

## **An Analysis of Intellectual Strands in Environmental Ethics**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Environmental ethics, both as an academic discipline and applied philosophy, is influential in all major streams in the current scenario. The existence of environmental ethics emerges as a discipline mainly because of the questioning of accepted practices on development. Hence, in the broader framework, environmental ethics can be viewed as a search for alternative methods on how we should interact with one another and with nature in the background of alarming environmental problems. These environmental problems are the result of lack of sustainable and long standing development.*

*The main focus of environmental ethics is on the moral foundation of environmental responsibility to our environment. It is also about ascribing values to the non-human world. This paper attempts to analyse various strands in Environmental Ethics from a philosophical perspective, thereby rereading the existing literature and look how far it has been integral in defining the relationship between nature, non-humans and human beings in the context of sustainable development.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Environmental Ethics, Deep Ecology, Animal Rights, Development, Ecofeminism*

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Environmental ethics, both as an academic discipline and applied philosophy, is influential in all major streams in the current scenario. The existence of environmental ethics emerges as a discipline mainly because of the questioning of accepted practices on development. Hence, in the broader framework, environmental ethics can be viewed as a search for alternative methods on how we should interact with one another and with nature in the background of alarming environmental problems. These environmental problems are the result of lack of sustainable and long standing development.

The systematic classification of theories of environmental ethics is not an easy task. These theories cannot be classified hierarchically, as each theory is mutually interlinked and influenced by each other. Broadly speaking, the main schemes of thought in environmental ethics are Anthropocentric ethics, Non-anthropocentric ethics, Animal rights, Social ecology, Ecofeminism, Built Environment, Gaia hypothesis and Spiritual ethics.

These streams of thought are not comprehensive and there are new forms of environmentalisms that are emerging. The most important aspect of above said schemes of thought is that they are inclusive of both urban and rural environment. For example, how animals and species are affected by human interference, how humans affected in their changing environments, how should one plan restoration strategy etc. are being discussed in all these.

This paper attempts to analyse various strands in Environmental Ethics from a philosophical perspective, by analyzing the existing literature and look how far it has been integral in defining the relationship between nature, non-humans and human beings in the context of sustainable development.

#### **I.1. Anthropocentric Or Instrumental Value Approaches To Environmental Ethics**

As Anthropocentrism is mainly focused on human beings, it considers the point that human beings alone can have values in themselves. It considers that all other things including non-humans, plants, species, eco-system etc, are for the welfare of the people to attain maximum pleasure. Anthropocentrism ascribes only instrumental or use value to nature since they consider everything as a tool to advance towards one's own well-being

William Baxter, a contemporary defender of anthropocentrism points out that what we value most highly is that which yields greatest human satisfaction. In that sense, damages done to animals, plants and lands are irrelevant. He rejects the notion of preserving environment unless the reason is for the benefit of man.

#### **I.2. Non-Anthropocentric Or Intrinsic Value Approach**

In elucidating the idea of intrinsic value, the first problem we face is that the concept of intrinsic value, as it appears in the environmental ethics literature, is not univocal. In fact, it is possible to discern at least three

distinct concepts of intrinsic value. Sorting through these distinct concepts, and working out which of them are relevant to the attempt to develop an environmental based ethics is our first task.

Intrinsic value in general terms, is the value that the objects possess because of its basic inherent or intrinsic properties. G. E. Moore was the foremost exponent of this view. Intrinsic value is taken as basic value and all other values are defined in terms of intrinsic value.

Non-anthropocentrism rejects all classical theories of ethics. All the classical theories of ethics such as utilitarian, natural rights theory etc. are framed in relation with human involvements. The non-anthropocentric ethics is based on the assumption that environment and all the species also possess a value over and above human centered values. The main reason for ascribing intrinsic values to environment is from human's point of view, environment helps to further human interests. The ethical theory of utilitarianism is based on this point. According to utilitarianism, an act is good or bad based on the greatest amount of happiness it produces.

