CHAPTER - 03
ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS
INTRODUCTION

Humankind’s failure to relate to nature with respect is most clearly reflected in the ongoing environment crisis, which since the industrial revolution has been characterized by massive industrial scale exploitation and the concurrent destruction of natural entities, such as individual’s species and ecosystem. Until recently, people were not aware of, or did not take seriously the harmful effects of economic development on the environment. In recent years, however, due to the warnings rounded by science about an impending ecological imbalance, philosophy became intensively aware of the environment we live in, and much attention has been paid on issues related to it. This emergence of awareness led to development of a new ethical philosophical discipline called ‘Environment Ethics’. In this chapter, a detail on account of environmental ethics will be discussed. Before moving on to the Environment Ethics, a brief study of ethics is to be discussed.

ETHICS

Ethics is the branch of philosophy in which man attempts to evaluate and decide upon at particular courses of moral action of general theories of conduct. It is considered a normative science, because it is concerned with norms of human conduct. The word ‘Ethics’ is derived from the Greek adjective ‘ethica’ which comes from the substantive ‘ethos’. ‘Ethos’ means custom, usages or habits. The term ‘moral’ closely associated with ethics, comes from the Latin word ‘mores’ which primarily stands for ‘custom’ or ‘habit’ and secondarily means ‘character’. Customs are not merely habitual ways of acting. They are also ways approved by the group. Thus, ‘Ethics’ literally means the science of custom or habits of men. In India also, the word’ dharma’ has been explained in two ways. On one hand, it stands for preservation of traditional values as reflected in social customs; on the other it means moral qualities of universal nature like non-violence and truth. The former view is emphasized by Purvamimāṇsā, which defines dharma as ‘rules lay down by the Vedas’, which are repositories of the traditional social virtues. The latter view is emphasized by Jainism which says that dharma is made up of non-violence, self control and austerity. Manusmṛti fuses both these views together when it says that dharma is characterized by Veda, Smṛti; good conduct and that which appeals to the conscience.
In the West, ethics has been precisely defined as the study of right or good in conduct.\textsuperscript{8} It is that study which concerns itself with judgment of approval and disapproval, judgments as to the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness, virtue or vice, desirability or wisdom of actions, dispositions, ends, objects or state of affairs. There are two main directions, which this study may take its space. It may concern itself with a psychological or sociological analysis and explanation of our ethical judgments, showing what our approvals and disapprovals consist in and why we approve or disapprove what we do. Or it may concern itself with establishing or recommending certain courses of actions, ends or ways of life as to be taken or pursued, either as right or as good or as virtuous or as wise, as over against others which are wrong, bad, vicious or foolish.\textsuperscript{9}

Philosophers have attempted to determine goodness in conduct according to two chief principles, and have considered certain types of conduct either good in themselves or good because they conform to a particular moral standard. The former implies a final value or \textit{summum bonum}, which is desirable in itself and not merely as means to an end. In the history of ethics there are three principal standards of conduct, each of which has been proposed by various groups or individuals as the highest good: happiness or pleasure; duty, virtue, or obligation; and perfection, the fullest harmonious development of human potential.\textsuperscript{10}

\textbf{History and Development}

For as long as people have been living together in groups, the moral regulation has been necessary to the group’s well being. Although morals were formalized and made into arbitrary standards of conduct, they developed, sometimes irrationally, after religious taboos were violated; out of chance behaviour that become habit and then custom; or from laws imposed by chiefs to prevent disharmony in the tribes. The Greek philosophers from about the 6\textsuperscript{th} Century BC onward, theorized intensively about moral behaviour\textsuperscript{11} which led to the further development of ethics as philosophy.

In the 6\textsuperscript{th} Century B.C. the Greek philosophers Pythagoras developed one of the earliest moral philosophies from the Greek mystery religion Orphism. Believing that the intellectual nature is superior to the sensual nature and that the best life is one devoted to mental discipline, he founded a semi-religious order with rules emphasizing simplicity in speech, dress, and food. Its members observed rituals
that were designed to demonstrate the decreed ethical beliefs. In the 5th century BC the Greek philosopher known as Sophists, who taught rhetoric, logic, and civil affairs, was skeptical of moral absolutes. The Sophist Protagoras taught that human judgment is subjective, and that one’s perception is valid for only one self. Another, Gorgias even went to the extreme of arguing that nothing exists; that if anything does exist, human beings could not know it; and that if they did know it, they could not communicate that knowledge. Other Sophists, such as Thrasymachus, believed that might make right. Socrates opposed the Sophist. His philosophical position, as represented in the dialogues of his pupil Plato, may be summarized as follows: Virtue is knowledge; people will be virtues if they know what virtue is; and vice, or evil, is the result of ignorance. Thus, according to Socrates, education as to what constitutes virtues can make people moral.

One of prominent pupil of Socrates, Plato submitted that good is an essential element of reality. Evil does not exist in itself but is, rather an imperfect reflection of the real, which is good. In his ‘Dialogues’ (First half of 4th Century B.C.), he maintains that human virtue lies in the fitness of a person to perform that person’s proper function in the world. The human soul has three elements-intellect, will and emotion, each of which possesses a specific virtue in the good person and performs a specific role. The virtue of intellect is wisdom, or knowledge of the ends of life; that of the will is courage, the capacity to act; and that of the emotions is temperance or self-control. The ultimate virtue, justice, is the harmonious relation of all the others, each part of the soul performing its appropriate task and keeping its proper place. Plato maintained that the intellect should be sovereign, the will second and the emotions third, subject to intellect and will. The just person, whose life is ordered in this way, is therefore the good person.

Aristotle, Plato’s pupil regarded happiness (eudemonia) as the aim of life. In his principle work on ethics, the Nicomachean Ethics (late 4th century BC), he defined happiness as activity that accords with the specific nature of humanity; pleasure accompanies such activity but is not its chief aim. Happiness results from the unique human attribute of reason, functioning harmoniously with human faculties. Aristotle held that virtues are essential good habits, and to attain happiness a person must develop two kinds of habits, those of mental activity, such as knowledge, which lead to the highest human activity, contemplation; and those of practical action and emotion, such as courage. Moral virtues are habits of action.
that conform to the ‘Golden Mean’, the principle of moderation, and they must be flexible because of differences among people and conditioning factors. For Aristotle, the intellectual and the moral virtues are merely means towards the attainment of happiness, which results from the full realization of human potential.\(^{18}\)

