

## **CHAPTER- I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The challenges of the world we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the subsequent situations are increasingly complex in character and multiple in dimension. The threat to environment, constant depletion of natural resources, ever-widening gap between the rich and poor, the changes introduced by scientific progress, effects of globalization on economic, cultural, moral and political levels which are all united and global in character.

These problems, along with the unprecedented level of interconnectedness and interdependence of human beings from all regions may be described as a 'crisis'. Human beings instead of trying to reach at a solution for such a crisis are confronted with war, border issues and problems that come from the global community. However, what are required are the conditions of such a community that demand reflection on the basic elements to maintain a peaceful and healthy life. In any community, there must be a minimum level of understanding of the policies or rules that will be founded on a guiding set of basic principles. But unlike other communities, the global community has neither basic principles, nor tradition or customs to serve as a reference. What is lacking is a global structure for understanding and an ethical framework as its reference. Thus we are confronted with some basic questions like: what is responsibility? What constitutes values? What is a notion of a community? What do these notions entail, assume and project? Thus, ethics or moral philosophy plays a role here.

For some thinkers, there are two approaches to the ethical reflection within the transformations of science and technology. First, ethical reflection needs to consider particular situations in problem solving, and second, there must be content in ethical reflection. The latter one provides openness to other cultural traditions. In order to establish solution for particular situations, references must be made to culture, tradition and wisdom. Thus ethics or moral philosophy can bridge the gap to arrive at ethical solutions to deal with specific problems that science and technologies face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is possible only when we define human fulfillment in relation to nature. Thus, the field of ethics involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and behavior, duties and responsibilities. Moral philosophers normally

divide ethical theories into three categories such as Normative Ethics, Meta-ethics and Applied Ethics. Let us describe these in brief.

The word 'Ethics' is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' which means character. Ethics may be briefly defined as 'the science of morality' or as 'the study of right human conduct or duty'. It is a theory which explains the facts of moral life and indicates the course in which human activities should be directed. Thus, it is essentially a philosophical investigation into the notions of good and bad, right and wrong, and the connected notion of duty, as applied to conduct or voluntary action. Ethics may also be defined as 'the science of moral character as expressing itself in right or wrong conduct or action', or as "the science which deals with the goodness and badness of human character and seeks to determine the ideally perfect type of character which it is the duty of all men to strive to realize within themselves". Ethics is sometimes defined as an enquiry into the nature of the ultimate end of human action, the highest good of man and the means of attaining it. Thus, it may be said that Ethics is the study which deals with the moral ideal or standard, the supreme good or chief end of human activity and with those laws or regulative principles by conformity to which the supreme good is attained.

Ethics implies knowledge of basic principles and responsibility to make appropriate choices when necessary. The strong bond between ethics and a society's customs raises the issue of relativism. Moral philosophers argue that ethics implies values that are universal and are not tied to one society or time period. The particular rules implementing ethical beliefs in a specific society may change, but not the fundamental principles. In a society composed of subcultures, the specific laws or customs of each may be expressed differently. The distinction between ethics and morality becomes important when the rules used by different groups are not understood or accepted. Unacceptable behaviour may be assumed to mean unacceptable values. In that case, the unifying characteristics, of a society are weakened and individuals within that society must justify their actions.

### **1.1: Normative Ethics:**

Normative ethics deals with the questions like which moral standards regulate right and wrong conduct. This question involves the good habits and duties that we should follow and the consequences of our behaviour towards others. It deals with a set

of questions like “how ought one to act morally”? Thus, normative ethics is distinguishable from Meta-ethics because it scrutinizes values for the rightness and wrongness of actions, while Meta-ethics studies the meaning and justification of moral language and moral facts.

