

# **A CRITICAL REFLECTION ON ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM**

A Thesis Submitted in to Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati in Partial  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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# DEDICATION

*To my parents & my mother-in-law*

*Smti. Tileswari Loing*



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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the thesis entitle “*A Critical Reflection on Environmental Pragmatism*” is a research work carried out by me in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, under the supervision of Prof. Prabhu Venkataraman for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. This work has not been submitted elsewhere for award of any degree or diploma in any university or institute.

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## **CERTIFICATE**

It is certified that the matter embodied in the thesis entitled *A Critical Reflection on Environmental Pragmatism*, submitted for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by Devartha Morang, a student of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati, India, has been carried out under my supervision. It is also certified that this work has not been submitted anywhere else for the award of a research degree.

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental ethical discussion has been taken by various thinkers. Environmental ethical discussions have been emerging out from various perspectives including biocentric, ecocentric etc. All these ideas are divided under two broad groups-anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism. With the value perspective, people think of value regarding environment and the nature in different ways, such as intrinsic and extrinsic value. Some philosophers insist on the monistic view by exhibiting intrinsic value of nature in their writings. Some other philosophers think that value can be emerged out with the due course of human experiences with the environmental things. This again leads to a value pluralism position. The environmental pragmatism tries to see the environment and its conflict in an evolutionary and dynamic way, rather than a static one. Thus it leads to a consensus building position among various environmental ideologies to make the environment healthy, stability and sustainability one. But it is not easy to make a practicality of making consensus among various groups.. So, this environmental pragmatism meets traits from the monistic value. Various perspectives may vary the policy implication in the environment. It can be assumed that in the praxis level, all such various environmental ideologies must come up to a consensus or a convergence to each other to make the environment safe and healthy. Thus, environmental pragmatism tries to see the human experiences with the nature in a pragmatic way to solve the human –environment conflict in a mutual and better way.

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## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

Philosophy is the branch of study that deals with fundamental questions related to the nature of knowledge, existence, and the way we should live. The academic subject of philosophy maybe branched as following: epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and aesthetics. Epistemology deals with the nature and scope of knowledge. It deals with the question of how we know and how is certain knowledge possible. Metaphysics deals with the study of nature of reality and existence. Ethics deal with how one should act and it discusses about the nature of good. Aesthetics is another branch of philosophy that deals with the discussion related to art and beauty. Though these divisions are made but they are not exclusive to one another. The way we understand epistemology influences the way we accept the reality. The discussion on the way one ought to live is influenced by what sort of entities one accepts as existing. There are also further branches of study like logic and political philosophy and several other sub-branches of philosophy like philosophy of religion and philosophy of science. While logic is concerned with good and bad reasoning, political philosophy talks about the relationship between the individual and state; how an individual should act in a society, how the values of freedom, equality and justice are discussed. As ethics discusses about the way one should act either in isolation or as a member of the society, it plays a significant role when we extend the same question to society and state. Other subjects like philosophy of religion, philosophy of science come up with philosophical questions focused on the respective subject-areas like religion and science. In this thesis, I shall focus on ethics.

Ethics and moral philosophy is used synonymously. The Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy's entry in *Ethics* states "the field of ethics (or moral philosophy) involves systematizing, defending and recommending concepts of right and wrong behaviour" (Fieser). Stanford encyclopedia does not have a direct entry either to 'ethics' or to 'moral philosophy' but the entry directs to *The Definition of Morality*. I would like to point out that however morality can be used to mean two distinct senses. A descriptive sense in which a

certain code of conduct as put by communities, societies is studied and a normative sense in which a code of conduct would be accepted by all for a given situation. (Gert & Gert, 2016). The focus in the thesis will be on the normative sense of ethics.

Ethics is one of the important branches of philosophy. Ethics is a field of inquiry that is concerned with the nature of right and wrong. In fact it brings out distinction between right and wrong, good and bad and the principles of justice. “In ordinary discourse, the term ethics often refers to a code of conduct or set rules that is supposed to govern or guide behavior.” (Callicott & Frodeman, 2009, p. xviii). The field of ethics or moral philosophy involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior. As I am interested in the study of ethics, I like to pursue my research work on one of the themes on ethics. Philosophers divide the study of ethics into three general subject areas: Meta ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. (Jamieson, 2009). The sub-branches are not strictly compartmentalized. Meta ethics discusses about what comprises of good or truth. Normative ethics set a specific norm to judge what is good or right. For instance, deontology sets ‘duty’ based on rationality as the norm and classical utilitarianism sets ‘happiness’ as the principle of their theory. Applied ethics deals with ethical issues in concrete situations in fields like business, medicine, and environment and like. Applied and “Practical ethics is concerned with the evaluation of particular things as good and bad, and of various acts, practices, or institutions as right or wrong “(Jamieson, 2009, p. 46).

In the domain of applied ethics, environment and its concerns are considered to be one of the most pertinent issues. The world we live in poses many challenges to us. Challenges arising out of environmental degradation are an important one, if not paramount. Human and other biotic community at large are now facing serious problems on account of population explosion, global warming, deforestation, desertification, resource depletion resulting in poor living standards, proliferation of diseases, and species extinction. All these

are serious problems for the humankind, because any of the aforementioned issues, if not taken proper preventive measures, can cause severe damages for the humans at large in terms of their quality of life and perhaps even costing their life as well. World bodies such as UNO (United Nations Organization), WWF (World Wildlife Fund), IPCC (Inter-governmental Panel for Climate Control) and many other similar bodies take environmental related issues very seriously and try to address for immediate and long term solutions for protecting the future of our planet.

Some thinkers insist that environmental impact occurs because of three important factors, Environmental impact= $P+A+T$ , here, P=Population, A=Affluent society which consume much of the natural resources and T=Technology and scientific instruments which can cause a huge impact on the environment (Hall, Jones, Donovan, & Gibbs, 2000). In the history of the environment literature, several writers have argued from various perspectives that cause degradation on the environment. Literature reveals that the concern for environment and accounts of environmental degradation are available even from 1960's.

Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), addresses how chemical pesticides destroyed some grasses, reeds and more particularly birds and other species. The book observes that pesticides, particularly DDT, which initially meant for the killing of Malaria mosquitoes eventually, brought immense damage to the birds and eco-cycle as a whole. Likewise Paul R. Ehrlich's *Population Bomb* (1968) shows that how over population growth may bring immense trouble and damage to the environment and its natural entities including biotic and a-biotic components in the form of encroachment, deforestation, desertification, urbanization and industrialization This rapid growth of population particularly in the developing countries causes great damage to the forest and the environment as a whole. *The Quiet Crisis* (1965) of Stewart L. Uddal is another book that addresses about the ecological damage in great detail by the anthropogenic activities.

From these literatures it can be seen that from 1960's onwards scholars across disciplines are concerned about environmental issues. In 1970's, environmental ethics emerged as an academic subject (Brenan, 2008). Along with the environmental ethics as a subject, various journals and the articles published in those journals added more impetus to the subject. The journal *Environmental Ethics* was started in 1979, *Environmental Values* in 1992, *Ecosophy* in 1983 published articles on environmental ethics issues.

The growing literature on environment and related issues from diverse fields are ample evidence that it is taken for serious consideration. Lynn White Jr (2001) point out that anthropocentric attitude emerging out of the Judeo-Christian legacy is the major cause of environmental degradation in the West. But it is not that only western approaches to nature has caused environmental crisis. Non-western approaches like Hindu religion and culture emphasize on equality to all natural beings. And there is nature worship as well in their spirituality. Despite this perception, there is destruction and degradation of environment. Rolston III (1987) observes that environmental degradation is much evident in Oriental countries, that is, non-western cultures as well. Thus, environmental problems are common concern across cultures and countries. Thinkers and researchers from various fields are working on environment related problems and issues. As I am interested in ethics and as I consider environmental ethics as one of the important themes discussed in applied ethics, I have carried out my research in environmental ethics. In this research work, I have undertaken a study on the environmental pragmatism within environmental ethics.<sup>1</sup>

In the domain of applied ethics, environment and its concerns are considered to be one of the most pertinent issues. The growing literature on environment and related issues

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<sup>1</sup>As the thesis focus on reflecting about 'environmental pragmatism', primarily a western school of thought in environmental ethics, the thesis is confined to the discussion of western notion and understanding of the issues. The thesis therefore is not focusing on the non-western approaches to environmental ethics.

from diverse fields are ample evidence that it is taken for serious consideration and thinkers and researchers from various fields are working on environment related problems and issues. As I am interested in ethics and as I consider environmental ethics as one of the important themes discussed in applied ethics, I have carried out my research in environmental ethics. In this research work, I have undertaken a study on environmental pragmatism within environmental ethics. .

The etymological meaning of environment is 'surrounding'. "Environment" comes from French term "environner", which means to encircle. The Oxford English dictionary defines "environment" as "the objects or the region surrounding anything" (Jamison, 2008, pp. 1-2). The encircling can be with or without human interventions. Nature is defined in English world as the 'wild, untamed' whereas environment is meant for the 'manageable and goal oriented'.(Banerjee, 2003, p. 152). Though there is a difference between nature and environment, within the environmental ethical discourse, the concern is towards the natural environment in relation to human beings. Thus when normative questions and discussions are carried out related to environment, we undertake an ethical deliberation on issues about environment. Environmental ethics thus conceived deals with the ethical purpose and perspectives of natural environment in relation to human beings. "Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of, the environment and its nonhuman contents." (Norton B. G., 1991).

The environmental ethical concerns include both human beings and other nonhuman beings. It includes within its discourse natural entities including trees, animals and other various other beings. As the environmental ethics discussion includes the human-beings, animals and plants and the entire eco-system, some thinkers feel that environmental ethics discourse is different from other allied applied ethics subjects by its contents and by its scope. This is the reason for which environmental ethics is somehow different from its other allied

applied ethics such as bioethics, engineering ethics, business ethics; while all the latter applied branches take 'life' of human being and other beings as their main discourse, the former takes both beings and nonbeings as its discourse. (De Silva, 1998). This way environmental ethics is involved in deliberation of larger domain unlike other applied ethical issues. Similarly, J. Baird Callicott also finds that environmental ethics is not like other applied ethics like bioethics, medical ethics, and business ethics. And its horizon can be extended to other areas as well. It is environmental ethics that is concerned with basic principles of the relations between humans and nonhuman natural entities. He observes,

*Environmental ethics so construed is environmental because it concerns non-human natural entities, natural commodities, or nature as a whole, and ethical because it attempts to provide theoretical grounds for the moral standing or moral considerability of non-human natural entities, natural communities or nature as a whole. So construed environmental ethics is not an applied ethics similar to bio-medical or business ethics; it constitutes, rather, nothing less than an incipient paradigm shift in moral philosophy (Callicott J. B., 1984, p. 300).*

As Callicott suggests, the environmental ethics is a paradigm shift to the moral philosophy. The Environmental ethics talks about the case of human being extending its morality towards the other beings of the environment such as animals, trees and entire ecosystem (Goodpaster, 2001). Human beings inevitably interact with nature and natural entities for their survival. In such interactions, human beings face various situations. Apart from the existing problems they face some newer problems while trying to solving some other problems. For instance, using cars and automobiles for comfort and time management, coming up with industries and production houses for job creation; constructing a dam for producing electricity and storing water etc. they have to face some other problems. While all these human endeavors are to tackle a set of problem, it inevitably results in one or the other environmental issues furthering a different problem. Similarly, policies that are taken to address one problem may make us to land up in some other problems. For instance, declaring

a national park in the vicinity of a village may create problems for the local people in losing their cultivable lands and opportunity of accessing other floral and faunal resources from the forest. There are many such environmental conflicting issues as a result of the constant interactions of humans with the nature. As there is often a regular human – nature interaction, it raises serious ethical questions. Can the humans interact with the nature in a free and unrestricted manner or is there a restriction or limit? What is the justification either for curbing humans' actions or not curbing humans' actions? If there is a need for restriction, is there a way to resolve and restrict humans' interactions with nature? Where and what is the limit? Questions like this and similar questions that carry serious ethical import arise once we contemplate on these environmental issues. The discussion in environmental ethics thus includes the human beings' relationship with nature, the issues related to the rights of animals, the questions related to the value of the natural entities and other similar questions.

*Environmental ethics as a field of inquiry is the attempt to understand the human relationship with the environment (including natural eco-systems, agricultural ecosystems, urban ecosystems, and the individuals that populate and constitute those systems) and determine the norms that should govern our interactions with it. (Sandler, 2005, p. 2).*

While addressing these issues, different opinions and arguments on the environment and human actions has emerged. Philosophers and thinkers have thought about the humans' relationship with nature in diverse ways. These diverse perspectives related to the environmental ethical discourse have been broadly categorized as either anthropocentric or nonanthropocentric. Anthropocentric approach to environmental issues holds that human beings are at the centre of the environment. Anthropocentrism views that all values are related to the humankind. That is all the objects whether it is biotic or abiotic should be used for the benefit of the humankind. Anthropocentrism suggests that humans are the only being who can think and have rational capabilities, so all values should be related to the human

being. Only humans can measure the values. All objects should be used for the benefit of humankind. Lynn White mentions that Anthropocentrism is a prominent philosophical position from the earlier days at least in the prominent western tradition. Judeo-Christian Genesis says that man is in the image of god. Man can dominate over all nonhuman being and entities of land, water and even sky (White L. J., 2001). And as this is sanctioned in religious scripture, it also makes it to be a religious perspective.

The anthropocentric attitude insists that only humans have intrinsic value and all other natural things and the nonhuman beings are to fulfill human needs. In other words, human beings are a superior lot to all and all other nonhuman species are subordinate to humans and they have only instrumental values acting as means for fulfilling human purposes. White opines that almost all the western literatures including Judeo-Christian and Greek literatures place humans as the superior to all and admit human beings to dominate over nature for their own fulfillment of needs. (White L. J., 2001). On the other hand, nonanthropocentric attitude insists on the intrinsic value of other entities and beings along with the human being and that is why they do not treat the nonhuman entities merely as instrumental value rather each should be considered to possess an intrinsic value of its own. These two types of attitudes to the nature have been prevailing in the history of human civilization. It is seen that in some particular environmental cases, ideological conflicts arise between these two approaches. In such situations, what ideology one has to follow? Should one follow the anthropocentric perspective or a nonanthropocentric perspective? Or is it the case that both these ideologies can be reconciled and adapted? If that is so, then how it will be possible?

The Environmental pragmatism, as a school of thought emerged in 1990s with an aim to address effectively environmental issues by incorporating pluralistic world views (Hull R. B., 2009). The Environmental pragmatists try to reconcile both the perspectives of the anthropocentrism and the non-anthropocentrism to decide and implement various

environmental policy related issues. In other words, environmental pragmatism emerges out to address different environmental issues or conflicts which are related directly or indirectly to the different standpoints related to environment, that is, anthropocentric standpoint or non-anthropocentric standpoint. The important aspect of the environmental pragmatism is to attempt a convergence among groups and formulate a pragmatic decision bettering both the anthropocentric and the non-anthropocentric perspectives. (Norton B. G., 1991). Pragmatic decision means a practical decision making process for humans in environment related conflict and conflict prone issues. Conflicting environmental issues includes the debatable issues such as building a river dam for the water and electricity for the local people as well as other socio-economic development of a region, or making an urban residential place by replacing the existing forest and hilltop, or declaring a national park in the vicinity of villages, or negotiating the human- animals' conflict. There are many such environmental problems that human beings face in the name of development, urbanization, industrialization, and similar other causes.

