

The Concept of Altruism in the Eco-Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl

Mohanan P

Assistant Professor, Research Department of Philosophy ,Government College Chittur, Palakkad, Kerala, University of Calicut.

Abstract

Altruism implies that we act to promote someone's welfare. It clearly reveals that man has an inner potentiality of cooperation and others welfare are hereditary traits. The impulse of spontaneous helping of people is a genuine consideration for their own welfare. Altruism is considered as natural character of human being and generate eco-friendly attitude imbibe in the human mind.

Our consciousness is always influenced by attitudes, beliefs, prejudice, theories and aptitudes etc. Here he stated that all perception received the consciousness with the presuppositions. The radical ecologist/ deep ecologist suggests that there is curing method of revolution rooted in spiritual conversion of mind is necessary for social and environmental sustainability. The philosophers believed that there is a metaphysical paradigm of spiritual practice is necessary for ecological existence.

The ethical issues are very complex and complicated related to environment and man. It is like a problem that appears good for the people is not good for the environment. The unilateral analysis may that the environment wins and the people loose and vice versa. It is a necessary condition for the harmony between man and the environment. The altruism is a theory of a moral responsibility to protect and sustain the environment, as a bio centric vision. It is a life centered environmental ethics. Being an eco-phenomenological exposition, the altruism generated as a matrix of human consciousness having the vision of the survival of the Universe as a whole.

KEYWORDS: Altruism, Egoism, hedonism, Phenomenological, environment, consciousness.

INTRODUCTION

Altruism implies that we act to promote someone's welfare. Generally believed that man is selfish and self-centered. But the modern research studies suggest that man's first urge is to cooperative rather than compete. It clearly reveals that man has an inner potentiality of cooperation and others welfare are hereditary traits. The impulse of spontaneous helping of people is a genuine consideration for their own welfare. Altruism is considered as natural character of human being and generate eco-friendly attitude imbibe in the human mind. Evolutionary rationalist believed that the drives of altruism is deeply rooted human nature, because they learned from their social living. The habit of helping others and co operations promotes the survival of the human species. Charles Darwin is also argued that altruism is a natural dispossession which manifests into in the form of 'sympathy' or 'benevolence'. He also combined altruistic motivation and

collective urge, that there is a characteristic feature of man is 'an essential part of the social instinct'.

Altruistic nature of man is very positive to society and individual. It really means "to give". It does not hope that all the people really give without any expectation of reciprocity. The people possess altruism, expected to express disinterested and selfless concern for the wellbeing of others. In other words, selfless concern may constitute a form of altruism. The altruistic individual is willing to take risk for the wellbeing of others. Altruism is a kind of helping behavior that is motivated by relieve sufferings without any expectations. Altruism may be expressed through social behavior such as caring, helping, comforting, sharing, philanthropy and social services. Altruism is opposing selfishness. The concept demands a debated issue in global, social and academic fields.

2. ALTRUISM - PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Positive psychology treats generosity, kindness, care, compassion and love are closely related to altruistic behavior. Such emotional states are not based on the reciprocity, may provide benefits both giver and recipient of the goodness. Altruistic behavior does not provide the intention of benefit to the giver. The expectation of benefit /reward of the giver may be deviate from his deed. The benefit is not the ultimate goal of the giver. The givers activity may result a "good glow" or "helpers light" but the giver transcends the feeling of good. Some psychologist states that motivation of altruistic behavior is show kindness to seem illness or the consciousness of morality. The studies proved that adult one age of 55 over are seem to be very less percentage of possibility. But altruistic behavior boosted the both physical and mental health. Psychologist concludes that as human beings have a basic need for belonging may sublime through the act of altruism. It is very clear being aware of kindness in oneself and other is related with greater feelings of pleasure / happiness. Altruism is a higher level of being aware of wellbeing of others. It is enlightened level of awareness of kindness as, as happy people show to be kinder.