Another version of non-anthropocentrism is Biocentrism and Eco centrist. Biocentrism is the view that life is the crucial feature that lends intrinsic value to those things that have it. Bio centrist ascribes moral values to wide range of entities surpassing human values. It gives equal preference to all the living entities. Biocentrism claims that life is intrinsically valuable.

Those who reject biocentrism are of the view that the basis of morality is the ability to reason and experience pleasure or pain. Plants and animals lack both of these qualities and so moral values are applicable to human beings alone.

Contrary to this, the defenders of biocentrism reject such claims and according to them, the basis of morality lies not in reason or experience of pleasure or pain, but in the interest. The principle of interest has a broader scope. For claiming for a moral treatment, it is enough to have interests. Therefore, non-human entities have interests, for being benefited or harmed. Biocentrism is limited in its scope. According to this view, anything that is not alive cannot have moral value. This notion excludes many species and ecosystems. The main drawback of biocentrism was that it fails to give intrinsic value to environmental systems such as ecosystem.

The pragmatic change in environmental studies is proposed by radical ecophilosophies. These radical ecophilosophies were involved in struggles to create new sets of key values and principles that directly question existing social paradigms. Some of these principles are shared by a number of eco-radical theories, though their arguments for them are different.

Ecocentrism argues that the environment has larger perspectives than that from the human point of view. It claims that the environment needs more attention and consideration. This consideration should not base human interests and it deserves direct moral consideration. Ecocentrists point out that the term 'environment' denotes direct rights and moral responsibilities; i.e., it has its own inherent worth. Aldo Leopold, the famous advocate of ecocentrism, in his influential essay "the land Ethic" deals how human morality is evolving through generations. Leopold elaborates the three types of ethics that is evolving through millennia. The first one deals with the relation between individuals themselves and the second one deals between individuals and society, of which golden rule is cited as an example. Leopold calls the third ethic, which is regulating now between humans and environment, as 'Land Ethic'. "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants and animals or collectively: the land".

Leopold's essay advocates the ethics of land or environment over human instincts. He points out that the individual instincts encourage him to compete for a place in the community, but his ethics encourages him to cooperate. The land ethic compels to change the role of humans from conqueror of the land to member of the land community which includes land also.

Leopold's ecocentrism is the strongest one as it maintains the land (which includes soil, water, plants animals etc.) as the member of the community. He points out that human beings failed miserably in stopping environmental degradation. Land conservation is in its slowest process and the conservation education failed to achieve its goals: "It defines no right or wrong, assigns no obligation, calls for no sacrifice, and implies no change in the current philosophy of values. In respect of land use, it urges only enlightened self-interest".

As a solution to the above problems, Leopold uses the concept of land pyramid. The land pyramid consists of the class of all food chains, where higher realms in the pyramid depend on lower realms for everything. The basic layers of the pyramid are soil, plants, insects, insect eating animals, omnivores and carnivores. According to Leopold, there is an upward flow of energy and any obstructions in the flow of energy will damage the system. In Leopold's optimum, the economic mind set of man is the greatest obstacle in achieving land ethic.

## **II. VARIOUS STRANDS IN ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

### **II.1. animal rights**

"Animal rights refer specifically to the extension of rights-based ethical theories to non-human animals and generally to a political movement with philosophical foundations in both the utilitarian and rights-based

traditions in ethical theory”. Animal rights theory is mainly based on the writings of twentieth century philosophers Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Peter Singer’s principle of equal consideration of interests and Tom Regan’s analysis of moral rights are the backbone of animal right theory. In Peter Singer’s seminal work ‘Animal liberation’, he discusses about animals having moral rights. Animal rights advocate the claim that animals also have rights. Basically being a utilitarian, Singer does not oppose the uses of animals. If the benefits of using animals for scientific experimentation outweighs harm to animals, then it is permissible on the basis of utilitarian principle.

