

## CHAPTER SIX

### Deep Ecological Movement

#### **Introductory:**

The objective of non-anthropocentrism can further be strengthened with the introduction of deep ecological movement. Deep ecology is an umbrella concept as it has been used in a variety of ways. Unlike Land Ethics of Leopold, deep ecology has not been developed out of one primary source; rather it incorporates a general description of all non-anthropocentric theories. The term 'deep ecology' was coined by Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, and the concept was subsequently developed and comprehended by many environmental philosophers and ethicists.

#### **What is deep ecology?**

The term Deep Ecology was coined by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in his "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary." Naess says, "The essence of deep ecology is to ask deeper questions. The adjective 'deep' stresses that we ask why and how, where others do not."<sup>43</sup> Naess further says that the deep ecology movement tries to clarify the fundamental presuppositions underlying our economic approach in terms of value priorities, philosophy, and religion. As deep ecology asking deep questions, it refers only to the depth of questioning and not to the contents of any answer to these questions. Deep ecologists typically do have substantive views that can be characterized as nonanthropocentric or ecocentric. According to Devall and Sessions deep ecology subscribes to two fundamental norms, such as, biocentric egalitarianism and self-realization. In fact Fox singles out the idea of self-realization as

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<sup>43</sup> Naess, Arne, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary", *Inquiry* 16(1) spring, 1973. p.43

central to his views and renames his development of the idea 'transpersonal ecology'.

Biocentric egalitarianism is the claim that all living things are of equal moral worth or equal intrinsic value. Here the term 'living' or life is used in a broad sense. It includes the land as such which incorporates watersheds, landscapes, ecosystems. The central idea is that human are in nature and in no way "above or outside of nature."

<sup>44</sup> In outlining the concept of biocentric egalitarianism, Naess says, "The ecological field-worker acquires a deep-seated respect ...for ways and forms of life. He reaches ...a kind of understanding that others reserve for fellow men and for a narrow section of ways and forms of life. To the ecological field-worker, the equal right to live and blossom is an intuitively clear and obvious value axiom. Its restriction to humans is an anthropocentrism with detrimental efforts upon the life quality of humans themselves. The quality depends in part upon the deep pleasure and satisfaction we receive from close partnership with other forms of life. The attempt to ignorance our dependence and to establish a master-slave role has contributed to the alienation of man from himself."<sup>45</sup>

So our prime task, Naess conceives, is to motivate people, influence people towards beautiful acts by finding ways to work on their inclinations rather than their morals. In fact Naess borrows the phrase "beautiful action" from Kant who says that a moral act is one done out of duty, not out of inclination. Acts done out of inclination, Kant opines, are suspect from the moral point of view.

At the very outset it can be said that deep ecology differs from ecology. By the term 'ecology' we mean the problem relating to environment. But unlike ecology, deep ecology is ecologically deep. It addresses a second order interpretation of environment. Deep ecology involves a cultivation of ecological consciousness; it is associated with an ecological, philosophical and spiritual approach where the unity of

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<sup>44</sup> Bill Devall, "The Deep Ecology Movement", *Natural Resources Journal* 20(2), April, 1980p.303.

<sup>45</sup> Naess, Arne, op.cit. Pp. 95-96.

humans, plants, animals and the earth are taken as relational whole. Deep ecology argues that the environmental movement must shift from an anthropocentric to a biocentric perspective. It focuses on the preservation of unspoilt wilderness.

Deep ecological movement appeared as a slogan that goes against shallow ecology which committed to the fight against pollution and resource depletion. More specifically, it can be said that deep ecological movement being the genesis of non-anthropocentrism actually appeared to encounter the so-called anthropocentrism. In this regard, it can be said that deep ecological movement is a second investigation regarding ecology. Shallow ecology, a nominee of anthropocentrism or modified anthropocentrism, has attempted to protect the health and affluence of the people in developed countries. Contrary to shallow ecology, deep ecology takes a 'relational total field' image by repudiating or rejecting the anthropocentric 'man-in-environment image' in favour of a more holistic and non-anthropocentric approach. As the environmental crisis is the outcome of modernization of industry, agriculture, excessive scientific innovations and demonstrations, an attempt has been made to tackle environmental crisis through scientific means. That means to say, on one hand, in order to tackle the so-called materialistic problems, such as the problem arising out of over population, the decision making body at times is bound to take up such measures which may be particularly beneficial to the environment in general.

