and human rights?

Let us focus our attention on another facet of the problem of violation of human rights in Sri Lanka. That the estate and other workers are the pillars of plantation economy and the poor peasants the pivots of general agro-economy must be repeatedly emphasized, because this truth receives little attention of many preachers of human rights. Not only these poor masses are being heavily and mercilessly exploited by the privileged land owners and equivalent elites, but also are being handicapped by the middlemen who act as the bridge between the producers and consumers. For example, it is well known that much of the benefits of agriculture, fisheries industry and similar ventures go to the profiteering businessmen who have been flooded with opportunities and the liberty of exploiting both the poor producers and poor consumers. The successive political authorities have exercised little effort to prevent this inhumane exploitation.

If the poor paddy-cultivators, chena-cultivators and inland-fishermen, for example, who are forced to struggle hard to earn their basic living in an environment devastated by the activities of the privileged minority, are further handicapped by profiteering exploiters, then, what an equality of human rights and equity of human values can we enjoy in Sri Lanka? Clearly, both the ecology and economy of the poor majority are being increasingly degraded by the flourishing minority, with conse-

quent deterioration of human values and violation of human rights.

I have not attempted to highlight the aspects of human rights violation prevailing in Sri Lanka through the exploitation of the working class by the privileged masters, because this facet of the crisis is too well known to be elaborated. That does not mean that I have disregarded its relevance in the present context, however.

It is more than necessary to evaluate further the generalized ecology of the living conditions and environs of peasants, plantation-workers, fishermen, chena-cultivators, daily wage-earners and the others collectively regarded as the working class, and to compare these with those of the privileged minority. That a good majority of these down-trodden workers are forced to live under the most appalling social, economic, hygienic and cultural conditions is very well established, but little attention has been focused on the problem of how these environs have degraded so dramatically and drastically and what the future ecological repercussions would be.

For example, a good majority of the chena -cultivators, plantation-workers and daily wage-earners in the Districts of Badulla, Galle, Hambantota, Kalutara, Kandy, Kegalle, Moneragala, Nuwara Eliya and Ratnapura are forced to live in environs euphemistically called 'homelands' which are, in fact, extremely rural, remote, hilly, degraded, denuded and eroded with hardly any topsoil to support much crop growth and where hygienically suitable drinking water is a rare luxury. Why? Because the destruction of vegetation-cover, mainly forests, has inevitably accentuated erosion, reduced ground water availability and impoverished the soil so that much of these environs are almost uncultivable, unarable and virtually uninhabitable, but the poor masses have no alternative but to attempt to just exist, not

necessarily to live, amidst ever-aggravating social atrocities, economic hardships and ecological adversities.

These socioeconomic and ecological conditions are no less appalling than those prevailing in the so-called 'black homelands' in the Apartheid South Africa, which Allan B Durning had outlined as follows: "Suffering under politically enforced over population - ten times the population density of white rural areas - the (black) homelands are among the world's most degraded regions." In actual fact, the predicament of the Sri Lanka's rural poor is much worse, because they are being exploited and suppressed by the people of their own 'colour', in sharp contrast to the black South Africans who are under the oppression of the so-called 'whites' who are globally notorious for their Apartheid policies and practices.

The continued degradation of the ecology and destruction of the environs inevitably lead to further aggravated retrogression of the economy, so that the Sri Lanka's rural poor are increasingly and inhumanely deprived of their basic needs let alone the so-called human rights. Under such depressing conditions, should any one waste wisdom to preach on human values?

If human beings are forced to exist more like wild animals, then, is it unreasonable to expect accentuated unrest? But one might argue that unrest is not a solution to their problems. Quite true, indeed! But one has only to visualize the appalling conditions that these rural poor are compelled to tolerate, to appreciate how long have they been awaiting a salvation from the privileged minority including the authorities in power. But consider that when the price of these contradictions becomes intolerable, some eruption has to occur.

From the foregoing, it should be more than apparent that disruption of ecology and devastation of environment ultimately

exert irrevocably calamitous repercussions on the under-privileged, down - trodden poor majority, so aggravating their social and economic stability and security as well as the problems of malnutrition and health hazards. What is the relevance of this succession of anthropogenic repercussion for the crisis of human rights violation and accompanied human unrest in Sri Lanka?