Some psychologist states that altruism is a hereditary trait, it does not agree hundred percentage of the opinion of morality. In some psychological experiments prove that the drive of empathy act altruistically. The act of empathy may concern the attribute of genetic factor. Besides empathy and agreeableness are the prosocial traits of personality. It manifested in an advanced stage of moral developments, also predict altruism. However, altruism does not consider as necessary stable traits. It is found that the people have good mood are more willing to help others. The individuals are willing to help mothers and cooperative with others are due to the hereditary elements of altruism exist in their mind.

3. ALTRUISM - ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Firstly, the concept of altruism is analyzed in the psychological perspective. Altruism is combined with hedonism, hedonism states that pleasure is the standard or norm of moral action. Hedonism may be divided into psychological hedonism and ethical hedonism. Psychological hedonism is a strong theory; it is a dispossession that man

naturally seek pleasure avoid pain. There is no necessary connection between psychological hedonism and ethical hedonism. Mackenzie points out that ethical hedonism fully compatible with psychological hedonism. Man, naturally seek pleasure, so psychological hedonism interpreted as the many of that man always seek 'pleasure of some sort'. Ethical hedonism defined as that ought to seek 'the greatest pleasure of our own or others'. He says "But in any case, there is no necessary connection between the two doctrines"¹

Psychological hedonism seeks our own pleasure. Ethical hedonism may divide in to egoistic hedonism and altruistic hedonism. Ethical egoistic hedonism means that we ought to seek our own greatest pleasure. Altruistic hedonism means that seeking pleasure of others, that result in our own pleasure. Egoistic hedonism states that the pleasure of individual is the moral standard. According to altruistic hedonism the standard is 'the greatest happiness of greatest number'.

4. ECO-PHENOMENOLOGY

Phenomenology, the term means 'the theory of phenomena or appearance'. The phenomenological approach is to examine an object from the standpoint of appearance. It is an approach of external world through senses. The word phenomenology is stand for a philosophico-psychological method developed by Edmund Husserl. He is a German Philosopher and considered as the father of phenomenology.

In generally phenomenology is described as the attempt to explain experience without metaphysical and theoretical speculations. He states that only bracketing away the 'natural attitude' to realize the truth of reality. He described that phenomenology is a science of conscious than material things. Husserl developed phenomenology as critique both psychologism and naturalism. Sunil Kumar Sarker says "Husserl came to think of phenomenology not merely as a method of philosophical inquiry in to the nature mind's object and activities but as the basis of a new kind of idealist metaphysics"²

The term phenomenology derived from the Greek word 'Phenomenon' and 'Logos'. The word Phenomenon means 'things appearing to views', it also means that 'to show itself' or 'to be manifest'. The word 'Logo' means 'the study of', 'an account of', 'discourse', word, calculation, reason, etc. The meaning of phenomenology is 'the study of what shows itself- to conscious nesses. The term phenomenology interpreted in the philosophical point of view is 'the study of structure of consciousness as experienced from the first person's point of view'.

Husserl introduced phenomenology as 'pure phenomenology', it is the way of seeking reality of appearance. It has a unique position in regard to all other science. It is a fundamental region of philosophy, it claimed as a new science. It has its own peculiarity and entirely different from other science. Phenomenology entitled itself a science of phenomena. Psychology referred as science of 'psychical phenomena'. Natural science is a science of 'physical appearance' or phenomena. So we state that all sciences that deal with realities. The attempt of phenomenology is also deals with all these phenomena and all their meanings.

In generally phenomenology entitled as eidetic science. The transcendental phenomenology is a probe in to the essence of a being, but not as a science of facts. Natural sciences seek the 'facts' of the reality; i.e., producing the 'knowledge of essence'. So that phenomenology is the common foundation of all other sciences.

The problem of knowledge is analyses the base root of epistemology is from either the objet or the consciousness (mind). Rene Descartes accepted in the method of doubt and foundation stone of knowledge is considered as 'cogito' (mind). Descartes did not analyze the purity of the cogito. Here the presupposition of knowledge is ignored and accept the authenticity of knowledge is 'cogito'. Kant also accepted the same method of Descartes. Kant states that knowledge is the joint venture of sensation and understanding. The sensation is coming from the object and understanding from the mind, the former is sensibility and the latter is categories of understanding. Like Descartes Kant accept cogito. He did not analyze nature of categories of understanding i.e., he did not inquire if the understanding was pure or not. Husserl state that there are many pre-suppositions are implied in the cogito/consciousness.