In each of these issues, there are several views emerging out arguing for and against a position, resulting in conflicts and opposing viewpoints, thus making environmental issues all the more critical and problematic. Thus, environmental issues are critical in the sense that there are several ideologies or perspectives involved leading to serious ethical discussions. In such situations, it is difficult to make a balanced view and to bridge the two poles of anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism. "Environmental issues involve powerful, turbulent, and unpredictable forces that can easily rush to disaster; Building a bridge in such circumstances is an inherently risky venture" (Farber, 2002-2003, p. 852).

Despite this difficulty, the school of the environmental pragmatism claims to provide effective solution to the problems. Thus, within the environmental ethics discourse, the environmental pragmatism tries to come up with a problem resolving approach, mediating

between the two or more such positions for amicable solution. But how far the pragmatic approach is coherent, ethical, and successful is to be inquired. I propose to engage in research trying to explore these questions.

Here, in this research work, effort has been made to focus on the environmental ethics, and more so, on the environmental pragmatism. The environmental pragmatism is a growing trend within environmental ethics which deals with decreasing theoretical debate, engaging in policy formulation on conflicted issues with a pluralistic world view. (Light & Katz, 1996). The Environmental pragmatism, thus, is a new strategy to environmental thought. It argues that theoretical debates are hindering the ability of the environmental movement to forge agreement on basic policy imperatives. The Environmental pragmatists claim that this new direction in environmental philosophy moves beyond theory, advocating a serious inquiry into the practical merits of moral pluralism. The Environmental pragmatism as a coherent philosophical position connects the methodology of the classical American pragmatist thought to the explanation, solution, discussion of real issues. (Light & Katz, 1996). “Environmental pragmatism is the open-ended inquiry into the specific real- life problems of humanity’s relationship with the environment.” (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 2) The Environmental pragmatists find the anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric viewpoints do not come out with possible solutions and environmental ethical concerns should go beyond it.

*Viewing this problematic situation it is the conclusion of environmental pragmatists that it is time for environmental ethics to consider some new positions in the field, and more importantly, to reassess its direction. The small set of acceptable approaches to environmental ethics may be inapplicable to the development of an acceptable environmental policy. (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 3).*

This thesis makes an effort to look at the claims of the environmental pragmatism from a philosophical point of view, more so, from an ethical point of view. It is seen that environmental pragmatism emerged out as a new trend within environmental ethical

discourse to address some conflicting environmental issues. This thesis tries to examine whether the environmental pragmatism can effectively tackle the issues faced by anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism or it comes up with more problems? The thesis tries to see if environmental pragmatism accepts value pluralism? If so, is it consistent in its pluralistic attitude to the environmental issues? How environmental pragmatism negotiates value pluralism? Does the environmental pragmatism succeed in tackling the environmental crisis?

The research will be analytical in nature based on the texts that include books, journal articles and policy documents and other relevant materials. The thesis is presented with the following chapters. In this work, 1<sup>st</sup> chapter (Introduction) deals with focusing on the need and necessity of the present research question, that is, environmental pragmatism. Introduction chapter gives a brief overview of the current issues in environmental ethics following it up with the research questions and objectives.

The second chapter deals with various positions related to environmental ethics. It deals with different strands of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism to show how these positions lead to different approaches to the environment. Anthropocentric position confers intrinsic value to human beings and instrumental value to all other beings and entities. Non-anthropocentrism confers intrinsic value to other beings as well in addition to human beings. This disagreement between the anthropocentrists and non-anthropocentrists on conferring the type of value to nature and its entities does not just happen at the theoretical level, but it has ethical and policy implications. What may be considered as ethical and morally acceptable from a strong anthropocentric position may be considered as unethical and morally unacceptable from a non-anthropocentric position. Thus, these differences will in turn result in having different understandings on environmental policies and issues.

After discussing about the anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism in the second chapter, the third chapter positions the claims of environmental pragmatism as an alternative to the diverse viewpoints. The chapter discusses the salient features and principles of environmental pragmatism. Who are the environmental pragmatists? Do they have a distinctive position against other environmental ethical thinkers? If so, what are the set of features that mark the school of environmental pragmatism? While it is true that they engage in one or the other sort of reconciliatory approach, environmental pragmatists as such are not one homogeneous group. The philosophers who claim themselves as environmental pragmatists advocate different views on values and philosophical influences in their discussions. These issues will be discussed in this chapter.

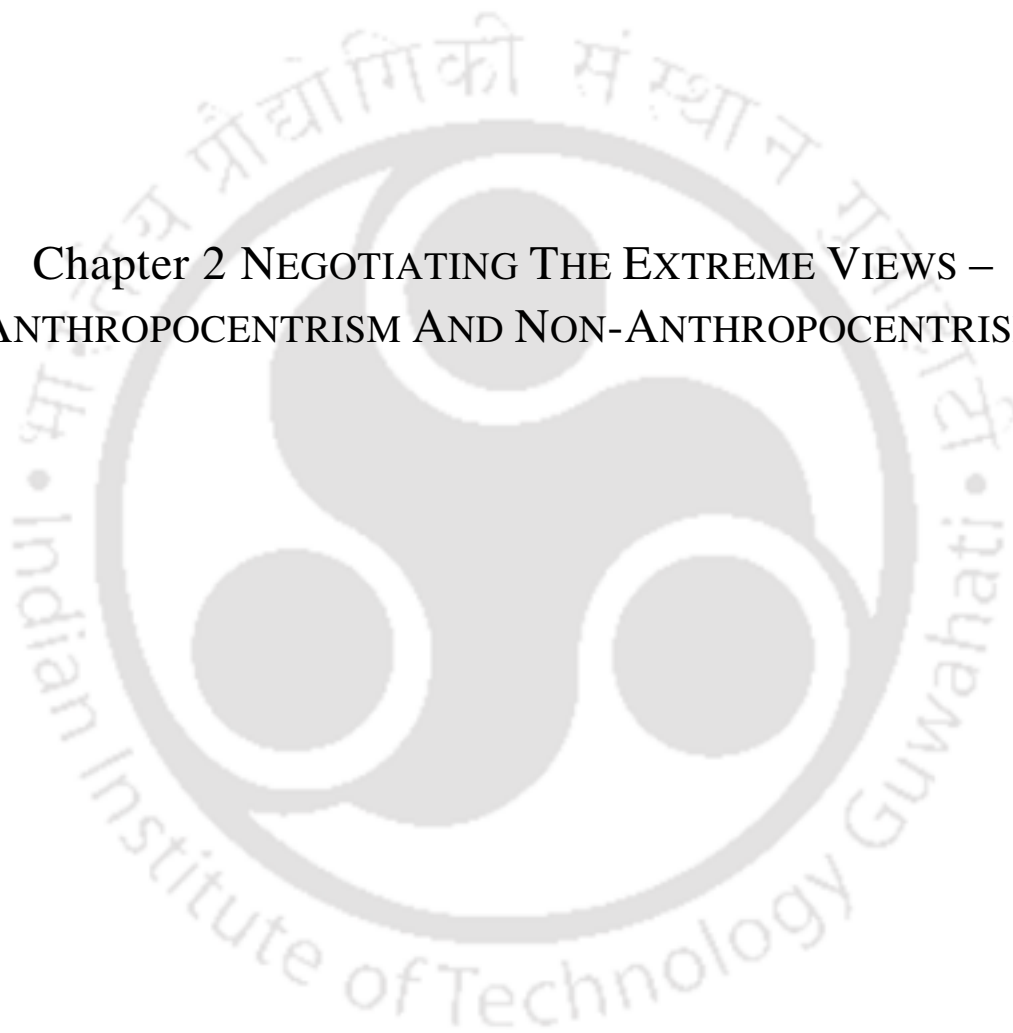
The fourth chapter discusses the issue of value pluralism in environmental pragmatists thought. Value pluralism implies there are various values and each value is unique on its own and distinct from other values. The environmental pragmatists support one or the other forms of value pluralism. As environmental pragmatists support a context sensitive approach to environmental issues, they have to subscribe to value pluralism to be consistent with their philosophical commitment. The attempt of the environmental pragmatism is that it tries to look from all the possible perspectives without sticking to any particular perspective. Therefore it inevitably entangles itself with the value pluralist attitude and by this reason it differs from monistic perspectives or groups. This chapter discusses this issue in detail along with criticism levelled against their position.

The environmental pragmatists claim that diverse positions in environmental ethics gets resolved while engaging in policy decisions. Their ability to resolve the conflicts with their methods is to be studied in this 5th chapter. This chapter focuses on this issue by taking one hypothesis proposed by environmental pragmatist thinker B.G.Norton. Norton proposes the 'convergence hypotheses' as a model that can be tested in empirical cases. He claims that

it may be taken as touchstone for environmentalists. According to this hypothesis, though there is value difference between the non-anthropocentric and the extended or weak anthropocentric views, their goal is ultimately the same in policy implication and implementation. For Norton, non-anthropocentric and weak anthropocentric in practice, should 'converge' on the same set of environmental policies. This chapter is devoted to discussion and evaluation of his position.

The final chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the issues and outcomes that are involved in this research. The conclusion tries to see the plausible explanations for the questions that have been raised in the introduction. It also tries to overall assess the environmental pragmatists position in terms of its prospects as a possible ethical position in environment related issues. The Pragmatists admit that decisions are context dependent and situation dependent and more often only those decisions that are sensitive to the context can be considered as ethical decisions. Through this, they agree to the position there is no absolute ethical standpoint related to environmental position. The environmental problems are complicated with lot many stake-holders. Given these conditions, the decisions that pragmatists take based the context and claim those decisions to be ethical can well turn up into a political decision satisfying one or the other set of people's personal interests. All these problems and shortcomings do put a big question mark related to a context based pragmatic approach in taking policy decisions. Despite its drawbacks and despite its political nature, environmental pragmatism can give us the room to bring people to a consensus and to take decisions. I conclude by taking a standpoint that flexibility, context dependence and sensitivity in understanding ethical principles is better than unalterable, uncompromising, context independent ethical positions.

Chapter 2 NEGOTIATING THE EXTREME VIEWS –  
ANTHROPOCENTRISM AND NON-ANTHROPOCENTRISM



The thesis proceeds with first understanding the two prominent positions in environmental ethics, namely anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism. As environmental pragmatism claims to negotiate between these seemingly extreme positions, in this chapter, attention is paid to have a discussion on these two diverse viewpoints on environmental ethics.

Environmental ethics involves a basic understanding how the humans value the environment. This in turn raises another question, which is fundamental to the earlier question, that is, how the humans value themselves with environment. The history of mankind has come up with two major ideas of the relationship of human beings with the environment. The relationship of human beings with nature has been broadly understood in two different ways - Anthropocentrism; All other ways other than anthropocentrism, that is, nonanthropocentrism. This may include biocentrism, ecocentrism, etc.(Nelson, 2009). A discussion of various theories about anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism has been carried out in the subsequent pages of this chapter.

## 2.1 ANTHROPOCENTRISM:

Anthropocentrism is a position that suggests that human beings are the center of this creation and all other things are at the periphery. For anthropocentrism, everything else in existence should be evaluated by its utility for the human beings, thus taking a position of instrumental value of the nature. Some thinkers feel that this approach by the humans towards nature is the important reason for the present environmental crisis. Lynn White claimed that the environmental problems are not purely scientific or technical and it cannot be solved purely by means of development of technology alone. He says that our view about our environment depends on our ideas of the man –nature relationship. White says that religious beliefs and opinions encourage man to build his environment and Christian belief system is

mainly anthropocentric and responsible for such ecological turbulence the world face today.(White L. , 2001) . Like White some other thinkers also feel that in the western tradition, the humans are treated as species, which can dictate it's superiority over the nature.

*Christianity and Marxism are identical in elevating the human species above all other species and in disregarding the subtle mesh of unity and solidarity that prevails among all creatures.*  
(Skolimowski, 1991, p. 64).

White recognizes anthropocentric attitude brought out by the religious influence as the main reason for environmental crisis. There can be a point of contention that Christian idea of anthropocentrism is the cause of environmental problems, because with the same anthropocentric idea, a kind of responsibility and a notion of stewardship were brought out by some thinkers.(Dobel, 2001) But, the idea of anthropocentrism, that is, humans as and at the center was much in vogue from the Western Christian tradition.

David R. Keller has interpreted five kinds of anthropocentric ideas that can be traced in various works of philosophers. In the first kind, human being is placed between God or Godlike angels and other nonhuman beings of nature in a hierarchical order or great chain of being. Thomas Aquinas wrote about such hierarchical order where human beings play all kinds of dominant role over other natural things by virtue of God's gift of thought and rational capacity to them. Aquinas stressed that human soul consists of both corporeal and incorporeal substance whereas soul of nonhuman beings consist of corporeal substance only. Human beings are the only moral beings due to its high caliber of language and rationality and other nonhuman beings and things are meant for humans' use and means. In the second kind, some philosophers give humans a special privilege of superiority over all the natural things and beings by pointing out the dualism that exists between mind or soul and body, culture and nature. Rene Descartes pointed out such dualism of soul and body. For him, human soul has its unique capacity of thought and reason by which humans considered

superior to all things. Descartes considered all other nonhuman beings are like machine that can perform works only mechanically. Though nonhuman beings perform works, they do like a machine which is arranged in a proper order to perform some specific work, and therefore they cannot do other works rationally as humans do. Animals do work by instinct and it becomes mechanical. In the third kind of the anthropocentric idea, in alignment with the dualism of Descartes who insists that nonhuman beings are like machine and can't do activates rationally, Isaac Newton also insists that nature and the biota are moved and controlled by the principles of natural laws. Human being with the free will is exempted of such control of laws and that is why human being is superior to all other natural entities. Fourth, human being claims themselves to be the possessors of intrinsic value and all other natural entities are for the use of human beings. This argument which insists on the instrumental value of the natural resources for the human purposes is found in writings of John Locke. Locke insists that nature things like land and forest can be utilized for the benefit of the human being and this implies that humans can cultivate the nature for their use. Thus, this position possesses an anthropocentric attitude towards the nature. And fifth, human is the only morally considerable being and other beings are not morally considerable. This point is also aligned with the two aforementioned ideas that humans are intrinsically valuable and human moral consideration is and need to be separated from the nature. Therefore only human community is worthy of moral consideration (Keller, 2010).

As Keller points out, there are several ways by which the idea of anthropocentrism emerged and got propagated in western thought. This may include the then available religious, metaphysical, and scientific viewpoints which tried to see human beings as superior to other beings. On account of that, the humans were given the free hand to use nature for their needs and demands. Ethical ideas emerged as well by considering that humans' alone

possessed intrinsic value. Considering humans as the centre and as superior to other beings give rise to the idea of anthropocentrism.

But, anthropocentrism only suggest that humans are at the centre and are at the top of hierarchical order in relation to nature. Anthropocentrism need not necessarily mean unscrupulous use of natural resources and exploiting the environment. There are different types of anthropocentrism and all do not come up with the idea of using of nature and natural resources for immediate benefits.