The coming of Christianity marked a revolution in ethics, for it introduced religious conception of good into Western thought. In the Christian view, a person is totally dependent upon God and cannot achieve goodness by means of will or intelligence, but only with the help of God’s grace. The primary Christian ethical belief is stated in the golden rule. ‘*So whatever you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.*’\(^{19}\) Early Christianity emphasized as virtues asceticism, martyrdom, faith, mercy, forgiveness, and non-erotic love, few of which had been considered important by the philosophers of classical Greece and Rome.\(^{20}\)

The influence of Christian ethical beliefs and practices diminished during the Renaissance. The Protestant reformation affected a widespread return to basic principles within Christian tradition, changing the emphasis on certain ideas and introducing new ones. According to Martin Luther, ‘goodness of spirit is the essence of Christian piety. Moral conduct, or good works, is required of the Christian, but justification or salvation comes by faith alone’. In general, during the reformation, individual responsibility was considered important than obedience to authority or tradition.\(^{21}\)

During the 18\(^{th}\) Century the British philosophers David Hume,\(^{22}\) in essays ‘Moral and Political’ (1741-1742) and Adam Smith,\(^{23}\) the proponent of *laissez-faire*, theory of economics, in his ‘Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), formulated subjective ethical systems. They identified the good with what evoked feelings of satisfactory and the bad with what evoked painful feelings.

In Europe, the French philosopher and novelist Jean-Jacques Rousseau,\(^{24}\) in his ‘Social Contract’ (1762), accepted Hobbes’s\(^{25}\) theory of a social contract. His novel ‘Emile’ (1762) and other works, however attributed evil to social maladjustments and held that human beings were by nature good.

A major contribution to ethics was made later in the 18\(^{th}\) Century by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant in his ‘Grundlegung Zur Mataphysis der Sitten
(Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics, 1785). According to Kant, no matter how intelligently one acts, the results of human actions are subject to accident and circumstances; therefore, the morality of an act must not be judged by its consequences but only by its motivation. Intention alone is good, for it leads a person to act, not from inclination, but from duty, which is based on a general principle that is right in itself.²⁶

One of another prominent ethical and political doctrine was prominent by British philosopher J. Benthum²⁷ towards the end of the 18th century and later expounded by James Mill and his son, John Stuart Mill,²⁸ known as Utilitarianism. He explained the principles of utility as a means of argumenting the happiness of the community. He believed that all human actions are motivated by a desire to obtain pleasure and avoid pain. Bantham speculates on the necessity of extending moral consideration to include non-human animals. The morally pertinent question, as Bantham states it is, can they suffer? For it is the capacity to suffer that entitles a being to moral consideration, irrespective of its species membership. More recent efforts, in the field of environment ethics, to extend the sphere of moral concern beyond the solely human, have suggested that plants, and even natural feature such as rivers, may have moral standing.²⁹ It will be discussed in detail under environmental ethics of this very chapter.

Later on many philosophers around the globe propounded different views contributing in ethical theories like German philosophers G.W.F. Hegel,³⁰ Danish philosopher and theologian Soren Kierkegaard,³¹ Russian philosopher Prince Pyotr Kropitkin, Sigmund Freud,³² British philosopher Bertrand Russell,³³ German philosopher Martin Hedegger,³⁴ French Philosopher Jean Paul Sartre,³⁵ American philosopher John Deway³⁶, Indian philosopher Rabindra Nath Tagore, Swami Vivekanand, Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Tulsi etc. These philosophers are considered the propounder of modern ethical theories, marked a place in the field of ethics.

**Field of Ethics**

Ethics is divided into two fields: meta ethics and normative ethics. Meta ethics, also called analytical or critical ethics, systematically studies the meanings of ethical terms and of judgment used in normative ethics, their function, and the means of supporting normative judgments. Normative ethics, also called moral
philosophy, is concerned with presenting and justifying a guide to right conduct. It employs such terms as ‘good’, ‘bad’, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ to express preferences, decisions and choices or to criticize, grade, persuade, praise, blame and encourage. Environmental ethics falls under normative ethics.

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

Environmental ethics is relatively a new field of philosophical ethics, concerned with describing the values carried by the non-human natural world and prescribing an appropriate ethical response to ensure preservation or restoration of those values. Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of the environment and its non-human contents. In other words, “Environmental ethics is theory and practice about appropriate concern for, values in and duties regarding the natural world.” Environmental ethics starts with human concerns for a quality environment and, some thinks this shape the ethics from starts to finish. Others hold that beyond inter-human concerns, values are at stake when humans relate to animals, plants, species and ecosystem. According to their vision, humans ought to find nature sometimes morally considerable in itself, and this turns the ethics in new directions.

It is often said to be morally wrong for human beings to pollute and destroy part of natural environment and to consume a huge proportion of the planet’s natural resources. If that is wrong, is it simply because the sustainable environment is essential to human well-being? Or is such behaviour also wrong because the natural environment and its various contents have certain value in their own right so that these values ought to be respected and protected in any ease? These are among the questions investigated by environmental ethics.

In the literature of environmental ethics, the distinction between instrumental and intrinsic value has been of considerable importance. The former is the value of things as means to further some ends, whereas the latter is the value of things as ends in themselves regardless of whether they are also useful as means to other ends. Because the intrinsically valuable is that which is good as an end in itself, it commonly agreed that something’s possession of intrinsic value generates a prima facie direct moral duty on the part of moral agents to protect it or at least refrain from damaging it.
In the field of environmental ethics, broadly there lie two perspectives. First perspective is called human-centered (anthropocentric) worldview. They assign intrinsic value to human beings alone or they assign a significantly greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings than to any non-human things such that the promotion of human interests or well being at the expanse of non-human things turns out to be nearly always justified. For example, Aristotle maintains that “Nature has made all things specifically for the sake of man and that the value of non-human things in nature is merely instrumental.” Generally, anthropocentric positions find it problematic to articulate what is wrong with the cruel treatment of non-human animals, except to the extent that such treatment may lead to bad consequences for human beings. Kant (“Duties to Animal and spirits”, in lecture on Ethics), for instance suggests that cruelty towards a dog might encourage a person to develop a character, which would be desensitized to be cruelty towards humans. From this standpoint cruelty towards non-human animals would be instrumentally rather than intrinsically wrong. Likewise, anthropocentrism often recognizes some non-intrinsic wrongness of anthropogenic environmental devastation. Such destruction might damage the well being of human beings now and in the future, since our well-being is essentially dependent on a sustainable environment. This human-centered view prevails in most industrial societies today. According to this view, as the planet’s most important and dominant species we can and should manage the planet mostly for our benefit. Other species have only instrumental value; that is; their value depends on whether they are useful to us or not. Following are the basic beliefs of this worldview:

- We are the planet’s most important species and we are apart from and in charge of the rest of nature.
- There is always more and it's all for us. Earth has an unlimited supply of resource to which we gain access through use of science and technology.
- All economic growth is good, more economic growth is better, and the potential for economic growth is unlimited.
- A healthy environment depends on a healthy economy.
- Our success depends how well we can understand, control, and manage the planet for our benefits.
There are several versions of this view. Some people think that economic and population growth is good and more growth is better. There is no serious problem of environment, or if there are, economic growth and technology will fix them. They are called “No problem School”.