Although one can apprehend the adverse impact of industrialization, it seems inevitable for the over populated countries suffering from unemployment and under development to still march towards industrilisation despite its adverse long term impacts on environment since it provides job opportunities for many. Through such activities the environment gets damaged. Some scientific measures are adopted to heal the damaged environment, but such endeavours are mostly futile. Development of the society cannot be halted; it should be carried on to meet the needs of the people. The question then is: what

development procedure or process should be adopted to keep the environment safe? It is really high time to realize that if development is still carried out without any thought about the environment, the world would face a total disaster without any chance of revival

So the question that needs to be addressed here is that in what sense the term 'development' is taken care of? We do develop, we need development, a cultural upliftment and this is a part of human innovation and it would perhaps be required in order to tackle some contextual materialistic demands and needs. But the term 'development' should not be conceived in terms of the phrase 'how we can develop', rather it should be conceived in terms of the phrase 'how we should develop'. Unfortunately, modern man in most cases use the term development in terms of can, rather than in terms of should. This is the nature of anthropocentrism, shallow ecological perception which is vehemently rejected by deep ecological movement. Unfortunately, instead of exploring the underlying environmental causes shallow approach looks at the immediate effects of environmental crisis arising out of an extreme form of anthropocentrism. That is why we propose to designate deep ecology as a modified version of anthropocentrism. It is really a dilemma to the most educated, affluent class of the globe, decision making bodies, the representative of the government, who on the one hand either directly damages environment or take a decision that would unknowingly damage the environment for fulfilling their unlimited greed, either in terms of money or in terms of fame. With the advancement of science and technology they sometimes take some ad hoc scientific measurements in order to cope up with the adverse impacts on the environment. Superfluously, this is the common practices that are mostly done. The net loss is the deterioration of our natural environment.

Here lies the importance or necessity of deep ecology that incorporates a wide variety of approaches. The objective of deep ecological movement is to investigate and unearth the so-called causes of

environmental crisis and thereby proposes a way out of this crisis through the process of self-realization where an individual can itself realize that his own self can attain highest level of joy by incorporating or merging with greater Self. But such realization requires a radical change in our existing traditional philosophical outlook, particularly the outlook of the so-called traditional ethics where man is supposed to be the measure of all things. In fact deep ecology brings a u-turn attitude towards nature and that is why the movement of deep ecology is known as radical movement. This sort of radical movement can only be achieved through the process of realization where one can realize that any attempt to conquer nature, to reorder nature is a false belief or false attitude of man as nature can never be conquered, it can never be reordered by the tiny individuals. Thus, deep ecology brings a radical approach that would require personal and cultural transformations which go against "the basic and ecological structures."<sup>46</sup> So the existing nature of individuals or humans and the traditions and cultures through which we are brought up requires a radical change and that change would transformation our prevailing attitude towards nature. This change, however, is definitely not a creation of something new, rather a very 'rewarding of something old' which would come through the cultivation of ecological consciousness. Thus, deep ecological movement hinges on ecological consciousness which pleas for the 'unity of humans, plants, animals, the Earth.'

The above remarks of Devall and Sessions clearly suggest that deep ecological movement actually presents a critique of what is called the dominant world view- a brand of anthropocentrism. Instead of the dominant world view, deep ecological movement as a messenger of ecocentrism and non-anthropocentrism gives rise to an alternative world view which is comprehensive as well as holistic unlike the so-called dominant world view. Thus; Deep ecology proposes a radical form of alternative world view that legitimizes the activism of human

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<sup>46</sup> Naess, Arne : " A Defense of the Deep Ecological Movement", *Environmental Ethics* 6 (fall 1984), p.246.

beings. In adopting such interpretation, deep ecology proposes and uses a variety of strategies to meet these challenges. In this regard deep ecology takes the insight from various isms such as poetry, Buddhism, spiritualism, and political activism including acts of civil disobedience and ecosabotage. Since deep ecology as a whole is the outcome of ecological consciousness, the alternative world view as sought by deep ecological movement hinges on some common principles. Following Naess and Sessions we can specify and analyze the principles of deep ecological movement in the following:

### **The Platform of Deep Ecological Movement:**

- (i) The well being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves and these values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes. We have already outlined and established the point that nature has intrinsic value independent of valuers. That means nature is valuable both as a value holder as well as value beholders. Here the term 'value' is conceived as intrinsic value or as inherent value. In fact when we are talking of the well being of both humans as well as non-humans, it actually refers to the whole biosphere or more specifically to the whole ecosphere. It includes the earth or land as such. In Gandhian sense when we are talking of *Sarvodaya*, we thereby exclude nothing from the biosphere. It includes all pervasive intimate relationship among all biotic species.
- (ii) Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of those values which are also possess values in themselves. The richness and diversity of life is the contribution of the entire life process including simple, lower, or primitive species of plants and animals. They are valuable in themselves, but in no way valuable for the presence of human beings. According to deep ecological movement life itself implies an increase of diversity and richness.