## 2.2. KINDS OF ANTHROPOCENTRISM:

Some thinkers identify two varieties of anthropocentrism. This differentiation is done by considering different generations of human beings. If the present generation alone is considered, then it may result in a conception of anthropocentrism and if the present generation is considered with the future generation, then it may come up with another conception of anthropocentrism. Mikael Stenmark mentions these two types of anthropocentrism as 'traditional' and 'intergenerational' anthropocentrism. (Stenmark, 2009, p. 83). He remarks that traditional view is that all the natural things are for the use and benefit of now-living people. And the view that all natural things are for the use and benefit of the present and future generation of the people is called as intergenerational anthropocentrism.

Similarly, in another type of classification, B. G.Norton talks about two types of anthropocentrism- strong and weak anthropocentrism. (Norton B. G., 1991). Strong anthropocentrism argues that humans are at the centre and only the humans possess the intrinsic value and all other things, if they possess any value, then they do have it only as an instrumental value. The weak anthropocentrism might acknowledge that significantly a greater amount of intrinsic value is given to humans compared to other beings and hence

protecting humans against the other nonhuman beings is always justified. This position though acknowledging the intrinsic value of other beings, try to place humans in the higher level compared to other beings' value. As the humans possess greater intrinsic value, than any other beings, the humans' well-being is given preference over the other beings. Many traditional western ethical perspectives are anthropocentric or human-centered in either the strong sense or the weak sense.

### *2.2.1 Intergenerational Environmental Ethics:*

Michael Stenmark and others talk of future generation, and an ethics that considers intergeneration, but it has its limitations. Some of the pertinent questions that are to be addressed by proponents of intergenerational ethics are that, who will be the future generation? What would be their interests and intentions? Do they have rights and claims? How can one know them? Derek Parfit brings about some of the issues mentioned above through his non-identity problem. (Parfit, 1984).

It is assumed there will be future people but who will be that group of people is unknown. There is no such definite description about our future generations. It is a 'non-identity problem' as called by Derek Parfit. His point is that any plan and policy that is introduced or implemented by government or such authority are for some targeted groups and those groups are definite. There is no such plan and policy without any definite group. If one has to take some initiative for environmental protection for future people without any definite future group then whether these initiatives actually benefit those people or not is not known. If there is no definite set of future people to receive benefit or actions then to whom will the present generation extend moral standing? Moreover, how the future people can legitimately complain that they have been wronged by the present policies resulting in environmental

degradation? If one does not take such policies then they cannot even exist. So the main issue is not the future people but the definite group of future people.

Parfit's claim that there should be a definite target group for taking a policy can be questioned. Though one may not be sure of the definite future group, but, it cannot be denied there will be a set of human beings who are to live in the future. They can be considered when one talks of future generation. Thus, as a response to non-identity problem some philosophers are of the view that although one do not know exactly the future people, that is, who will exist in future, one may assume that some group of future people will exist and they will have their interest. In line with this view, one can talk of the present generation's obligation to future people rather than specific future individuals themselves.(Desjardin, 2001)

Thus, it can be assumed there will be some set of people who will be living in the future. Though there is no definite target of the future people, yet it can be assumed that some group of people will represent humankind as future people. As the future generations will be representing humankind, it becomes all the more obligatory for present generation to take care of the rights of future generations as well. If the present generation can able to enjoy certain rights, the minimal of those rights should be made available for the future generations also and they should also be able to enjoy the rights the present generation are enjoying. Alan Gewirth says that we have to care for our future generation when we deal with the environment because our future generations would be like us conscious beings and climate change and global warming will do harm the future people. So it is our moral obligation to extend our moral standing to future generations. "There is a correlative obligation to future generations to refrain from damaging the natural environment so that it can be such an object of reverence."(Gewirth, 2001, p. 209).

The environmental protection is one kind of right. This environmental right can be carried and enhanced by the present human beings to provide the opportunities to the future people. Overall rights and duties have to be preserved by the people for their own welfare and for the environment. In case of conflicts between the rights of humans and animals, for Gewirth, it is the humans' rights that take precedence. For him, granting moral standing to future generations is more important than granting moral standing to other animals and objects.

*The respect owed to the natural environment has certain implication for the rights of animals and other living beings. Entirely apart from the obligation to refrain from inflicting gratuitous pain and animals, there remains the question of the extent to which animals and even plants should be used to fulfill the imperative needs of human beings for food and clothing. Here the rights of present and future generations of human beings may come into conflicts with the rights of animals. The basic arguments for human rights show only, in cases of such conflict, human rights must take precedence.*(Gewirth, 2001, p. 210).

Gewirth's granting moral standing to future generations is thoroughly from an anthropocentric position. Nevertheless, it tries to extend moral standing not only to present generation, but also to future generations. But, it doesn't talk of moral standing from a non-anthropocentric viewpoint. Gewirth insisted that present people have the duty as well as responsibility to the future people so the future people can fulfill their needs and demands. The present generation should create opportunities for the future generation to enjoy the same benefits as the present generation enjoys. But some thinkers do question of one's moral obligation to future generations on the ground of reciprocity. Arguing against future generation, Mark Golding says there is a lack of reciprocity from the future generations (Golding, 2001). Reciprocity means that one should get some benefits or similar deeds in return for service to some others. Golding argues that distant future generation is not the member of our moral community so far and if we do have some responsible duty towards

them, then we would not have anything to gain in return from them. Moreover, one do not know how they will behave or whether future generations will be interested in environmental related issues like wilderness, natural beauty, etc. So there is this lack of reciprocity and therefore one has no moral obligation to the future generations. “We cannot enter into an explicit contract with the community of the future. And although future generation might derive benefits from us, these benefits can’t be reciprocated”(Golding, 2001, p. 286)

Golding’s position maybe true that present generation cannot derive any benefit from the future generation. To that extent, it lacks reciprocity. But, if one understands reciprocity by action and not by intended receiver, perhaps one can accommodate moral obligation to future generation through reciprocity. For instance, if current generation got a conducive environment to live and sustain, they may not be able to give it back to their earlier generation, but they can give a similar conducive environment to live and sustain to the future generation. John Rawls, who has taken up reciprocity in his idea of hypothetical contract in the original position, do talk about intergenerational justice. Rawls argues that each generation should preserve and save some amount of basic and primary goods such as clean air, water, cultivable land for the betterment of the next generation. These natural capitals again give opportunity to the future generation to cultivate those goods so the next generation can avail the similar amount of natural resources. He urges to preserve the natural goods to uphold the just society. John Rawls urges,

*Each generation passes on to the next a fair equivalent in real capital as defined by a just savings principle....This equivalent is in turn for what is received from previous generations that enable the later ones to enjoy a better life in a more just society(Rawls, 1971, p. 256).*

It can be noted that arguing for ethics and moral obligation from the point of reciprocity can make ethics more of a bartering mechanism like a contract. While it may be coherent, ethical questions on the ‘oughtness’ do arise on one’s actions towards certain

beings even though they fall beyond the boundaries of reciprocity; so, moral 'oughtness' can be deliberated by going beyond the idea of reciprocity.

It is not necessary that one has to see the idea of intergenerational justice from the idea of reciprocity. On the other hand, some other philosophers argue for moral obligation to the future generations even in the absence of reciprocity. They argue that although one cannot know about the intention and motives of the future people yet it can be assumed that one has moral obligation to the future generations even without reciprocity. In this regard Kavka, observes that it is one kind of obligation to fulfill the deceased's will and wish, though there is no reciprocity. Therefore without thinking about any reciprocity from the future generations, one can think of having some moral obligation.(Kavka, 1978). Gewirth also argues that without thinking on a value of reciprocity one has to extend one's moral obligation to the trans-generational people (Gewirth, 2001).

It can be noted that thinkers who subscribe for rights of present generation alone, or rights of present generation with future generations, still most of them go by one or the other forms of anthropocentrism; whether it is 'traditional' or 'intergenerational', 'strong' or 'weak'. In all these cases, there is the emphasis on the superiority of humans in the hierarchy of species. As mentioned, humans are considered to be at the center and they possess the intrinsic value. This approach and attitude of making humans at the top of the pyramid gave rise to the anthropocentric viewpoint. As White observes, from the Judeo-Christian culture to modern time people, usually see the nature from the human point of view, that is, nature is instrumental or its various entities help people to realize and fulfill their needs and greed.(White L. , 2001). White pointed out the anthropocentric attitude of humans on nature and maintains that it should be replaced by an alternative way, that is, a non-anthropocentric approach.

## 2.3 NON-ANTHROPOCENTRISM:

Non-anthropocentrism is the view that apart from human beings, there can also be some other set of beings and entities that can be considered to possess an intrinsic value. Non-anthropocentrism may be of different kinds depending on the type of beings and entities for which the intrinsic value is bestowed. Thus non-anthropocentrism is a term that takes within itself the different ideological positions like sentientism, biocentrism, and ecocentrism. A discussion of these various non-anthropocentric approaches is carried out in the subsequent passages.

### 2.3.1 SENTIENTISM:

Sentientism as a school of thought argues for providing equal value to certain other beings besides human beings. Thus, they subscribe for a nonanthropocentric position, in which they give some other entities equal value as that of human beings. This suggests that it is not only the humans who are at the centre, but with them there are also a set of other beings. Sentientists are a set of thinkers who subscribe for non-anthropocentrism based on a being's capacity to be sentient. A sentient being is one that has the capacity to feel pain. (Singer, 2009). As the capacity to feel pain and pleasure is the criteria for a being to have a moral standing, the sentientists included other beings that have the capacity to suffer along with human beings in their moral ambit. Started primarily from the utilitarian tradition, the animals, along with human beings have been considered for moral standing. Jeremy Bentham, the utilitarian thinker worked out the moral principles for humans and animals based on pleasure and pain principles. He insists on the suffering principle – the sensibility of feeling pain and pleasure to argue for animal welfare. He writes,

*... The question is not, can they reason? Nor, can they talk? But can they suffer? Why should the law refuse its protection to any sensitive being? ...The time will come when humanity will extend its mantle over everything which breathes*(Bentham, 1948, pp. 310-311).

In the history of human civilization, animals have been killed for meat, furs, and ornaments and for many other uses by people in different parts of the world. They have been exploited in many different ways. Animals were not given for moral consideration as they were thought to be nonrational beings and hence do not deserve any moral consideration. Primarily from the utilitarian tradition from the works of Jeremy Bentham, considering animals in the moral realm has been thought of. British psychologist Richard D. Ryder, who coined the word 'speciesism' as the practice of privileging human species over other species, says that animals should also be brought under moral consideration. In the recent times, thinkers from different ethical perspectives voice their opinion for considering animals in the moral realm. Peter Singer (Singer, 2003) from the utilitarian perspective, Tom Regan (Regan, 2004) from the deontological perspective, Mark Rowlands (Rowlands, 1998) from the contractarian perspective talk about animal liberation.

Following utilitarian view Peter Singer in his works, assigns an equal consideration to animals. Singer says that animals are sentient beings. They can feel pleasure and pain. Based on sentience, one has to extend moral obligation to animals. (Singer, 2003) (Singer, 2009) Singer says that every being, human and nonhuman who have the capacity for sentience should get equal consideration. From this utility view, joy and happiness are good and pain and suffering are bad. So, this pain and suffering should be minimized irrespective of the species. He says,

*The application of the principle of equality to the infliction of suffering is, in theory at least, fairly straightforward. Pain and suffering are bad and should be prevented or minimized, irrespective of the race, sex, or species of the being that suffers* (Singer, 2003, p. 61).

Peter Singer urges that animal should get moral consideration for their inhuman suffering and pain. For Singer, humans' action on animals that can feel pain should have moral justification.

On the other hand, Tom Regan says that any being which is the 'subject of life' has to get moral consideration. Following Kant's deontological ethics, Regan also argues that every being should be considered as an end and not merely as a means. (Regan, 2004). Supporting for animal rights from a non-anthropocentric standpoint, Tom Regan says that equality amongst animals needed to be preserved in order to talk about the rights of animals.

*All animals are equal, when the notion of 'animal' and 'equality' are properly understood, 'animal' referring to all (terrestrial, at least) moral agents and patients, and 'equality' referring to their equal possession of inherent value (Regan, 1983, p. 240).*

These set of moral thinkers subscribe for one or the other form of non-anthropocentrism by arguing for minimum equal rights or privileges for a set of animal beings on par with the human beings. By taking such a standpoint, these thinkers go beyond anthropocentric position. They thus do not privilege humans against all other species. Similarly, there are other thinkers who also take a non-anthropocentric position but trying to argue for the entire biotic community.

### 2.3.2 BIO-CENTRISTS:

Biocentrism is the view that all the biotic community has their own rights to continuance of life and to carry out their own activities. Taylor remarks, "from the perspective of a life-centered theory, we have prima facie moral obligations that are owed to wild plants and animals themselves as members of the Earth's biotic community" (Taylor P. , 2001, p. 101). These biocentric egalitarians propose for an equal and same value for all the living beings irrespective of the species. Robin Attfield observes that this biocentric

perspective is more extended in range than of the individual sentientists like Peter Singer. (Attfield, 2009). Biocentrism appeals to extend moral worth to all the living nonhuman beings including the trees.

Albert Schweitzer known for his biocentric theory of reverence for life, maintains the idea that all life is sacred and one must live with respect to every living being and should give each one its worth as an inherently valuable entity that has the “will-to-live”. He says,

*Just as in my own will-to-live there is a yearning for more life, and for that mysterious exaltation of the will-to-live which is called pleasure, and terror in face of annihilation and that injury to the will-to-live which is called pain; So, the same obtains in all the will-to-live around me, equally whether it can express itself to my comprehension or whether it remains unvoiced.*(Schweitzer, 2001, p. 95).

Schweitzer puts across the view that irrespective of whether there is human cognizance or not of the beings’ will-to-live, it has to be considered. The logical position of this account shall take one beyond biocentrism as it has to then consider all beings into consideration. One major issue is that how can one understand the beings’ will-to-live if it is incomprehensible to humans or if it is unvoiced.

Paul W. Taylor says that all the living being whatever it may be, can enjoy its life span with all activities including eating, reproducing and has its own destiny or teleological goal. It is the duty of every being to respect one another and live in peaceful manner.

*Every species counts as having the same value in the sense that, regardless of what species a living thing belongs to, it is deemed to be prima facie deserving of equal concern and consideration on the part of moral agents* (Taylor P. W., 1986, p. 12).

Taylor insists that all the living beings have its own inherent values and respect for nature justifies realizing the worthy of beings. After denial of human superiority over other

living beings, he argues that all living beings are equal and therefore one should respect nature and its being. Each species has its unique feature and is the centre of its teleological life. Human being should not claim superiority simply by the feature of the rational capacity, because some animal species have some other special skills and features which are lacking in human. (Taylor P. , 2001).

Kenneth Goodpaster also insists on the moral considerability to the beings who can feel pain and pleasure. (Goodpaster, 2001). Goodpaster extended morality of human being for consideration to the trees and other natural things. For him, rationality and sentience are sufficient conditions for the moral considerability. He finds distinction between moral rights and moral considerability. Humans and other such beings legitimately have their moral rights; still other sentient beings also legitimately deserve moral considerability. Though there is difference of moral significance in degrees amongst the sentient beings, all such sentient beings should get moral consideration. In contrast the being that has no such sentience, desires, and wants cannot be considered for moral standing.

In most of the cases of sentientists and the biocentrics arguments, one can find that there is no superior status given to humans, even though humans possess rationality. The arguments from these non-anthropocentric thinkers take two different lines. One is that some thinkers admit that rationality is also found in some other nonhuman beings and hence the moral standing can be extended beyond human beings. The other line of argument is that rationality need not be the criteria. If rationality is not the criteria, then again, moral standing can be extended to other nonhuman beings as well. Either way, the idea of confining moral standing only to human beings is questioned by these set of non-anthropocentric thinkers.

