

**Why do we protect our land?  
And  
How do we do it?**



**Sarath Fernando**

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Since Land grabbing has become a serious global issue the struggle of the poor people to protect their land rights has become an Issue of crucial importance. People find their survival by having access to land and natural resources which provide them livelihoods. Therefore, they cannot silently watch their land and natural resources being taken away. The plundering of land for big profit making ventures deprives people of their livelihoods and their lives. Therefore the struggle for land and right to access to natural resources such as land, water, forests and bio diversity becomes a struggle for life and death.

In today's world the necessity for protecting land and other natural resources has acquired a matter of another importance. In our struggle to protect land we have to be conscious of this need and develop our visions and strategies to include this need too.

### **Regeneration of nature**

Nature has a natural capability of regeneration. It is this ability of regeneration that ensures survival of life, life of all humans, animals and plants depend on this ability of regeneration. At the beginning this ability of regeneration was assumed to be limitless and eternal and there was no threat to this ability. Thus humans thought of progress in terms of improving their ability to utilize nature and its

resources. The improvement of the aggressiveness of extracting of nature was seen as success. Advancement of science and technology was understood as the improvement of this aggressiveness.

Now it has become clear that this ability of regeneration also has its limits. Humans cannot think of plundering nature and its resources more and more aggressively since the very ability of nature to regenerate can itself be destroyed. Nature has begun to express its reaction against this endless and limitless exploitation and has begun to demand that nature's functioning has to be looked after and protected.

Looking at the present trends of global warming and climate change which has begun to express clear signs of disaster it has become necessary to adopt immediate measures for recovery of the regenerative ability of nature. This concern for recovery of nature's ability to regeneration has to be a concern in all human activity. In industry, in transport, in health and medicine, and in agriculture and also in other activities such as reforestation, housing, improving bio diversity etc we have to think of ways in which this recovery of regeneration has to be an essential concern.

This is most clearly understood in terms of agriculture. Land has to be utilized in a manner that recreates the ability of regeneration. Ecological Agriculture is the methodology that includes this concern.

1. In ecological agriculture we have to prevent soil erosion and enhance the regeneration of fertile soil.
2. Maximizing the use of sunlight by diversifying crops and growing trees to different canopies is another requirement
3. Increasing bio diversity, establishing integrated pest control and increasing the microbial activity in the soil are other ways of maximizing regeneration.
4. By doing these we enhance the retention of water in the soil and improve the purity of the soil. Avoiding chemical agriculture is another necessity and avoiding the use of heavy machinery is another.

It is obvious that the small scale farmers working on small plots with very little capital input are more capable of doing this form of regenerative agriculture. Therefore, they have a greater right to have access to land and utilize land in a manner that recovers the ability of nature to regenerate itself. In our struggles for land we have to have this vision and thus have the right to claim control over land, since we become the saviors of land and of life.

We call this strategy "Healing the Earth"

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