ABSTRACT

Today the environmental problems have been the object of discussion everywhere from village to parliament. Were there environmental problems in very ancient times or not? If there were some problems, what were they and how were they solved? To answer these questions one has to have a look into the ancient literature as literature is the reflection of the culture and the society. So far as our country is concerned, we have an enormous amount of literature beginning from the Rigveda till today, where, we find that people respected nature very high and had established various relationships with the natural elements. The Atharvaveda has a special status in the vast span of vedic literature. It is said to be the veda of the masses. It contains the expressions of all kinds from mundane to highly philosophical type. Ordinary man and his environment seem to have occupied the central place in the Atharvaveda.

We, however, are more interested here in looking into the ancient concept of ecology and man’s thought concerning the same. The history of ecology in India is not very different from that of any other country. In Indian writings right from the Vedas, Epics and Purāṇas etc. we find many references to ecological thought. Many an ancient writer in Sanskrit described
the import-ance of Vāyu (gasses and air), Jala (water),
Deśa (topography) and time in the regulation of life,
similarly, the concept of Pañcatattva (five elements)
namely-earth, water, air, fire, sky reflect the idea of
circulation of materials. Indians have always respected
plants and animals. In this country cutting of a green
tree has been considered a crime and planting of a tree
a charity.

This work is a study of the Atharvaveda from this
point of view and it depicts a more or less realistic
picture of the rela-tionship of man with another man,
society, nature and with all that is around him at the
time of the Atharvaveda which is the main focus of
ecology.

The study is presented as follows:
1.0: Introduction
1.1: Scope of the work
1.2: Methodology adopted
2.0: Concept of ecology: Past and Present
2.1: Ancient concept
2.2: Modern concept
3.0: Man and Nature
3.1: The picture of the Atharvaveda
4.0: Man and man
4.1: The picture of the Atharvaveda
5.0: Man and Flora and Fauna
5.1: The picture of the Atharvaveda
6.0: Conclusion.