### 2.3.3. ECOCENTRISTS:

Ecocentrists are the set of thinkers who give moral consideration to the entire ecosystem. Thinkers like Aldo Leopold (1887-1948), Arne Naess (1912-2009) argue against 'unnecessary' intervention on nature. They extend the moral obligation beyond the human beings and animals to the entire ecosystem that may include the living and the nonliving.

Aldo Leopold comes up with the notion of 'land ethic'.(Leopold, 1949).According to Leopold, to keep a balance in ecology land ethics is essential. He tries to interpret the environment as a community, not as a commodity. Each thing has interrelatedness with one another. These interrelatedness or interdependence among the natural things leads all to be as a community. One species' loss can cause the whole environment to be imbalanced. He insists the land should not be merely considered as commodity, but, according to him, it is also a community. "The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land."(Leopold, 1949, p. 204).

Leopold shows the interdependence of nature with an image of pyramid, with a plant layer resting on the soil, an insect layer on the plants, a bird and rodent layer on the insects, and so on up to the carnivores. For him, land is the basis for all natural things and all energy flowing from it is for the life cycle. Plants and animals get food and all sorts of needed energies from the soil. When these plants and animals die then it comes to the soil as decay and it is the downward movement. On the top of the pyramid are the human beings and therefore human should be steward to the nature rather than exploiter.(Gibson, 1998).

Leopold writes,

*Most members of the land community have no economic value. Wildflowers and songbirds are examples...Yet these creatures are the members of the biotic community and if (as I believe) its stability depends on its integrity, they are entitled to continuance... A system of*

*conservation based solely on economic self-interest is hopelessly lopsided. It tends to ignore, and therefore eventually eliminate, many elements in the land community that lack commercial value, but that are essential to its healthy functioning* (Leopold, 1949, p. 210).

Leopold acknowledges the evolutionary changes that happen in nature. He argues that man-made changes are of different order than evolutionary changes. Man-made changes are prone to be more violent because of population density and rapid technological use, whereas that is not the case with evolutionary changes. He says regarding the balance of the biotic community, “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise”.(Leopold, 1949, p. 225).

Based on Leopold’s land ethic which insists on the integrity, stability and the beauty of the nature, J. B. Callicott finds it as the soul for the foundation of the environmental ethics. He insists that Leopold’s ‘Sand county almanac’ is like a bible in the context of environmental ethics and preservation (Callicott J. B., 1989). Again based on Leopold’s land pyramid which claims to hold a balance strategy amongst all the living and nonliving natural beings and things, Callicott promotes his environmental ethics into a communitarian ethics. This ethics implies that each species and natural things has its own distinctive trait and features which is intrinsically valuable for its own sake. All such natural communities have a common platform for existence and shelter in the name of land. Land and its other entities give an ecological house to the natural things and beings. It provides food and shelter to sustain the life cycle of the biotic community as a whole.

#### 2.3.4 DEEP ECOLOGY:

Arne Naess emphasized on ‘deep ecological movement’, that demands self-realization and deep intuitive attitude for preserving the nature.(Naess, 1973). Arne Naess tries to find an ontological relationship between human and nonhuman nature through a process of self-

realization. Naess, with George Sessions, formulated eight principles for ecological development that includes the admission that the human and the nonhuman life on earth have intrinsic values. They are values-in-themselves, and the humans have no right to reduce the richness and diversity except to satisfy their vital needs. (Devall & Sessions, 1985).

*...Arne Naess, coined the terms “shallow-” and “deep ecology” to describe the difference between anthropocentric and biocentric environmental protection. While the former “fights pollution and resource depletion in order to preserve human health and affluence”, the latter “operates out of a deep-seated respect and even veneration for ways and forms of life, and accords them an equal right to live and blossom (Singh, Darryl, & Celia, 2010, p. 15).*

Thus, Arne Naess was suggesting a non-anthropocentric position, in which he expects humans to have a cordial relationship with nature by showing respect and veneration rather than trying to overpower nature on the ground that humans are superior.

It can be seen that non-anthropocentric do not form one homogeneous group but they are all particular in not subscribing to the conception that human beings are superior and they alone are worthy of moral consideration for determining the moral rightness of an action. The moral rightness of an action depends on whether the objects of contention do possess any value and if it possesses what sort of value does it possess?

Whether traditional or intergenerational or weak or strong within anthropocentrism and similarly whether sentientism or biocentrism or ecocentrism within non-anthropocentrism, all such approaches depend on how human beings assign value to nature and its beings. Anthropocentrism values natural beings and things as instrumental for human purpose, while non-anthropocentrism values some or all of natural things as possessing noninstrumental value. They are considered to have value on their own accord and not by their utility, that is instrumentally valuable, to human beings. As one of the key issues is

whether the beings have intrinsic value, it is therefore demanding that one introspects on what the intrinsic value can mean and how it affects the idea of moral standing?

## 2.4. KINDS OF INTRINSIC VALUE:

All the different kinds of non-anthropocentrism are centered on the issue of intrinsic value. As a matter of fact, the notion of intrinsic and instrumental value plays an important role in the anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches towards environment. As Jamieson remarks,

*Ethical theory requires concepts of value, and in my view this concept are constructed from acts of evaluation...Our patterns of evaluation are enormously complex and surprisingly uncharted. Some notions of intrinsic value are likely to loom as a significant landmark on any adequate map of our evaluative practices (Jamison, 2009, p. 75).*

Thus, Jamieson acknowledges that a reflection on intrinsic value is bound to happen in the discussions on environmental ethics. Dale Jamieson remarks intrinsic value has been understood in four different senses. These are -1) Intrinsic value in the sense of ultimate value, 2) Intrinsic value as a sense of moral considerability, 3) Intrinsic value as a sense of inherent value, and 4) Intrinsic value as a sense of independent of the valuers. (Jamison, 2009, p. 154)

First, Jamison says that intrinsic value is like 'gold standard value' of morality. As gold is considered as the ultimate value of measuring monetary value of any trade, exchange and affairs of national and international standard, similarly intrinsic value is considered as the ultimate value for evaluation. This sense of intrinsic values essentially places intrinsic value against instrumental value. Intrinsic value is that what is of ultimate value; Instrumental value is that what is conducive to realization of what is intrinsic value. He says that for example,

pleasure is an intrinsic value. In this line, we can think that playing tennis is valuable, not for its own sake, but because it produces pleasure, which is of intrinsic value. (Jamison, 2009)

In the second sense, intrinsic value is considered as a ticket or a passport to a moral community (Jamison, 2009, p. 70),(Benson, 2000). This is basically coming up with a basis for assigning value to an object or being that is necessary and sufficient for the community to consider an object to be of moral standing or moral considerability. For instance, Peter Singer takes 'sentience' as the basis from where one can extend moral standing for beings. Philosophers may consider various such attributes as the basis of intrinsic value for moral consideration.

In the third sense, intrinsic value may be considered as an inherent value of things or objects because it depends entirely on what inheres in the thing itself. G. E. Moore (1873-1958) characterized this notion of intrinsic value as follows-

*To say that a kind of value is intrinsic value means merely that the question whether a thing possesses it, and in what degree it possesses it, depend solely on the intrinsic nature of the thing in question(Moore, 1922, p. 260).*

Lastly, in this sense, intrinsic value is independent of valuer. In this sense value is completely a neutral point of view. Neutral value means the things or the system as a whole its value without a valuer. In this sense, there is not a relational kind of value between the subject and the object. Without such relational property, if value is assessed that the thing or the object has its own value, then it is a value from the neutral point of view. For instance, an ecological system is intrinsically valuable though there is no valuer at all. (Jamison, 2009).

If one looks at Jamieson's classification it need not be taken to be exclusive to one another. For instance, the first way of understanding talks about intrinsic value as the case of ultimate valuation. One can see the third type of understanding comes up with a standpoint

of intrinsic value being inherent in the object while the second type of understanding of intrinsic value specifies particular attributes to be residing in the entities. The last one talks about intrinsic value independent of valuer. Though Jamieson's four ways of understanding intrinsic values need not be taken as exhaustive, but, it is to be accepted that the notion of intrinsic value is understood in different ways and this leads to different position within environmental ethics. (Chakraborty, 2004) As a matter of fact, one can see the discussions basically talking about the relationship between the valuer and the entities of value. Does intrinsic value resides in the object even without the valuer or is it merely the case the valuer gives the value to the object and if that is so, is there anything inheres in the object which makes the valuer to give the value to the object.

The issue of intrinsic value is primarily a matter of serious concern for the non-anthropocentrists as the anthropocentrists are to take a position of instrumental value of all things except human beings. It is to be seen within the non-anthropocentrists group as to how they are going to understand the idea of intrinsic value. Is it the case that all non-anthropocentrists are going to go by the idea that intrinsic value is independent of the valuer? Some non-anthropocentrists do feel that values cannot be independent of the valuer. For instance, Callicott admits that values need a valuer but that valuer cannot be the whole measure of value. He also insists that though human is the valuer by virtue of his consciousness, but human is by no means the locus of all values. In this way Callicott proposes for a subjective feeling of value. It is one kind of objectifying and projecting our own measure or value to the natural world.

*The source of all value is human consciousness, but it by no means follows that the locus of all value is consciousness...since no value can, in principle...be altogether independent of a valuing consciousness...value is as it were, projected onto the natural objects or events by the subjective feeling of the observer (Callicott J. B., 1989, pp. 133-134) .*

He also says that nature has its potentiality of value but to evaluate or actualize objects need an interaction of a conscious being. Without such an evaluator the value will be as it is in itself. So to be of value means an interaction between a subject or a conscious being and an object or an event. He says, "...A range of potential values in nature actualizable upon interaction with consciousness"(Callicott J. B., 1992, p. 129).

Thus, even amongst the ecocentrists there are disagreements in their understanding of intrinsic values, but there is no denial that they subscribe to one or the other forms of intrinsic values. This intrinsic value position is against anthropocentric position that goes for instrumental value of nature. This disagreement between the anthropocentrists and non-anthropocentrists on conferring the type of value to nature and its entities do not just happen at the theoretical level, but it has ethical and policy implications. What may be considered as ethical and morally acceptable from a strong anthropocentric position may be considered as unethical and morally unacceptable from a non-anthropocentric position, thus posing a challenging task for determining morally acceptable actions regarding nature and natural entities. Is there a way to reconcile these diverse positions?

A set of thinkers, calling themselves as environmental pragmatists, have come up with alternative and complementary perspective to try to reconcile these extreme viewpoints. For instance, let us take the case of intrinsic value debate. It is true there exists different standpoint on the notion of intrinsic value as what it means and whether that intrinsic value is independent of the knower or is dependent on him or her and even if it is dependent, how do one understand intrinsic value? While it is true that these differences exists, certain thinkers opine that these differences can be either sorted out, or dissolved or set aside while engaging in policy decision process. By this, they come up with a position that the issue of intrinsic value can be a nonissue at the level of policy formulations. Even if they disagree amongst themselves to the way one understands intrinsic value, but, they group themselves on the

contention that there should be a sort of reconciliation to make policies. For instance, when Norton talks about intrinsic value, he takes a position similar to Callicott's that intrinsic value cannot be acknowledged independent of the valuer. For him, humans are the only agent of values. He says,

*Moralists among environmental ethicists have erred in looking for a value in living things that is independent of human valuing. They have therefore forgotten a most elementary point about valuing anything. Valuing always occurs from the viewpoint of a conscious valuer... only the humans are valuing agents* (Norton B. G., 1991, p. 251).

While Norton assumes that intrinsic value cannot be independent of valuer, Katz claims that what is supposed to be of intrinsic value loses its meaning from the perspective of ecological holism. For him, objects have their values in relation to or together with other entities in the ecological process. Hence, the "entire notion of intrinsic value loses its meaning from the perspective of ecological holism, because each natural entity performs some function in the ecological system" (Katz, 1996, p. 309).

Katz opines that whether there is something of intrinsic value or not should not matter much for human's obligations. According to him, intrinsic value of nature can be acknowledged. But as long as it doesn't play any significant role in policy decisions and thereby obligations, there is no need to have a threadbare discussion on intrinsic value. Rather, a mere acknowledgement of intrinsic value will do as a value that exists against instrumental value. He says,

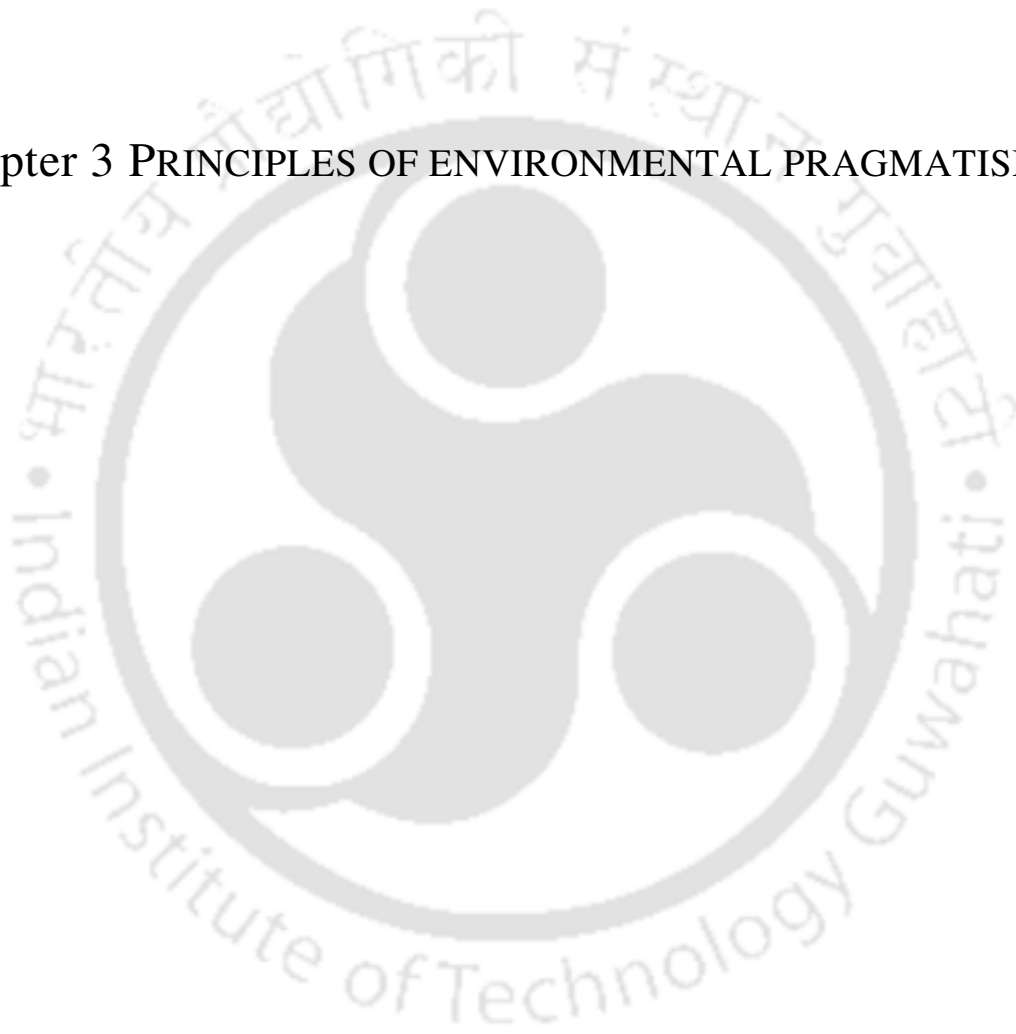
*The existence of intrinsic value needs to be acknowledged, to serve as the limit to anthropocentric instrumentalism; but this value need not be totally articulated or justified, for it is not the ground of all obligations. The problem of intrinsic value in nature is a problem that does not require a solution; It is enough to know that some kind of non-anthropocentric value exist, even if the description of this value remains unclear* (Katz, 1996, pp. 316-317).

