

Book Review

Erickson, C. L. (2018). *Environmental justice as social work practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

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The book *Environmental Justice as Social Work Practice* consists of ten chapters dealing with the centrality of the social work profession in environmental justice. The book provides various action-oriented innovations and practice skills for social workers working with individuals, families, groups and communities to secure environmental justice. It also clearly and systematically specifies the use of social work methods, values, and ethics for achieving environmental justice. The author lists the role of social workers in every phase and setting, and discusses the required competencies for mitigating environmental injustices. The book makes an attempt to integrate theories, values, and ethics into a holistic praxis toward environmental justice.

The first chapter traces the historical roots of environmentalism and describes the four waves of environmentalism in a global context. It defines various terminologies relating to environmental justice and briefly describes the relationship of environmental justice to human health, economy, and human rights. In addition, the chapter gives a brief overview of the concept of environmental social work, ecological social work, and green social work. The second chapter discusses various foundational concepts of social work, which are integral to environmental justice practice. In this chapter, the six most salient concepts of social work (justice; strengths perspective; person in environment; power; life span perspective; and micro, mezzo and macro practice levels) and their application to environmental justice is discussed.

In the third chapter, the author includes the importance of system theory and narrative theory, as well as structural theory, in understanding environmental justice and social work. The author has categorically selected the three theories based on ethical implications, sensitivity to humans and the earth and their potential in environmental social work. The fourth chapter of the book elaborately discusses the need for ethics in environmental justice. In this chapter, the author lists various moral norms of ecological justice, which are closely aligned with social work values and can be successfully applied in achieving environmental justice. The author presents beautiful illustrations of two ethical case studies on environmental social justice in this chapter.

In the fifth chapter, the author makes a very interesting and relevant discussion about how we begin to perceive the natural environment in childhood and continue to develop our view of the natural world and in what ways nature has meanings for oneself. The chapter explores the complex relationship of nature and the environment to gain deeper understanding of the relationship of human beings with the environment. Chapter 6 lists four phases of social work practice for environmental justice and lists various macro and micro practice roles of social workers, the competencies required in each phase, as well as the problem-solving process to be followed in each phase of social work practice. Chapter 7 and 8 discuss the various methods of working with individuals, families, groups, and communities towards achieving environmental

justice. These chapters not only focus on alleviating environmental justice problems, but also emphasize building resiliency through environmentally based interventions. The chapters also highlight the importance of developing environmental competence to develop a conducive and healthy environment.

In Chapter 9, the author discusses the role of social work practice at the macro level, particularly dealing with policies of organizations related to environmental justice and highlights the role of social workers in policy formulation in organizations. In the last chapter, the author emphasizes holistic practice, incorporating the foundational concepts used by social workers and theories that resonate with their practice skills, the community they work with, and practice methods that are natural to them, along with stewarding people and the environment simultaneously.

The book is very creative, innovative, and timely given the present-day challenges of climate change and global warming. The book will help us to have a deeper understanding of our relationship with our environment and hone social work skills for working effectively for environmental justice. The book is written in a very lucid and friendly language with stories, applications, and descriptions in each chapter. The book could serve as a main text on environmental social work for students and social work teachers. I am sure the book will develop critical thinking on environmental justice and will serve as an effective guide for environmental social workers.