Husserl formed the method of 'phenomenological epoche' and started from his teacher Brentano that all lived experiences are intentional. Our consciousness is always influenced by attitudes, beliefs, prejudice, theories and aptitudes etc. Here he stated that all perception received the consciousness with the presuppositions. His method of 'phenomenological epoche' is process of setting aside or bracketing all the presuppositions from attitudes, beliefs, prejudice, theories and aptitudes etc. about the world oneself. The consciousness receives the perceptions without the presuppositions are normally accepted. One neither affirm nor denies the natural attitudes, it is simply bracketing. There is a question arises from the existence of natural attitudes exist independently or a component of the world. The epoche prepares the consciousness for the reception of 'absolute truth'. This method of epoche reduce lived experience to the transcendental subject and its intention. Here the method may change or shifted the experience (reality) into an eidetic reduction. The deduction is designed by Husserl, the transcendental aspect of investigation produced a certain pure form different from perception, imagination and memory.

5. ECO-PHILOSOPHY AND ECO-PHENOMENOLOGY

The proposed article discusses the possibilities of ecological philosophy and phenomenology. Ecological philosophy considers the ontological existence of human and non-human nature and the intrinsic value and human ethical relation to nature and the limitations of moral society. It also challenged the methodological limitations of phenomenology. The study analyses the descriptive experience of normative and ontological abstraction in relation with Husserl's phenomenology and ecological philosophy. Husserl's critique of naturalism helps to see us the conception of nature consisting the external problem related to causal connection of nature (causality). The subjective interpretation of nature is free from value free ideas of rationality and subjective naturalism. The reality is reduced to extension and causality, naturalism differentiate from real and declare the impossibility of moral discourse. In such perspectives yielded to descriptive interpretations of science like mathematics deviated from normative ethics.

Husserl's critique of naturalism provides a basis for modern moral philosophy, but some aspects of ecological ethics is difficult. His concept is based on objective epistemologically supported naturalistic metaphysics. Husserl's theory of intentionality provides the orientation of axiological rationality that support the value of good and value within non-human nature. The rationality is based on the dialectics of empty and filled intention will provide a space for the discourse in the goodness and value of non-human nature expressed in a rational manner, it gives a ground for ecological ethics by experimental and not a metaphysical.

Husserl's critique of the evils of naturalism, the fact ignored by the contemporary ecological philosophers that the relationship between our world views, systems of metaphysics and the forms of rationality. The unseen elements also include social and environmental domination. The radical ecologist/ deep ecologist suggests that there is curing method of revolution rooted in spiritual conversion of mind is necessary for social and environmental sustainability. The philosophers believed that there is a metaphysical paradigm of spiritual practice is necessary for ecological existence.

6. EGOISTIC HEDONISM

Epicureans means that the happiness is the absence of pain from body and from soul, it implies that the negation of pain. The greatest maxim of Epicurean is to develop a temper of indifference to pleasure and pain. It is a kind of peaceful condition of soul or a tranquility of mind. The end of life is not the attainment of indifference or neutral feeling but a positive feeling of enjoyment (happiness). Epicureans claim the predominance of intellectual pleasure over physical pleasure. The base of egoistic hedonism is deeply rooted in Psychological hedonism.

Hobbes believed that man is naturally egoistic and all higher feelings and will of action of modes of self-love. Generally, states that we live not for others but for ours. He believed that self-sacrifice is lower love than self-preservation. Hobbs estimated that the altruistic emotions are never evolved from egoistic feelings. Egoism and altruism are rooted in human nature. Egoism is based on egoistic instincts and altruism is based on altruistic instincts.