A similar line of argument was proposed by Mclean, but in a stronger sense. Reacting strongly against the intrinsic value, Douglas McLean says that neither human being nor earth has any special cosmic significance. His view is going against the idea of assignment of intrinsic value. The anthropocentric assigns intrinsic value only to the humans and the non-anthropocentric to the wider sense to the earth and its elements. But Mclean is against all such assignment of intrinsic value either to the human or to the earth. For him, to think about the intrinsic value is only illusion. He says,

*It is an illusion to think that we can discover intrinsic value, in ourselves or in our surroundings, and that this discovery will tell us how we should act. We live in a world toward which we have a wide range of reactions and attitudes. We can reflect upon them and modify them to varying degrees as we try to live happier, richer, and more meaningful lives. Our reasons for protecting the environment and passing on a better world to future generations should be seen in this light. Controversial metaphysical claims about intrinsic value will not help us either in making sense of these reasons or in making them effective.*(McLean, 2009, p. 141)

As mentioned, while for these environmental pragmatists, even though, they differ, for instance, in their understanding of what the intrinsic values are, but the difference is of secondary concern. Their main contention is reconciliation that helps in making policy decisions. Ben A. Minteer thinks that environmental theorists should incorporate more contextual, social and pragmatic approaches to address the modern environmental crisis. (Minteer, 1998) Thus, there is a shift in concern for these pragmatic thinkers. Their way of understanding the problem, their method of reconciling and the ethics and effectiveness of their reconciliatory approach will be dealt with in the following chapters.

## Chapter 3 PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM



In the previous chapter it was mentioned that environmental pragmatism as a school of thought attempts to negotiate between the extreme viewpoints of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism. Thus, their concern shifts to a reconciliatory approach between these extremities. Who can be the environmental pragmatists? Do they have distinctive feature against other environmental ethical thinkers? If so, what are the set of features that mark the school of environmental pragmatism? These issues will be discussed in this chapter.

About the name of 'environmental pragmatism' Andrew Light claimed to be the first to use this name. His pragmatic views on valuating nature were very much present in his various works.(Light, 2010). Before Andrew Light, some other philosophers used such pragmatic approaches in their writings. Antony Weston, Bryan G. Norton are prominent among many to use the pragmatic ideas in their earlier articles but nobody called this type of approach as 'environmental pragmatism'(Light, 2010). Andrew Light later edited a book on environment with Eric Katz with the title 'environmental pragmatism' in 1996. (Robert, 2000).

While it is true that they engage in one or the other sort of reconciliatory approach, environmental pragmatists as such are not one homogeneous group. The philosophers who claim themselves as environmental pragmatists advocate different views on values and philosophical influences in their discussions.

For instance, some environmental pragmatists such as B.G.Norton, Anthony Weston, Andrew Light advocate the instrumental value of the nature. Norton admits of weak anthropocentric position where he insists on preserving natural variety for the future human beings. He does not admit of intrinsic value of nonhuman natural entities and for him, they possess only the instrumental value and hence these are for human use.(Norton B. G., 1984). Anthony Weston

also does not support intrinsic value of nonhuman species. He insists that intrinsic value is one of the kinds of value and it cannot be the foundation of environmental ethics.(Weston, 1996). Amongst the pragmatists group, some others advocate the intrinsic value of nature. For instance, Ben Minteer argues for intrinsic value of entities. He insists that even with intrinsic notion of value, environmental pragmatism can negotiate with the practical environmental issues.(Minteer, 2001). On the other hand, Aristotelis Santas argues that intrinsic value is relational and contextual in the sense that value itself is a triadic concept. The triadic concept of value is that an object has value, because of its property and its ability to serve in the purpose which is context dependent. So property, ability and purpose combine the triadic value of the things. So, an object like pen has a value for the property it possess and ability to work for particular purpose.(Santas, 2003 ) Thus the pragmatists do differ amongst themselves on the nature of intrinsic values to nature and its entities.

In the similar lines regarding the philosophical influences, some pragmatists admit of the classical pragmatic influences on their school of thought, that is, environmental pragmatism. The name itself implies the pragmatic school's influence on environmental pragmatism. Environmental pragmatism was influenced in many respects by the classical American pragmatic philosophy. Pragmatism is a philosophical revolution began in America in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The classical American pragmatism was spearheaded by three important philosophers such as Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914), William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952). Though their writings don't talk much about the environment, still such pragmatic thoughts provide scope to succeeding philosophers to relate those thoughts to the environment in later time. For instance B. G. Norton states that his environmental ethical position is 'broadly pragmatic' (Norton B. G., 1991, p. x). Similarly, Antony Weston also insists that canonical pragmatic figure like John Dewey's ideas are much relevant to the environmental ethics.(Weston, 1996).

Kelly Parker discusses about the contribution of the classical pragmatists for the epistemological, metaphysical and ontological formation of the environmental ethics. He finds that pragmatism, as a philosophy of process and context based approach can provide morale boost to the emerging environmental ethics. (Parker, 1996). For Parker, pragmatism revises traditional ideas in epistemology, metaphysics and value theory by stressing that humans as well as other organism are embedded in a particular environment, so that knowledge and value are the result of transaction or interactions with the world. Pragmatic epistemology is critical of any notion of absolutes in either knowledge or metaphysics (Parker, 1996). He added that Pragmatic value theory acknowledges a plurality of values. Pragmatic ethics is thus the systematic understanding of these values in all their multiplicity, complexity and indeterminacy. Parker uses these basic pragmatic concepts to analyze major issues in current environmental philosophy.

In the same way, Sandra B. Rosenthal also finds that classical pragmatism contributes a lot to the environmental ethics with its pragmatic ideology in several forms. It seems that from the American pragmatic philosophical ideas and insights, environmental pragmatism finds a new kind of pragmatic ethics to address the different environmental issues. (Rosenthal & Buchholz, 1996).

Among the three classical pragmatists, John Dewey's naturalistic philosophy is more akin to environmental pragmatism. Though C. S. Pierce and William James pragmatic philosophical trend had a great influence on the environmental pragmatism, yet it is true that these two philosophers did not directly write on the environmental related issues. But their pragmatic perspectives and tenets were main philosophical grounds for the environmental pragmatism. It is John Dewey's works that partially touched upon the relational discussion between subject (human being as a moral agent) and the object (natural entities). Paul Ott finds that John Dewey was not concerned about the dichotomy between the intrinsic and

instrumental value of natural objects. Rather he was concerned about the valuation of any object in relation with human being in some specific context. He did not understand value purely in an abstract or metaphysical sense. For him value and valuation come through the primary and secondary stages respectively. In the primary stage human being experiences the object. In the secondary stage person's reflective notion emerges from the primary experience of the object. The experience and the reflective action of things bring the interrelation between intrinsic and extrinsic value of things. There is no value which cannot be touched by human being. As Ott says,

*We have every reasons to believe that values in practice do not exist in isolation, then the insistence on the part of environmental philosophers in holding the intrinsic-instrumental value dualism is indeed tragedy and morally irresponsible(Ott, 2010, p. 296).*

As Paul Ott finds that Dewey was in all support for any kind of value of objects which is in practice and existential in nature so his philosophy talks all about such naturalistic tendencies. In this sense valuation of object may be of various kinds as because human being interacts with nature in myriad context. What Dewey emphasizes is that any value which can fulfill the desire or feeling in good of things or objects should be considered as the source of ethical values. Value may be of various kinds depending upon the person's context and intuition. It can be said that Dewey was more concerned for the practical valuation of the natural objects in context to the human life rather than the unused value or more profound abstract kind of valuation of the objects. Dewey finds that experience in life influences the valuation of entities about the things in nature. Thus Dewey finds, "The conditions and consequences, the existential relations, of goods which are accepted as goods not because of theory but because they are such in experience"(Dewey, 1988, pp. 322-23).

Similarly, Hickman also believes that Dewey's philosophy has much influence in forming the environmental pragmatism compared to other classical pragmatic thinkers. Especially Dewey's naturalistic philosophy, deliberative democratic discussion and his dynamic nature of mind gives most sought after impetus to the environmental pragmatism. In the article 'nature as culture' Larry A. Hickman insists that Dewey had not believed that nature as nature, rather he believed nature as human culture (Hickman, 1996). Nature as human culture in the sense that human being inevitably interacts with the nature for various purposes such as for food, fuel or such other socio-economic and cultural aspects. These interactions between human beings and nature bring new dimension of knowledge. So, for John Dewey the interaction between humans and nature is real and empirically true and therefore any conflict or contrast between the two should be addressed properly. In Dewey's philosophy there is no such distinction between nature and culture. For Dewey, whatever happens to the natural entities through anthropogenic activities, humankind is responsible for that. Humankind cannot be separated from the nature. Nature can be damaged in one sense for various human purposes and nature can be rebuilt to some extent in another sense. So, Dewey thought nature as not as nature, but nature as human culture (Hickman, 1996). Dewey says,

*As the development growth of an individual from embryo to maturity is the result of interaction of organism with surroundings, so culture is the product not of efforts of man put forth in a void or just upon themselves, but of prolonged and cumulative interactions with environment (Dewey, 1929, p. 28)*

Though it is believed that classical pragmatic philosophy has a good influence on the emergence and formation of the environmental pragmatism, still some philosophers do not agree to accept such classical pragmatists' influence on the environmental pragmatism. For instance, Andrew Light says that he does not agree with such influence, and insists that

environmental pragmatism is unique on its own and involves in the practical environmental problems rather than to engage in the theoretical debate in the environmental ethics (Light, 2010). He says that it is not of interest of such ‘fatherly reading’ articles which show the path for the environmental pragmatism. By ‘fatherly reading’ article he means to those articles which are written under the heavy influences of the classical pragmatists’ works on environment. There are several articles of such classical pragmatic thought about the environment. His argument is that the germ of the classical pragmatism is there in the environmental pragmatism, but it does not imply that classical pragmatic philosophy is the comprehensive overview of environmental pragmatism. Andrew Light brings environmental related issues to be addressed in line with environmental pragmatism and not necessarily within the classical pragmatic thought.

Light classified at least four forms of environmental pragmatism in his edited book ‘environmental pragmatism’ in the following way

*Examination into the connection between classical American philosophical pragmatism and environmental issues; the articulation of practical strategies for bridging gaps between environmental theorists, policy analysts, activists, and public; theoretical investigations into the overlapping normative bases of specific environmental organizations and movements, for the purposes of providing grounds for the convergence of activists on policy choices; and among these theoretical debates; and general arguments for theoretical and meta-theoretical moral pluralism in environmental normative theory (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5)*

According to Light’s understanding of the environmental pragmatism, classical pragmatism’s influence is one part of the whole environmental pragmatism’s contents. Among these four forms, the first one tells about the metaphysical foundation of the classical pragmatism for the environmental pragmatism while the rest three is concerned in forming public policy goal to arrive at solutions to the environmental problems. Light’s understanding thus is to either lessen or sideline the influence of classical pragmatism as he thinks that

environmental pragmatism is more concerned with environmental policy decisions and ways to resolve the conflicts rather than engaging in metaphysical debates with other schools of thought. A similar line of thought is followed by Norton as well.

Thus environmental pragmatism is a heterogeneous group and therefore it is difficult to find some common principles of it. (Moriarty, 2006). Though it is difficult because of not being a homogeneous group, but it is not impossible to find some basic principles of the environmental pragmatism. Different philosophers discuss the principle of environmental pragmatism in different ways. Still there are some similarities among the different philosophers on the principles of environmental pragmatism. The editors of the book *Environmental Pragmatism* indicate three main aspects as central to environmental pragmatism. These are moral pluralism, reducing the theoretical debate among thinkers and policy consensus for resolving the practical environmental problems.

*...the call for moral pluralism, the decreasing implication of theoretical debates and the placing of practical issues of policy consensus in the foreground of concern, are central aspects of our conception of environmental pragmatism* (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 5).

Jason Scott Robert also takes a similar standpoint on the important issues of environmental pragmatism. Robert finds the central focus of environmental pragmatism is to discuss on 'moral pluralism', secondly environmental pragmatism usually avoids the 'theoretical debate' of the environment, and finally and most importantly environmental pragmatism focuses on the 'political and policy issues' for environmental decision making process. (Robert, 2000, p. 196). Kelly A. Parker explains and insists on four areas, which he thinks as most connected to the thought of the environmental pragmatism.

*The remainder of this essay comprises a brief survey of the matters I take to be most germane to an exploration of 'environmental pragmatism'. These matters are (1) the concept of environment,*

*(2) the place of environmental ethics in philosophical inquiry and (3) the social and political dimension of environmental ethics. Under (4) I propose pragmatic contributions to the current debates over (a) moral pluralism, (b) anthropocentrism and (c) the intrinsic value of nature. (Parker, 1996, p. 28).*

Even though environmental pragmatists are heterogeneous group, one can see the issues that are of common concerns for them are those of moral pluralism, policy consensus and decreasing theoretical debate, particularly on anthropocentrism and intrinsic values. This suggests there can be certain common features across all the environmental pragmatists as mentioned above. Added to it, it is the researcher's position that sustainability can also be considered as one of the features of environmental pragmatism though pragmatists don't specifically mention it. Of course B. G. Norton argues for this issue in several of his works.(Norton B. G., 2005).

### 3.1 MORAL PLURALISM:

Moral pluralism implies there are many values in nature and each value has its own worth. Environmental pragmatism strongly supports moral pluralism. Christopher D. Stone finds that it is difficult to address different environmental perspective with a monistic principle. So pluralism carries this ethos that for different situations there may be different reaction and one monistic approach cannot solve all these different issues.(Stone, 1988). In a similar voice, Bryan Norton also finds that environmental problems are embedded with different angles such as social, cultural, and ecological. Therefore environmental problems should be seen from various perspectives rather than sticking to a single monistic principle.

*All environmental problems are ecologically, socially, and culturally complex; the complex problems must be seen from multiple perspectives. In real policy context, good response to actual, complex problems are acceptable to as many perspectives as possible, not judge up or*

*down according to universal, philosophical principles. The goal of environmental ethics should be to use philosophical and ethical theory to tell normative stories appropriate to particular problems, to help community to develop a narrative that fits their perspectives and environmental challenges, not to support universal principles.*(Norton B. G., 2009, p. 51).

Pragmatists believe that human experiences are complex and are an ongoing process within nature. Out of these various experiences different values emerge. So values emerge because of contact between subject and object in experiences. From this perspective values can neither be wholly subjective nor objective. For pragmatists, acknowledging the possibility of different values is the starting point for deliberation on the environmental issues. The possibilities of different values inevitably lead us to value pluralism position. Again these value pluralism which may emerge out in due course of human experiences, need to be monitored to make a commensurable among different values.