Social repercussions of disruption of Ecology

It should have been clear that inequity of utilization of resources, of consumption of energy and of exploitation of space in our Island had aggravated the hardships of the under-privileged Sri Lankan masses. It is necessary now to elucidate how these successions of anthropogenic phenomena ultimately led to the violation of human rights, distortion of human needs and degradation of human values.

With increasingly aggravating socioeconomic hardships, it is natural that most of the poor masses of this country became unable to provide the fundamental prerequisites to their children for much warranted education, which is the ultimate pivot and pillar on which every human being has to design his future. Can anyone expect the starving children to concentrate on learning? An empty stomach hardly allows filling the brain with knowledge! Is it surprising, then, that poor children with empty stomachs fail to win fruits of education? Is this not the predicament of a good majority of down-trodden children of this country? Clearly, they have become the innocent victims of a rural economy handicapped by devastating ecology. Would this not lead to their frustration culminating in unrest?

On the other hand, continued malnutrition and consequent health hazards during the early stages of life hinder the proper brain development of the rural and other poor children, so

restricting their mental capacity and intelligence, and the collective and cumulative impact of these social, nutritional, health and other extrinsic phenomena would be to deprive these children of their educational opportunities followed by heavy retardation of employment prospects.

Free education is propagandized to be a pride in Sri Lanka. But what is the mighty idea of having free educational opportunities, not necessarily facilities, if the poor children are prevented from benefiting, because of their intrinsic biological and physiological deficiencies caused by extrinsic nutritional and hygienic limitations which are the outcome of a dwindled economy and devastated ecology? It seems fair, therefore, to conclude that one of the root causes of the problem of unrest is the denial of the poor of their ecological rights and basic biological needs. Does this not exemplify how the monopolized exploitation leads to violation of human rights?

The gravity of injustice can be easily appreciated by focusing attention on another facet of the problem.

In sharp contrast to the predicament of the 'have nots', the 'haves' and their princes and princesses are flooded with opportunities of enjoying undeserved facilities, of acquiring unprecedented knowledge and experience and, consequently, of winning whatever the goal that they wish to achieve. Is this the way of maintaining the equality of human rights? Are we not, in fact, maintaining a hierarchy of human values, of human rights and of human needs, from the privileged minority downward to the down-trodden poor?

There is yet another facet to this problem. Despite intolerable socioeconomic hardships, nutritional handicaps and health hazards, a fortunate minority of the poor children are able to overcome every hurdle and finally to win higher educational opportunities, but only to learn eventually that their prospects of

winning suitable employment are worse than bleak. Whereas some youths are flooded with socioeconomically privileged opportunities simply because of their social status or prestige of being, for example, a so-called sportsman, a good majority of poor youths are deprived of their deserved prospects, in spite of having academic qualifications. Should these tendencies be not regarded as violations of human rights, which had led to their utter frustration and disillusionment culminating in human unrest, social anarchy and final national calamity?

It seems clear how social repercussions of devastation of ecology leads to widen the gap between 'haves' and 'have nots' so creating unrest among the latter. However, these are not the only avenues created by the privileged minority to violate human rights, for there is yet another subtle mechanism where cleavages between professionals have led to degradation of human values through disruption of human rights.

Professionalism and human rights violation

It is my logical contention that the evolution of social structure, erection of socioeconomic hierarchy and introduction of the so-called educational reforms have also been designed and devoted not to bridge the gap between 'haves' and 'have nots', but to widen cleavages within the society, on the basis not of inherent abilities and the essentiality of service but of the social status acquired through extrinsic forces such as family background, wealth, learned speciality, bureaucracy and politicoadministrative might, where money is the decisive source of power, pride and prestige.

The tragic consequence of this inhumanely unjustifiable and unacceptable attitude and approach has been to disregard the indispensability of the technically skilled craftsmen such as masons, carpenters, plumbers and tailors, for example, while

elevating doctors, engineers and the similar elite as the professional 'brains' and 'hearts' of the Island. But what is the use of these internal organs if the external organs are disabled and deformed? Analogously, the so-called learned professionals are of little use if the technically skilled professionals are ignored as mere *Bassunnahes*, a classic example of violation of human rights which has received little attention, and has, in fact, been ignored appallingly in this country with almost irreparable socio-economic repercussions.

