CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.1. MAN AND SOCIETY

Man is a social animal—goes the age old truth since the beginning of human life incepted on earth. Man can survive without fellow beings in nature, but he remains without a purpose and goal of life. He does not become separate from the identities of other animal beings in such conditions. Man becomes motivated and inclined to implement his intelligence only in presence of other fellow beings. Man is born as one of the species on earth towards the later part of the evolutionary process of the species on earth. He is endowed with the gift of intelligence unlike most other species and therefore he is borne with the ability to rationalise his decisions or thinking on basis of perception of righteousness or the wrongfulness of it. However, all of these abilities becomes meaningful and applicable when he lives in a society only. The gift of abstract thinking has helped man and his kind progress and functioning in life in a relentless manner. It has also helped him to decide upon his future actions and activities in future. According to the philosophy of some of the thinkers of modern period like Hobbes and Rousseau, in primitive time, folks of man one day sat down to agree to sign the treaty of society, by which they became bounded by the law of society. Although the treaty is defined differently by different thinkers, in reality there had never been any, as human society did not develop uniformly in all places in the world or was literate enough at the beginning of it to sign it univocally. It makes only a symbolic
representation of the rules of society since in all probability man and society had been existing simultaneously since the beginning of humanity. Man and society remain integral to the identity of each other.

Man remains an unitary part of his social identity in spite of his ability to function alone. Man and his unitary family in the society is like the atom in the molecule that expresses its individuality through its togetherness. But then, since human and his society is part of the evolutionary process, therefore it is a part of nature also, which is the receptacle of all the natural embodiments, living or non living. Therefore in spite of human effort in establishing its identity separate from the rest of the species in the world various reasons, it cannot ignore its umbilical connection with its surrounding - that is nature. Therefore, for human society, when man is its unit, then nature i.e. its surrounding is its basis or receptacle of its functioning. Human society, therefore, is born into and functions within the periphery of nature and its objectivity only. But then, since human beings happen to be the most intelligent of the species, who by gift of God is also attributed with the ability to function and creates on his own besides that of rationalizing - and therefore he is also endowed with the ability of judgment too. Man’s periphery of action and function had been far more wider than that of any other species. Besides, man’s own ability of judgment has asserted him himself to be superior to other species also. The sense of superiority, ironically has made man to carry out his own activities, apart from the necessities of natural kind. At the continuing evolutionary process on earth, man has become the most domineering species on
earth by not only using or over utilizing natural commodities, but also by pushing the other species to the edge of their existence, occupying, chasing or even by destroying the forest and land of their habitats in the process. However, man does not believe only in his intelligence. Prior to executing his act of intelligence, he likes to scrutinize the 'righteousness' of his act, whether from individual point of view or that of society. He also believes in 'conscience', the ethical guide to assert the rectification of his act.

However, often the acts of intelligence of man supersede the dictation of ethically rectified amendment of it, so as to comply his sense of superiority. In some other case, over periods of time, he would even change his ethical views to keep intact his sense of propriety that fits into the need of time. Thereby, we can conclude that ethical views and values and 'conscience' is complementary to each other. However, like supreme truth, which often gets clouded with half truth only to be clarified over a period of time, man's conscience also treads its rightful path by following the truth of nature. Therefore following the path of conscience, man realizes the extravagance of his felony of over exploitation of nature, the implications of such acts and its fall outs too. Therefore, man’s ability of ‘ethical scrutinising’ has lead to the realization of not only retrieving the qualities of nature back to its origin, but also to remain ethically bound to do so, that is, to reinstate his ethical values of believing in the equilibrium of man and his society with the nature and its various components for the well being of all man, hisethically guided society and nature.
1.2. MAN _the Basic Unit of the Society

According to the theory of evolution, man, one of the species on earth, was born nearly at the end of the evolutionary process. In scientific terms of anthropology he is called Homo Sapiens because as in the process of it, he is also born as the most intelligent of them all. Reflecting on human existence on earth and its relation with the earth Holmes Rolston, III expresses in the following way,-

"Really the story is little short of 'miracles', wondrous fortuitous events, unfolding of potential; and when earth's most complex product, Homo Sapien, becomes intelligent enough to reflect over the cosmic wonderland, everyone is left struttering about the mixtures of accidents and necessity out of which we have evolved."1 The root of human society is none other but man himself. Man, together with other fellow beings only comprises the entity called 'Human Society'. Man, on the other hand as an individual identity is a species on earth, born at the end of the long evolutionary process of innumerable kind of species, belonging to different families of flora and fauna.