*The pluralism proposed here is motivated by methodological considerations and need not be understood as a doctrine about ultimate values. It is part of broader experimental strategy that seeks first to express diverse values in multiple and perhaps incommensurable ways, and then seeks ways to organize and present those diverse goals as a starting point for a more holistic analysis.*(Norton B. G., 2003, p. 517).

### 3.2 DECREASING IMPLICATION OF THEORETICAL DEBATE:

Decreasing implication of theoretical debate is one of the central tenets of environmental pragmatism. Environmental pragmatism tries to reduce the gap between environmental ethical theories to solve practical environmental problems. Environmental pragmatism as a school of thought opines that the earlier ethical theories fail to address the practical environmental problems, due to their dogmatism over method and theories. Light observes,

*Perhaps one reason is methodological and theoretical dogmatism. Mainstream environmental ethics has developed under a narrow predisposition that only a small set of approaches in the field is worthwhile-that only some ways of developing an environmental philosophy will yield a morality justifiable environmental policy. (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 2).*

According to pragmatists, mainstream environmental ethics means the ecocentric views which insist on the intrinsic value of natural entities both living and nonliving. J. B. Callicott argues that this intrinsic value should be the foundation stone for the environmental ethics.(Callicott J. B., 1984). But in the time of conflict between human and nature, or for development activities, such as building a dam over a river, or trade-off between human and some animals, such monistic view may not able to provide solution. What it provides is the lopsided monistic intrinsic value of nature. So, environmental pragmatism argues that both non-anthropocentric and anthropocentric theories should come together despite their differing views. Some environmental pragmatist like B. G. Norton argues for a convergence hypothesis where both intrinsic and instrumental values can be adjusted for practical solution. Andrew Light also appeals for compatibility between materialist and ontologist for a practical environmental solution through democratic understanding. These two concepts of convergence hypothesis and compatibility will be discussed later. The merits and shortcomings of the positions of compatibilism and convergence hypothesis will be discussed later in the subsequent chapters. Thus it has been seen that environmental pragmatism tries to reduce the gap between environmental theories to arrive at a practical environmental solution. The aim to arrive at a practical solution makes the environmental pragmatists to engage in consensus building process.

### 3.3 DISCUSSION OF PRACTICAL ISSUES OF POLICY CONSENSUS (POLITICAL AND SOCIAL):

Policy formulation for amicable settlement of a particular disputed environmental situation is another important feature of the environmental pragmatism. Based on the pluralistic attitude, pragmatism tries to give policy decisions for the environmental problems. As Robert James Scott says, “The intent of environmental pragmatism is to make environmental philosophy relevant to environmental policy.”(Robert, 2000, p. 196). The environmental philosophers have wanted to contribute in environmental policy making process. They usually want to influence in three heads- agenda settings, evaluation of the setting policies and making alternative ways for the policy to save and conserve the wild species.(Kingdon, 2003). Environmental policy can be formulated from various perspectives, such as anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric that may include biocentric or ecocentric positions. Environmental pragmatism as a school of thought insists more on reconciliation of both of these two approaches, whenever there is a conflict while making policy for the environment. The pragmatists opine the solutions is brought out by engaging in a form of methodological discussion stressing on the importance of compatibility and contextualizing the issue than focusing on ideological shifts amongst the different positions. While all these pragmatists subscribe for consensus building positions, inherent in their position is an acceptance and promotion of a context dependent approach towards environmental problems. This makes all the pragmatists to support a principle of contextualism.

### 3.4 CONTEXTUALISM:

The contextualism is another of the important features of the methodological environmental pragmatism. Regarding environmental policy management there are two basic approaches-monistic principles which insists on one value and the contextualistic pragmatic

trend which acknowledges plural values. Monistic value indicates that any environmental policy for preservation or conservation should be based on one basic principle, which implies that one should be able to take policy decisions based on that one single value. In contrast to this approach, environmental pragmatism insists on the context based policy implementation of the environment issues, because in the growing interaction between human being and nature, there may come some conflicts leading to some trade off, which indicates that context based policy formulation will be in a better position to do than traditional single value approach as pragmatism believes on the many value perspectives, that is, value may come out in different stages, different intensity, different directions. To reduce different values into one single value, like one 'principle-ism' is not justifiable for the pragmatism. Rather than stick to one single abstract valuation or holistic view, pragmatist insists on the context. Environmental decisions demand one to consider plurality of values rather than single value principle.(Minteer, Manning, & Corley, 2004). So it is in this sense, pragmatism emerges as context bound ethical system. Vincent Colapietro finds that context as an elastic notion, which gives room for widening the scope of morality. He says,

*What is most important for our purpose is that context is an elastic notion. The elasticity of this notion allows us to stretch the conception of context to include even wider and also fundamentally different contexts than the ones to which our attention, as situated agents, is ineluctably drawn (Colapietro, 2009, p. 11) .*

For pragmatists, without considering the situation from all sides, mere emphasis on single principle would not help to resolve the issue.

*The point is that some ethical systems give much more weight to the situation than do others; What makes an approach to moral judgement contextual is that it acknowledges more influence of the situation in shaping ethical norms than most other approaches allow(Marietta D. E., 1994, p. 143) .*

On the absolutists' conception of nature and its species, pragmatists find several loopholes in their ethical approach. The holist emphasizes on the intrinsic value of the nature without giving any attention to the situation. They think that biodiversity and species should be saved on the sole criteria of intrinsic value and there would not be any consideration on the context. But such approach is not sufficient enough to address the environmental situation the human being faces today. With rapid changes in the environment for various reasons and the growing population make the eco-circle complicated and in this critical juncture human needs critical and diverse approaches to address the environmental problems. Marietta observes,

*The absolutist does not respond to a real situation but to an abstraction. There are many faults in abstract view: it tends to be simple, while life is complicated; it tends to overlook the stubborn parts of a situation; and it fails to recognize the complicated nature of the humans involved in a situation.*(Marietta D. E., 1994, p. 152).

### 3.6 ANTHROPOCENTRIC:

At the beginning of this chapter it is mentioned that environmental pragmatism is not a homogeneous group. While Light attempted to come up with the features of environmental pragmatism, it was neither an exclusive one nor an exhaustive one. Apart from Light's understanding of the principles of environmental pragmatism, Parker includes two other features as essential to environmental pragmatists - anthropocentric and intrinsic value.

Environmental pragmatism is mostly anthropocentric in nature. But it is to be noted that not all the pragmatists are anthropocentric, because, some pragmatists argue from the non-anthropocentric perspective as well. For instance, Peter S. Wenz argues that a pluralistic, pragmatic and policy oriented views are important for the environmental issues, yet keeping anthropocentric attitude for the pragmatism is not favorable. Rather he prefers the non-

anthropocentric approach which subscribes to the intrinsic value of the nature. (Wenz, 1999). Ben A. Minteer also claims himself to be a member of the environmental pragmatic school of thought yet in support of intrinsic value of nature. (Minteer, 2001). He argues that most of the environmental philosophers are advocating the intrinsic value of nature and it is the focal point for preserving and protecting the natural things.

*...most environmental philosophers have thrown their shoulders to the wheel of the intrinsic value theory and nonanthropocentric arguments for the protection of nature believing that these positions are the only philosophical stances that can be counted on to consistently justify adequate environmental protection.”(Minteer, 2001, p. 58).*

For Minteer, this intrinsic value of nature certainly plays a vital role in protecting nature. He further argues that B. G. Norton, one of the ardent supporters of the environmental pragmatic camp did not completely oppose intrinsic value of nature. He also believed in the noninstrumental value of nature. Minteer, therefore, opines there is a scope for Norton as well as for the other environmental pragmatists to acknowledge for the intrinsic or such types of value in the nature.

Parker’s inclusion of anthropocentric and intrinsic values as features of environmental pragmatism seems to be a general characteristic of any school of thought that is concerned with environmental ethics. While it may be assumed that at least to a greater extent many of the pragmatists are anthropocentric that may support his case for including it as one of the characteristic of pragmatist school of thought, the same cannot be said for intrinsic value. Most of the schools of thought will have one or the other conceptions on intrinsic value. Pragmatists also believe in the intrinsic value, but primarily their understanding considers human beings alone to possess that intrinsic value, whereas some other thinkers like ecocentrics and biocentrics may ascribe the notion of intrinsic value to other nonhuman

entities as well. Parker may not include intrinsic value as a feature exclusive to pragmatists, but, rather, he points out to a different perspective amongst the pragmatists to the issue of intrinsic value that can form a common ground for all pragmatists.

### 3.7 SUSTAINABILITY:

One of the important features of environmental pragmatism is the principle of sustainability. Though Light and Parker did not explicitly include this aspect when they talk of principles of environmental pragmatism, the researcher opines that it is an important characteristic of the pragmatists' school of thought. Sustainability indicates meeting the needs of the present generations' demand without hampering the future generations' wants and need. "Sustainability development is a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland, 1987, p. 43). Interpreting the Brundtland's report, Norton sees sustainability from the two inter-temporal perspectives 'human needs' and 'human productive capacity'. (Norton B. G., 2003, p. 169). Human needs resources to live and at the same time humans try to cope up through their creative skills the shortfall from other sources. In this sense, sustainability is a concept of both the needs and creative skills of human action in time of resource shortages.

Norton in his article in fact discusses strong and weak anthropocentric attitude to the natural resources along with two preferences - felt preference and considered preference. (Norton B. G., 1984). Strong anthropocentric is the view which insists on the use of natural resources as a felt preference of humans and resources can be used as much as possible as demanded by the felt preference. In this sense natural resources are used for the present generation and felt preference usually is related to the present generation and that is why it is strong anthropocentric in nature. However Norton prefers the other kind - weak anthropocentric approach towards natural resources. According to him, though humans have

a feeling for number of wants and desire, still all cannot be fulfilled. Norton says that resources use should be aligned with the considered preference and not with the felt preference. This attitude to the nature implies that resources are not meant for the present generations alone and rather future generations are also to be kept in mind while using natural resource. This leads to a weak anthropocentric position and also takes care of sustainability in nature. (Hickman, 2009). . As Norton's weak anthropocentric approach insists on the considered preference while using the object, and not on the felt preference, it indicates of the sustainability approach to the natural objects. Other pragmatist thinkers as well uphold the use of natural resources for the present and the future generations. A way of judicious use of nature and its resources thinking about the other generations is the mark of sustainability. Like Norton, those thinkers as well, indicate of such intergenerational ethics and appeal for the conservation of natural resources based on considered preference.(Norton B. G., 1984). If the pragmatists do not opt for sustainability, then, it would be difficult for them to engage in any reconciliatory process. Thus, for pragmatists, sustainability is the ground for the policy making on various issues in a consensus way for the practical environmental policy goal.

*...Looking at the situation from the viewpoint of policy and practice and recognizing the need for a unifying concept to anchor normative theories of environmental protection, it seemed to me that the most promising candidate was the idea of sustainability(Norton B. G., 2003, p. 3).*

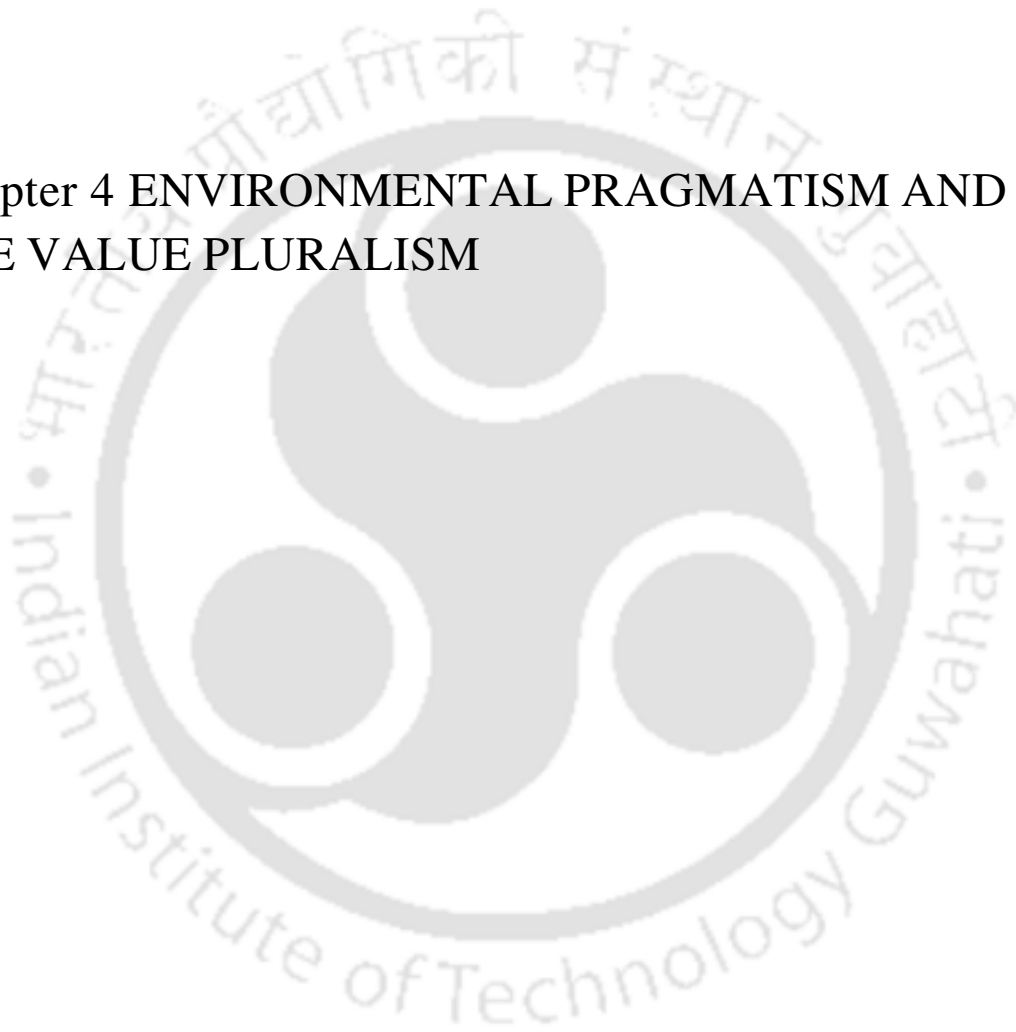
### 3.8. CONCLUSION:

It is seen from the discussions that these principles can be sketched out as the principles of environmental pragmatism. Though environmental pragmatists are not one homogeneous whole, nevertheless, attempts are made to see the similarities that exist among all the pragmatic thinkers. Light's understanding is added with Parker's on pragmatists being

anthropocentric. If anthropocentric is being taken as a principle in pragmatism, it entails understanding of sustainability as another principle that needs to be considered as one of the foremost principles of environmental pragmatists. These issues have been discussed in the present chapter. The question remains if with the principles as suggested by the pragmatists help them to make an ethical decision on environment and its related problems. This issue will be discussed further in the subsequent chapters.



## Chapter 4 ENVIRONMENTAL PRAGMATISM AND THE VALUE PLURALISM



In this chapter, a discussion on value pluralism is undertaken. It may be true that environmental pragmatists do not belong to one homogeneous whole. But, almost all the environmental pragmatists take recourse to value pluralism in trying to engage with environmental problems. This makes it to be an important point of discussion in studying their thought.

#### 4.1. VALUE PLURALISM OR MORAL PLURALISM:

Value pluralism implies there are various values and each value is unique on its own and distinct from other values.