- (iii) Since life is valuable in itself, humans have no rights to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs. The term 'vital need' means the basic needs, i.e. needs required for ones minimum survival. Darwin's principle of evolution actually suggests this.
- (iv) The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. In fact the flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population. Ironically people of the rich countries cannot be expected to reduce their excessive interference with the non-human world. They consciously or unconsciously fail to realize that the whole world is nothing but a single whole, a single family where everything is running according to the natural world. So it would be futile to make **changes** the natural order. Thus, humans' attitude requires a deep – a deep change in order to have substantial richness and diversity. This will require a substantially lesser human population.
- (v) Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening. Human being the citizens of the biotic community or being the child of **Devivasundhara** may utilize nature. But there must be a limit. In the present consumerist environment, nature has been used as a mere storehouse of material and it is conceived unfortunately that nature is there for the utilization of humans. Such brute interpretation of nature leads the mankind in general towards its inevitable destruction. It destroys the richness and diversity of natural life. It violates the golden principles which states that 'live and let other to live'.
- (vi) Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present. No one can deny the relevance of technological implication. The present generation does require growth, but

one has to keep in mind at what cost the desired growth to be accumulated. Growth without sound moral principle, without sustainability, without protecting natural communities, would no longer be considered as desirable growth, because it would annihilate or extinct the natural communities whose presence is a must for maintaining bio-diversity. Present growth system is consumerist in nature, it is subjectivist, it is directed towards self-determinism, associated with local-community instead of global community, it is not as much as deep rather it is superfluous lacking sound moral ground or foundation. Development without morality is like a ship without a captain. So we do require development, but it should be sustainable and this sustainability can be retained if the development process would be a deep one where the planner of this development is a virtuous being. The planner or the developer comes to realize why and how one should develop in order to mitigate the first order requirement arising out of over population. So long the development process maintains sustainability, visualizes the relevance of bio-diversity, there is nothing wrong with it. Unfortunately, the present ecology of human society is mainly attached with self-determination, local community, and thereby prefers to act locally rather than globally. It is the individualist or subjective act that runs with false belief. It is revealed that world body as such and the governments of third world countries in particular are very much reluctant regarding deep ecological issues and principles. The so-called cultural diversity is measured in terms of technological development, and truly but unfortunately where there is technological development; there is absence of sustainability, absence of morality, absence of caring, mutual trust and co-operation and above all absence of universal holism.

- (vii) The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality rather than adhering to an increased higher standard

of life. There will be profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness. Modern society conceives the quality of life in terms of cultural development, but the concept of quality of life is something different. In fact the phrase 'quality of life' should not be comprehended in terms of first order material objects, rather then is something that underlies in the deep concept. Many would like to say that the quality of life is measured in terms of per capita income of the people or in terms of GDP of the country. Environmental ethics in fact goes beyond that. The concept of quality of life is a matter of realization where everything is measured not in terms of economic wealth, but in terms of the safety of the Nature as such. Quality of life of each biotic community can only be maintained where the natural order runs smoothly without inference of humans. Increasing per capita income with the process of excessive interference of nature in no way maintains the quality of life. In recent time, it is revealed that the people of Bangladesh, one of the most underdeveloped countries in the world, are far happier than India and the people of the so-called developed countries are no longer happier in comparison to other underdeveloped countries. This reflects that wealth creation may increase per capita income of the people of a particular country, but in never develops the quality of life where the so-called quality of life is defined in terms of peace and happiness.

- (viii) Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes. Deep ecological movement actually wants to change the human attitude towards nature. Since it is deep, it will require an anti-dimensional change quite contrary to shallow ecology. So long such turn would not be materialized; it is hard to resist the so-called environmental degradation. Fortunately, around the globe presently people have come to realize the loopholes of

materialistic form of development, but it has already damaged a lot of the ecology as such and its repayment is out of control. So, the best message to the mankind in general is to change their attitude and approach towards nature, forget the false conviction that nature is there for the mere use of humans, realize the real that all biotic community is just like a single family and mutual love, trust and care is the meaning of life, accumulating more wealth is the cause of destruction of the universe. Deep ecological movement emphasizes on these issues and thereby tries to promulgate a system of life rooted in the deep sense of realization.

The points discussed above are said to be the kernel points of deep ecological movement through which the message of deep ecology can be comprehended. However, there still underlies disagreement whether such points are necessary as well as sufficient of comprehending the deep ecological movement. In fact in environmental ethics, deep ecology is conceived differently by different environmental philosophers by using different terminology. Some would understand deep ecology as 'ecological resistance'; some would coin the term deep ecology as; 'the new natural; philosophy'. Many would like to conceive deep ecology as 'eco-philosophy' or 'ecosophy' or 'sustainable earth ethics'. Ecosophy means eco-wisdom, an inner realization of the nature as such. This can be made clear if we make a comparative study between deep and shallow ecology.

### **A Contrast between Deep and Shallow ecology:**

Many environmentalists would like to conceive deep ecology not in terms of philosophy, rather in terms of a movement. For them deep ecology is no longer a philosophy, nor it is institutionalized as a religion or an ideology, but something that hinges on some fundamental attitudes and beliefs that would motivate for doing an action. Shallow ecology is humanistic, but deep ecology is not humanistic, rather it is ecocentric. An ethic that calls for humane

treatment of sentient beings would have to be radically different from an ethic that calls upon us to respect the integrity of insentient ecosystems. More specifically, it can be said that an ethical system calling for respect for the interest of environmental wholes are necessarily inconsistent with ethical systems calling for respect for the interest of individual organisms, because wholes and individuals have inconsistent interests. An ethic which deals with ecosystems as a whole is called deep ecology and an ethic that deals with individual organisms is called shallow ecology.