A distinguished branch of normative ethics is the theory of value which looks at what things or which are deemed to be valuable. For example, suppose we have decided that certain things are intrinsically good, or are more valuable than other things that are also intrinsically good. In such a context the following questions are plausible. What would this suggest about how we should live our lives? What sorts of things are good? What sorts of situations are good? Is pleasure permanently good? Is it good for people to be equally well off? Is it inherently good for beautiful things to exist? Or what does “good” mean? It may literally define “good” and “bad” for a community or society. Let us discuss some of the normative ethical theories, in the following way.

A) Consequentialism (Teleology) argues that morality of an action is dependent upon the action’s outcome or result. Some of the consequentialist theories are as follows:

- According to utilitarianism, an action is right if it leads to the most value for the greatest number of people (Maximizes value for all people).
- According to egoism, an action is right if it maximizes good for the self-person’s self-interest.
- According to situation ethics, the right action to take is the one which creates the most loving result, and that love should always be our goal.

B) Deontology: Deontology argues that decisions should be made considering the factors of one’s duties and other’s rights. Deontological theories include:

- Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative, which roots morality in humanity’s rational capacity and averts certain inviolable moral laws.
- The Contractarianism of John Rawls and Thomas Hobbes, which holds that the moral acts, are those that we would all agree to if we were unbiased.
- Natural rights theories, of Thomas Aquinas or John Locke, which holds that human beings have absolute, natural rights.

C) Virtue Ethics, which has been advocated by Aristotle, focuses on the inherent character of a person rather than on the specific actions that he or she performs. There has been a significant revival of virtue ethics in the past half century,

through the work of philosophers like G.E.Moore, E.Anscombe, Phillipa Foot, A. MacIntyre, Jane Austen, and Benjamin Franklin.

### **Metaethics:**

Metaethics is the study of the nature of ethical statements. It involves questions like “are ethical claims true?” i.e., capable of being true or false, or “are they, expressions of emotion?” If they are true, are they true forever? If they are ever true, what is the nature of the truths that they express? And are they ever true completely or always only relative to some individual, society, or culture?

Metaethics studies the nature of ethical sentences and attitudes. This includes such questions as what does “good” and “right” mean?, how we know what is right and good?, whether moral values are objective?, and how ethical attitudes motivate us? Often this is derived from some lists of moral absolutes, e.g. a religious moral code, whether explicit or not, some would view aesthetics as itself a form of Metaethics. Metaethics also investigates where our ethical principles come from, and what they mean. Are they merely social creations? Do they encompass more expressions of our individual emotions? Metaethical responses to these questions focus on the issues of universal truths, the will of God, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of moral terms themselves.

### **1.2: Applied Ethics:**

Applied ethics is a branch of ethics that considers the practical application of ethical principles to specific issues of social or personal concern, including medical ethics, professional ethics, and environmental ethics. Applied ethics is the philosophical examination, from a moral standpoint, of particular issues in private and public life that are matters of moral judgment. It is thus, a term used to describe attempts to use philosophical methods to identify the morally correct course of action in various fields of human life. Thus, applied ethics tries to provide guidance on specific issues within the context of a consistent notion of the elements of a good life. It is a discipline of philosophy that tries to apply ethical theory to real life situations. But it is not simply a matter of the application of ethical norms. Applied ethics also gives a special attention to humanity’s specificity and the urgency of the situation in which the ethical issues arise. The distinctiveness of applied ethics lies in its particular and direct attention to

those features. In fact, ethics as it has been understood traditionally, integrates both theoretical and the practical ethical concerns.

### **The emergence of applied ethics:**

There has been an unprecedented growth and demand for applied ethics since the last half of the previous century. In order to make sense of the demand for applied ethics, let us discuss some major developments that contributed to the turn to applied ethics that have been witnessed over the last three decades.