Why should there be such a discriminative disparity between different tribes of professionals and hardly any equality and equity of human rights? Are all of them not true professionals in their own right and skills? Are all professionals not indispensable for the betterment of the society and upliftment of the country? The important truth that must be emphatically reiterated is that every profession, like every vocation, is indispensable in its own right and that there must be an acceptable equality and equity between different professionals so that neither is superior nor inferior to another. This is nothing but maintaining acceptably comparable human rights between different professional tribes representing a specific set of social strata. For this fact to become a reality, a series of prerequisites must have to be satisfied.

The primary step must be to eradicate the lop-sided attitude of discriminating some professionals and glorifying the others. Time is, therefore, ripe for society in general, for the policy-makers and decision-takers in particular and for the so-called learned professionals more specifically to recognize the importance, appreciate the respectability, acknowledge the integrity and accept the indispensability of the technical professionals, who have hitherto been undervalued and intimidated as mere *Basunnahes*. Complementarily, the technical professionals themselves must make a concerted and combined effort to win back the

credibility, respectability, integrity and indispensability which have been virtually smuggled out by the privileged elite for their own benefit. For this, the technical professionals must not only discard the *Basunnahe mentality*, but also and perhaps more essentially, be prepared to exercise their authority, authenticity and monopoly as true consultants so demanding and winning a true consultation-fee for the indispensable service rendered, and, not to be satisfied with a mere *daily wage*. If a medical practitioner, for example, is entitled for a consultation-fee, why can a welder or a carpenter not enjoy an equivalent privilege? Unfortunately, however, the technical professionals have failed to appreciate their importance, to understand their significance, to emphasize their indispensability and to demonstrate their true niche in the society, let alone exercising their autonomy, so that the privileged mighty and elite minority are allowed to exploit them at their will; this is one reason why they are being discarded as mere wage-earners as those of the so-called working class, so denying their due credibility in the professional world.

In the developed world, however, an electrician, for example, is not only regarded and respected as an engineer but also enjoys the privileges, or more appropriately the human rights, as any other engineer with professional degrees. Similarly, an X-ray technician is as privileged as a medical practitioner. This is because each tribe of professionals is indispensable in its own right and merit. The developed nations are not only aware of this fundamental anthropological axiom but also practise it, and that is why they respect the essentiality of each tribe of professionals and establish the relevant equity and equality between different professionals so maintaining the human rights at acceptably comparable levels.

In the United States and the (late) Soviet Union, supposedly practising contrasting political disciplines, certain technical professionals are entitled to more lucrative benefits than do much

learned professionals as doctors and lawyers, for these nations are not only aware of but also appreciative of the fact that the technical craftsmanship is the basis of converting sciences into technology and of evolving theoretical fantasies into practical realities which are fundamental and pivotal for the progress of the mankind. Can the so-called learned professionals conquer the universe without the able and co-ordinated co-operation of the technical professionals? NO! Then, why should there be an unjustifiable discrimination between these two equally indispensable and mutually essential categories of professionals?

In a country like ours where the social status is elucidated by the dress, evaluated by the purse, appreciated by the *Pukka Sahib* life style and assessed by the accessibility to the political and bureaucratic mighty, and not by the contributory service rendered to the society through one's own inherent abilities, induced aptitudes and intelligent applications, anyone expecting much progress through the theorized maintenance of equality of human rights, to bridge the well-widened gap between the technical professionals discarded as mere *Basunnahes* and the so-called learned professionals decorated as specialist consultants or more specifically *Pukka Sahibs* must be living in a dream world, for ultimately it is the social status determined by the Rupees, and not by the Cents, which overrides everything else. The only way of converging *Pukka Sahibism* and *Basunnaheism* is to eradicate the lop-sided inhumane attitude and to exterminate cock-eyed social status, determined by the pride, power and prestige, which have been buttressed in our degraded society. Unless and until these stringent social anxieties are fully satisfied, attempts to accomplish equality and equity of human values, of human rights and of human needs would be a mere fantasy.