*Value pluralism, the view that there are a number of distinct intrinsically valuable properties, such as autonomy, knowledge, justice, equality, beauty, which are not reducible to each other nor to some other ultimate value such as pleasure. (O'Neill, Holland, & Light, 2008, p. 71).*

As there are various kinds of values, so there are several moral theories such as deontology, utilitarian and virtue ethics. While 'duty' is the basic principle of the deontology, 'maximum happiness' is the basic principle of the hedonistic utilitarianism<sup>2</sup>. The virtue ethics based its value on character building of a person. (Sandler, 2005). It is not necessary that value pluralism should essentially result in different moral theories. For instance, the utilitarian theory can be ascertained not only from the value of happiness, it can be seen from the values of knowledge, preference and like. Similarly, the deontological moral theory can still have multiple values and not just confined to 'duty' alone. It is therefore to be noted that pragmatists when they accommodate value pluralism, it can be for subscribing to different values from a single moral theory or even from multiple moral theories as well. As such, value pluralism is positioned against value monism.

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<sup>2</sup>Jeremy Bentham (1789) understood happiness in terms of pleasure and he believed that the aim of each person is mainly the promotion of agent's own happiness, which is pleasure. John Stuart Mill (1863) altered this hedonistic assumption by introducing his idea of higher pleasures, thereby changing the notion of happiness within the utilitarian tradition.

Peter S. Wenz (Wenz, 1993) has talked about three types of moral pluralism—minimal, moderate and extreme pluralism and he advocates the moderate pluralism which can address the moral crisis of human being in a neutral way. In one sense he says that all moral theories are minimally pluralistic. In this sense monistic theories like utilitarian, deontology or may be virtue ethics are minimally pluralistic because to be pluralistic for these theories the criterion is minimal in nature. About the moderate pluralism he says that it contains various independent principles which cannot be derived from a single moral principle or reduced to a single master principle. On the other hand, extreme pluralism involves a plurality of theories, while moderate pluralism includes only a plurality of principles in a single theory. Moreover, moderate pluralism does not compartmentalize the moral life. These moderate pluralists confront all situations with the same ethical theory. He says that extreme pluralist adopts different ethical theories for different context or for different subjects of application. For instance, in Christopher D. Stone's writing such extreme pluralism has been found. (Stone, 1987). Wenz, thus suggests that use of different moral theories for different purposes is an extreme kind of pluralism. (Wenz, 1993).

In situations related to environmental concerns, ethical problems arise because of different ideological positions. For instance, on protecting a forest area, some people may raise concerns with the view that forest has its own intrinsic value. Some others see it from an instrumental value perspective and again, here too, the instrumental value can be in its economic utility, natural beauty or any such similar instrumental value. In most of the cases in the environmental ethics discourse, the subject is dealt from competing moral positions, that is, competing value claims. In such cases one cannot reduce one value to the other. One principle cannot be reduced to another principle. Rosenthal and Buchholz maintain that in such and similar cases, an advocate of moral pluralism should think of different approaches to ethical problem.

*Moral pluralism generally advocates two different approaches to an ethical problem, (1) That each relevant principle be considered in every instance, or (2) That one principle be operative in one type of domain or sphere of interest, and another principle be operative in another type of domain or sphere of interest.” (Buchholz & Rosenthal, 1996, p. 265).*

As environmental pragmatists support context sensitive approach to environmental issues, as it is their ideological commitment, they had to subscribe for value pluralism. The environmental pragmatism, as a school of thought, usually enters into various issues on environment and thus encounters with various valuations of human on the environment and the nature as a whole. Light and Katz indicates the environmental pragmatism is not a homogeneous group, it is heterogeneous and cluster of many groups and ideologies. (Light & Katz, 1996). Thus its conception and ideology imply its connection and commitment to the value pluralism. The attempt of the environmental pragmatism is that it tries to look from all the possible perspectives without sticking to any particular perspective. Therefore it inevitably entangles itself with the value pluralistic attitude and by this reason it differs from monistic perspectives or groups. Andrew Light himself claimed that he turns to a pluralistic position in environmental ethics which he called as ‘environmental pragmatism’(Light, 2010). Thus the notion of environmental pragmatism inevitably embraces the value pluralism. As an advocate of value pluralism as well as moral pluralism the environmental pragmatism unfolds open-ended possibilities. It provides opportunity to each of the party or stakeholder for a mutual understanding to arrive at a good policy decision for the environmental related issues. These kinds of consensus building approaches are essential in the policy making process of the environmental issues among different groups. For it can be assumed that no one perspective is perfectly true or complete. William James says about partial truth of a view of an object and the need of a pluralistic view thus,

*...Pragmatically interpreted, pluralism or the doctrine that it is many means only that the sundry parts of reality may be externally related. Everything you can think of, however vast or inclusive has on the pluralistic view a genuine 'external' environment of some sort or amount. Things are 'with' one another in many ways, but nothing includes everything, or dominates over everything... The pluralistic world is thus more like a federal republic than like an empire or a kingdom. However much may report itself as present at any effective centre of consciousness or action, something else is itself govern and absent and unreduced to unity (James, 2008, p. 31).*

In view of such pluralistic universe, as a school of value pluralism, environmental pragmatist philosophers admit various consensus procedures, which can give a good platform for assimilation among different groups and ideas.

Andrew Light has distinguished two types of value pluralism- theoretical pluralism and meta-theoretical pluralism for the environmental pragmatism. (Light, 2010). Theoretical pluralism acknowledges different and distinct principles or theories for moral consideration of different individual animals which are at the same time incommensurable. For instance, Peter Singer bases his argument on 'sentient' principle while Paul W. Taylor bases his logic on 'respect for the teleological center of life' principle for moral extending to individual animals. In these two cases it has been seen that though end is the same that is moral extending to animals, but means or standpoints are of different kinds. Thus it leads to the theoretical pluralism.(Light & Katz, 1996).

Meta-theoretical pluralism, on the other hand also proposes for openness to divergent ethical theories working together under a moral enterprise to achieve the same goal in the environment. For example, eco-feminists insist to save the natural habitats on the basis of feminist view point, while ecological holists emphasis on the monistic tendency to protect the natural habitats. (Light & Katz, 1996). Though theoretically both are differing, still in the meta-theoretical level both the theories comes to a mutual consensus or understanding for the conservation of forests. In the meta-theoretical stage various ideologies or theories may come

to make a avenues for compatibility between two or more such theories for better understanding and mutual consensus for conservation of forest and environment As Light pointed out,

*From this meta-philosophical perspective, environmental pragmatists are not wedded to any particular theoretical framework from which to evaluate specific problems, but can choose the avenue which best protects the long-term health and stability of the environment, regardless of its theoretical origin. (Light, 1996, p. 172).*

Gary Varner also used 'robust theoretical pluralism' for theoretical pluralism and 'pragmatic pluralism' which resembles the meta-theoretical pluralism of environmental pragmatism (Varner, 1991).

By observing various moral perceptions in the discourse of environmental ethics, Eugene C. Hargrove feels that moral pluralism or searching for different principles is acceptable.(Hargrove, 1989). He sees various perceptions on environmental related issues such as animal rights and liberation, biocentrism, and ecocentrism. These moral pluralisms are more useful in decision making process rather than one unified principle. It is difficult to find a unified rule or principle amongst the diverse principles. For him, these rules or principles themselves are not logically connected. On the body of rules for various environmental issues, Hargrove finds that these rules are not fixed and rules may change from one situation to another. He says,

*The body of rules has no ultimate unifying principle, the principles themselves are not logically related to one another (the omission of one or the addition of another in no way affects the group as whole), they are not organized in any meaningful hierarchy,...and there are innumerable cases which can be brought forward to each of them in which following the proper rule leads to disaster in a broad (or analogously, in a real life) situation”(Hargrove, 1989, p. 22) .*

Hargrove even argues to abandon the quest for universal moral principle by moral philosophers to make decisions. He says, “Moral philosophers will have to abandon for the most part the search for a rational set of universal principles which moral agents can mechanically follow.”(Hargrove, 1989, p. 30) His point is that in the vast environmental discourse, it is not easy to stick to one moral principle and blindly follow it. Depending on the situation, various principles may be accepted.

Bruce Hull also subscribes to pluralism. He says nature is socially constructed object and he opines that to deal with it one needs to have a pluralistic perspective. However, Hull argues that not all types of pluralism demand merit. He considers three kinds of pluralism. (Hull R. B., Infinite Nature, 2006). He mentions ‘flabby’ pluralism as one which without examining and uncritically accepts all perspectives, paradigms and vocabularies. He categorizes another type of pluralism, ‘fortress-like’ pluralism where separated and isolated group work for their own theory and practice and are not ready to cross different paradigms to assimilate and arrive at a solution as the situation demands. He claims he does not support both these pluralisms. Rather he is suggesting for an ‘engaged’ pluralism which is ready to accept multiple perspectives on every issue through agreement.

*Applied to environmental negotiations, engaged pluralism seeks ways to understand, value and illustrate the environmental condition that describe where we want to live in the future as well as mobilizing the political support needed to get us there. (Hull R. B., 2006, p. 6).*

Environmental pragmatists understanding of pluralism also makes them to think of pluralism as dynamic that which changes over time and to changing situations. For them, pluralism is not static or it does not stick to one single moral worth, it is dynamic so far as the valuation is concerned.

*For any reasonable, morality is bound to be constantly changing, because moral value must be adjusted to fit changing economic, technological, political, demographic and other circumstances (Kekes, 1996, p. 4).*

While the environmental pragmatists like Hull, talks about engaged pluralism, Norton comes up with an account of how such engaging can be. Bryan G. Norton (Norton B. G., 2003) talks of three levels of human valuation-1) locally developed value that reflect the preference of individuals. 2) Community value that protect and contribute to human and ecological communities, and 3) Global values, which express a hope for the long-term survival of species. In the local level, individual preference gets advantage but that should be in a sustainable way. Some values are community related and those values should be viewed keeping in mind the entire community of that specific area. This approach will give the community to enrich their culture and heritage. Again some values which are valued locally or community wise may be forfeited for the global community. (Norton B. G., 2003).

Andrew Brennan (Brennan, 1988) also advocates of moral pluralism to address environmental issues. To mean ethical pluralism in environmental ethics Brennan uses the term ethical polymorphism. Ethical polymorphism implies that for multiple situations, multiple ethical principles may be required. Instead of going for a unified moral principle for the environmental related issues, consideration of different principles from different directions would be more fruitful.

*An ethics by which to live is not to be found by adopting one fundamental, substantive principle relative to which all our deliberations are to be resolved. Instead we are prey to numerous different kinds of consideration originating from different directions, many of them with a good claim to be ethical ones.(Brennan, 1988, p. 186).*

Peter Wenz finds that pluralistic attitude to the nature is needed, for its multiple contexts and multiple situational demand. Wenz subscribes to this principle when he talks about environmental justice. On environmental justice, Wenz argues that it is difficult to

justify from single moral principle to various environmental related issues. For the justice and evaluation of environmental outlooks, moral pluralism may be the right way out. He brings a metaphor of pizza to the environment. Environment is like a pizza to be shared. With a single direction or principle, environmental justice cannot be evaluated. It requires going to the pluralistic theory in environmental ethics.

*We found... that none of the above theories of justice was flexible enough to accommodate all of our considered views about how particular matters of environmental justice should be decided...But because each theory and many of the principles contained in each theory seem reasonable when applied to certain kinds of cases, they should not be abandoned entirely. They should be modified and blended to form an all embracing pluralistic theory. A theory is pluralistic when it contains a variety of principles that can't be reduced to or derived from a single master principle.*(Wenz, 1988, p. 310).

While the pragmatics do vouch and subscribe for a moral pluralistic position, they may differ on why they want to do so. It can be because adhering to multiple values is the trait of pragmatists. Or it can be that environmental problems demand acceptance of different values in different situations. Or it can be that they may hold on to the belief that single value position cannot do justice to environment related concerns. These different positions need not be exclusive to one another. But one common point that exists among all environmental pragmatists is that they swear by value pluralism.

But many other environmental ethicists do not subscribe for idea value pluralism. On the other hand, they prefer to have a single value perspective on environmental concerns and contest that environmental problems can be resolved with one single value and there is no need of multiple values. They thus subscribe to a position of value monism. Value monism usually contrasts with value pluralism.

Value monism implies there is only one intrinsically valuable principle or one norm or one idea to which all other values can be converted. For instance, Jeremy Bentham's

hedonistic version of happiness which emphasizes that only the pleasure is the ultimate value is considered as one value theory. Similarly Kantian doctrine which emphasizes that 'duty' is the ultimate value can be taken as one value principle. "Value monism is the claim that there is only one intrinsically valuable property or entity which is valuable in itself and that other values are reducible to this value."(O'Neill, Holland, & Light, 2008, p. 70).

John Baird Callicott is one of the important figures who try to defend monistic attitude to the environmental ethics. (Callicott J. B., 1999). By following Aldo Leopold's 'land ethic', (Leopold, 1949), J.B. Callicott insists on the intrinsic value of nature and its entities throughout his works. His monistic argument is that all the natural entities have their own intrinsic value and therefore any moral attitude for the environment should be based on this intrinsic value.

J. B. Callicott(Callicott J. B., 1990) does not support such many values for environment. Against moral pluralism Callicott subscribes for single value theory. He insists on the intrinsic value of nature and based on this single value theory, he comes out with a position on environmental ethics that is intrinsic value on which the whole eco-system should be preserved. Callicott by upholding a monist position feels that a single, monistic principle is good enough in dealing with ethical issues related to environment. According to Callicott, the people who subscribe for this moral pluralism rely on utilitarian position for one ethical problem and deontological position for another ethical problem and so on. This type of randomly changing principles would lead to a position like 'metaphysical musical chairs'. Instead, Callicott thinks that human beings have to be consistent and coherent in their outlook to the nature.

*Moral pluralism, in short, implies metaphysical musical chairs. I think, however, that we human beings deeply need and mightily strive for consistency, coherency, and closure in our*

*personal and shared outlook on the world and on ourselves in relation to the world and to one another.* (Callicott J. B., 2003, p. 211).

Against the moral pluralists, J. B. Callicott comes up with many arguments defending his monistic standpoint. First, he thinks that with several ideas in mind in a particular course of action, the self-serving or vested interest may get preference among the many alternatives. It would be difficult to choose the most suitable one which leads to a holistic goal. As he says,

*With a variety of theories at our disposal, each indicating different, inconsistent, or contradictory course of action, we may be tempted to espouse the one that seems most convenient or self-serving in the circumstances.*(Callicott J. B., 2003, p. 209) .

Second, because of the multitude of ideologies, pluralism cannot provide a solid or deciding principle for a course of action on which one to be followed. And more importantly Callicott argues that pluralism leads to nowhere except nihilism and skepticism where one loses both moral and intellectual coherence for environmental ethics.(Edelglass, 2006).

Thus, according to Callicott the pluralists do not have a consistent approach to deal with environmental issues and there are no solid grounds for them to take a course of action. On account of this, they lose their ground in environmental ethics.(Callicott J. B., 1994). He rather insists on the holistic approach towards environmental entities based on intrinsic value of nature.