### **The contemporary turn towards applied ethics:**

This is an age of application for the various disciplines under humanities. And it is customary in philosophy to discriminate any applied or practical oriented subject on the ground that it destroys philosophy and applied ethics is not free from such kind of segregation. In spite of this approach towards applied ethics, it is believed that applied ethics is a direct outgrowth of the earlier philosophical periods. Because we know that at the beginning of this century *Logical Positivism*, which is considered a part of philosophy of science rejected all ethical theories. For them all ethical theories or judgments are expressions of emotions, which are neither verifiable in principle nor in practice, therefore, do not have meaning. But after the Second World War Logical Positivism came under attack. Critics started to look at those issues of sciences and what the positivist's said about those issues. These issues of the critics are called *The Logic of Discoveries*.

Philosophers started to look at the logic of ethical judgments and found that when people make ethical judgments and decisions they simply do not express their emotions or feelings; rather they are making a distinction between making the decisions and justifying the decisions. Research in this area is called "practical ethics". Philosophers became more interested in this area and examined specific ethical issues. Thus practical ethics gradually developed and transformed itself into applied ethics.

From another perspective, the contemporary turn towards Applied Ethics was fuelled by a variety of developments. Perhaps the most important of these developments was due to the rise and status of science in the modern times. Say for example, Francis Bacon's famous statement that 'knowledge is power' has become a reality in the modern times. Philosophical ethics, which by its very nature deals with

values, has been pushed to the sidelines, if not totally excluded from the main line of modern scientific discourse’.

The developments of philosophy have contributed to the marginalization of philosophical ethics. Modern philosophical ethics, in an attempt to cope with the rationality of modern science, has produced the approaches to ethics that imitate the universal laws of nature produced by the natural sciences. Say for instance, deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant and utilitarian ethics of John Stuart Mill has produced its own account of a universal moral law in the form of Categorical Imperative and the Greatest Happiness Principle.

We have started to recognize that we need to assume responsibility for the impact of our actions on our natural and social World. This awareness of responsibility towards the World has generated the need for a new way of engaging ourselves ethically within the world. Philosophical ethics, with its focus on abstract moral principles on the one hand, and its attraction with meta-ethical issues on the other, was not able to answer this need in the modern World. Thus, applied ethics emerged as a strong contender to fill up this gap. Applied ethics is concerned with the specific, controversial moral issues, such as abortion, animal rights and euthanasia. Medical ethics is the first applied ethics ever to be developed. The following principles are the most common principles in applied ethical discussions.

- *Social benefit*: acknowledges the content to which an action produces beneficial consequences for society.
- *Principle of benevolence*: helps those in need.
- *Principle of honesty*: do not deceive others.
- *Principle of autonomy*: acknowledges a person’s freedom over his/her actions or physical body.
- *Principle of justice*: acknowledges a person’s right to due process, for compensation for harm done, and fair distribution of benefits.
- *Rights*: acknowledges a person’s right to life, information, privacy, free expression, and safety.

The above principles represent a spectrum of traditional normative principles and are derived from both consequentialist and duty-based approaches.

### **1.3: Environmental Ethics:**

Environmental ethics is a sub branch of applied ethics. The word “environment” maybe defined as the ‘collective term for the conditions in which an organism lives, both biotic and abiotic’. Environmental ethics emerged as a new sub discipline of philosophy in the early 1970. It is a discipline that studies the moral relationship of human beings, and also the value and moral status of the environment and its nonhuman contents. Environmental ethics has given a new dimension to the conversation of natural resources. In wider sense ‘environment’ signifies the surroundings, which include the social, cultural and moral sphere. In its narrow sense, it includes the non-human nature including plants and animals. Man and nature together constitute environment as a totality. Thus, environment includes both man and nature and environment of man comprises of the relation between man and man and the relation between man and nature.