In the case of shallow approach technological help is required to purify the air and water and to spread pollution more evenly. Laws limit permissible pollution. Polluting industries are preferably exported to developing countries. On the other hand, pollution is evaluated from a biospheric point of view in the case of deep ecology. Deep ecology looks at the impact of pollution not exclusively in the context of human interest; rather it looks on life as such. In this regard, it can be said that shallow ecology is humanistic unlike deep ecology as it gives special attention to humans. The shallow reaction to acid rain is to tend to avoid action by demanding more research and the attempt to find species of trees which will tolerate high acidity etc. On the contrary, the deep approach concentrates on what is going on in the total ecosystem and calls for a high priority fight against the economic conditions and the technological responsibility for producing the acid rain. Unlike shallow approach, deep ecology claims that any form of exporting pollution is not only a crime against humanity; it is a crime against life in general.

According to shallow approach, natural resources are there for the use of humans, especially for the present generation in affluent societies. It holds that the resources of the earth belong to those who have the technology to exploit them. It further maintains that the resources will not be depleted because a high market price will conserve them and substitutes will be found through technological progress. According to shallow approach natural objects are valuable only as resources for

humans. They have only instrumental values. Accordingly, if no human use is known, it does not matter if they are destroyed. Deep ecology holds just the opposite view. It holds that natural resources are there not only for the humans alone, rather natural resources are there for the sake of all life forms. In fact no natural object is conceived of solely as a resource. Natural resource, from a deep perspective, is not there for consumerism; rather it is there for sustainable development which would be useful for the present and future generation as well.

There is no question of doubt that technological development is mostly needed in order to mitigate the excessive demands of over population particularly in the developing countries. In fact shallow approach at times applauds over population as according to this approach an increase in the number of humans is considered as valuable in itself or as economically profitable. It suggests the destruction of wild habitats in order to cope up with the demands of over population. As the social relations of animals are ignored in the shallow approach, decreasing wild habitat areas is economically acceptable. But deep ecology runs the other way round. It tells us that excessive population is environmentally unwanted as it will bring human population explosion. It holds that proper biotic society can be only be sustained by population reduction.

As far as cultural diversification is concerned, there underlies a subtle distinction between deep and shallow approach. Present society conceives cultural diversification in terms of wealth, in terms of scientific and universal adoption of western technology. Here cultural diversification is comprehended in terms of articulation rather than creation. Consumerist approach or domination is the key to shaping cultural diversification of modern man. It is very often said that a particular family is culturally sound, because of the fact that it is not only educationally sound, but also economically affluent. Deep ecology, on the contrary, seeks for creative and aesthetic values in determining the cultural diversification of a society. It holds that

without cultural realization, without creation, no society can be regarded as culturally sound. So protection of non-industrial cultures from the invasion of industrial societies is the main objective of deep ecology. Unlike shallow ecology, deep ecology gives importance on the biological richness as well as diversity of life forms. Shallow ecology, on the contrary, tries to establish a monolithic type of life system which can only be attained by a considerable extinction of other forms of life. Thus, it can be said that deep ecology tries to maintain its deep relation with other natural beings and shallow ecology exactly tries to do the other way round as it tries to alienate man from nature. So deep ecology tries to bring a cultural anthropology along with sound education in the prevailing industrial societies so that sustainable development can well be taken up for the generation to come.

Unlike shallow ecology, deep ecology is very much concerned with land and sea ethics. The celebrated article of Leopold also recalls the sensitivity of land ethics. Shallow ecological movement tries to conceptualize the land as such in terms of its fragments which is very much detrimental to nature as such, because such an attempt encourages individualism instead of holism. It goes against the law which states 'united we stand, divided we fall'. Naess says, "Shallow approach cuts landscapes, ecosystems, rivers and other whole entities of nature conceptually into fragments and thereby disregarding larger units and comprehensive gestalts."<sup>47</sup> Shallow ecology not only fragments the nature as such, it equally regards natural properties, resources as the properties of individuals, organisms and states. Here conservation of natural properties is conceived in terms of multiple use and cost benefit analysis. In doing so it completely ignores, of course deliberately, the social and long term ecological costs of resource extraction. Deep ecology thinks the other way round. Unlike shallow ecology, deep ecology conceives that the earth does not belong to humans. For example, the Norwegian landscapes, rivers, flora and fauna, and the neighbouring sea are not the property of Norwegians.