Another group believes that the best way to manage the planet is through a free market global economy with minimal government interference. Still another group believes that we have serious environmental problem that we must deal with by becoming better and more responsible planetary managers. These people follow the pragmatic principle of enlightened self-interest: Better earth care is better self-care. Many people with this belief adopt a Spaceship- Earth strategy, in which earth is seen as a spaceship – a complex machine that we can understand, dominate, change and manage to prevent environmental overload and provide a good life for everyone.

Another group advocates the principle of stewardship in managing the earth. According to this principle, because of our super intellect and power or because of our moral or religious belief, we have an ethical responsibility to manage and care for all species and ecosystem. But, all these view are anthropocentric, which aims for the more and more betterment of human species.  

This very anthropocentric view is responsible for the present state of environmental and endangered condition of planet earth and its species. As a reaction to this anthropocentric worldview, emerged the eco-centric or non-anthropocentric view, which further developed as a systematic philosophical discipline namely ‘environmental ethics’. Non-anthropocentrism believes that any human-centered worldview even stewardship is unsustainable. They holds the view that we all should recognize inherent value or intrinsic value of all forms of life i.e. value regardless of their potential or actual use to us. This means that all species have inherent right to live and flourish or at least to struggle to exist to play their role in evolution. Non-anthropocentrism tries to establish that all non-human living organs are morally valuable in themselves, as each of them possesses intrinsic value irrespective of valuers. It annihilates moral hierarchism within biotic communities, restores equal moral status and environmental justice, mutual care, love and sympathy. It equally cultivates individual rationality by means of which one can realize that his own self is no longer different from other
and every individual self is essentially merged with the self. Thus, self-realization is the most important key to understanding nature.48

Proponents of eco-centric worldview believe that as long as we see ourselves as the ‘top-dog’ species, we will continue to eliminate species that are not useful to us instead of recognizing biodiversity as a vital element of earth capital for all life. They also believe that any human-centered worldview will fail because it wrongly assumes that we have or can gain enough knowledge to become manager of man.49

In the words of Aldo Leopold “We are only fellow voyagers with other creatures in the odyssey of evolution,” 50 Eco-centric worldview calls for us to work with rest of nature by learning and using mechanism that nature has evolved for promoting sustainability and adaptability. Followings are eco-centric beliefs which are opposite of the anthropocentric worldview beliefs.

- Nature exists for all Earth’s species not just for us, and we are not apart from or in charge of the rest of nature. We need the earth, but the earth does not need us.
- There is not always more, and it’s not all for us. Earth’s resources are limited, should not be wasted, and should be used sustainably for us and all species.
- Some forms of economic growth are beneficial and some are harmful. Our goals should be to design economic and political system that encourage earth-sustaining forms of growth and discourage or prohibit earth degrading forms, and to see that the benefits of such growth are distributed equitably among all people (social and economic justice) and sexes (gender justice), and across generations (intergenerational justice).
- A healthy economy depends on a healthy environment. Our survival, life quality, and economies are totally dependent on the rest of nature.
- Our success depends on learning to cooperate with one another and with the rest of nature instead of trying to dominate and manage earth for our own use. Because nature is so incredibly complex and always changing, we will never have enough information and understanding to manage the planet.
History of Environmental Ethics

The notion of eco-centric ethics or environmental ethics has gained prominence recently among many environmentalists, but its ongoing go back centuries. Environmental ethics as a discipline evolved in west, but environmental values, and concern for protection and urge to live in harmony can be traced from eastern world also. One of the oldest religion of east, Hinduism provides a worldview with regard to the ecological situation based on the premise that mankind is an integral part of nature itself linked to the rest of creation by a indissoluble bounds. Prayer for peace in Yajurved is the embodiment of environment ethics “Supreme Lord, let there be peace in the sky and in the atmosphere, peace in the plant world and in the forests; let the cosmic powers be peaceful, let Brahman be peaceful; let there be undiluted and fulfilling peace everywhere.” Eastern religions Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, etc are enshrined with environmental values, and promote harmony with nature world. St. Francis of Asisis (1181-1126) espoused a philosophy akin to the eco-centric ethic. He specially considered all animals as integrated components of divine creation. According to him, ‘wildlife has right to exist independent of any human purpose. During St. Francis’s century, however, such concepts were largely ignored or chastised.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), the father of Limnology, the transcendentalist, also professed a variety of eco-centric ethics. He built a cabin on Walden Pond in Massachusetts and lived a simple life for two years. There he viewed nature as a single living organic entity with all living organism related to each other. In his work ‘Walden’ he urged his readers to recognize and learn to live within environmental guidelines.

Although nature was the focus of much nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy, contemporary environmental ethics emerged as an academic discipline in the 1970s. This emergence was no doubt due to the increasing awareness in the 1960’s of the effects that technology, industry, economic expansion and population growth having on the environment. The development of such awareness was aided by the publication of two important book at this time Rachel Cason’s ‘Silent Spring’ first published in 1962, alerted readers to how the widespread use of chemical pesticides was posing a serious threat to public health.
and leading to the destruction of wildlife. Of similar significance was Paul Ehrlich’s book ‘The population Bomb’ (1968), which warned of the devastating effects of spiraling human population has on planet’s resources.\textsuperscript{54}