In conclusion, if this fantasy does not metamorphose into a fruitful reality, then, it is virtually impossible to prevent the predicament of the 'have nots' becoming aggravatingly so,

pathetic and precarious with consequent economic hardships, ecological disasters and social calamities culminating in anthropogenic anarchy, leading to subversive atrocities which could create and cause unprecedented ecological hazards as already experienced in Sri Lanka during the last few decades.

Ecology of subversive atrocities

Of the irrevocable catastrophes of subversive activities, most people care and fear, quite understandably of course, about the loss of human life, economic disasters, social disruptions and intellectual ravishments; in sharp contrast, however, the long-term ecological repercussions are being given hardly any attention. Those who are aware of the environmental crisis occurred during the bloody wars in, for example, Vietnam, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Northern Ireland, no doubt, would be alarmed and appalled by the continuously aggravating environmental atrocities caused by the subversives of this country. It is the responsibility of the public at large in general, the constitutional duty of the authorities in particular and the moral obligation of ecologists and environmentalists more specifically, to make remedial efforts to dilute, at least, if not stop, this danger, for otherwise the disasters could be well beyond repatriation and rehabilitation. This is, however, not to underestimate the gravity of cultural, socioeconomic and other atrocities of recent subversive acts recurring both in the north and non-north (not necessarily south).

Let us start with more obvious environmental destructions caused by the subversives. During every occasion of Islandwide protests, it had been quite customary to cut-down trees to block roads and to destroy power and telephone lines. But everyone is concerned most exclusively about the loss of public property while nobody seemed to care at all about the environmental and vegetational losses; it is my view that the former is reparable

while the latter is irrevocable . That is why we all should be alarmed, concerned and alert about this inevitable repercussion.

The plight of Para-mara (*Sammanea saman*) trees had, more particularly, been most precarious and pathetic, for they would have taken well over a century to attain such colossal sizes. These trees had been established by the side of the major roads by the British during the last century for providing shelter to pedestrians and protecting and improving the local environment; during each hural, the entire tree or main branches were sacrificed. The environmental impact of this inhumane and foolish act is most precarious, for the development of such gigantic trees would take several generations.

Is it not pathetic that our own youth are so blind to destroy their own environmental heritage and posterity? While the privileged mighty is at liberty to exploit natural forests illegally, the underprivileged future mighty has adopted the subversive tactics of destruction of trees for no purpose at all. Should we cut our own nose to take revenge from the face? Today's youth who destroy their precious vegetational treasures would have to face themselves the hostile and inevitable consequences of their own atrocities tomorrow as adults, but by the time they realize the gravity of their mistakes it would be too late. Why cannot they see beyond the tip of the nose into the distant future?

Let us now focus our attention on the ecology of northern subversive atrocities. Does anyone know how much of the natural vegetation has been sacrificed for making and maintaining terrorist camps, training guerrilla forces, testing land-mines, bombs and other fire-arms, digging bunkers, developing access roads into the jungle and other subversive purposes? It must have been colossal indeed. It was reported last year that the LTTE leader and his hard-core associates have taken refuge in under-ground camps encircled by powerful land-mines and that there were

hundreds of such subterranean camps scattered in the thick jungle in, for example, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and other areas. Does the destruction of forest end after the construction of camps, bunkers and the like? No! It is, in fact, just the beginning of successions of environmental calamities, for the battle between the subversives and official forces would invariably lead to more and more disasters. In the end, nobody would emerge victorious, for they all lose their precious environmental balance, in addition, of course, to the invaluable human life. The sooner these subversives realize the gravity of the danger of destroying their own shelter the better. What an environmental price are they paying to win the so-called liberation?

The northern subversives are known to earn quick money by illicit timber-selling, gem-mining and cultivation of Ganja (*Canabis sativa*), all of which create wide clearings deep inside the thick jungle. Apart from the illegality, they result in fragmentation of forest thereby disrupting its ecological balance and equilibrium.

The Ganja cultivation, in particular, leads to a succession of appalling repercussions. Apart from forest destruction and environmental devastation, it also causes moral ravishment and destruction of human life. The pathos is more precarious, for the foreign exchange earned from Ganja-smuggling is invariably utilized to import weapons. What for? To kill fellow Sri Lanka human beings and destroy more forests, what else? How foolish, far-sighted and narrow-minded, indeed! Disgusting!