Environmental ethics studies the ethical relationship between human beings and natural environment. Human beings are a part of society and so are the other living beings. When we talk about the moral principle that guides our life, we often ignore the fact that even floras and faunas are a part of our lives. They are an integral part of the environment and therefore have a right to be considered a part of the human life. On these lines it is clear that they should also be related with our guiding principles as well as our moral and ethical values. There are some basic premises in environmental ethics that govern human-nature relationship which are as follows:

- Human being is a part of nature.
- Our knowledge and understanding of the complexity, diversity, and interrelationship of life and living system remain rudimentary.
- The sustainability of our life support system is incompatible with current consumptive growth patterns and the rate of human population growth.
- Humans have altered the natural system of the Earth to such an extent that much extinction have already taken place and the existence of countless species, including our own, is in jeopardy.
- Human beings need to have a profound respect for nature in all its diverse manifestation.
- All species are unique and have value regardless of any value that they may have for humans.

- All persons need to take responsibility towards nature.
- Indigenous knowledge of eco-system and the culture of which it is a part should be respected and valued in the effort to enhance knowledge and pursuit of environmental sustainability.

When industrial progresses lead to destruction of resources, is it not the industry's duty to restore the depleted resources? Moreover, can a restored environment make up for the originally natural one? Mining process hamper the ecology of certain regions, they may outcome in disturbance of plant and animal life in those areas. Slash and burn techniques are used for clearing land for cultivation. Thus, most of the human activities lead to environmental pollution. The excessively increasing population is increasing the demand for resources like food and shelter. As the population is exceeding the carrying of our planet, natural environment are being used for human inhabitation. The damage we, as human beings, are causing to nature, as coming back to us by resulting in a polluted environment. The diminution of natural resources is jeopardizing our future generations. The imbalance in the nature that we have caused is going to disrupt our life. By destroying nature, we are depriving these life forms of their right to live. We are going against the proper ethical and moral values by disturbing the equilibrium in nature. We are being unethical in treating the plants and animals life forms, which co-exist in the society.

Human beings have certain obligations towards their fellow beings; similarly, we have a set of duties towards our environment. Environmental ethics claims that our behaviour needs to be based on a set of moral values that guide our approach towards other living beings in nature. Environmental ethics is about including the right of non-human animals in our ethical and moral values. Even if human race is considered as the prime concern of society, animals and plants are in no way less important. They have a right to acquire their fair share for survival. We the human beings, along with the other farms of life make up our society. We all are a part of the food chain and thus, closely related with each other. We together form our environment. The preservation of natural resources is not only the need of the day but also our prime duty.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* P. Erlich's *The Population Bomb* , B. Commoner's *The Closing Circle* and, in particular, the Club of Rome's report *Limits of Growth* are often quoted as being the motivation for the environmental movement which penetrated politics, the media, science and philosophy. The relatively late

spreading of ecologist discourse into the general public stemmed from human tendency to act by taking rational measures only after a critical situation has arisen, i.e. under pressure. At present, contrary to opinions suggesting that the ecological movement has become less active following its institutionalisation, we can perceive that in Western Europe, the range of protest actions has actually increased.

Technological growth brought humankind face to face with a historically exceptional situation, the importance of changes imposed upon nature, the image of the Earth viewed from space, and local, regional or even global crises and the boomerang outcome of certain technical attainments generated insuperable difficulties for traditional ethics. Earlier it is believed that traditional ethics deals with only humans and their fellow humans and is therefore anthropocentric and also non-cumulative. Confronted with our technical resources, the brittle nature of life on our planet calls for ethical thinking to enlarge and include future generations and the non-human world.

