Conclusion

This study is a humble attempt to understand Arne Naess's Deep Ecology environmentalism in a comprehensive way. We have taken into account how Naess moves through the passage from ecologism to Ecosophy T via Deep Ecology. Ecologism is the viewpoint, according to which, science of ecology dictates human morality. But, as Naess has rightly pointed out, this cannot lead us to the deeper questions and concerns. And as such, we have to shift from factual science to practical wisdom, from ecology to ecosophy. To say, mere information about the degrading status of ecosphere would not yield any significant result, unless and until we relate it with a broader world-view. We need moral principles and norms based on some ultimate philosophy of life and reality, and act accordingly. And with this orientation environmentalism really becomes philosophical.

As we see, one of the most important features of Naess's environmentalism is its liberal, pluralist approach. Guided by the perception that a group of some academics alone cannot make a significant change, he developed his Deep Ecology environmentalism in such a way that people from all walks of life, from different cultures could be accommodated within its fold. For this he set up a Deep Ecology Platform, and proposed some minimum basic ecological principles, eight in number, for us all. As we have seen in Chapter-VI, anyone who share the basic common concerns for the planet Earth, its various life-forms and communities, can subscribe to the Platform, even though their life-philosophies, cultural traditions and political affiliations are different. They have only to learn the means of developing their own ecosophies based on their own cultural, religious and
philosophical backgrounds. As Naess has his own Ecosophy T, anyone can develop his own Ecosophy and give a name as he wishes, say Ecosophy A or Ecosophy B... or Ecosophy X. Of course, saying 'my own' does not mean that the ecosophy is someone's own original creation by oneself. It is enough that it is a kind of total view with which one feels at home, where one philosophically belongs. Obviously, one can erect one's own version of ecosophy based on his own indigenous culture or religion.

Another aspect which we have emphasised here is Naess's thesis of turning towards ontology—in his own words, to 'move from ethics to ontology and back'. Naess is not merely interested in ethics or morals as such; he is more interested in how we experience the world, as how we act to the environment depends upon how we think about the world. When we articulate our deep experiences, we develop an ecosophy. This primacy of the ontological over the ethical initiated a new phase in contemporary environmentalism. Similarly, Deep Ecology's direction of 'look to the East' has given a new impetus to contemporary environmentalism, initiating the over-due process of looking into the eco-sensitive non-western cultures, philosophies and religions in its endeavour to overcome the global eco-crisis via some sorts of eco-spiritualism. Keeping track with this new orientation we have explored, though sometimes summarily, some dominant religions in Asia, such as Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism in order to reach at the heart of their time-tested eco-wisdom. We have also explored my own indigenous culture of Bali in order to integrate it with the global panorama of environmentalism. We think, an exploration of the eco-wisdom scattered throughout the globe may help us to realise Deep Ecology's ideal of 'simple in means but rich in ends' life-style. But Naess's
turning back to pre-modern cultures and religions raises some questions in the minds of ‘modern’ intelligentsia.

We also keep the fact on record that Deep Ecology sets off as a critique of the shallow ecology’s *ad hoc* reform approach with narrow speciesist bias. Shallow ecology sees the Earth as a set of natural resources that should somehow be managed for present and future generations of humans. Naess’s Deep Ecology criticises such reformist approaches exemplified in large, mainstream environmental organisations that work within the current socio-political system to gain policy victories without challenging society’s main assumptions and values that are ultimate cause of environmental degradation. The proponents of Deep Ecology also object to the individualist approach common among animal liberationists, which, they believe, neglects the importance of holistic eco-systems. We have also examined the main objections and criticisms levelled against Naess’s environmental philosophy in Chapter-IX.

It seems that Naess’s Deep Ecology is perhaps the best discovery in contemporary environmental philosophy. Going beyond the traditional anthropocentric speciesism and biocentric individualism, this environmental theory has developed as a really ecocentric philosophy of Nature. It has also overcome the limitation of Leopold’s Land Ethic, by adopting the paradigm of ‘changing’ Nature. Deep Ecology’s tenet of biospherical egalitarianism ‘in principle’ and its notion of Identification with the Nature have helped to rethink over our traditional consumerist life-style.

As a philosophy of Nature, it is integrated with some basic philosophy of life and reality, and thus it becomes an eco-philosophy or ecosophy. As
environmental ethics, it is well-founded in this sense that its moral prescriptions are based on some ultimate worldviews. Moreover, it has accommodated thinking, feeling and acting in its fold very aptly. Being pluralist in its approach, it is open for people from different walks of life, which is very important for making environmental movement a success. As a supporter of non-violence in his philosophy of action, Naess’s Deep environmentalism strikes a positive note in the midst of some aggressive ‘green movements’.

But the main obstacle is the capital-intensive consumerist culture and its globalisation, which unashamedly preaches extreme individualism and presupposes that science and technology itself can cure all ills. As present humanity is under this consumerist duress, it is difficult to make them understand that individual self-seeking is not the ideal way of life, rather Self-realisation and Identification with Nature—both human and non-human—is the ideal life-style for us all. It is a Herculean task for us to awaken the populace in this direction. But do we have any alternative?