Forests are not the only natural vegetational treasures that are being destroyed by the northern subversives. That the coastline in general and sand-dunes and mangroves in particular in the Districts of Jaffna, Manner and Trincomalee are being ravished by them for maintaining camps, training fighters and testing fire-arms has long been known. The consequent destruction of vegetational covers exposes the coast, sand-dunes and lagoons so

causing their wind-induced and sea-induced erosion. Are they not accentuating the erosion of their own homelands?

The destruction of sand-dunes is more particularly calamitous. Why? Sand-dunes are the outcome of long-term, continuous accumulation of wind-borne sand around such plants as *Dan* (*Syzygium spp.*), *Maha-ravana-revula* (*Spinifex littoreus*) and the like. This is a very slow process. Thus, the development of colossal sand-dunes, rising upto 10 m in height, of the type widespread along the northern and eastern coasts would have taken several centuries, but their devastation can be achieved within few years once the vegetational-cover acting as a carpet is removed.

Sand-dunes protect the coast-line and provide shelter for the adjoining inland. The human impact is to destroy the vegetational-carpet and to expose the loose sands accentuating wind-induced erosion; consequently, the coast-line is exposed to heavy wave-action so aggravating sea-erosion. The intensified subversive impact and inevitable retaliation by the official forces would, therefore, be extremely lethal.

The northern and eastern coasts support the richest mangrove communities of Sri Lanka, but, unfortunately, these are being destroyed by the subversives, for making easy access to the sea to transport men and material. The environmental indispensability and ecological invaluableity of mangroves are well known, and their destruction would be disastrous in more than many ways. Mangroves are highly specialized communities occupying saline soils where no other vegetation can thrive, and they help the persistence of economically valuable populations of lobster, prawn and fish. The destruction of mangroves, therefore, removes the breeding and feeding habitats of these species and hampers the livelihood of the poor fishing communities. More-

over, we have less than twenty species of mangroves in Sri Lanka occupying about 8000 ha of the coast. No more is needed to emphasize the great ecological value and botanical indispensability of these precious plant communities.

The gravity of the subversive destruction of natural forest can be evaluated by taking their appalling plight into consideration. According to the satellite pictures of 1981, only about 16,000 km² of the total land-area of 65,000 km² of Sri Lanka is under forest-cover. Of this, 341, 1121, 1513, 1138 and 1104 km² occur in the Districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Vavuniya respectively. Accordingly, the northern and eastern provinces had a total of about 5210 km² of forest-cover in 1981, which, in fact, was a one-third of the total forest heritage of ours. The inhabitants of these two provinces are undoubtedly ecologically and environmentally more fortunate than most other Sri Lankans. But, if they destroy it...?

But how much of these forests now remain undisturbed? Not much, I am sure!

In the past, it was illicit timber-fellers, gem-miners and Ganja-cultivators who destroyed forests so creating an environmental crisis, but, today, the so-called freedom fighters are increasingly pouring fuel into this burning disaster. There are laws, at least on paper, to protect forests from illicit timber-fellers, poachers and other hooligans, but there is nothing to stop ecological disasters of subversive atrocities; but the laws of the jungle would take its path one day, no doubt!

It must be emphasized that nobody can avoid and evade natural justice, but the precarious pathos of subversive destruction of the environment is that the mother-nature cannot discriminate and distinguish between the real culprits and innocent victims. Thus, any social liberation without environmental salvation is meaningless. This is the message that ecologists and

environmentalists can and should extend to all subversives or more generally the so-called freedom-fighters.

What freedom can anyone enjoy in an environmental prison?

Human unrest is an ecological problem

It must be evident from the foregoing that the cause of human unrest is exclusively a complex of ecological problems which had created a succession of social, economic, political and cultural repercussions. The final effect of human unrest leads to ecological problems culminating, in turn, in social, economic, political and cultural crises. The failure of the majority of human beings to accomplish their own social, economic, political and cultural requirements is ultimately an outcome of the misuse, abuse and over-use of ecological resources by a minority of powerful and power-hungry human-animals who create ecological problems through environmental pollution, social ravishment, economic dictatorship and cultural manipulations, the outcome of which is an inevitable deterioration of human values and ethics culminating in extinction of humaneness.