Environmental ethics is the only sub-branch of applied ethics that does not solely involve culture. It measures conditions produced by nature and the point at which nature and culture meet. The ethical-environmental method is a precarious one: once we humans have gone through nothing will ever be the same again; problems must be undertaken rather than bypassed. But presently the condition forces us to face the problems. The distinctive feature of any ethical method is to scrutinize issues and difficulties and try to understand them rather than dishing out resolutions. The immediacy of threats on the same scale as, nuclear war overshadows controversy about abstract issues such as the controversy between supporters of ethical nativism and those who see ethics as rooted in culture alone. Sidgwick comes to the conclusion that a theory about 'the origin of ethics would make very little difference to the controversies between the different schools of ethics'.<sup>1</sup>

One might question the necessity for another type of ethics, given that traditional ethics and several religious ethics already exist. The response is that environmental ethics does not look like any of these ethics in any way, for several reasons at least. Let us discuss. Firstly, No universal religious ethics, is available to solve conflicts of international law. In addition, the bases of religious ethics are not the equal as those of environmental ethics. Religious ethics have a spiritual foundation whereas environmental ethics have a rational, scientific foundation. But there is a

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<sup>1</sup> Sidgwick H. and Singer M.G. edit. *Essays on Ethics and Method*, Oxford University Press. 2005, P.10-26.

constant attraction and tension between the two. Both realms belong to humankind and neither can rule the other one out. We cannot use certain religion to explain ethics or vice versa, but rather to understand the way that the two are inter-related. Any practical ethical method should take account of, and expand its basis of reflection to include, all human proportions for which environmental ethics has a transversal dimension. In a disappointed world which has lost its sacred aura, the fear of harmful consequences leads to precaution, but ultimately in the long term, only the fear of interfering with something sacred will be able to keep us out of harm's way. However, that stage is still a long way off.

The emergence of questioning about the relationship between human and environment on a global scale calls for reflection, on the same level of generalisation, about establishing a framework for analysing actions, which independently or together, in the present or the future, are liable to cause damage to humankind and the ecosphere. Large-scale creativities represent a new type which is no longer ethically neutral. Similarly to the fields of ecology and systemology, it would seem that the field of ethics also has emerging properties. Just as persons and societies require ethics to reach a minimum of consensus and escape the relativism of values and moral tribalism, so humankind requires ethics regarding the ecosphere and its components.

The year 1988 was an important year so far as the development of environmental ethics is concerned. Several books were published in marking the birth of this discipline. *Respect for Nature, Environmental Ethics, Foundations of Environmental Ethics, Why Preserve Natural Diversity? And Biodiversity*, were all published. In 1989, Holmes Rolston III, E. Katz, L. Westra and others formed *The International Society for Environmental Ethics*. In the year 1997 another scientific association has formed *The International Association for Environmental Philosophy*. Various periodicals were published including *Environmental Ethics, Environmental Values* and *Ethics and the Environment*.

The relationship between environmental ethics and environmental philosophy share a common characteristic, namely, they can be ranked into two categories, i.e. *anthropocentric* and *biocentric*. *Ecocentrism* is a third category, which is closely associated to biocentrism. The detail about these theories is discussed in the second chapter. These categories are useful for moralistic purposes, but, like any wide-ranging outline, are rather simplistic. The differentiated approach separates anthropocentrism

from biocentrism and the criterion is the moral entity whether this is human or non-human. Utilitarianism and equality lie at opposite poles.

The relationship between human and environment/nature, or relationship between humankind and its natural habitat, is a matter which requires some idea of tradition, religion, culture and philosophical, political and economic systems. This relationship is a vast field of research for ecology, particularly its cultural and ideological dimensions. The human-nature relationship also includes elements of philosophy as it concerns humankind's place in the world.

The mutual character of the human-nature relationship is nothing new. Humankind has had a significant impact on its environment ever since it first started using fire over 700,000 years ago. Humankind's excessive hunting led to the extinction of fauna, and its agricultural practices. These are all instances of the *co-evolution* of human beings social systems and natural systems.