An intellectual climate had developed in the last few years of the 1960s in large part because of the publication of two papers in ‘Science’ Lynn White’s, ‘The historical roots of our ecological crisis’ (March, 1967) and Garrett Hardin’s, ‘The Tragedy of the Commons’ (Dec 1968). In his paper, White argued that the main strands of Judo-Christian thinking had encouraged the over-exploitation of nature by maintaining the superiority of humans over all other forms of life of earth and by depicting all of nature as created for the use of humans.\textsuperscript{55} White’s thesis is widely discussed in theology, history and has been subject to some sociological testing as well as being regularly discussed by philosophers. Central to the rationale for his thesis were the works of the Church Father’s and the Bible itself, supporting the anthropocentric perspective that humans are the only thing that matter on Earth. Consequently, they may utilize and consume everything else to their advantage without any injustice.\textsuperscript{56} In addition, White also stated that some minority traditions within Christianity (e.g. the views of St. Francis) might provide an antidote to the arrogance of a mainstream tradition steeped into anthropocentrism.\textsuperscript{57} Around the same time ‘Population Bomb’, (1968) was published. Most influential with regard to this kind of thinking, however, was an essay in Aldo Leopold’s A Sand Country Almanac, “The Land Ethic” in which Leopold explicitly claimed that the roots of ecological crisis were philosophical. Although originally published in 1949, ‘Sand Country Almanac’ became widely available in 1970 in a special Sierra Club/Ballantine edition in which included essays from a second book, ‘Round River’.\textsuperscript{58} The sense of environmental crisis stimulation by those and other popular works was intensified by NASA’s production and wide dissemination of a particularly potent image of the earth from space taken at Christmas, 1968 and featured in the ‘Scientific American’ in September 1970. Here, plain to see, was a living, shining planet voyaging through space and shared by all of humanity, a precious vessel vulnerable to pollution and to the overuse of its limited capacities. In 1972, a team of researcher at MIT led by Dennis Meadows published the ‘Limits to Growth’ study, a work that summed up in many ways the emerging concerns of the previous decade and sense of
vulnerability trigged by the view of the earth from space. In commentary of the study the researcher wrote:

“We affirming finally that any deliberate attempts to reach a rational and enduring state of equilibrium by planned measures, rather than by chance or catastrophe, must ultimately be founded on a basic change of value and goals at individual, national and world levels.”

The call for a basic change of values in connections to the environment (a call that could be interpreted in terms of either instrumental or intrinsic value) reflected a need for the development of environmental ethics as a new sub division of philosophy. Throughout most of the decade philosophers sat on the sidelines trying to determine what a field called environmental ethics might look like.

William Blackstone at the University of Georgia organized the first philosophical conference in 1972. The proceedings were published as ‘Philosophy and Environmental Crisis’ in 1974 which included Pete Gunter’s first paper on ‘The Big Thicket.’ In 1972 a book called ‘Is it too late? A Theology of Ecology’ written by John B. Cobb was published. It was the first single authored book written by a philosopher. In 1973, an Australian philosopher Richard Routley (Now Sylvan), presented a paper at the 15th World Congress of Philosophy ‘Is there a need for a new Environmental Ethics.’ In 1975, environmental ethics came to the attention of mainstream philosophy with the publication of Holmes Rolston III’s, paper “Is there an Ecological Ethics?” Arne Naess, Norwegian philosopher and the founding editor of the journal ‘Inquiry’, authored and published a paper in Inquiry, ‘The shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement’ in 1973, which was the beginning of the deep ecology movement. Prominent writers in this movement include George Session, Bill Devall, Warwick Fox, and Max Oelschaeger.

Throughout the 1970s ‘Inquiry’ was the primary philosophy journal that dealt with environmental ethics. In 1979, Eugene C. Hargrove founded the journal ‘Environment Ethics’, which name became the name of the field. The first five years of the journal were spent mostly arguing about rights for nature and the relationship of environmental ethics and animal rights/animal liberation. Rights lost and animal welfare ethics were determined to be a separate field. Animal rights
has since developed as a separate field with a separate journal, first, ‘Ethics and
Animals’, which was later superceded by ‘Between the Species’.

John B. Cobb published another book in the early 1980s ‘The liberation of life’
with co-author Charles Birch. Robin Attfield, a philosopher in Wales, wrote a
book called ‘The ethics of Environmental Concern’. It was the first full length
response to Passmore. An anthology of papers, ‘Ethics and the environment’ was
edited by Donald Scherer and Tom Attig.

There was a turning point about 1988, when many single-authored books began to
come available. Paul Taylor’s ‘Respect for Nature’, Holmes Rolston’s
‘Environmental Ethics’, Mark Sagoff’s ‘The Economy of the Earth’, and Eugene
C. Hargrove’s ‘Foundation of Environmental Ethics’. J. Baird Collicott created a
collection of his paper ‘In Defense of the Land Ethic’. Brayon Norton wrote
‘Why preserve Natural Diversity?’ followed more recently by ‘Towards Unity’
among Environmentalist. A large number of books have been written by Kristin
Shrader – Frechette on Economic and Policy.

In the 1980s a second movement, eco-feminism was developed. Karen Waren is
the key philosopher, although the eco-feminism movement involves many thinkers
from other fields. It was then followed by a third, social ecology based on the
views of Murray Bookchin. An important link between academics and radical
environmentalists was established with the creation of Canadian deep ecology
journal ‘The Trumpeter’. In 1989, ‘Earth Ethics Quarterly’ was begun as a more
popular environmental publication. Originally intended primarily as a reprint
publication, now as a publication of the ‘Center for respect for life and
Environment’, it is focused more on international sustainable development. The
1990s begin with the establishment of the ‘International Society for Environmental
Ethics’, which was founded largely through the efforts of Laura Westra and
Holmes Ralston III. It now has members throughout the world. In 1992, a second
referred philosophical journal dedicated to environmental ethics, ‘Environmental
values’ published its first issue in England. In 1966, a new journal was established
at the University of Georgia, ‘Ethics and the Environment.’ In 1997, a second
international association was created ‘The International Association for
Environmental Philosophy’, with an emphasis of environmental phenomenology.
Development of Environmental Ethics

The field of environmental ethics concerns to outline our moral obligation. The most fundamental question that must be asked when regarding a particular environment ethic is simply ‘what obligation do we have concerning the natural environment. If the answer is simply that we, as human beings, will perish if we do not constrain our action towards nature, then the ethics is considered to be anthropocentric. And in one senses all ethics must be considered anthropocentric. After all, as far as we know, only human beings can reason about and reflect upon ethical matters, thus, giving all moral debate a definite ‘human centeredness.’ 78

While the history of western philosophy is dominated by this anthropocentric ethical framework that grants moral standing solely to human beings, it has come under considerable attack from many environmental ethicists. Such thinkers have claimed that ethics must be extended beyond humanity, and moral standing should be accorded to the non-human natural world. Some have claimed that this extension should run to sentient animals, other to individual living organisms and still others to holistic entities such as river, species and ecosystems. Under these ethics, we have obligations in respect of the environment because we actually owe things to the creatures or entities within the environment themselves. Different philosophers have given quite different answer to these fundamental questions, which has led to the emergence of quite different environmental ethics. Following section examines the prominent accounts for moral standing within environmental ethics, together with the implication to each.