Singer characterizes all human being as ‘speciesists’, in the sense that speciesists give preference to interest of their own species and neglects the greater interest of other species. He objects this speciesist treatment along with racism and sexism. “Racists violate the principle of equality by giving greater weight to the interests of members of their own race when there is a clash between their interests and interests of those of another race. Sexists violate the principle of equality by favoring the interests of their own sex. Similarly, speciesists allow the interests of their own species to override the greater interests of members of other species. The pattern is identical in each case”. Singer argues that we need a middle position that would avoid speciesism. According to him:

What we must do is bring non-human animals within our sphere of moral concern and cease to treat their lives as expendable for whatever trivial purpose we may have. At the same time, once we realize the fact that a being is a member of our own species is not in itself enough to make it always wrong to kill that being, we may come to reconsider our policy of preserving human lives at all costs, even when there is no prospect of a meaningful, life or existence without terrible pain.

Peter Singer succeeded in championing the rights of non-humans and his use of “animal liberation” theory got wide spread acceptance among other liberation movements. His position is viewed as a philosophical analysis of how the human moral horizon and ethical obligations can be extended. He argues that human moral obligations should be extended such as to include animals also.

The two background movements that paved the way for animals rights is environmental movements and animal liberation movements. Environmental movements carried out the message that it is a wrong notion that natural world existed for human purposes. Environmental movements ascribed value to the environment independent of the benefits that the humans enjoy by utilizing the environment. Their contention was that human beings give value to the environment because it is useful to them. Man enjoyed and reaped a lot of benefits from nature and therefore nature is valuable. According to environmental movements, nature’s worthiness stands well above the human’s assignment of values. Man sees natural world from his perspectives alone; he sees nature mainly with the notion of ‘usefulness’. Environmentalists argue that nature is having a value of its own and it has a right to exist its own.

Animal liberation movements argue the same point with a different mode. Their point is that the priority that we attach to human values compared to non-human values should be stopped, and the core theory of animal liberation movements is that “all sentient beings have interests and we should give equal consideration to their interests irrespective of whether they are members of our species or of another species”. “Sentientism” is the term associated with all animal liberation movements. The term ‘Sentient’ refers to the consciousness of something. In animal liberation movements this term is used mainly to denote that all non-human animals are conscious at pleasure or pain. The prominent advocates of sentient ethics are Peter Singer, Joel Feinberg, Tom Regan and John Rodman.

Another philosopher namely Paul W. Taylor argues that there is independent moral status beyond sentient beings. He ascribes independent moral status to all living things. He uses the principle, ‘respect for nature’ which depends on how we view nature; in our thinking, feeling and acting. Taylor says that we must accept the wilderness of nature in its own way, not in our (human) terms. For explaining the respect for nature, Taylor puts forward a set of belief system. This belief system is explained by Taylor as the ‘Biocentric outlook on nature’. John Benson summarizes Taylor’s belief system into four core beliefs of the biocentric outlook.

1. The belief that humans are members of Earth’s community of life in the same sense as, and on the same terms that, other living things are members of that community;
2. The belief that the human species along with all other species, are integral elements in a system at interdependence such that the survival of each living, as well as its chances of faring well or poorly, is determined not only by the physical conditions of its environment but also by its relations to other living things.
3. The belief that all organisms are teleological centers of life in the sense that each is a unique individual pursuing its own good in its own way.
4. The belief that humans are not inherently superior to other living things.

By this way of beliefs, man is compelled that he ought to adopt the attitude of respect for nature. For Taylor, the human centered approach to value theory is not acceptable mainly because if we accept human-centred value system, then nature’s value will be dependent on man’s interest. At the same time, some

philosophers challenged Taylor's position by saying "that the sense in which sentient being have a good is different from the sense in which non-sentient being have a good". Nevertheless, Taylor's position evokes a response to think of non-human centred value system.

The main ideological background for eco-radical theories can be divided into three segments. They are Social Ecology and Deep Ecology, Eco feminism and Environmental justice. Each of these viewpoints has their own philosophical points and their own commitments to the principles of eco philosophy. But still, it is a difficult task to identify each of these camps from each other, because there are differences even amongst a single camp.

## **II.2. Social Ecology**

Social ecology is rooted in man's relationship with nature. Social ecology calls for a rethinking in man's relationship with nature. They allege that the history of man's relation with nature is oppressive. Man's primary aim was to conquer nature and exploit natural resources. For accomplishing such primary tasks, he even started to suppress human by human. So, the root cause of an environmental crisis is domination of nature by humans.