However, man is also the most intelligent among all the species, who is also attributed with the ability of functioning by application of his intelligence. Therefore, he is able to utilize his surroundings, that is the nature and natural objects for his own benefits and formulate the development of the society and give expression to his intelligence in form of civilization.

The entity of a man, as an individual, however, has gone through numerous definition and elaborate explanation by man himself. About the origin of man, different religions have forwarded different theories. The various philosophical
lineages of Hinduism have emphasized on the spiritual entity of human in form of ‘Aham’ only, which is a part of the cosmic reality called ‘Brahman’ . Such a definition attributes man with existence of eternity only. He attains, or rather ultimately emerges with the entity of eternity through the performance or fulfillment of duties, which is called as laws of Karma. He attains his zenith only after repeated birth on earth till he achieves it—his moral goals.

The definition of man by some other oriental religions are equally nature oriented or related. The nature defining religion of Confucianism believes that the first man on earth was the child of Ying and Yang, the gods representing sky and earth respectively.

Taoism, another oriental religion, explains that the earth is a combination of two natural forces called Ying and Yang and the man is their natural child. Christianity on the other hand believes that man was created by God, who exists in the personalized form of entity, along with all other inanimate and animate beings on the earth at the same time. Therefore, it does not believe man to be necessarily a part of nature, but an entity entirely independent of others and on its own. It does not belong or connected to nature anyhow.

Apart from the great religions in the world, different societies believing in different forms of worshipping also express their views on the first man on earth. Many tribal societies believe the first man on earth was by the name Adim or Adam and he started his family on earth to give birth to mankind.
The most revealing and possibly the most authentic description on the origin of man was given by anthropologist of nineteenth century Charles Darwin in his scientific based knowledge oriented book 'The origin of Man'. In the theory, he had proclaimed man to be originated from the primate species monkey on earth, which was preceded by many other species of flora and fauna in their different forms. According to him, life first originated in the sea to give way to the invertebrate and later the vertebrate animals - the latest being the mammals to dominate on earth. Different species dominated it at different period of time. One of such dominating species was the dinosaur, with minimal brain but a huge body, which failed to survive on earth as they failed to adept to the newer ecology on earth. However, man is believed to be one of the latest species coming to earth as part of evolution, and his late induction ensuring a superior intelligence for him to all other animals.

However, for larger part of human civilization, man is being considered in light of the individual religious or cultural definitions only- as superior beings to other animals or at least as separate in their identity on earth. Therefore, the discovery of man at the later part of second millennium as the protégé of the primate has revolutionized the conventional ideas about himself, although no how it decreased the idea of exploitation of nature thereafter.

Man, on the other hand, is also a social animal, like many other ones mostly mammals considered comparatively more intelligent than other species- such as apes and other primates living together in large congregation or the elephant
living in herd. However, with his ability of intelligence and more so that of rationality attributes him with the ability to define his values of morality and other ones also with ethical propensity makes him differ from all other intelligent beings on earth. Therefore his intelligence becomes significant in presence of his society only, in which he can make applications of both his intelligence and values for its development—both in psychological and technical dimensions. Therefore, the identity of man and the concept of society are complementary to each other and their individual identity.

1.3. ETHICS: the Moral Guide of the Society

The twentieth century has brought revolutionary ideas and their application in all spheres of human lives in this world. We have witnessed tremendous success and development in the field of science as it was in the beginning of the last century. The new entrants to the areas of scientific development such as the automobile and the aeroplane have made unprecedented metamorphosis in the living conditions of human life. Since the beginning of human civilization, man has only been talking in terms of these scientific accessories, besides the nuclear power and the newest addition being the electronic gadget that can solve (or it seems to be) all human problems. There are also tremendous development in some fields that have flourished since the inception of human civilization, education, transportation, architecture which are being facilitated in growing and developing by other scientific inventions.
Man has been practicing 'Ethics' — the act of moral obligation and responsibility in scrutinising all his work, in judging the righteousness or 'goodness' of it from time to time to arrive at a rational conclusion. The present-day crises of the environment as a reflection of overall degeneration of ethical values has been interpreted by Titus/Keeton, the authors of 'Ethics for Today' in the following manner:

"The hypothesis is this:- The current doubt, turmoil and despair reflect a loss of consensus among men about what is 'good' or 'right' or what is 'better' or 'worse' in human conduct for present times. This loss of consensus arises from many causes. Among them, paradoxically, are charges that enlarge our opportunities charges that, interacting with other conditions, create unwelcome as well as beneficial effects. One cause of loss of consensus is the conflicts and disagreements about who gains and suffers and about who should gain and suffer as these charges occur—"**2. Again, the authors say:- " During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was widespread optimism, faith and confidence. A few lonely voices in the nineteenth century warned the West about the dangerous trends and possible disaster ahead, but the 'prophets of gloom' were largely disregarded........ There was great co incidence in sciences and a belief that it would be odd to solve these problems rather quietl."**3