Egoistic hedonism is not a general standard of morality. It may judge like pleasure constitute right and pain constitutes wrongness. what is pleasure to one may be painful to another. It concludes that is not a standard of pleasure is not uniform. The uniformity of moral standard is rejected. The standard of pleasure need a comparative and comprehensive value analysis. Individual may vary mood and temperament and circumstance, then the individualistic standard of hedonism is impracticable. The subjective feeling cannot be quantitatively measured.

7. ALTRUISTIC HEDONISM

Modern hedonism is holistic and optimistic. Ancient hedonist means simply recover from pain than experiencing positive pleasure. Modern hedonist accepts the end as the real enjoyment not merely the absence of pain, real expression of pleasure. The

modern hedonist is altruistic or universalistic, the greatest happiness of individual is replaced by the greatest happiness of greatest number. Bentham and JS Mill state that the greatest happiness of greatest number for that of the individual, as the end of the life. The utilitarian concept of pleasure is individuals own greatest happiness but the greatest amount of happiness altogether. Utilitarian considers between his own happiness and of others. Utilitarianism implies the individual requires an impartial or disinterested benevolent spectator. Mill introduces the distinction of qualities. Epicureans considers the pleasure of the mind to those of the body on the ground of their greater durability and their comparative freedom from painful consequences, but they do not prefer the mental pleasure. Paley and Bentham treat all pleasures are alike and have the same kindness. Mill states that there is a distinction of quality is independent of quantity, he accepts the qualitative distinction is real.

7.1.ALTRUISM

Mill is the adherence of ethical hedonism. His ethical hedonism is based on psychological hedonism. He gives proof for ethical hedonism. We always desire pleasure, therefor pleasure is desirable. He says “the only proof capable of being, he being given that an object is visible that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it; the soul evidence that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it”³

Mill differentiate the quality of pleasure; he introduces the distinction of quality. Epicurus point out the distinction between pleasure of our body and those of the mind and give superiority to latter. He did not identify the qualitative superiority of the mental pleasure. But Bentham believed that all pleasures are essentially in same kind. Bentham signifies the purity of pleasure; he did not mean the superiority of quality. Mill asserts the distinction of quality is independent of quantity, he stresses the qualitative distinction than quantitative.

Mill makes compactible with the principle of utility, realize the fact that some kind of pleasure are more desirable and valuable than others. It will be meaningless to considers the quality alone but also considers the quantity. Mills argument is called refined utilitarianism opposed with Bentham’s Gross utilitarianism. Mill states that two experience of pleasures are not alike, they differ in priority. If one gets confronting the option of choice to prefer as moral obligation became a standard of choice. The fact that those who are equally maintained with and equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both do give a marked preference, which employ their higher faculties. A right person judges always accepts intellectual pleasure than body or sensual pleasures. If there is a conflict of opinion, he suggests that he could accept that majority among them is considered as final.

Mill’s hedonism is altruistic; he advocates refined utilitarianism. He gives some arguments for altruism. He says, “the utilitarian standard is not against greater happiness but the greatest amount of happiness altogether”.⁴He also comments that the comparison and consideration of others’ happiness and one’s own happiness become impractical as

disinterested or benevolent spectator. It is very clear in the golden rule of Jesus to do moral action done, 'do love one's neighbor as oneself', constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. Mill states that reason cannot provide a general happiness is desirable for each person. Each person desires his own happiness. Each person's happiness is good to that person, and the general happiness, good to the aggregate of all persons.

According to altruistic hedonism or universal happiness is the ultimate moral standard, i.e., "The greatest happiness of the greatest number". Bentham and Mill advocate the view, but they differ in their own standpoint. Bentham considers only quantitative differences of pleasure, whereas J. S. Mill accepts qualitative distinction, this theory is called 'utilitarianism'. An action is judged by the 'utility', as means for the promotion of general happiness. Bentham accepts the quantitative standard of pleasure. Quantity takes difference from 1) intensity, 2) duration, 3) proximity, 4) certainty, 5) purity (freedom from pain), 6) fecundity (fruitfulness), 7) extent (number of persons). One pleasure is more intense than the other. According to him more intense pleasure is preferable to less intense pleasure. The more durable pleasure is greater than less durable pleasure. An immediate pleasure is preferable to a remote pleasure. A certain pleasure is better than uncertain pleasure. A pure pleasure is greater than impure pleasure. A fruitful pleasure is preferable to barren pleasure. It is a pleasure greater extent is preferred to one of the small extent.