Human Beings

Under this section comes the anthropocentric ethics which claim that people are both the subject and object of ethics. Humans can have no duties to flora and fauna and ecosystem only. Anthropocentrists may wish to save these things for the benefits they bring.79 Quite simply then, we posses obligation to respect the environment for the sake of human’s well-beings and prosperity. The sentiments of John Passmore are probably typical of this narrower view. “The of right is simply not applicable to what is non-human. It is one thing to say that it is wrong to treat animals cruelly, and quite another to say that animals have rights.80

Despite the human-centeredness, anthropocentric environmental ethics have nevertheless played a part in the extension of moral standing. This extension has
not been to the non-human natural world though, but, instead, to human beings who do not yet exist. The granting of moral standing to future generation has been considered because of the fact that many environmental problems, such as climate change and resource depletion will affect future generation much more than they affect present ones. In light of these facts, some philosophers have founded their environmental ethics on obligation to the future generations. In this sense our obligations lie with ensuring that we do not prevent future generations from meeting their basic needs. This, in turn, forces us to consider and appropriately revise our levels of pollutions, resource depletion, and climate change and population growth. Despite of this extension of moral standing, most environmental philosopher feel that such anthropocentric environmental ethics do not go far enough, and want to extend moral standing beyond humanity. Only by doing this, such thinkers argue, can we get the beyond narrow and selfish interest of humans, and treat the environment and it’s inhabitants with the respect they deserve.

**Animals**

Ethics is for people, but is ethics only about people? Wild animals do not make man the measures of things at all. There is no better evidence of non-human values and valuers than spontaneous wild life, born free and on its own. Animals hint and haul, find shelter, seek out their habitats and mates, care for their young, and flee from threats. They suffer injury and lick their wounds. Animals maintain a valued self-identity as they cope through the world. They defend their lives because they have a good of their own. There is somebody there behind fur or feathers.

An animal values its own life for what it is in itself, without further contributory reference, although of course it inhabits an eco-system in which its life-support depends. Animals are valuable, able to value things in their world, their own life intrinsically and their resource instrumentally. So there can and ought to be several philosopher agree that moral standing should be extended to include animals and an animal welfare ethic or some prefer to say an animal rights ethic.

Peter Singer and Tom Regan are the most famous proponents of the view that we should extend moral standing to other species of animals. While both develop quite different animal ethics, their reasons for according a moral status to animals are fairly similar. According to Singer, the criterion to moral standing is sentience:
the capacity to feel pleasure and pain.\textsuperscript{85} For Regan, on the other hand, moral standing should be acknowledged in all subjects-of-a-life: that is those beings with beliefs, desire, perception, memory, emotions, a sense of future, and the ability to initiate action. So, while Regan and Singer give tightly different criteria for moral standing, both places a premium on a form of consciousness.

For Singer, if any entity possesses the relevant type of consciousness, then that entity should be given equal consideration when we formulate our moral obligations. The point is not that every sentient being should be treated equally, but that it should be considered equally. In other words, the differences between individuals, and thus, their different interests should be taken into account. Singer then feeds his principle of equal consideration into a utilitarian ethical framework, whereby the ultimate goal is to bring about the greatest possible satisfaction of interests.\textsuperscript{86}

For Tom Regan, all entities that are subject-of-a-life ‘possess inherent value’. This means that such entities have a value of their own, irrespective of their good for other beings or their contribution to some ultimate ethical norm. In effect then, Regan proposes that there are moral limits to what one can do to a subject-of-a-life.\textsuperscript{87} This position stands in contrast to Singer, who feeds all interests into the utilitarian calculus and bases our moral obligation on what satisfies the greatest numbers.

It can be concluded from the above perspective that animal welfare is relevant to environmental ethics because animals exist within the natural environment and thus, form part of environmental concerns. However, extending moral standing to animals also leads to the formulation of particular types of environmental obligations. Essentially, these ethics claim that when we consider how our actions impact on the environment, we should not just evaluate how these affect humans (present or future), but also how they affect the interest and rights of animals.\textsuperscript{88}

**Individual Living Organism**

A bio-centric ethics ask about appropriate respect towards all living things, not only the wildlife and farm animals, but now the butterflies and the sequoia tress. Otherwise, most of the biological world has not yet taken into account: lower animals, insects, microbes, and plants. Over 96 percent of species are invertebrates
or plants; only tiny fractions of living organism are sentient animals. Considering plant makes the difference between biocentrism and animal ethic clear. ⁸⁹ For some environmental philosophers, extension of moral standing merely to animals is not sufficient rather, it should be extended beyond conscious life to include individual living organism such as tree. According to them, we cannot rely on intuitions to decide who or what has moral standing. For this reason, a number of philosophers have come up with arguments to justify assigning moral standing to individual living organism. One of the earliest philosophers to put such an argument was Albert Schweitzer. His influential reverence for life claims that all living thing have a will to live and that humans should not interfere with or extinguish this will. ⁹⁰ In the words of Schweitzer, “Just as in my own will to live there is a yearning for more life, and for that mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live which is called pleasure, and terror in the face of annihilation and that injury to the will-to-live which is called pain; so the same obtains in all the will-to-live around me, equally whether it can express itself to my comprehension or whether it remains unvoiced. Ethics thus consists in this, that I experience the necessity of practicing the same reverence for life toward all will-to-live as toward my own. Therein I have already the needed fundamental principle of morality. It is good to maintain and cherish life, it is evil to destroy and check life.” ⁹¹

But, while it is clear that all living organism struggle for survive, it is simply not true that they ‘will’ to live. This, after all, would require some kind of conscious experience, which many living things lack, however, perhaps what Schweitzer was getting at was something like Paul W. Taylor and more recent claim that all living things are teleological centers of life. ⁹² For Taylor, this means that living things have a good of their own that they strive towards, even it they lack awareness of this fact. This good is the full development of an organism’s biological power. In similar arguments to Regan’s, Taylor claims that because living organism have a good of their own, they have inherent value; i.e. value for their own sake, irrespective of their value to other beings. ⁹³ It is this value that grants individual living organism moral status, and means that we must take the interest and needs of such entities into account when formulating our moral obligations.