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<sup>47</sup> Naess, Arne. "The Deep Ecological Movement: Some Philosophical Aspects", p.269.

time, people-from heads of state to the members of rural communities-will most readily be brought to demand conservation if they themselves recognize the contribution of conservation to the achievement of their needs as perceived by them, and the solution of their problems, as perceived by them.”<sup>48</sup> Unlike shallow approach, the deep ecological approach gives importance on vital needs. It activates mental energy and strengthens motivation. Shallow ecology makes humans more passive and disinterested towards nature, life-style related issues and environmental issues. It only looks at the non-technical aspects of environmental problems. Shallow ecology tries to evaluate environmental issues in terms of use values or instrumental values. On the contrary, deep ecology views dominant economic approach in terms of value priorities. This reflects that unlike shallow ecology, the deep ecological movement senses something deeper. Realizations of the deep changes make us realize the necessity of questioning everything. According to Naess, deep ecology entails, “.....rejection of the man-in-environment image in favour of the relational, total-field image. Organisms as knots in the biospherical net or field of intrinsic relationships. An intrinsic relation between two things A and B is such that the relation belongs to the definitions or basic constitutions of A and B, so that without the relation, A and B are no longer the same things. The total field image dissolves not only the man-in-environment concept, but every compact things-in-milieu concept-except when taking at a superficial or preliminary level of communication.”<sup>49</sup> So the genesis of deep ecology stands with the principle that there is nothing in isolation, no thing in itself. Deep ecology suggests a deeper, more thoughtful understanding, deeper and more significant values. Shallow ecology, on the other hand, suggests limited awareness and superficial values. Shallow ecologists fight against pollution and resource depletion, on the other hand deep ecologists have deeper concerns, such as, principles of diversity,

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<sup>48</sup> World Conservation Strategy, Section 13.

<sup>49</sup> Johnson, Lawrence, E.: *A Morally deep World*, Cambridge University Press, New York, P.241.

complexity, autonomy, decentralization, symbiosis, egalitarianism and classlessness. That is why Naess rightly says that the tenets of the deep ecology movement are clearly and forcefully normative.

### **Is deep ecology a derivational system?**

So far we have outlined the differentiation between deep and shallow ecology. We have seen that unlike deep ecology, shallow ecology is superficial or alternatively it can be said that unlike shallow ecology, deep ecology is deep. Now let us examine whether deep ecology is derivational or not? We have observed that deep ecology actually hinges on eight points and basic positions and norms which are underlying in philosophical positions can also be found in deep ecological movement. The question then is: can deep ecological movement be derived from descriptive assumptions to the particular decisions in actual life situations? There is no question of doubt that deep ecology deals with ought questions, i.e. sentences at the deepest level are normative and preferably are expressed by imperatives. This in fact makes it possible to arrive at imperatives at the lowest derivational level. So when we are dealing with the question: Is deep ecology derivational? We are thereby deriving an ought conclusion from an ought premise. Here we never move from an 'ought statement' to an 'is statement and vice-versa. In this regard, it can be said that deep ecological movement is derivational.

### **Two layers of deep ecology: Metaphysical and Ethical:**

It is important to note here that deep ecological concept is not a monolithic concept; rather deep ecology is an amorphous cluster of ideas what Sylvan describes as a 'conceptual bog.' It is a continuous upward process of movement and in this process different stages may be witnessed. Two important categories may be mentioned, such as metaphysical and ethical. However, one would like to say that the

metaphysical and ethical stages of deep ecology are so akin to each other that such division at times appears to be futile. They are closely akin to each other or more specifically, it can be said that they are the two sides of the same coin. We think that the ethical outlook of deep ecology is most vital than its metaphysical outlook. Primarily, deep ecological movement is a normative kind of movement where the ethical evaluation takes its precedence. The metaphysical stage comes later. When it is said that nature must be respected because it is valuable in itself; it actually hints the ethical aspect of deep ecological movement. Sylvan argues that deep ecology is fundamentally and originally a normative value system; the metaphysics, he suggests, came later. However, what is notable is that although deep ecology is predominantly in origin a value system, it has been presented as metaphysics, as a consciousness movement and even as a part of religion.

Many environmentalists' philosophers would like to say that deep ecology has been hijacked by metaphysicists. This point, however, is debatable. Fox, a leading campaigner of environmental ethics, holds a diametrically opposite view of Sylvan. For Fox deep ecology renders ethics superfluous. He rejects the intrinsic value approaches and thereby gives importance on ontology rather than ethics. He quotes George Sessions: "The search for an environmental ethics, in the conventional modern sense seems wrongheaded and fruitless....the search, as I understand it, is not for environmental ethics but for ecological consciousness."<sup>50</sup> The position of deep ecology, at least from the above quotation, appears unclear. Is deep ecology a value system, proposing a new ethics of the natural world or is it a metaphysical system which goes deeper than ethics?