The so-called global warming, for example, is notorious to be one of the most critical ecological crises which is anticipated to create an unprecedented succession of social, economic, cultural and political repercussions culminating in considerable, and perhaps irrevocable, human suffering. Now, who are the creators of this ecological crisis? The self-centred industrial nations who continue to pollute the world with greenhouse gasses through the abuse, misuse and over-use of natural energy sources, synthetics such as hydrocarbons and chlorofluorocarbons and other man-made chemicals. But who are the victims of their selfish manipulations and monopolization? The majority of the suffering masses in the so-called under-developed and develop-

ing Third World, who else! Is it unnatural, then, to expect unprecedented unrests in these down-trodden societies? Clearly, the human unrest manifested in whatever form is ultimately an outcome of misuse, abuse and over-use of common resources by a privileged minority creating specific ecological crises victimizing the innocent majority.

Human unrest needs an ecological solution

If human unrest is an ecological problem, then, there is no alternative but to seek an ecological solution. Where does the solution lie? Should it be intrinsic, motivating within the man himself, or extrinsic, originating from outside? It is my contention and conception that the entire problem of human unrest is a creation by the selfishness and greediness of a minority of human-animals seeking unlimited satisfaction from life through the over-utilization of limited resources, and until and unless this selfish and greedy over-exploitation of mother-nature is minimized, no ecological solution to the problem of ever-aggravating human unrest can be expected.

But the solution is very simple!

The salvation can be accomplished only through the controlled selfishness and controlled greediness. How should the power-hungry minority control its greed and selfishness? To answer this question, one needs to elucidate what satisfaction means.

Satisfaction is an outcome of fulfilment of expectations. It is common experience that not all expectations of any human being would be materialized successfully. Thus satisfaction is a function of the number of fulfilled expectations with respect to the total number of expectations, which may be expressed mathematically thus:

$$\frac{\text{Number of fulfilled expectations}}{\text{Total number of expectations}} = \text{Satisfaction!}$$

Any logical mind should be able to appreciate the important fact that unlimited ascent of expectations leads to an increase in the number of unfulfilled expectations so that satisfaction would be deminished. This, in fact, is exactly the crisis that the power-hungry human minority is experiencing today.

Then how can one regain the lost satisfaction? There is only one way. Control the selfishness and greediness so that the number of expectations can be limited thereby increasing proportionately the number of expectations that are fulfilled so that satisfaction from life is maintained at a high level!

Such control of selfishness and greediness would reduce the demand on mother-nature so that misuse, abuse and over-use of ecological resources would be impeded. The consequent rehabilitation, reconstitution and restructuring of deformed ecology would lead to an ultimate reversal of mother-nature back to its normal self so that ecological web would remain under a maintained equilibrium conducive for the persistence of the entire biophysical world.

Convergence of ecological needs and human needs is the solution

From the foregoing it must be abundantly clear that much of the root cause of human unrest is an anthropogenic creation which had led to the divergence of human needs from ecological needs so establishing an unprecedented situation of unlimited expansion of the realized human niche beyond the fundamental ecological niche provided by mother nature to the human animal through the normal process of genetic evolution. It is also clear that this expansion of realized niche beyond the limits of funda-

mental niche, dictated by the genetic potential, is an outcome of unlimited and ever-intensifying cultural evolution, which has now created a technological culture placing unecologically stringent demands upon both the intrinsic human environment, particularly the mental capacity and expectations, and extrinsic natural environment. Consequently, human animal has become the victim of his own unlimitedly expanding selfishness and greediness.

There is only one path to salvation.

The human needs must be converged towards ecological needs of human animal, so that unlimited demands placed by him on the external environment would be heavily restricted. This can be achieved only through minimized deviation of human rights from ecological rights so that human values coincide broadly with ecological values. *Homo sapiens industrialis* must never forget and fail to accept the fact that, like any other organism, he is also an ecological-being who should never attempt to exceed the natural ecological limits, for the mother nature would allow expansion only within its scope and capacity.