Christopher Stone, a Professor of law at the University of Southern California proposed that trees and other natural objects should have at least the same standing in law as corporations. He reasoned that if tree, forests and mountains could be
given standing in law then they could be represented in their own right in the courts by groups. Moreover, like any other legal person, these natural things could become beneficiaries of compensation if it could be shown that they had suffered compensatable injury through human activity.\textsuperscript{94}

A question arises that we humans require the destruction of many living organisms simply in order to live, how are we then formulating any meaningful moral obligation. We need to walk, eat, shelter, and clothe ourselves, all of which usually, involve harming living beings. Schweitzer answers that we can only harm or end the life of a living entity when absolutely necessary.\textsuperscript{95} On clearing about necessary condition, Taylor points out as self defense, basic needs. When basic interests clash, human are not required to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others.\textsuperscript{96}

**Holistic Entities**

Aldo Leopold, a forester ecologist, is the main influence on those who proposes holistic ethics. He claimed famously: “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. ‘The land is a community’, is the basic concept of ecology, but that land is to be loved and respected is an extension of ethic.”\textsuperscript{97} In a holistic ethic, this ecosystemetic level in which all organisms are embedded also counts morally in some respect more than any of the component organisms, because the systematic processes have generated, continue to support, and integrate tens of thousands of member organism. The appropriate unit for moral concern is the fundamental unit of development and survival. That, we were just saying, is species lines. But a species is what it is, where it is, encircled by ecology.\textsuperscript{98}

According to Leopold, land is not merely soil. Instead, land is a fountain of energy, flowing through a circuit of soils, plants and animals while food chain conduct the energy upwards from the soil, death and decay returns the energy back to the soil. Thus, the flow of energy relies on a complex structure of relation between living things. While evolution gradually changes these relations, Leopold argues that man’s intervention have been much more violent and destructive. In order to preserve the relations neither the land, Leopold claims that we must move towards ‘land ethic’, thereby granting moral standing to the Land community itself, not just its individual members.\textsuperscript{99}
Loopold’s idea that the land as a whole is an object of our moral concern also stimulated writers like Eric Katz, Andrew Brennanar to argue for certain moral obligation towards ecological not just their individual constituents. The U.S. based theologian and environmental philosopher; Holmes Rolston III argued that species protection was a moral duty. It would be wrong, he maintained, to eliminate a rare butterfly species simply to increase the monetary value of specimens already held by collectors. Species are intrinsically valuable. They are usually more valuable than individual specimen, since the lost of a species is a loss of genetic possibilities and the deliberate destruction of a species would show disrespect for the very biological process, which make possible the emergence of individual living things. 100

J. Baird Callicott advocated a version of land-ethical holism which takes Leopold’s statement “a thing is right …..” In this theory, the earth's biotic community per se is the sole locus of intrinsic value, here as the value of its individual members is merely instrumental and dependent on their contribution to the integrity, stability and beauty of the larger community.101 Thus, on the whole, according to bio-centric ethics, our moral obligation lies in maintaining and not disturbing the integrity and stability of larger community by our actions.

Earth Ethics

The astronaut Michael Collins recalled being, “I remember so vividly. What saw when I looked back at my fragile home-a glistening, inviting beacon, delicate blue and white, a tiny outpost suspended in a black infinity? Earth is to be treasured and nurtured, something precious that must endure.”102 The UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, closed the Earth summit, “The spirit of Rio must create a new mode of civic conduct. It is not enough for man to love his neighbour, he must learn to love his world.”103 Earth is not mere a big resource to be exploited for human needs, nor a pie to be divided up for human consumption. Rather, Earth is a precious thing in itself because it is home for us all, Earth is to be loved, as we do a neighbour for an intrinsic integrity. The center of focus is not people, but the biosphere.

The most prominent philosopher, who proposed highest moral standing to earth itself is James Lovelock, who proposed ‘Gaia Hypothesis’. He first exposed his idea in 1979 in his book, ‘Gaia, a new look at life on Earth’. The Gaia theory
states that the biosphere of this planet has most or all of the essential characteristics of a living organism. These characteristics are responses to stimuli, metabolism, biological development and, most importantly, homeostasis. The fifth characteristic, reproduction, may be or may not be evident. Nevertheless, Gaia model represents the planet as a super organism. It also implies that not only do living organisms modify their nonliving environment but both of them evolve together as a unity.104

Lovelock discovered Gaia from outer space when he saw the Earth from the perspective of an ET looking for evidence of life. He thought that what he is seeing is not so much a planet adorned with diverse life form, but a planet transfigured and transformed by a self-evolving and self-regulating living system. By nature of its activity, he named that being Gaia, after the Greek goddess, which drew the living world forth from chaos.105

In way analogous to the myriad different cell colonies which make up organs and bodies, the life forms of earth in their diversity co-evolving and contribute interactively to produce and sustain the optimal conditions for the growth and prosperity not of themselves, but of the larger whole, Gaia. The very make up of the atmosphere, seas, and terrestrial crust is the result of radical intervention carried out by Gaia through the evolving diversity of living creatures.106

James Lovelock proves through his theory the importance of whole earth as a super living organism, and that our moral consideration should be extended up to the Earth itself. Eco-centric views emphasize our obligations towards Gaia’s health by invoking the intrinsic value of a complex system like Gaia and by recognizing that Gaia as a long lived super organisms has great relative worth then does a single species like Homo Sapiens,107 Under the eco-centric view all species carry equal worth a priori, but every species is dispensable to Gaia, whereas a healthy Gaia is absolutely indispensable for the flourishing of any species.108

Since, Gaia is identical with the global ecosystem, its biota and abiotota, we are under morally obligation to apply the criteria that ecologist have established for the health of smaller ecosystems i.e. maintained species diversity, productivity, and the systems homeostatic capacity. As Lovelock said, “Earth does not belong to us, rather we belong to it. We belong on it. 109 Earth is really the relevant survival
unit. The Gaian ethics may facilitate the task of converting destructive human activities to constructive and corporate behaviour.

**Radical Ecological Ethical Theories**

There are some philosophers who perceive our obligation towards environment beside in terms of extending moral standing. They do not find extension of moral standing sufficient to resolve environmental crisis. They argue that a broader philosophical perspective is needed, requiring fundamental changes in both our attitude to and understanding of reality. For radical ecologist, ethical extensionism is inadequate because it is stuck in traditional ways of thinking that led to these environmental problems in the first place. They argue that ethical extensionism too is human-centered, because it takes human beings as the paradigm example of entities with moral standing and then extends outwards to those things considered sufficiently similar. These radical ecologies do not confine themselves solely to the arena of ethics. Instead, they demand fundamental changes in society and its institution. In other words, these ideologies have a distinctively political element, requiring us to confront the environmental crisis by changing the every way we live and function, both as a society and as an individual. Some prominent of such are as:-

**Deep Ecology**

This philosophical school was founded by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in the early seventies with his distinction between shallow and deep ecology. The shallow ecology movement, as Naess calls it, is the fight against pollution and resource depletion, the central objective of which is the health and affluence of people in the developed country. The deep ecology in contrasts endorses biospheric egalitarianism, the view that all living things are alike in having value in their own right, independent of their usefulness to others. It recognizes the fundamental interdependence of all phenomena and the fact that as individual and societies, we are all embedded in (and ultimately dependents) the cyclical process of nature. Deep ecologists advocate the development of a new eco-philosophy or ecosophy to replace the destructive philosophy of modern industrial society. Arne Naess and George Sessions have compiled a list of eight principles or statement that is basic to deep ecology:
1. Well being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth)

2. These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

3. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.

4. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.

5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller population. The flourishing of non-human life requires smaller human population.

6. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive and the situation is rapidly worsening.

7. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies effect basic economies, technological and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

8. The ideological changes will mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent values) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.

Those who subscribe to foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.  

Naess’s ecosophy involves just one fundamental ethical norm “Self realization.” For Naess, this norm involves giving up a narrow egoistic conception of the self in favour of a wider more comprehensive self (hence the deliberate Capital “S”). Moving to this wider ‘Self’ involves recognizing that as human beings we are not removed from nature, but are interconnected with it. Recognizing our wider self, thus, involves identifying ourselves with all other life forms on the planet. The Australian philosopher Warwick Fox has taken this theme of self-realization in his own eco-philosophy, ‘transpersonal ecology’. Fox does not regard environmental ethics to be predominantly about formulating our moral obligation concerning the environment, but instead views it about the realization of an ecological
consciousness. Thus, for Naess, once the appropriate consciousness is established, one will naturally protect the environment and allow it to flourish, for that will be part and parcel of the protection and flourishing of oneself.

A radical ecological thinker, Mahatma Gandhi’s ideas were quite akin to deep ecology. Nature to him was the outer expression of the all-pervasive living Reality, which means God. He said” God manifests Himself in innumerable forms in the universe and every such manifestation command my spontaneous reverence” He was quite sensitive to the charms of nature. He viewed that everything living and nonliving is vibrating with life. He advocated a creative harmony between individual communities and natural world. He advocated that it is the task of human beings to realize that only a violent attitude towards life destroys the power of the earth. So, as a remedial measure, Gandhi told to follow a non-violent way of life, a unique and valuable concept which needs to be expanded to all living and nonliving beings. Hence, his vision was of a non-violent eco-friendly world order.

He echoed his principle of deep ecology, when he said that nature has given enough to satisfy everyone’s need, but not greed. Unsatisfied desire, resulting into increasing imbalance, environmental degradation, fast vanishing flora and fauna, explosion of population- all are the outcome of the greed of the modern homo sapiens. He himself practiced nonviolent throughout life and told that it is not possible for a human being to create life, so he is in no way justified to destroy any life.

Social Ecology

Social Ecology shares with deep ecology the view that the foundations of environmental crisis lie in the dominant ideology of modern western society. Thus, just as deep ecology, social ecology clear that in order to resolve the crisis, a radical overhaul of this ideology is necessary. Indeed, domination is the key theme in the writing of Murray Bookchin, the most prominent social ecologist. For him, environmental problems are directly related to social problems. In particular, Bookchin claims that the hierarchies of power prevalent within modern societies have fostered a hierarchical relationship between human beings and natural world. Indeed it is the ideology of free market that has facilitated such hierarchies, reducing both human beings and natural world to mere commodities.
Bookchin argues that the liberation of both human and nature are actually depending on one another. This argument is quite different from Marxist thought which recognizes men’s freedom dependent on the complete domination of humans from nature that is prevalent in capitalist ideology. Instead, social ecology argues that human must recognize that they are part of nature, not distinct or separate from it. It suggests that then human societies and human relations with nature can be informed by the non-hierarchical relations found within the natural world. Like in ecosystems, there is no species more important than other; instead relationships are mutualistic and interrelated. This interdependence and lack of hierarchy in nature provide a blueprint for a non-hierarchical human's society.\textsuperscript{118}

On how such transformed society will look like? Bookchin explains that such transformation must take place within smaller local communities. Such communities will be based on sustainable agriculture, participation through democracy, and of course freedom through non-domination. Not only then does nature help cement richer and more equal human communities, but transformed societies foster a more benign relationship with nature. This latter point also illustrates Bookchin’s optimistic view of humanity’s potential. After all Bookchin does not condemn all of humanity for causing the ecological crisis, for instead it is the relationship with societies that are to blame.\textsuperscript{119} Bookchin suggest that we can choose to put ourselves at the service of natural evolution, to help maintain complexity and diversity diminish suffering and reduce pollution. Bookchin’s social ecology recommends that we use our gifts of sociability, communication and intelligence as if we were ‘nature rendered conscious’, instead of learning them against the very source and origin from which such gift derive. Exploitation of nature should be replaced by a richer form of life devoted to nature’s preservation.\textsuperscript{120}

Indian environmental thinker, Ramchandra Guha also expressed his ideas akin with social ecology. He supported the idea of social change to solve the eco-crisis. He said that our historical experience of different societies shows that there are always exemplary individuals who in their own lives, through thinking, reflection and experience have undertaken value changes and a spiritual transformation in their attitude towards nature and the non-human.\textsuperscript{121}
**Eco-feminism**

Like social ecology, eco feminism also points to a link between social domination and the domination of the natural world. And like both deep ecology and social ecology, eco feminism calls for a radical overhaul of the prevailing philosophical perspective and ideology of western society.

By the mid 1970, feminist writer had raised the issue of whether patriarchal modes of thinking encouraged not only widespread inferiorizing and colonizing of women, but also of people of colour, animals and nature. Sheila Collins argued that male dominated culture or patriarchy is supported by four interlocking pillars: sexism, racism, class exploitation and ecological destruction. Yenstra King, an eco-feminist says that domination of women by men is historically the original form of domination in human society, from which all other hierarchies of rank, class and political power-flow. Human exploitation of nature may be seen as a manifestation and extension of the oppression of women, in that it is the result of associating nature with female, which had been inferiorized and opressed by the male dominating culture. Val Plumood, Karen J. Warren are considered prominent eco-feminist thinkers. Like deep ecology and social ecology, eco-feminism also believes that to resolve environmental problems we face and the system of domination in place; it is the consciousness and philosophical outlook of individual that must change.