Bentham advocated the psychological hedonism. He says, "nature has placed man under the empire of pleasure and pain. We owe to them all our ideas; we refer to them all our judgements and all our determinations of life. His object is to seek pleasure and shun pain. The principle of utility subjects everything to these two motives".⁵ Bentham states that the nature provides mankind under the controlling force of life is the two masters, pain and pleasure. He describes the pleasure principle also can determine 'what we ought to do or what we shall do'. The balancing quantity that decides the right and wrong of action. An action is right; it gives pleasure over pain. The judgement of action is wrong; it gives pain over pleasure. Therefore, Bentham gives a hedonistic standard for right and wrong, good and bad. The rightness results in pleasure, and wrongness results in pain.

Bentham's hedonism is altruistic; he wants to extend the pleasure. It means the increase in numbers, a pleasure is shared by many persons, it is the extension of it. Bentham extends number of person's enjoyment of pleasure, is introduced in his altruistic doctrine. The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the moral norm. Bentham's theory is based on altruistic hedonism. He really understood the natural egoism of man. He states that to attain the greatest happiness for himself is the object of every human being. But he is aware of that the other persons were not concerned of his pleasures and pains. He also states that the selfish nature of man, he also reasserts the nature of man is basically egoistic.

7.2. LOVE – SUPREME EMOTION

Altruism is presented as a motivation, an intention implies to act for the other's welfare. The emotion of love is regarded as a positive resonance between two or several people; the feeling of the emotion love is completely renewable. The emotion of love and altruism have certain similarities and differences in certain points. Barbara Fredrickson, one of the founders of positive psychologists gives attention to the fact that the positive emotion like joy, contentment, gratitude, wonder, enthusiasm, inspiration and love are much more than a simple absence of negative emotion. Joy is not the simple absence of sadness. The positive emotion has an additional energy and activity than the maturity of mind, they are the greatest source of satisfaction. There is an implication of flourish in the life, it is not to neutralize the negative and disturbing emotions, but one must nurture the flowering and positive emotions.

7.3.SELF INTERESTED ALTRUISM

Self-interested altruism is a mixture of altruism and selfishness. It is not a hypothetical assumption, aims sincerely contribute to the good of others, but reminds the conditional and practiced only when it contributes to the self-interest. Human beings are ready to help each other, which is the cause of their own self-interest. It varies clearly in social activities such as fair trade, rituals of exchange in cultural fest in traditional societies, gifts and counter gifts. This practice is very compatible with feeling of respect for others. One acts in a fair way and very careful not to make any harm others. The self-interested altruism is not deceitful. The action that performed for others may be profitable to oneself. There is an absence of intention of benefit for them. It is an altruistic activity but not a perfect altruism.

7.4.SELFLESS ALTRUISM

The concept of Selfless altruism, performed in an action perfectly selfless. One performs an action without expecting anything in return, i.e., one does not desire the fruit of the action. There are so many living stories of selfless altruism. A bassoonist, in New York, Syrus Segal was waiting for the bus in Manhattan, sidewalk when his precious instrument which has kept near him, was secretly snatched away. Syrus had been playing that instrument for twenty years even though it has been insured, he was ruined mentally. Each Bassoon has his own personality and he knew he would never again find exactly the same companion. A few days later a homeless man walked into the music store and offered the bassoon for the modest fee of ten dollars (actual rate is \$12000). The sales man is from the family of a musician. He could easily understand the feeling of the owner of it. He decided to buy the instrument, he bought it without bargaining. Then he asked all the musicians who visited his shop if they had heard about a colleague who was the victim of a bassoon theft. In the days followed, the news reached the ears of Syrus who quickly went to the shop and recognized the beloved instrument. The salesman, Marus did not ask for any reward and even refund of the dollars that Syrus tried to repay him. It is not like a brave jumping into the freezing water to save some one from drowning. But it is an example of generous or selfless act.