Therefore, there is an attempt in the context to bring into topics only those aspects of 'Ethics' that may have affected the human psychology regarding the environment i.e. human view related to happiness or pleasure since ancient times,
as it has perforated a major role as a deciding factor not only in the human psyche of twentieth century and later, but also that of the fate of the earth as such - our mother earth, to be decimated and destroyed to the vicinity of oblivion as the cradle and nurturer of the human civilisation.

*While defining 'Ethics*', we come to know, 'Ethics' is derived from the Greek word 'ETHOS', which means 'Study of Good Conduct', it suggests that ethics is the subject that studies 'Goodness' or 'Righteousness' of the 'Thinking' or action of person or a group of persons. In precise, it means the 'righteous' or the 'good' conduct of an individual or a group of persons in another word the conventional values of the society. The values, which are in a word safeguarded and nurtured by different societies, vary in dimensions of application depending upon the stringency each society dispenses with. Thus, although every society may have varied system of values, it is not difficult to find out a familiar and uniform pattern underlying all norms of ethics in this world. At the core, the different modes of ethics in different societies world over relate to same or similar issues only, which primarily discuss the major social and morals institutions such as marriage, honesty, duty, restrain of conduct etc., the basic values of Stoicism or even on pleasure, sense of utility and sense of reasoning or rationality etc. Therefore, we may arrive at the conclusion that all the civilised societies in the world believe in similar ethical values only.
And when we think of 'Ethics' as the 'Study of right or good conduct we also come to know that Ethics studies or discusses in details the basic values of human kind, especially the moral values which we assert or mark as 'good' or 'right'. However, then we must define 'values' prior to defining ethics i.e. when we say "What is 'Value'?", we understand 'value' to be the standard or criteria by which we try to judge a person or persons' actions, define certain postulates (for example, we say to young children "Respect your elders") principals or tenets imposed by an individual in particular or society in general. For example, when we say we should 'respect our elders' or 'we should obey our parents', we mean to express certain postulates of values of an individual society (which, of course may have, from ethical point of view, universal acceptance as a postulates of value).

Therefore we can surmise that there is necessity to find out the 'Standard of Measure' i.e. criteria for deciding 'what is good' or 'what is bad or wrong'. Ethics as a subject studies in details about 'goodness' or 'righteousness' of a person's or a society's acts or collective actions. In precise, it means judgment of righteousness or goodness of human conduct or in another sense the conventional values of the society. The criterion itself can be called as the 'Value' system of human society. The society, in its bid to achieve the 'good' of it, the standard of which has been set by its own 'value' system, often aspires to achieve the 'good' itself. Therefore, rather than using it as a means for achieving the 'goals' of the society, it strives to achieve the 'good' itself.
Prior to discussing about the goal of the 'good' of the society, we must return to the question of the 'value' of the society to be retained, so that the moral order of the society can be maintained. To further the question we may ask to the extent that what are the reason behind maintaining the 'values' by the societies; the general answer to the question may be that since the 'Progress' of the society is to be maintained, the society should lean on a 'locus standi', that is, to find a reason to carry out an act for its progress and the moral values act as the 'Locus Standi' of it. A society based on strong moral values can progress both morally and spiritually and economically, as is believed by the wise man on earth - bringing both peace and stability to it.

Therefore, we may arrive at the conclusion that the 'good' of the society is to 'achieve' the 'good' it aspire for—be it economic development or achievement for some, whereas it may be interpreted by some others as 'achieving the spiritual zenith'. Still there may be some who may consider 'intelligence acumen' as the penultimate 'good' of the society. The ancient Greek society was one such community which highly emphasized on exercising one's 'intelligence' to achieve the 'good' of the society. The great Greek scholar Socrates emphasized on 'Education' as the 'good' of the society, whereas his equally renown disciple, the great philosopher Plato emphasized on 'Virtue' as the ultimate 'good' of all of human kind. In India at the ancient time, sages believed individual should make entourage of spiritual quest so as to enhance the level of 'good' of the society. In modern time, we find western societies espousing the causes of 'economic development' and also in orientation of common man's psychology to adapt to the
market values so that the individuals can live materialistically unhindered and an effluent life.