Deep Ecology, feminism and social ecology have had a considerable impact on the development of political positions in regard to the environment. Apart from their radical ecological theories, there are some other radical ideas, which present their ideas relevant to the development of ecological ethics. One of them is Eucharistic ecology, which believes that this planet is a God gift. It perceives earth as Eucharistic planet, a God gift planet, which is structured as mutual feeding as intimate self-sharing. It is a great process, a circulation of living energies, in which the Real presence of the Absolute is discerned. Never holding still, continually passing away from moment to moment, it is shining face of the eternal. It is living as an integral body, as the glory body of the Real. In short, it perceives the world as the real presence of Absolute one, the God.

Similar to Eucharistic ecology is the ‘Pantheism’, which believes in the oneness of God and Nature. This doctrine identifies the deity with various forces and working
of nature. It believes that God is identical with the universe. All is God and God is all. The universe taken as a whole is God. God and nature are synonymous, two for the same thing.\textsuperscript{127} Pantheism with its idea of oneness of God and nature instills a reverence for nature, which can help reverse the ecologic crisis.\textsuperscript{128}

The variety of approaches to environment ethics described in this chapter indicates the diversity and complexity of environmental ethics. All these approaches to ethics formed in current general ethical theories have been applied with environmental ethics. In addition, considering the possible ethical significance of grouping such as eco-system and the ideas such as diversity, has led to the development of largely new ethical approaches such a suggested by Collicot or developed out of Gaia hypothesis. The environmental problems of the present have drawn attention to the insight that ethical questions are raised by human behaviour towards not only non-human individuals, but towards ecosystem, species and biosphere itself. Deciding what sort of ethical response is appropriate to such question is the task of environment ethics. The importance of such responses is beyond doubt.

\textbf{The Future of Environmental Ethics}

Given the increasing concern for the environment and the impact that our action have upon it, it is clear that the field of environmental ethics is here to stay. There are evidences for future development in various aspects. First of all, environmental ethics needs to be and will be informed by changes in the political efforts to ameliorate environmental problems. As earlier said, Environmental Ethics concerns formulating our moral obligations regarding the environment. Realizing this imminent danger of the environholocaust, there has been an awakening enmassed and a new world order has compelled itself to deliberate how best one can maintain, upgrade and improve the environment with judicious utilization of this treasure, for the benefit of mankind. In this context the last decade has witnessed an explosion in the structural and functional capabilities of non-government organizations. It is a sign of relief that various efforts are being taken at global level by these NGO’s. International organizations provide an essential forum for International cooperation in relation to environmental issues. In this context they have two important roles to play: environmental policy-making and the development of international environmental laws. It is important to observe,
however, that these two roles are distinct and that the powers of particular organizations in regard to each function will vary. While it is now common practice for a wide range of international organizations to develop environmental policies, but, the development of law is usually only one element, which does not fall within the powers of organizations. Here the environmental legislation adopted in various countries plays a vital role for the conservation of environment, i.e. more than two-dozen laws protect India’s environment. They cover all aspects of the environment from pollution to conservation, from deforestation to nuclear waste.

Ethicists and environmentalists must also propose more alternatives and better means of resolving the problem we face, and the environmental movements are providing a significant platform for the same. The environmental movements advocates for the protection, sustainable management and restoration of the natural environment in an effort to satisfy human needs, including spiritual and social needs, as well as for its own sake. The movements are united by a reverence for the natural world, a commitment to maintain the health or natural systems and in its recognition of humanity as a part of and not separate to ecosystems. Some significant movements, i.e. Green Peace, Chipko, Save Narmada etc. were organized and represented by the common mass resulting in some important summits and treatise for the environmental conservation. Earth summit, Kyoto Protocol is some to name.

Once, it is recognized that we have environmental obligations; all areas of ethics are affected, including just war theory, domestic distributive justice, global distributive justice, human rights theory and global ethics. Global ethics deals with the moral questions that arise from globalization. Some of the most pressing of these arise from the great systematic disparities of wealth, health, longevity, security, and freedom between the North and South. What obligations have individuals and governments in the North to improve the lives of people in the South? How might international trading arrangements be made fairer? How might military intervention be better regulated? How might the local tyrannies of warlords or criminal gangs be undone? How far must the ways of life of individuals change for the sake of the worst off elsewhere, or for the sake of reversing climate change? In nutshell global ethics can be summarized as under:
1. Culture of nonviolence and reverence for life.
2. Culture of Solidarity and just economic order.
3. Culture of tolerance and life of truthfulness
4. Culture of equal rights and partnership between men and women.

Finally, environment ethics of course is informed by our scientific understanding of the environment, whether it be changes in our understanding of how ecosystems work, or changes in the evidence concerning the environmental crisis. Here environmental education will have to be potential Instrumental for the common awareness.

The academic programme should be planned in such a way as to meet the changing needs of the country. We have seen agriculture and technological revolution with their consequences. Now it is high time when we need an educational reform based on environmental education. The behaviour of entire society towards the biosphere must be transformed if the achievement of conservation objectives is to be assured. A new ethic, embracing plants and animals as well as people, is required for human societies to live in harmony with the natural world, on which they depend for survival and well-being. The long-term task of environmental education is to foster or reinforce attitudes and behaviour compatible with this new ethic. The objective of environmental education can be broadly classified as under:

(a) To create awareness and impart knowledge as also attempt to change the attitude of individual and social groups towards environment and its degradation.

(b) To help individuals and social groups to acquire skills to evaluate and solve the environmental problems confronting the society through active participation of the members. To achieve these objectives education can be imparted at two levels the formal and the informal level.

(c) To promote formal and non-formal education related to the environment by implementing the World Conservation Strategy: (i) by promoting the inclusion of environmental objectives within ongoing educational programmes and projects; and developing new projects; (ii) by encouraging public participation in environmental issues; (iii) by
facilitating communication within the professional community concerned.

(d) To train specialist involved in management and decision-making related to conservation: (i) by promoting and developing training programmes for natural resources managers; (ii) by supporting the development of a network of wildlife and parks training centers for developing countries; (iii) by assisting government departments to meet training needs.  

Conclusion

Work in the environmental ethics over the past three decades has focused to a considerable degree, on how humans should think about world environment and what values they might carry. But it seems likely that in future, ethical interest in other kind of environment will grow. There are number of obvious reason for this. Wilderness is declining both in size and number. Urbanization is expanding. Most people in the world rarely or never enter wild areas, living and working in urban or rural agricultural areas. Environment ethicists are now turning to explore new dimensions of ethics to be applied in broad perspective in order to realize the stipulated condition of harmonious and healthy environment. Thus, in the future, debates about environmental ethics are likely expanded to consider even other kinds of environmental and ethical issues, which this environment raises.

In the light of above is can be summarized up that this millennium will be significant for the propagation and application of environmental ethics, and this will be also the need of hour.

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