Eminent environmentalist and philosopher Naess conceives deep ecology as clearly and forcefully both ethical as well as metaphysical. Searching intrinsic values of non-natural properties assures the ethical aspect of deep ecological movement and rejection of the man-

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid. p.167.

in-environment image in favour of the relational, total field image confirms the metaphysical aspect of deep ecological movement. So for Naess both ethical as well as metaphysical aspects co-exist in deep ecological movement. The metaphysical aspect of deep ecology is reinforced in subsequent works. Ayer's article on "Intuition, Intrinsic Value and Deep Ecology" also reaffirms the importance of metaphysics. Ayer speaks of a four-level discussion beginning with 'verbalized fundamental philosophical and religious ideas and intuitions' moving through the *Deep Ecology Platform* to general consequences and finally concrete situations. For Ayer everything is derived from the fundamental metaphysics. Even according to Naess 'authentic' deep ecology is strongly metaphysical and cannot be separated from 'Western' deep ecology in the way which Sylvan suggests.

Unlike Sylvan, Naess gives much importance on the metaphysical aspect of deep ecology. For Naess the exact role of ethics is obscure and contradictory. He says, "I have the feeling that morality is not a great force in the world."<sup>51</sup> Naess repeatedly affirms the importance of a pluralist metaphysics by means of which he conceives ecosophical system. The prime objective of deep ecology enterprise is to guide, is to achieve a change in outlook. Fox's fundamental argument seems to be that a change of world-view to 'transpersonal ecology' will issue in a symbiotic approach to the natural world. In these circumstances, ethics becomes superfluous, because the flourishing of others would instinctively be regarded as the flourishing of ourselves.

What we have observed above is that deep ecology seeks to develop alternative world views that echos ecological insights into such issues as diversity, holism, interdependencies and relations. These fundamental questions include what is human nature? What is the relation of humans to the rest of nature? What is nature in reality? These questions are traditionally identified as metaphysical questions. Deep ecology therefore is as concerned with questions of metaphysics

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<sup>51</sup> Naess, Arne. : "Basics of *Deep Ecology*", Resurgence., Vol.126, p. 4.

and ontology as well as questions with ethics. Deep ecologists trace the cause of many of our problems to the metaphysics presupposed by the dominant philosophy of modern industrial society. Deep ecology, therefore, is concerned with a philosophical ecology rather than a scientific one. The dominant metaphysics inherent in modern industrial society is predominantly *individualistic* as well as *reductionistic*. It holds that only individuals are real. It also maintains that humans are fundamentally different from the rest of nature. As an individual human being possesses some distinctive qualities, such as 'mind', 'free-will' or 'soul' which differentiate a man from the rest of the nature. In this sense it can be said that the dominant world-view rejects the so-called metaphysical holism as advocated by deep ecological movement. In fact rejection of the beliefs of dominant world view is the central objective to the metaphysics of deep ecology. Acquiring a clue from ecology, the metaphysics of deep ecology denies the view that humans are completely different from the rest of the nature. Rather deep ecology is committed to implement a version of *metaphysical holism* which rests on the principle that humans are fundamentally a part of their surroundings and in no way distinct from them. Deep ecologists suggest that both biotic and abiotic constituents actually determine what humans are. This view recalls the remark 'relational, total-field image' as given by Naess. Deep ecologists feel that with the relationship that exists among humans and between human and nature, men would be regarded as a different sort of beings. *Dominant world view reduces or annihilates humanity, the genesis of man and thereby reduces humans to individuals.* In this regard, the dominant world view is called reductionistic and individualistic. This view has well been supported by Fox who says, "It is the idea that we can make no firm ontological divide in the field of existence: that there is no bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms....to the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of Deep Ecological consequences."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Fox, W.: *Deep Ecology: A New Philosophy for Our Time?* Ecologist, 14, (November-December

It seems clear from the above observation that as metaphysical holism, deep ecology ignores reality of individuals as mostly habituated by Western philosophy. It inclines to say besides a total field image, there are no human beings. In true sense human nature is inseparable from nature. Considering humans as individuals, the dominant world view has broken up reality which is detrimental as it misleads metaphysics. Deep ecology argues that the dominant world view conceptualizes an artificial distinction between individuals and their surroundings and this particular metaphysics has proved dangerous. So an alternative metaphysics based on total field image can offer an opportunity for resisting environmental devastation.

So far we have outlined the metaphysical implication of deep ecological movement. However, one thing should be kept in mind that issue involving to the metaphysics of deep ecology are normative prescriptions and hence ethical foundation is the base of deep ecology. In fact environmental challenges do require not just new ethics, but a new metaphysics. Deep ecology is deep in the sense it starts with new metaphysics and then moves from metaphysical ecology to ethical and political concerns. Thus, the goal of ecophilosophy is to provide a philosophical account of the metaphysics, ethics as an alternative view of reality.