The most influential exponent of social ecology is Murray Bookchin. For him, "social ecology is a political movement which analyses the structure of human social hierarchy". The notion of exploiting nature by man was preceded by domination of man by man. Thus, the concept of domination historically started from man dominating man. This is known as historical priority thesis.

Bookchin was a strong critique of deep ecology movement. According to him, the deep ecology movement gives very little concern to the manipulation of human by humans. He alleged that deep ecology failed in its attempt to analyze social hierarchal structure. Bookchin was known as the anarchist of ecological theorists. John Clark describes him as "the first elaborated and theoretically sophisticated anarchist position in the history of political theory".

According to social ecologists, all our present day ecological problems arise from deep rooted social problems. The way human beings behave with each other as social beings is analyzed in social ecology:

In its deepest and most authentic sense, a social ecology is the awakenings earth community reflecting on itself, uncovering its history, exploring its present predicament, and contemplating its future. One aspect of this awakening is a process of philosophical reflection. As a philosophical approach, a social ecology investigates the ontological, epistemological, ethical and political dimensions of the relationship between the social and the ecological, and seeks the practical wisdom that results from such reflection. It seeks to give us, as beings situated in the course of real human and natural history, guidance in facing specific challenges and opportunities. In doing so, it develops an analysis that is both holistic and dialectical and a social practice that might best be described as eco communitarianism.

Social ecology envisages a co-operative ecological society rooted in the basic levels of being. It is a holistic vision which sees the social and ecological process as a holistic process. Such holistic and ecological evolution of species is understood by analyzing the interaction and mutual dependence between species and between species and eco system. It opposes all forms of domination including human and non-human. Social ecology gives primary position to human social organization and for them society consists of political and economic freedom of individuals and local communities.

## **II.3. Gaia Hypothesis**

According to Gaia hypothesis the Earth functions as a self-regulating organism. Gaia hypothesis proposes that the environment is conceived as a community of individuals, with absolutely no distinction between community and organism and the environment is regarded as a single kind of individual. James Lovelock is considered to be the founder and propounder of Gaia hypothesis. He insists that Gaia is a central mechanical process involved in sustaining life on earth. It is a theory about holistic non anthropocentric concerns, primary attention being given to species and ecosystems.

'Gaia' is a term which denotes Greek goddess. Gaia hypothesis put forth the view that the Earth as a whole has life as single organism, and the individual species are like cells in a living organism. By thinking this way James Love lock justified holistic non-anthropocentric theories. He says:

The question ..... is the earth a living organism is a very unusual question, because most scientists, and that includes most biologists, would answer without doubt that it is not alive; so why should, a fairly hard scientist, wish to contradict them, why I think it is alive, and what kind of life it is. Now in doing this, I am speaking as a radical. I have had to become one because science is usually reluctant, and rightly so, to accept new hypothesis as fact, and the Gaia hypothesis, that postulates the earth to be the largest living thing in the solar system, has only been around for about fifteen thousand years.

The Gaia hypothesis points out that like the species in the Gaian system, the earth itself has its own natural tendencies and mechanisms to adjust with the situation. These adjustments and natural mechanisms will

be in danger when our action harms it. Lovelock point out that Gaia is sacred and has its own ends and meanings.

“Gaia is a theory stating that the earth is a living entity whose biosphere is self-regulating and is able to maintain planetary health by controlling its chemical and physical environment”. Gaia theory puts forth a hypothesis that is more oriented towards bio-centrism than anthropocentrism. As a bio centrically oriented theory, it holds human beings play only a minor role in this living entity.

Gaia hypothesis calls for a holistic thinking, thinking ourselves as part of a larger living entity will create humility and kindness in treating the earth and other species. So it is primarily a holistic non-anthropocentric viewpoint. Lovelock proposes that the entire earth is one large eco system. It is a self-sustaining and self-creating system. He points out that all the problems in relations with environment are basically a problem of human’s culture and not of nature. So protection of Gaian system is the starting point of problems solving in relation with environment.