Historical elements of humankind's attitudes towards nature or environment can only be discussed in this dissertation in the light of religious approaches, as far as the modern age is concerned. Humankind organized its values on religious beliefs; implicitly, this is here where ethics came to the picture. There are also socially constructed perceptions of nature that represents a model. This model is originally the part of religious models. After the religious approach then came scientific knowledge and both approaches continued to exist side by side. If we were to judge the legitimacy of the knowledge developed by one or other viewpoint, we would indirectly tend to favour the rational, i.e. scientific school of thought. However, if we ponder the convergence of models obtained by mystics and scientists, the harmonizing nature of the two viewpoints goes beyond the realm of mere hypothesis. The elements presented here may be the key to understand human-nature relationship, especially its progress and current status, which go a long way to elucidate environmental crisis.

Primitive religions originated in early humankind's contact with nature. From the disparity between its own power and that of the natural elements, primordial humankind gained a sense of the existence of a reality which transcended this world, and was brought into contact with the sacred. It is useful to point out here that this first step in the emergence of Homo religious gave rise to humankind's sense of

dependency. Religions and ancient theories stem from nature, which are classified under the term naturalism: animism, totemism etc.<sup>2</sup>

The beginning of modernity noticed as a turning point in history and reason initiated to take on importance in all of humankind's attitudes and activities which resulted in a religious crisis. Logical reasoning, methodical reasoning of Descartes, mechanicism of Newton, quantification and experimentation of Bacon and Galileo were all transformations of the paradigm that governed modernity. The changes made possible by the influx of industry followed by science and modern technology. Industrialization, which also had consequences on agriculture, brought about considerable developments for Homo sapiens. It dramatically increased environment's carrying capacity and a population boom soon followed. The 'nature-machine' or 'nature resource store' is an image which remained in modernists' mind and, which, in many ways, still endures today. In the early 1970s, at the dawning of the environmental crisis, doubt was cast over the idea of an everlasting, untamed nature, endowed with considerable autopoietic capability and flexibility.

#### **1.4: Sustainable Development:**

Sustainable development is a broadly used concept which is shared by economics, ecology and politics. Sustainable development incorporates well-known solutions to reconcile economic development with the worthy continuance of human civilisation and the protection and renewal of natural resources. Basically sustainable development is today's institutionalised answer to the environmental crisis. The economic side of sustainable development is transformed and subordinated to the cause of human solidarity which must go beyond national and temporal barriers of universal, intragenerational and intergenerational harmony. It involves conserving the natural environment in a state of minimum deterioration. The idea emerged out of the climate of imitation which followed the UN Summit in Stockholm (1972) and the creation of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In 1983, the United Nations General Assembly formed the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (UNWCED) to study the compatibility amongst economic development and environmental protection. In 1987, the Commission produced a report entitled *Our Common Future*, also known as the *Brundtland Report*. The report defines sustainable development, initially known as eco-development, as: "...development which meets the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.slideshare.net/H.S.VIRK/man-nature-relationship-and-the-sikh-perspective>.

needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.”

The definition is brief, vague and, inapplicable according to the experts. It can be used by environmentalists, who highlight the sustainable part and also by economists who focus on the development part. Tim O’Riordan drew a distinction between sustainability and sustainable development<sup>3</sup>, but in Agenda 21 the terms ‘sustainability’ and ‘sustainable development’ were used interchangeably. The first one prioritizes the environment, while the later highlights the development aspect which could be confused by some with economic growth.

Radical ecologists have been anxious of using the term sustainable development in the contexts where progress is sporadic or regional. They suggest the term sustaincentrism as the middle ground amongst techno-centrism and eco-centrism. Development can be judged economically using simple indicators such as the GDP/inhabitant, but this does not give an idea of well-being. Various types of capital support development, like: natural capital, physical capital produced by humans, human capital and social capital. There are two forms of sustainable development like strong and weak. An important issue is that of the degree of substitutability between natural capital and other capitals, a degree which defines whether there is strong sustainability or weak sustainability. Followers of weak sustainability consider that a loss of natural capital can be compensated by other forms of capital. This idea is full of optimism and confidence in future scientific and mechanical solutions. On the other hand, supporters of strong sustainability consider the other forms of capital to be harmonizing and non-substitutable.