7.5.UNCONDITIONAL ALTRUISM

Altruism takes a new dimension of manifestation; it is known as Unconditional Altruism. One person, consciously takes risk and suffering for the sake of others. For the altruistic behavior illustrates a German, Otto Springer, was living in the Prague during the Second World War. He took the ownership of company whose previous owner was Jewish. He took advantage of his position to save a number of Jews from deportation to concentration camps by providing them with false papers and by bribing Gestapo officers. He married a Jewish woman in order to protect her and was finally himself arrested and deported. Even as a prisoner he managed to save hundreds of Jews from death and escaped himself. After he returned to California where Kristen Monroe met him. She described him as a man of overflowing with humanity and enthusiasm. He is also suffering the humility and confident at the same time. He acknowledged having saving many Jews but he said "I don't know whether I'd consider what I did altruistic".⁶ It is a very clear picture of the altruistic activity done by Otto Springer, is unconditional altruism.

Altruism is opposed to egoism, altruism and egoism are two different and two separate motivational states, egoism concern for the benefit of oneself (self). The ultimate goal of altruism is increasing other's welfare. The behavior of altruism is selflessly motivated whereas egoism stressed the goal of being one's own wellbeing. Researchers argued that altruism includes the essential features of an act performed voluntarily and intentionally with the primary goal of the well-being of others.

8. RESULT

The ethical issues are very complex and complicated related to environment and man. It is like a problem that appears good for the people is not good for the environment. The unilateral analysis may that the environment wins and the people loose and vice versa. It is a necessary condition for the harmony between man and the environment. It is very harmonious and most suitable is that which is good for the environment and is also good for the people. There is a balance between environment and development is necessitate a personal strong environmental ethical sense in every individual. The concept of altruism is opposing anthropocentrism and modern humanism. Altruistic activity transcends the limits of human to environmental non-human and living beings. The exploitation of environment is very clear, the environment fulfills the needs of human beings, concern only the human wellbeing. On the part of human survival, everything in nature is for human, it is an explanation of egoism. The awareness of environment and its protection is executed by human activities; man is an instrument for the environmental protection. The concept of altruism enables the human being to behave globally sustainable environmental consciousness. Thus it breaks the human centered environmentalism and demands of the environment persist and exist for the existence of next generation (anthropocentric approach).

The altruism is a theory of a moral responsibility to protect and sustain the environment, as a bio centric vision. It is a life centered environmental ethics. Being an

eco-phenomenological exposition, the altruism generated as a matrix of human consciousness having the vision of the survival of the Universe as a whole.

9. DISCUSSION

The byproduct of technology and industry would be poisoning and damaging the earth's bio web. There is a paradox that the massive ecological destruction occurred from the result of technology. We thought science and technology would save us from natural calamities shortcomings of natural resources. Instead of restructuring and recovery the organic world; replanting the planetary web men believed the technological utopia. The existential philosophers warned us the replacement of one conceptual system for another is not enough, but there is a shift of life style, that actually create a new organic centered being for humanity. The concept of altruism (ethical) install in the human mind to protect the environment and biosphere, is an ethical duty of man and enlarge the vision of humanism to environmentalism. The altruistic vision is very essential to environmentalism and deep ecology.

REFERENCES

1. Mackenzie, John S (1915), A Manual of Ethics, University Tutorial Press, London, p. 168.
2. Sarker, Sunil Kumar (1994), A Critique of Phenomenology, Atlantic Publications, New Delhi, p.1.
3. Sinha, Jadunath (1947), A Manual of Ethics, The Central Book Agency, Calcutta, p. 135.
4. Sinha, Jadunath, (1947)A Manual of Ethics, The Central Book Agency, Calcutta, p. 137.
5. Sinha, Jadunath, (1947)A Manual of Ethics, The Central Book Agency, Calcutta, p. 179.
6. Ricard, Matthiew (2013), Altruism, Atlantic Books, London, 2013, P.110.