

# Anthropocentrism and ecocentrism views on deforestation

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Environmentalism is significantly characterized by the perception one holds towards the relationship between nature and humans. Different views on the best approach towards the preservation of nature; have been categorized according to the ethical context in which they are premised.

Anthropocentrism, a concept defined as a human-centered approach to forests; is premised on the belief that all other things exist to serve the needs of humans. These include forests and all living things in them.

Therefore, the anthropocentrism approach to deforestation can be defined as an approach motivated by human greed to satisfy the immediate human needs at the expense of the natural environment.

This approach has led to the dire climatic and environmental consequences facing the world. Meanwhile, ecocentrism is an approach which recognizes the value of a nature centered system. This concept recognizes the significance of all living things in the natural environment without consideration of their potential input in serving human interests (MacKinnon2007, p. 336). Ecocentrism opposes the human-centered approach towards the natural environment and is opposed towards deforestation.

Ecocentrism holds humans as guardians of the natural environment and life; while taking into account the fact that human beings are the ultimate beneficiaries of natural factors such as forests. This concept is premised on the belief that people are capable of understanding and appreciating the significance of preserving forests and other aspects of nature. While, it is essential to preserve natural forests, it is essential to replant those areas where deforestation has occurred. Additionally, it is critical that more forests  
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be created to ensure the survival of the humans. Deforestation significantly threatens the survival of human beings. In light of these, it emerges that anthropocentrism and ecocentrism are critically opposite ecological dilemmas.

Those who hold themselves to the anthropocentric approach towards nature, more so, forests; perceive themselves above any other living thing or organism on the planet. This group believes that forests are there to serve their purpose and individual interests. These ignore the potential of forests in providing essential and critical benefits to humans such as medicines, shelter and food (MacKinnon 2007, p. 331). Consequently, the anthropocentric perception of forests has led to large scale deforestation and destruction of natural environments leading to extinction and displacement of significant living organisms.

However, the ecocentrism perception appreciates the intrinsic contribution and value of irrespective of their use to humans. Ecocentrism encourages positive attitudes towards forests and all living things in their natural ecosystems. This approach questions the failure of humans to appreciate the significance of other living things other than themselves (Wapner and Matthew 2009, p. 205). Ecocentrism observes that all living things have a role to play in creating and preserving a harmonious natural environment. Activities premised on anthropocentric perceptions are significantly more predominant in contrast to those of an ecocentrism premise.

Therefore, these actions have led to significant impacts in the alteration of climatic trends and environmental integrity. Severe impacts such as the

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depletion of the ozone, drought and water shortages, global warming and loss of significant bio-diversity. For instance, deforestation has led to global warming because more carbon dioxide is being released into the environment; where the forest cover is limited for the absorption of these gases. Consequently, the green house effect continues to influence environmental and climatic conditions. People cut down trees for various reasons; however, they fail to recognize the long term impact their actions if they fail to mitigate their actions through planting more trees. Therefore, the anthropocentric concept has potential harmful outcomes not only to forests but also to humans.

On the one hand, while ecocentrism is characteristically the optimal concept to embrace when relating to forests; it is significantly difficult to convince those who practice anthropocentrism to abandon their actions towards forests. This is because a large number of this group has a high reliance on forests as a natural resource (Wapner & Matthew 2009, p. 212). On the other hand, humans make justifications for intervening on behalf of forests or any other natural habitat when such an action is crucial to human requirements. As a result, it is essential for all living things to benefit from their respective ecosystems, more so in satisfying their basic needs. Therefore, deforestation with a view to create luxurious establishments such as a golf course is not essential to basic human needs.

This contributes to the destruction of vegetation and living organisms.

(MacKinnon 2007, p. 339). Conclusion The decision making process, where forests or other natural factors are in consideration should weigh the benefits

and the draw backs of each concept. In doing so, the decision made will not impact forests adversely but will seek to benefit both humans and the environment. While both anthropocentric and ecocentrism have an impact towards forests, it is evident that they are at opposing ends.

However, while these concepts have their merits and demerits, the industrial and technological advance should not be ignored. The input of these industries in arriving at a more prudent approach towards the preservation of forests is critical; given their contribution towards the harmful environmental impacts. Humans have been observed to contradict one another in various respects; however, if they fail to acknowledge the dire need to preserve and respect forests, they will also be extinct at some point. Anthropocentrism cannot be abandoned instantly; however, a distinction can be made where actions lead to the consumption and destruction of forests. Intervention should be made where the need for doing so, is critical to human survival.

Consequently, alternative resources should be sought which will effectively substitute forests. While making the decision making process may be conflicted, it is critical that the decision made by either anthropocentrism or ecocentrism subscribers be forest conscious. Therefore, the optimal choice should yield minimal harm to forests.