After the Rio summit, the use of the term sustainable grew up in popularity like, sustainable agriculture, sustainable political systems, sustainable societies, etc.. From an environmental viewpoint, seeing the connection amongst economic and ecological systems and examining local and regional problems within overall economic and ecological context indicate a change of perception. *Think global, act local* is a fashionable slogan. Sustainability cannot be envisaged on a local or regional scale if global sustainability is ignored, as sustainability is possible locally by importing natural resources which may damage, or even render impossible, the sustainability in the

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<sup>3</sup> Riordan, Tim O. ‘The Politics of Sustainability’ in *Sustainable Environmental Management: Principles and Practice*, edited by R. Kerry Turner, London: Belhaven, 1988.

exporting regions or areas.<sup>4</sup> On first glance, the concept of sustainability, which refers to notions of equity, may appear to be highly compatible with socialism. In a recent report, the Commission recognizes the limits of sustainable development, which are related to the current state of our methods, current social organisation and the biosphere's capability to support the effects of human activity. Under these conditions, sustainable development is not a state of equilibrium, but a state of change and research, which implies the need to make painful sacrifices and decisions. And where there are decisions there are also choices and ethics.

In the second chapter entitled: *Theories in Environmental Ethics* we have made an attempt to discuss the very basic normative theories in environmental ethics and discussed the question that "to what extent anthropocentrism is acceptable"? We have also mentioned the philosophical arguments for anthropocentrism in environmental ethics. From a moral perspective anthropocentrism describes that only human beings are intrinsically valuable, nature has only instrumental value. We have discussed three varieties of anthropocentrism prevalent in environmental ethics. Some of these are concerned with the interests of human while some are not concerned with the human interest. We have tried to show that to a certain extent, anthropocentrism in a weak sense can be acceptable because, we think that absolute destruction is dangerous and absolute preservation is impossible. We have discussed some philosophical arguments for non-anthropocentrism some arguments against both these theories. In this chapter, we have tried to say that human interest in survival is the best ground on which to argue for an ecological balance which is good both for human and for the whole biological community. We humans are gifted with rationality; therefore, we need to use that gift in a rational manner to save our environment.

In the third chapter entitled: *Environmental Ethics, Sustainable Development and Future Generations: Some Observations* we have discussed that environmental ethics is concerned with the issues of responsible personal conduct with respect to natural objects, resources and non-human organisms. It is one of the most important modern environmental conservation and sustainable development tools. It teaches us to be healthy and reciprocal to the global environment and development. Here we have defined the concept of sustainable development, and tried to show that the term

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<sup>4</sup> [http://www.uvm.edu/giee/AV/PUBS/PARADOX/Sust\\_Par.html](http://www.uvm.edu/giee/AV/PUBS/PARADOX/Sust_Par.html), (Voinov, A.A. Paradoxes of Sustainability, *Journal of Environmental Management*, 1998.)

sustainable development contains two key concepts. Firstly, the concept of needs, in particular the essential need of the world's poor, to which priority should be given, and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and secondly, social organization on environment's ability "to meet present and future needs". In addition to these two key concepts four interlinked dimensions of sustainable development also introduced in this chapter such as, economic, environmental, social and cultural, because if development is to be sustainable in the long-term, there needs to be a balance between these four dimensions. We also discuss the ethical approach of sustainable development, in this chapter. The basic normative principles of sustainable development are: Common but differentiated responsibilities, Intra-generational equity, Inter-generational equity, Justice, and Gender equality. We have also discussed some relevant questions of sustainable development. These are: sustainability of what? Sustainability for whom? Why Sustainability? We have mentioned the distinction between strong and weak sustainability, cultural sustainability. The paradigm shifts in sustainable development, different environmental ethical theories and sustainable development we have discussed in this chapter. Ethical concern of population control, how wildlife preservation can help to promote sustainable development, is highlighted in our discussion.