Western philosophical tradition very much anthropocentric in tradition very often makes a distinction between objectivity and subjectivity. When it takes the real world as something different from human beings and human understanding, it conceives the world objectively. On the other hand, human beings interpret the world, conceive it, perceive it, value it and have feeling about it. These human factors are subjective as they depend upon the human subject. Deep ecologists think that this subjective-objective conceivability is detrimental as it creates a bad influence on how we understand nature and how we value nature, a subjective judgment (ought to) cannot be derived from objective descriptions of fact (is). As

deep ecologists challenge the distinction between individual and nature, they equally challenge the distinction between subjectivist and objectivist distinction. Dominant world view conceives evaluative or aesthetic judgment as the outcome of personal opinion which can neither be true nor rational.

From the materialistic point of view one can say that evaluative or aesthetic judgments are the outcome of personal opinions. However, deep ecologists seek a different kind of attitude as contrary to dominant world view. So the prime task of deep ecologist is to rely on stories, poetry, narrative myths and ritual and thereby convince the people to understand these realities. This requires a different outlook towards nature which would be non-anthropocentric, holistic instead of individualistic. In addition to poetry and ritual , the religious concept of bearing witness in the way that we live our lives, along with the 'forceful announcement' of our lives and living in accord with those values, are the other methods for communicating the Deep ecology world view. In concluding this section, we can say that deep ecology is deeply associated with both ethics and metaphysics. They are of central importance in deep ecology and to attempt to strive towards either of them is to present deep ecology only half-clad. The metaphysics of deep ecology should be carried out within an ethical context.

## **Universal Holism and the Extension of Realization of the Self:**

The above observation gives us a clear verdict that deep ecology is a deep ecological interpretation that can be actualized by denying individualism and thereby ascending towards universal holism, by denying the metaphysics of world view means ascending towards the metaphysics of deep ecology. This can be achieved through the process of self-realization. The term 'holism' as conceived by Phillips is composed from five interrelated ideas, such as,

- (i) Rejection of the 'analytic' or 'reductionist' approach of much science
- (ii) Argument that the whole is more than the sum of its parts,
- (iii) Argument that the whole determines the nature of its parts,
- (iv) Argument that the parts cannot be understood in isolation from the whole,
- (v) Argument that the parts are dynamically related, or interdependent.

The distinction between (i) and (ii) is that (i) does not possess emergent properties, whereas (ii) possesses emergent properties. An emergent property is a property possessed by a whole unlike by a part. Emergent property has been emerged in the whole out of its parts which is invisible in its parts. Phillips says emergent properties cannot be predicted from investigation of the parts, but this does not make sense to say after one has the whole, one cannot explain it by examining the parts and their interactions. Just as there are no isolated blocks, but only a great web of relations, likewise there is no isolated being or natural object in the world as a part, but all beings are inter-related with each other. This is also found in quantum theory which shows that sub-atomic particles have no meaning as isolated entities and at the sub-atomic level, the interrelations and interactions between the parts and the whole are more fundamental than the parts themselves. Thus the notion of quantum theory is one kind of holism where parts are dependent on the whole. This is exactly the same thing which happens in deep ecology. Deep ecology as we have already shown has pleaded for a total field image based on the web of relations among all natural communities. Fox says, ".....the idea that there is no ontological divides in the field of existence. In other words, the world is simply not divided up into independently subjects and objects, nor is there any bifurcation in reality between the human and non-human realms. Rather, all realities are

constituted by their relationships. To the extent that we perceive boundaries, we fall short of deep ecological consciousness.”<sup>53</sup>

Although deep ecologists as such has pleaded for holism, but not all of them give the same interpretation of the term ‘holism’. However, some basic or common characteristics can be sorted out of the term ‘holism’. These features can be presented as follows:

- (i) The genesis of holism is that all is ultimately one and the whole or total view is the best.
- (ii) To describe the world as a metaphor of ecology (the web of relation) or as a metaphor of physics (the field of energy) not only interlinks everything, but equally constitutes all that is. Holism actually knots individual organisms in the biospheric web of relations which is a constant state of flux characterized by process, dynamism, instability, novelty, creativity, etc.
- (iii) Since individual organisms are conceived as knots or web of relations, their solidarity within holistic approach disappears. Accordingly, the notion of the world as composed from discrete, compact, separated things should be abandoned.
- (iv) The web of relations must be understood in terms of intrinsic relations, because without this relation two things cannot be conceived as something. This further leads us to say that everything is constituted by its relationship. It also states that relationality is more fundamental than independence.
- (v) The establishment of relationality rules out the subjects-objects distinction, i.e. is-ought distinction.
- (vi) This leads us to say that there is no ontological distinction between humans vs. non-humans, mind vs. body, spirit vs. matter etc. So the two aspects of nature, such as, extension and thought, are both complete aspects of one single reality.
- (vii) So the part-whole division is meaningless as no part has any value irrespective of its whole.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. p. 194.