#### **ii.4.Deep Ecology**

The concept of Deep Ecology emerged as a result of streams of environmentalism in twentieth century. Many thinkers and writers were questioning the dominant attitude of modern societies in their approach to environment. This “ecological consciousness” is the starting point of Deep Ecology. Arne Naess is considered to be the founder of deep ecology movement. The term deep ecology became prominent when Arne Naess published a paper namely; ‘The shallow and the Deep, Long Range Ecology movement: A summary’. Deep ecology is a movement, which seeks alternative models for metaphysics, epistemology and environmental ethics. It was a reaction to the excesses of social paradigm.

According to deep ecology, the present relationship between man and nature is an unhealthy one and the characteristic feature of such a relation is exploitation, manipulation, disrespect and domination. As a result, there is no harmony between man and nature and both exist as distinct entities. Under the term deep ecology, there is a wide range of writers with different intellectual positions. One of the varieties is explained by peter Hay. He says “We are left with two interlocked but distinct and not always mutually comfortable senses of the term ‘deep ecology’. The first of these is deep ecology as a movement, the second deep ecology as a philosophy. In the former sense ‘deep ecology’ is an umbrella term, its meaning somewhat smeared”.

The environmental crisis of today’s world is the result of unhealthy relationship of man with nature. According to deep ecologists this relation is an artificially created one. So a break from such artificial bond is needed and a harmonious relationship should be established.

Deep ecology movement comes under synergistic environmental philosophy. Peter S. Wenz defines synergistic environmental ethics as follows. “Synergistic environmental ethics is the view that simultaneous respect for people and nature improves outcomes for both. In general, people benefit from valuing nature for itself because this helps people avoid oppressing one another. It also helps people attain their own highest good. In general, nature benefits when all people are respected, because biologically diverse environment that many poor people depend on will be spared, out of respect for those people. Also, toxic pollution will be reduced when all people are respected, because not a person’s exposure to this pollution will be considered acceptable”. Under synergistic environmental ethics, he includes Deep Ecology, Eco Feminism and Land Ethics.

The dominant attitudes of modern society with regard to environment and Deep ecologist’s reaction are noteworthy. Timothy Doyle and Doug McEachern point out some main differences.

<b>Dominant Attitude</b>	<b>Deep Ecology</b>
Domination over nature	Harmony with nature
Nature a resource, intrinsic value	Natural environment
Confined to humans	Valued for bio centric egalitarian
Ample resources or substitutes	Earth supplies limited
Material economic growth a predominant goal	Non-material goals, especially self-realization
Consumerism	Doing with enough / recycling
Competitive lifestyle	Co-operative life way

Arne Naess questioned the dominant assumption that nature is a resource. The concept of nature as that which is rich with resources is the unquestioned concept in Western philosophy. Deep ecology works as a thread, which bonds between humans with non human nature. The main assumption of Deep ecology is interconnectedness. According to Deep ecologists the world is intrinsically interconnected. There is no dividing line between living and nonliving. Humans and non- humans have the same role in nature. Deep ecology is a process, which is trying to surpass all sorts of divisions. It is a liberating movement, which stands for educating the masses to the spiritual development and local autonomy.

The major influencing factors in the process of Deep ecology movement include Eastern and Western thoughts. Eastern traditions provided a radically different aspect of relationship with man and nature. The leading social philosophers of west who were critical of modern societies and its dominant attitudes towards



environment were failed to give a strong metaphysical out look to their views. Deep ecology filled this gap by providing a new metaphysics, which identified humans with non human nature. Arne Naess calls this identity as “biological equalitarianism”. The contrast between shallow ecology and deep ecology is interesting. Shallow ecology is called shallow in the sense that the paradigm is mainly oriented towards anthropocentrism. The main purpose of shallow ecology is to protect environment for human well being. Deep ecology calls for a rethinking our relationship with nature. It lies in being identified with self and nature. According to Val Plumwood this identification of self and nature is of three kinds, indistinguishability, expansion of self, and transcendence of self. Arne Naess lists the seven basic principles, which are fundamental to deep ecology.

