

Preface

Preparing this thesis entitled **INTRINSIC VALUES IN NATURE: SOME CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS** has made me realized that how far the discussion of ethical issues related to non-human species, and examines the discrepancy in applied ethics and between treatment of human life and treatment of all other life forms. In the process, this thesis offers both explanations and some critical observations of basic moral theories such as deontological and teleological ethics approaching environmental issues.

Long back, philosophers simply did not discuss our treatment on intrinsic value in nature. Actually, it was not widely considered to be a topic of anyone's interest at all till 1949 when Aldo Leopold entered in the field of environmental ethics with his *Sand County Almanac*. But the time has change today. Our earlier thinkers had been well aware of the need to justify the concept of intrinsic value. We have gone through Genesis and some well-known thinkers like G. E. Moore, Roderick M. Chisholm, Noah M. Lemos, Homes Rolston III, Arne Naess, Robert Elliot, J. B. Callicott, Edwin P. Pister, Albert Schweitzer, Paul Taylor, Peter Singer etc. Actually there are strong philosophical debates among many western philosophers about the moral status of nature/environment. Moore proposes a theory related to the concept of intrinsic value which is later examined and elaborated with specification its dimensions. Other thinkers offer discussions concerning anthropocentric/non-anthropocentric dichotomy related to the moral status of nature. There are also discussions whether intrinsic value is subjective or objective. In the domain of these theories, philosophers designed to maximize the satisfaction of preferences defending intrinsic value in nature and that perhaps aims at for a desired outcome that maximizes the preferences in the concerned area of discussion. Leopold, Naess, Rolston III and many other defend a theory of environmental ethics designed to ascribe intrinsic value in nature, based on the inherent worth of teleological entities.

In the chapter one that has been undertaken in the thesis, attempts will be made to give an overview of the statement of the problem, objectives of the research and the research gap that attracts the interest toward the debates and dimensions of intrinsic value in nature. This chapter investigates whether ascribing intrinsic value to nature is crucial to environmental ethics. Furthermore, a good regulatory regime- as found in some traditional normative theories- helps to augment to suffice a sound logical argument that produces a healthy and continued debate on intrinsic value in nature in research.

In chapter two attempts will be made to explore the very concept and warrant of intrinsic value right from Moorean trend to John O Neill's implicit examination about the concept. However, the ideas inherited from these analyses offer a clear picture that in most of the ethical theories, even though they are different terminologically, seems to be agreed in one point and common to them to mean intrinsic value as *an end in itself*. In Moorean group, regarding the concept and warrant of intrinsic value, Noah M Lemos, Roderick M Chisholm, Franz Brentano, A. C. Wing have almost forwarded similar view. However John O' Neill has a different interpretation. There are also discussions about the counterpart of intrinsic value which is commonly understood as instrumental value- considered as a derivative value.

In chapter three we explore Contemporary environmental ethics begins with 'moral extentionism.' There are some debates in this regard. To what extent of the nature/environment, is to be accorded intrinsic value, and consequently, moral worth? What is the criterion of according moral value? Some like Peter Singer, favour sentience criterion, while conservationists speak of biospheric egalitarianism. The latter hold that trees and plants have non-felt goals of their own. Even in an eco-system, species are to be accorded moral value. Whether to accord equal moral worth to all beings, or accept degrees of value? Some accept degrees; others say this is undue partiality. Can we accept killing some wild beasts in order to maintain ecological balance? The welfarists say, 'no'. Conservationists permit keeping in view the integrity of the system. Some thinkers like Warwick Fox, do not find any necessary connection between value ascription and

conservation. They think deep self-realisation is needed. Some other thinks that only sentient beings have intrinsic value. Some feel that environmental values are not universal. They support relativist environmentalism. On the other hand third world environmentalism is different. As we have seen that philosophical discussion of moral status of nature has a long history. So, the discussion of moral status of nature and the normative elements of the human-animal relationship long existed in the margins of philosophy.

In chapter four we have examined the eco-aesthetic concern of ancient literature in Sanskrit. The pantheism of the Vedas reflects the intimate relation between men and deified natural forces. *Agni, Indra, Varuna* and other Vedic deities clearly shows that they are personified natural forces. They were most powerful. In the *Brahmanas* there is a desire to subjugate nature by magical powers. During this time the external nature were studied extensively and the ancient science like Ayurveda began to flourish. After the Vedic period the *yajna* cult became weak and the worship of personal Gods became popular. In *Valmiki's Ramayana* the description of nature is given importance. Nature is presented as a coherent and harmonious system of existence. *Ramayana* is always supplied with the energy of nature and Sita is the true daughter of nature. When compare to *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* is friendlier towards forests. The two epics together draw an ecological map of India from Himalayas to Srilanka. Kalidasa has followed the style of Valmiki in describing nature and human life. We must note one clear difference between Hindu ethics and Environmentalism. Hindu ethics upholds the freedom from samsara but on the other hand environmentalism upholds the preservation of samsara. However Hindu ethics and Environmentalism do not neglect the need of universal harmony, which we can confirm from the above mentioned findings. Environmentalism once more disagrees with Hindu ethics in the self-realization methodology. In Hindu ethics, particularly in *Advaita*, self-realization stands for the negation of plurality between beings while environmentalism defines self-realization as realization of the non-difference of oneself and the processes of the natural world without sacrificing plurality.

Therefore, this thesis exposes the ongoing necessity for philosophical work in the field of ethics with regard to the treatment of living beings and the urgent need for an ethic that is less partial and more consistent for both human and nonhumans.

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