Therefore, the question remains as to whether the 'good' of the society is a means for achieving its goal or it is an 'end' itself. However, many an ethicists, specially those believing in the greater 'good' of society believe that not only the 'good' of society is quite often is its 'end' itself, the society itself quest for the 'good' that is not only universally 'good', the epitome of 'goodness', but something that must be the essence of life and the ultimate reality of life too. Like in Indian philosophy it is said that "Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram", That is Truth is universal Reality and Reality is Beauty' which otherwise suggests that reality itself is 'goodness' which is eternally beautiful and true.

1.4. ENVIRONMENT

Our surrounding, that comprises the trees, animals, birds and other creatures and the rivers, waterfalls, hills and the mountains together is called the nature. Human beings like all other creatures on earth are borne by and grown on the lap of mother nature. In scientific terms it is called Environment. Nature also extend to the air and atmosphere and even the space, the soil and the deep of the ground and even the various important elements it contains in the sea, the deep of the ocean and even the aquatic animals and plants in it. In that case we can call nature as our Environment and it comprises all the biotic and non-biotic (that is living and non living) substances on the earth. Scholar, Alok Saklani defines environment in the following way... "The term 'environment' includes water, air, land, human beings
and other living creatures."*4 Regarding the presence of life on earth author Holmes Rolston III expresses in the following way: "The evolution of rocks into dirt into flora and fauna is one of the great surprises of natural history, one of the rarest events in the astronomical universe. Earth is all dirt, we human too arise up from the humus, we find revealed what dirt can do when it is self organising under suitable conditions."*5 In the scientific terminology, the study of nature is called the Ecology- and it contains various study groups, the study of the various features of nature such as that of trees and animals are comprised in the category of Flora and Fauna, that of water-bodies as study of Hydrology and comprising study of lake, river, sea, ocean etc. are included in the Marine Biology as it focuses on different branches of it. It defines the various and overall characteristics and various natural happenings to give scientific explanation to them. Ecology can be divided into many divisions, which includes subject matters Eco-system, Marine ecology, Tropical forests i.e. the Rain Forests, Estuary, Bio-sere, Flora and Fauna etc. Thus, Ecology helps in learning extensively about nature.

In the study of Ecology, we can study in details about the inter-relationship or to be precise dependency between two or among a group of species of living beings or the inter-action between living and non-living substances of nature. According to scientists Allen H. Benton and William E. Warner, "Ecology, which deals with all of the interrelationship of nature, is thus a modern version of nature's study."*6 Usually when we talk about nature or refer to Ecology, we mean about various living and non-living aspects of our surrounding only such as birds, mammals.
The flowers and the trees, the birds and the animals, the rivers and the mountains—all these are part of the nature around us. The nature provides us with food, shelter and also cover besides the air, water and the earth to live on. Like a mother it helps us being fed and nurtured to carry on our lives and activities together. Since the beginning of human race on earth, man has been as much part and parcel of nature, as all other inhabitants of it. Man has been living in nature, taking shelter in it and has been using it for his own benefits. However, man happens to be more intelligent than all other inhabitants of it. He can use and manipulate things as no one else can do. He not only can move things from one place to another but also to cook food, construct a house or protect himself with weapons that no other inhabitant could do. However, all these activities by mankind have been carried out for its own conveniences and his extraordinary ability in comparison to other living beings has made him assert himself as superior to all of them. However, on earth in geo biological term, man is not the only important factor; there are other major characteristics of nature which only help in maintaining natural balance on earth and make it more livable for all the living beings.
1.5. THE EQUILIBRIUM

The three primary aspects of human society, man as its unit, nature as its basis and ethics as its guidance are not only complementary to each other, but also integral to each other’s entity as part of society. The three entities create interdependency, as a result of which human society make progress on earth. Ethics, although abstract in form, it dominates human psychology to drive him to achieve his goal in a righteous way and nature provides him with necessary and other requirement of life. On the other hand, ethics derives inspiration for the values it espouses such as devotion, dedication, honesty, fraternity etc.

Although over the change of time human ethics has turned into a complex system, its roots are based on natural values only. However, nature cannot be said to be dependent on either human or his ethics, but man, his ethics or his society is part of the development of nature’s relentless process only. Relation of man with nature is like that of a child with his mother only. Therefore, while like a mother, nature is not dependent on human, man himself is integral part of it only. But then, man, like any other species and with limited utilization of nature can contribute to the process of its continuity only. Thus, an equilibrium is created amidst man, ethics and nature of their existence, so that the human society can move ahead in harmony with the law of universe and without any interfering with its ongoing process. The equilibrium is created with the contribution of each component: nature, man and ethics, each component’s proportion of contribution causes a ratio amidst them creating a balance on earth that helps the equilibrium continue in its process and therefore the human society.
However, any of the components acting beyond its measure can not only create disturbances for other components, but also may destroy any of them and therefore so would be the process of equilibrium, destroyed beyond remand. For example, if nature causes enough fury to destroy most of the human habitation, than mankind will be in jeopardy and therefore the very existence of human society would be threatened.