1. Rejection of the man-in-the environment image in favor of the relational, total field image
2. Biospherical Egalitarianism – in principle
3. Principles of diversity and of symbiosis
4. Anti-class posture
5. Fight against pollution and resource depletion
6. Complexity not complication
7. Local autonomy and decentralization

Thus, deep ecologists have a world view-that are deviating points and holistic views in contrast to the advocates of unlimited resource utilization and optimum economic growth.

### **Ii.5.Eco Feminism**

Eco feminism as a theory rejects the prevailing attitudes to the natural world that are perceived as male dominated. Feminists often point out that the ideology of master mentality in western thoughts with regard to women and nature is the prime reason for exploitation. They argue that androcentrism, the domination of women by men preceded anthropocentrism, the domination of nature by humans.

There are many divisions in eco feminism as there is in radical environmentalism. The main difference between them is between essentialist and constructionist viewpoint. The essentialists argue that women are closer to nature than men, and this is an innate quality which should be nurtured and protected. But liberal eco feminists reject these views and argue that it is not innate qualities but social factors which determine the gender based equalities. Constructionist refers to the assumption that “a subject is constituted by social, historical and cultural contexts that are complex and variable. According to them, the association of women with nature in Western patriarchal society is a social construction and it is only through radical social change that the liberation of nature is possible. So, capitalist patriarchy should be replaced by non-hierarchical, non-dominating types of social organization.

Biological essentialism puts forth another argument: “women and nature is viewed as inferior categories, to be used a raw material for man’s physical needs. Biological essentialism argues that this position should be altered by admitting that there is special relationship between women and nature and this unique relationship between women and nature should help us to have an ecological insight and places upon them “the prime responsibility for devising strategies for planetary healing”. Cultural eco feminism argues nature is basically spiritual and personal. It is traditional science and technology which created problems because their emphasis was on domination. Because of this dominating nature, there is insufficient attention to environmental threats to women’s reproduction because of chemicals and wars.

Eco feminism rejects deep ecologies efforts to project that ecological deterioration is caused mainly because of domination of nature by humans. Eco feminism sees the domination of both women and nature is the root cause of modern crisis. D’Eaubonne, the man who coined eco feminism points out that eco- feminism is an innovative variety of humanism put forth by “feminine masses” for re born world. In such world it does not mean that power is controlled by women, but instead, there will be no power at all. Eco feminism points out that the social mentality behind suppression and oppression of women and ecological abuse of earth is one and the same, they are from same source. Man’s ownership rights over land gave him a pseudo mentality that led to the domination of nature and land abuse.

Val Plumwood speaks about the vision of eco feminism as “the story of a land where women live at peace with themselves and with the natural world is a recurrent theme of feminist utopias. This is a land where there is no hierarchy, among humans or between humans and animals, where people care for one another and for nature, where the earth and the forest retain their mystery, power and wholeness, where the power of technology and military and economic force does not rule the earth, or at least that part of it controlled by women”.... But this vision of eco feminism is one sided, it raises lot of problems and questions of which Val plum wood is aware of. Is eco feminism gives us a notion that goodness of women save us. Is it only women who can know the mysterious nature of forest? Ought we to renounce the achievements of science and technology? Although such questions devalue the stand of eco feminist positions, there is some meritorious value involved in eco feminist one such positive value is that it helped to view nature in a positive direction which was given negative value which was the main reason for oppression.

Eco feminist positions helped to re-evaluate the role of women played in society and environment. There is strong eco feminist influence in all environmental movements all over the world. It raised the notion of ecological awareness and spread the message to the masses. Eco feminism created a positive notion in society that wherever there is oppression and deterioration against nature, it is also against women.