## **Extension and realization of the Self in Deep Ecology:**

We think that in fulfilling the tenets of universal holism as well as the requirement of deep ecological movement, individual self needs to be opened up. To conceive that all things are ultimately one, one has to open up his own self and it is known as 'extended self' or self-realization. Naess in fact conceives the notion of extended self in this sense and he says that all things are ultimately one. In this regard, he cites the name of Spinoza who also conceives God or Nature as one substance through which everything is manifested. Theory of self-realization suggests that all beings are one; their nature cannot be disjunctive as we conceive in the Western tradition where self is conceived as a narrower constitution. Naess tries to make a contrast between the idea of the self as identified with the human body and to a broader self which stretches far beyond the individual and thereby sensing the vision that all is one and that one's self is everything and everything is in one's self. Humans can develop in such a way that their selves include the other selves in a certain way. Since every individual is physically dissolved, biologically we are just centers of interaction in one great field. Therefore it is physically impossible to draw boundaries of self.

It is important to point out here that when Naess pleads for the identification of self, he thereby means a psychological identification among selves. As per as this identification is concerned if I hurt you, I hurt myself. Here the term myself does not indicate my 'ego' which is generally to be the case, but it refers to something capable of vast development. If we concentrate on developing our greater self, we can come to identify and feel with, not only all other human selves, but with the *Oneness* at the basis of all that is. Naess's twin concept of 'self-realization' is actually based on the intuition that 'all life is ultimately one'. So identification with all means identifying with greater wholes. This leads us to say that the greater our identification

with everything all around us is the greater our self-realization. That is why; the system of self-realization is by far the best system of sensing something deeply. Naess says, "The higher the self-realization attained by anyone, the more its further increase depends upon the Self-realization of others. This leads him to advocate 'Self-realization of all living beings'." <sup>54</sup> Thus, the system of self-realization is the hallmark of the flourishing of all life. Naess says, "The greater our comprehension of togetherness with other beings, the greater the identification and the greater care we will take. The road is also opened thereby for delight in the wellbeing of others and sorrow when harm befalls them. We seek what is best for ourselves, but through the extension of the self, our 'own' best is also that of others. The own/not own distinction survives only in grammar, not in feeling." <sup>55</sup> The above observation indicates that deep ecology insists us to develop our own sense of self until it becomes *Self*. It draws our sense of ecological sensibilities that protection of the natural world is the protection of ourselves and more importantly protection of the non-human world thus can be justified as a protection of one's Self. Therefore destroying or reorganizing the natural environment means destroying part of oneself or preventing oneself from reaching the fullest possible self-realization. According to Fox since the world is fundamentally one, one must oppose the destruction of the natural world not because of its usefulness to us, or because of its value in it or to itself, but because 'it is part of my/our wider self. Therefore, its diminishment, Fox opines, is my/our own diminishment.'<sup>56</sup> Self-realization system through deep ecological movement is a transpersonal ecology. It means psychological identity with the ecological world beyond the selfish individual ego. Fox therefore urges

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<sup>54</sup> Naess, Arne. : *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle*, Translated by David Rothenberg, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p.197.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid. p.175.

<sup>56</sup> Fox, Warwick. : "Approaching Deep Ecology: A Response to Richard Sylvain's Critique of Deep Ecology", *Environmental Studies Occasional Paper*, 20, Hobart: University of Tasmania, 1986, pp.71-72.

deep ecologists to 'realize one's ecological, wider or big self'.<sup>57</sup> Transpersonal self therefore widens individual self towards web like self where ontological and cosmological identification, i.e. impartial identification with all entities, are made possible. Such identification promotes the freedom of all entities to unfold in their own ways what may be called 'symbioses'.

We think that the whole issue of deep ecology actually hinges on two norms, namely, self-realization and biocentric equality. Self-realization is a process through which people come to understand themselves as existing in a thorough interconnectedness with the rest of nature. On the other hand, biocentric equality is the recognition that all organisms and beings are equally members of an interrelated whole and therefore has equal intrinsic worth. It is also noted that self-realization was there in the traditional philosophical system, but deep ecological movement interpreted it in a new way. The term 'know thyself' as used by ancient Greek means that good life involves process of self-realization and self-fulfillment. However, traditional self-realization admits two selves, such as, one is the intention of the ego and the other is the true nature that underlies this person's ego. Deep ecology, on the contrary, conceives one self. It states that the underlying self is the self that is one with the natural self. Self-realization, according to the deep ecologist, is a process of self-examination in which people come to understand themselves as part of a greater whole. It is a process through which a person comes to understand that there is no firm ontological divide between humans and non-humans, between self and other. It is a process through which we come to know ourselves not as individuals separate and distinct from nature, but as a part of greater 'self'. Self-realization, therefore, is a process through which self comes to understand itself as Self and self-interest comes to be seen as 'Self-interest'. Thus, deep ecology represents and develops a systematic environmental philosophy that is both ecocentric as well as non-anthropocentric.

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. p.268.

Unlike other approaches, deep ecological movement not only confines to ethical issues, it also explores and raises questions of philosophy, such as the questions of metaphysics, epistemology, ethics and political philosophy. However, during our discussion, we particularly confined ourself within the ethical and metaphysical issues.