Question like what is future generation, the moral status of future generation what is our obligations towards future generation, what sort of problems can be raised if we support our obligation to future generation, what is the Utilitarian approach towards future generations, are discussed in this chapter. Since the 1970s, the topic of ethical obligations to future generations has been of interest to philosophers, economists, environmentalists, and others. While the context for application differs for each field, the central issues are the same: whether a current generation has moral obligations to non-contemporaneous future generations, the nature of those obligations, and whether those obligations require an earlier generation to make sacrifices for a future generation, are discussed in this chapter.

In the fourth chapter entitled: *Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development in Indian Philosophy and Culture* an attempt has been made to show that Indian philosophy and culture have strong foundation for environmental protection and it has a holistic approach towards environment, sustainable development and future generations. Indian culture shows greater concern and deep respect towards nature and

emphasizes the holiness and purity of life for both at present and future. Indian philosophy and culture seeks to identify and evaluate the distinctive ecological attitudes, values and practices of human beings by making clear their relations with the intellectual and ethical thought within scripture, ritual, myth, symbols, cosmology, and sacrament.

A good environmental sense has been one of the fundamental features of India's ancient philosophy. History reveals the fact that the civilization of India had grown up in close association with nature. Indian philosophical tradition provides a solid foundation for adequate concern and deep respect for nature, biosphere and ecosphere and future generations. Indian environmental thinking reaches its apex in the philosophical *sutras* of the six school of *Darśanaś*, or a way of life. We discussed the ecological insight of the three best known schools i, e., *Nyāya*, *Sāṃkhya*, and *Advaita Vedānta*. These schools are intended to regulate our conduct in tune with cosmic order. Environmental consciousness in Hinduism and the *Dāṇḍanīti* of Kautilya as environmental consciousness is highlighted in this chapter.

While discussing environmental sustainability in Indian philosophy and culture it is suggested that, though sustainable development and ecologically appropriate lifestyle are a relatively new concept in the Western world to overcome environmental crisis, but it has been an integral part of the traditional Indian culture and philosophy for ages. The sustainability of Indian culture has been made possible by virtue of cultural diversity which in turn is on account of the diversity of ecosystems prevailing. The operational software for the sustainability of diversity is however the traditional Indian value system much of which is retained even today. As a conclusive remark of this chapter we have suggested that the holistic concept of environmental ethics, sustainable development and preservation of natural resources for future generations was already there in Indian philosophy and culture.

As a *concluding remark*, we have tried to propose that our obligations to protect environment from human's despot like attitude must be primarily based on obligations to future generations. If we have no moral reason to consider the interests of future individuals, then we have few compelling reasons to conserve environment. This is because the present generation, will not be harmed very much if we continue to destroy our environment. So, if we only consider the interests of the present generation in our moral calculations, we will fail our posterity. In order to advocate environmental

protection, we must have moral reasons to look out for future individuals. It is imperative for these environmental reasons that we find a way to justify our moral obligations to future generations. The question is whether or not we have any obligations to future, and what these obligations are, this may seem like a simple question with a clear answer. Yes, we do have obligations to future generations, including an obligation to leave behind a clean environment. This obligation is expressed in the definition of sustainable development as the development that meets the need of present without compromising the need and interest of future generations. While discussing environmental ethics, sustainable development and future generations, we believe that environmental problems and the related problems for future generation can be solved and the world will be saved if we necessarily understand the normative nature of such problems.

We can say that nature has weak anthropocentric intrinsic value following Rolston III. But humans' destruction of environment according to their own needs, without compromising the interest of future generation, is excessive and unexpected. We need to protect our environment from unnecessary destruction and preserve natural resources for future generation by a sustainable developing technique, which may be considered as an **Ethics of Responsibility**. There are lot of issues and concerns in relation to environmental ethics, sustainable development and future generations which are not covered and discussed in this dissertation, keeping necessarily in mind for future research.