### **ii.6. Built Environment**

Environmental ethics as an emerging theory with its multifarious faces includes built environment also. There are some thinkers who argue that environmental ethics also should incorporate built environment. They feel that built environment plays a crucial role in analyzing how human degraded our environment and to non-species in the nature. Roger J.H King cites several reasons for incorporating built environment with environmental ethics. The most significant of these is that “if we are to contribute to articulating the outlines of an environmentally responsible culture, we must be prepared to address the problems faced by people in the places they inhabit. Degraded urban, sub urban and rural environments are obstacles to the development of an environmental conscience. In addition, they are objective constraints on our efforts to minimize waste and pollution and enjoy a harmonious and integrated human existence in the natural world. Built environment affect how we perceive the natural world and how we understand ourselves. It is crucial, therefore, that we consider how we might critique the contemporary built environment and envision one more in conscience with environmental aspirations....”.

So considering the built environment is important aspect in environmental ethics. The thought of a harmonious and peaceful environment is possible only when one’s built environment is in a satisfactory form. There won’t be any environmental consciousness if one’s built environment is in a shabby condition. Built environment works as a mirror reflecting man’s position in society. It helps us to identify our role in nature and our duty towards nature. Consciousness about environment also prevents us from over explicating natural resources.

Anver De.Shalit points out about another neglected area of built environment, urban preservation. He alleges that environmental ethics and literatures on environmental ethics failed to concentrate on the ethical issues in urban preservation. Anver points out that the main reason behind such neglected is that a tendency of anti-urbanism among some environmentalists and conservation promotes love towards wilderness of nature. Avner admits there are indeed some genuine theoretical difficulties in constructing a theory of urban preservation. There are value conflicts with regard to urban preservation and the values of economic progress, job creation and wealth dominates over the values of aesthetic conservation. Another aspect it urban preservation is that preserving ancient buildings is a way of respecting monuments and historical values in preservation. Environmental task here is to promote concepts of preservation and justify the priority of preservation over fast growing progress and luxurious style of living.

### **11.7. Spiritual Ecology**

For some environmentalists, spiritual ecology is the natural culmination of hostility towards science and ‘human rationality’. As an alternative to science and scientific interpretation of nature, they look for a new spiritual or religious basis for human life and inter-species relationships. Fritjof Capra points out, that this search can be characterized as ‘paradigm shift’.

In the article ‘Ecology and process Theology’ John Cobb, JR., explains the need to change our vision of reality with religious and environment. “During the past decade, people have become aware of the dangers to the human future resulting from exploitation of the environment. This exploitation has been consistent and both the dominant economic theories and the dominant theologies of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ideally these theories called for treatment of all human beings as ends rather than as means, but the power of the dominant theories has been such that their objectifying categories are readily extended to human beings, people, too become resources, and the term human resources has become prevalent. In the practice powerless human beings and powerless societies have been treated as resources for exploitation by those who has economic and political power to establish goals and to pursue them. In response to this situation, the task cannot be simply to improve practice in light of existing theory. It must be to change the theory. And because our theory, both economic and theology, has both shaped and expressed our dominant perceptions and sensibility, it is necessary to change our vision of reality as well”.

Spiritual ecology is a process theory which urges to everyone to identify with everything. Spirituality is the magical tool which can lessen the empirical ego to a point of harmony. “The intensity of identification with other life depends upon milieu, culture and economic conditions. The ecosophical outlook is developed through identification so deep that one’s own self is no longer adequately delimited by the personal ego or the organism. One experiences oneself to be a genuine part of all life. Each living being is understood as a goal in itself, in principle on an equal footing with one’s own ego”. All theistic religions demand submission of one’s ego in order to proceed a higher realm. This is particularly a dominant tendency in eastern religions.

### III. CONCLUSION

Environmental ethics in its broadest terms is an attempt to find solution to the problems with regard to the environment of which mankind faces today. The most important task before environmental ethics is not to find solutions to all the problems in environment, but its primary task lies in presenting the problem itself. The goal and role of environmental ethics is not to teach us or warn us that we should be concerned about our environment. There is already growing literature in this area and we are already concerned about our environment. The main focus of environmental ethics is on the moral foundation of environmental responsibility to our environment. It is also about ascribing values to the non-human world. The current environmental issues faced by the world also stress this point. The ethnocentric approach should give way to a holistic approach. This can be achieved through concepts like environmental ethics.

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