Man, if growing in number beyond its proportion, he is bound to create stress on nature which provide him with necessities and also his ethics which would be bound to tether and its values ignored if man fails to provide himself with his basic necessities. A hungry man cannot be expected to be within the bounds of morality and not steal to appease himself. Likewise if man's ethics becomes either stringent of its values or laxity shown in implementation of them in society, the society may become disoriented by harming the integrity of human, its basic component or even the existence of nature.

Thus, it becomes a primary requisite, or to be precise, the obligation of the society to maintain the equilibrium on earth, so that ultimately it is not harmed itself in the process of its existence and continuity on earth. In modern era, the equilibrium of nature is best expressed in the theory Gaiaism, which believes such inter balance amidst the aspects of nature.

Therefore, we can surmise that man, nature and ethics are the three most important aspects of human society,- man as its unit, nature its receptacle and
ethics as its guidance have given human society its mobility and dynamism to function as the most important entity on earth. While ethics and environment i.e. the surrounding of a society remain integral part of it, they also help it in its entire formation, whether metaphysically or materialistically. While ethics has been dictating the necessities to be fulfilled for the development of the society, nature has been contributing it materialistically, helping it in the process of prosperity and development. However, looking at the process of development the need of the society also changes from time to time. There was a time while the society showed precedence in expressing respect for nature for being like a mother in nurturing all its organisms, including human society. It believed not only in the balance of its components and restrain from over using it, but also believed in not evoking the anger of nature by doing so. Ethics has changed over in time and the process of development has also taken over it. When at the beginning of human civilization, ethics was primarily meant to relate to the need of fulfilling the moral guidance only. But in the process of development, it has become a more complex and structured genre of thinking. While human society at such a stage derived the 'good' values from natural surrounding, for example, learning about dedication, loyalty, care, duty, responsibility etc., gradually it has given way to ethical institutions like marriage, religion etc. as part of a composite society. It has fulfilled not only the spiritual guidance to it, but also has helped human society to become a complex structure itself, setting it apart from rest of the surrounding flora and fauna to assert itself as a complex system.
Regarding the intrinsic relation of man with his surroundings, and the dependency of human existence on the earth, the Chandogya Upanisad has narrated in a hymn in the following manner,—

Esham Vutanam Prithvi Rasah Prithvya Aapo Rasah I

OpaamosadhayoRasa Oshadhinam Purushah Rasa II 7

It means essence of all the beings on earth is earth. The essence of earth is water, the essence of water is vegetation and from it is born human kind. It expressed the interrelationship between man and nature.

Some scholars have been trying to explain the equilibrium of nature man and ethics in their individual ways. For example, some scholars view it more from objective perspective explain it from ecological or even anthropological point of view, whereas some others try to explain it in subjective manner. Author Stephen J. Kellert believe that the harmony of the aspects of society depends on maintaining the balance among certain values which will assure rightful affinity and of its integrity. The values mentioned by him are as follows,—first it is aesthetic value, which inspires man to enhance his capabilities and orderly nature, then the dominionistic value that causes domineering attitude of man over others. It is followed by humanistic value that inspires love and care towards nature. Moral values helps man develop in spirituality and moral affinity towards it. Naturalistic view encourages man to come closer to nature. The last of them all, Negativistic value makes man fear and avoid nature or some of its features. Together they are called as 'Biophilia'- which helps in maintaining balance in man-nature relationship.
The most important feature of the relation among the three genres—man and his society, ethics and nature—is that not only they are supplementary to each other but also integral in nature. Their relationship has caused an equilibrium of existence and survival, not only of human being and his society in the midst of nature, but also of the natural aspects including flora and fauna and human ethics as well. Any kind of metaphysical or physiological change in one genre is bound to influence the others.

References:
2. Harold Titus and Morris Keeton—Ethics Today/EthICS tomorrow—p.1
3. Ibid. —p.2
4. Alok Saklani—Impact of Environment—p.3
5. Holmes Rolstone III—Philosophy and Natural Environment—p.26
7. Chandogya Upanisad—Environment and Ancient Sanskrit Literature—p.129