Callicott maintains an ecocentric position towards environment ethics. Callicott bases his ecocentric approach from different traditions of philosophy. He brings in the notion of 'stewardship' from Judaeo-Christian tradition to point out the goodness of all creatures as all are His (God) creations. He also supports his argument based on an orderly world as seen in Leibnitz and other thinker's works. (Callicott J. B., 1994). More importantly Callicott gets the clue from Aldo Leopold's *Land Ethic* who talks about a healthy eco-system that could carry a

rich and diverse culture of creatures. According to Leopold “A thing is good if it provides the stability, integrity and beauty of the biotic community and it is wrong otherwise.” (Leopold, 1949, p. 225). Callicott’s point is that an ecocentric position that has been envisaged over time is sufficient to take care of the environment related concerns. He argues that with such a strong historical, moral and normative ethical basis there is no need for pluralist position in environmental ethics. He thinks that without such historical continuity, a new theory, cannot give a good platform for the environmental ethics. (Callicott J. B., 1994).

Callicott’s arguments against moral pluralism are to a great deal have to do with the problem of not having an absolute standpoint related to environmental ethical issues. By being a monist, Callicott feels that it might be better to have a single foundational principle to address the ethical concerns. Such a standing shall give a consistent approach in dealing with the environment related issues.

This might be the point of disagreement between monists and pluralists. A monistic position can give consistency in decisions that are made, but, will it be sufficient to take care of diverse environmental concerns? The environmental pragmatists say no. They think that a single value moral position cannot take care of complicated environmental issues. They thus take a position of moral pluralism. Environmental pragmatism looks for consensus or compatibility amongst various theories in environmental conflict resolution or conflict management. For instance, Andrew Light talks of compatibility between social ecology and deep ecology, (Light, 1996), while Bryan G. Norton calls for a convergence hypothesis for policy goal among different groups. (Norton B. G., 1991). All these environmental pragmatists’ ideas show that they believe in plurality of values and thus their position leads to moral pluralism. Edelglass observes in this regard thus,

*Instead of debating the one, right, univocal metaphysic of morals-ecocentrism versus anthropocentrism, biocentrism versus sentientism, deep ecology versus social ecology, etc.- pluralists and pragmatists seek agreement on practical policies that can be derived from a variety of moral principles.*(Edelglass, 2006, p. 10).

The moral pluralistic position of pragmatists makes them to consider the relation between human and nature as a process and in this process, different circumstances may demand different outputs. (Rosenthal, 1986) According to them, morality arises based on how one values one's own things or circumstances. There are different kinds of moral worth or values for different persons from different perspectives. And even same person may have different values in various situations. "Different moral theories are possible depending upon which values or principles are included."(Buchholz & Rosenthal, 1996, p. 265). According to the pragmatists, as there are different set of values it is difficult to resolve environmental ethical problems on one value principles. For them, the problems are too complex to be resolved with the help of taking a value monistic position. Light remarks thus,

*Viewing this problematic situation it is the conclusion of environmental pragmatists that it is time for environmental ethics to consider some new positions in the field, and more importantly, to reassess its direction. The small set of acceptable approach to environmental ethics may be inapplicable to the development of an acceptable environmental policy* (Light & Katz, 1996, p. 3).

This position of environmental pragmatists is criticized by Callicott and other monists. Callicott as a moral monist believes the pluralist position to be essentially flawed. For him, an ethical monist position is simpler and sufficient in solving environment related issues. David Keller brings out the difference between the monist and the pluralist position thus,

*Ethical monist maintains that meta-ethical coherence can be achieved only through the adoption of a single unified normative theory. On the other hand ethical pluralists maintain*

*that variety of entities worthy of moral considerability requires multiple normative theories.*(Keller, 2010, p. 18).

Callicott's monistic approach towards environmental ethics, and that too, an ecocentric position fails to address many of the persisting problems related to environmental ethics. Though it might sound sacred to have an intrinsic value approach towards the ecosystem, but, it is difficult to substantiate the intrinsic worthiness of the ecosystem. The worthiness of the ecosystem possessing a value by being conducive to human welfare, for both the present and future generations, shall make it to be valuable. But claiming that ecosystem to have value-in-itself is given for discussions and deliberations. Moreover, Callicott by emphasizing on the intrinsic value of the ecosystem as a whole did not want to give the intrinsic value for the components that make up the ecosystem. For instance, some biocentrists might try to give an intrinsic value for the beings that are sentient. Callicott does not recognize this individual being's value, because of his inclination to eco-centric whole. As a matter of fact, he takes the individual species as a 'means' to achieve the 'end' of the ecosystem as a whole. This in fact takes a 'consequentialist' turn, even though he might not be subscribing to consequentialism. Influenced by the 'land ethic' of Aldo Leopold, Callicott disvalues the individual species which may hamper the integrity, beauty and stability of the biotic community. In this context Tom Regan questions the very basis of Leopold's land ethic which does not bother about individual species and termed such view as 'environmental fascism'. (Regan, 2004, p. 362).

The environmental pragmatists think that J. B. Callicott's argument is abstract and monistic in nature and it will fail to address the modern environmental problems. In a conflict between eco-centrists and animal rights, Callicott would immediately go for the eco-centric position without thinking about the concerned animal due to his overemphasis on ecocentric position against a biocentric ethics. Similarly as between the anthropocentric and non-

anthropocentric position, Callicott overwhelmingly subscribe to a non-anthropocentric position, whereas pragmatists go for a consensus between the two poles of anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric to bring a solution to the ethical problems. (Norton B. G., 1991).

Second, Callicott says that moral pluralism is like a ‘metaphysical musical chair’ for their tendency to display different attitude for different cases. If with one value can one be able to resolve the environmental issues, it is fine. But, the question is whether one can? Environmental philosophy is the relation and interaction between human and nature in different situations. Christopher D. Stone finds that it is difficult to address different environmental perspective with a monistic principle. So pluralism carries this ethos that for different situation there may be different reaction and one monistic tendency cannot solve all these different issues.(Stone, 1988). Pluralists value objects in different time frames. This will lead to difference in value perspectives on the same object. Similarly, everyone will have a value perspective on a given object and there will be differences amongst their perspectives. So these values with different perspectives invariably lead to the incommensurable situation. In such situation trying to commensurate among different values through single value or monistic tendency would be a difficult job. Norton says, “The best we can do in these situations is to honestly seek a fair balance point at which we have done our best to minimize harms for which we are responsible”(Norton B. G., 2003, p. 377)

Callicott’s argument to uphold a moral monistic position is susceptible to certain drawbacks. Due to overemphasis on the holistic environment, he even avoids the rights and interest of the individual species. For the sake of whole eco-system Callicott takes the individual species as mere means which is nothing but a typical consequentialist’s position. To acknowledge the moral worthiness of the whole against the individual units many a time goes against our ordinary moral intuitions. One does not make a distinction when one tries to save the life of an animal, if it is in her ability, to see whether it is rare or extinct or just a

commonly available animal species. If one finds some being suffers, she helps it. Perhaps, Callicott's position may go against this intuitive sense of morality.

One of the arguments against moral pluralism which Callicott maintains is that moral pluralism may lead to vested interests and there can be chances that decisions are based on vested interests. This can however be true and it demands a more serious study about environmental decisions taken by the people. However, to jump immediately to the conclusion that, moral pluralism may not be a better alternative is too farfetched. As the environmental issues are problematic and complicated, it needs to be addressed based on the situation, context and other factors. Therefore, to think of a solution solely based on monistic principle might rather be a tame solution without addressing some of the important concerns, particularly seeing the issues from an ecocentric position. The pragmatists on the other hand carry this pluralistic attitude to address the practical environmental crisis. Andrew Light accuses J. Baird Callicott of holding to a position leading to ideological logjam, which hinders compatibility among different values for solving environmental problems. Andrew Light finds that despite his deep sense towards intrinsic value of ecology, Arne Naess's philosophy is liberal to merge with the pluralistic world views to address the environmental issues than Callicott's position (Light, 1996). Keller mentions that Callicott forcefully argue that environmental ethics should rest on one unified normative standard.(Keller, 2010).

On the advantage of the value pluralism, it can be said that it can take the important elements of different theories for different situations. Marietta remarks, "A pluralistic theory has the advantage of using the elements of different theories which are attractive in different kinds of situations."(Marietta D. E., 1993, p. 70). As William Edelglass finds that in a conflict between animal liberation and eco-centric ethics, moral pluralism gives one an opportunity to think about the proper course of action, that is which would be better. So there

is enough scope in moral pluralism to find out a solution in a given conflicting situation than stick to a monistic view.

*Instead of rejecting one theory wholesale in the pursuit of monism, pluralists and environmental pragmatists argue, we should prudently determine which moral principle to apply to a particular situation. (Edelglass, 2006, p. 10).*

Environmental problems are complex in the sense that it is embedded socially and culturally with human beings. In these complex problems human beings have to think critically in policy formulation for the environment. Environmental pragmatism, therefore insists on context bound principles rather than mere abstract ideas or principles. In this process it seems that moral pluralism is more flexible than moral monist.

*All environmental problems are ecologically, socially, and culturally complex; the complex problems must be seen from multiple perspectives. In real policy context, good response to actual, complex problems are acceptable to as many perspectives as possible, not judge up or down according to universal, philosophical principles. The goal of environmental ethics should be to use philosophical and ethical theory to tell normative stories appropriate to particular problems, to help community to develop a narrative that fits their perspectives and environmental challenges, not to support universal principles. (Norton B. G., 2009, p. 51).*

The environmental pragmatism does consider the involved complexities and try to address it on a case by case basis. It may not come up with one universal approach to tackle the environment related issues as the monists prefer. Monists accuse pragmatists as they do not consistently follow one principle. Pragmatists do not deny and reject this critique. But, the pragmatists claim that is what precisely their advantage. By being localized and by bringing out context dependent solutions, environmental pragmatism places itself as a sensitive and sensible approach towards the multitude of environment related problems than the universal, monistic principle approach. “Norton argues that monism, as a dominant

development in the field, is perhaps the biggest barrier to the acceptance of either a pluralist or a pragmatist stance in environmental philosophy” (Light, 1995, p. 326).

But some of the recent critique finds that Callicott’s latter writings bear a pluralistic attitude when it is imperative to address to the cross-cultural environmental ethics. As Richard Evanoff observes,

*Despite his earlier pronouncements in favour of a monist environmental ethics, in his recent writings, Callicott seems to be moving towards a more pluralistic approach, suggesting that ‘preservationism and resourcism, compositionism and functionalism are contemporary, not competitive and mutually exclusive. (Evanoff, 2011, p. 436). .*

Strengthening the pluralistic attitude of the environmental ethics, Evanoff even finds this approach of Callicott and others as a position similar to Bryan G. Norton’s convergence hypothesis (CH). He says, “A position surprisingly similar to Norton’s CH and that has the potential for leading to a more pluralistic approach to the problem of cross-cultural dialogue on environmental ethics, as also advocated by Norton” (Evanoff, 2011, p. 436).

#### 4.7. THE PROBLEMS OF THE VALUE PLURALISM (Incommensurability and incompatibility):

Peter Schober finds that one of the problems for the value pluralists is the idea of incommensurability of values. Incommensurability of values suggests that values cannot be comparable to a common measure or to common matrix. Schober says that one sense of incommensurability is incomparability, as the value pluralists think.

It is found there are various values and it is difficult to reduce one value to that of another. In other terms each value has its own worth and is independent of other values. When two or more different ethical values need to be compared for a given situation, then

there may arise the issue of incompatibility and incommensurability of values. Graham Smith has interpreted these two ideas in this way.

*Incompatibility of values refers to situations in which two (or more) possible actions, ideas or virtues can't be fulfilled at the same time. The incommensurability of values recognizes that there may be no common value, principle or decision rule against which conflicting value can be weighed or evaluated (Smith, 2003, p. 21).*

When it is compared with two or more ideas or things, usually comparative words or degree such as 'better than', 'worse than' or 'equally good' are used. These three ways of comparison is called trichotomy thesis.(Chang, 1997). But some thinkers say there are various values and each cannot be compared to other or no one is reducible to other. This is the state of incommensurability of values. Ruth Chang sees that value pluralism does not suggest there is no comparability. What is needed to compare is the common metric or common unit or measure. When 'x' is shorter than 'y' by 8 inches, then it is measured in the length unit. This type of common unit is required to justify the values amongst the goods or things. But when two abstract or qualitative word say 'good' and 'beauty' are taken to compare then it cannot be compared because there is no common ground of measuring these two values. Due to lack of common factor or unit it cannot be compared. (Chang, 1997) So, 'good' and 'beauty' have their own value that one cannot be compared with another.

But Schober believes that in reality, this need not be a problem for the pragmatists. In fact values are compared in decision making process. He argues that to compare between two or more values, there is no need of supreme value. Values are chosen based on rational capacity and thus deciding on one among the many values, one should not think that values are incomparable.(Schober, 1999). Here, Schober does only talk about the decision making procedure, that is, to employ reason in taking a decision. He is not talking about what

decision can be made and how the decisions that are made take care of the incommensurability issue. Allied to this issue is the idea of regret.

One of the other problems associated with value pluralism is the idea of regret. Peter Schober maintains that philosophers like John Kekes, Bernard Williams, Michel Stcker and Martha Nussbaum argue from the regret point, known as argument from regrets. (Schober, 1999). According to this view when one chooses one alternative between two available alternatives, then one regrets for not choosing the other, because the other has value too. About regret decision Benard William urges that sometimes ethical decision becomes a conflict of morals. "By 'moral conflicts' I mean only cases in which there is a conflict between two moral judgements that a man is disposed to make relevant to deciding what to do;" (William, 1986, p. 47). Moral conflict decisions mean when there are two or more alternatives in front of a human being, then it is difficult to take a morally right decision. It is difficult in the sense that if one moral decision has been taken, then other alternatives remain as a regret decision. It is regret in the sense that decision of other alternative has been missed.(William, 1986). But Peter Schober emphasizes that is not the case. One chooses one alternative between the two with one's rational ability. It is reasoned out that what is chosen is more valuable than other, and therefore there should not be regret. Schober takes it to be that as through reason if one chooses one alternative of the available alternatives, there need not be a case of regret. But, it is observed that even when one chooses the better of the alternatives with one's rational ability; it does not mean the option that has not been chosen does not have any value at all.

#### 4.9. CONCLUSION:

On the theory and practice of the value pluralism L. W. Sumer's comment is noteworthy. He says, "Pluralism is the theory, liberal neutrality the practice." (Sumner, 1996, p. 200). Similar argument is found even more directly in some other writings when it is said the term as it appears in 'value pluralism' is neutral among different moral theories such as deontology, utilitarian, virtue ethics. (Mason, 2006). Environmental pragmatism can correlate among different ideologies because of this neutral attitude. Neutrality does not mean total abstain of morals or principles rather it brings a new idea of morals to the amicable solution of a particular environmental crisis. On the advantage of the value pluralism, Marietta observes, "a pluralistic theory has the advantage of using the elements of different theories which are attractive in different kinds of situations" (Marietta D. E., 1993, p. 70).

In this chapter, various approaches of valuation such as pluralism and monism have been discussed. It is true the problem of incompatibility and incommensurability do persist in holding on to a value pluralist position. But the features of environmental pragmatism as a practical, context dependent solution provider to a great extent sets aside the theoretical reflection on the problems of pluralistic position. It is to be seen whether they can resolve the practical concerns which make them to give less concentration on theoretical aspects of the issues. It is to be seen if their specific methods and approaches can resolve the environmental conflicts. In the next chapter, some of the pragmatic thinkers' specific methods like Norton's 'convergence hypothesis' will be discussed for their ability to resolve the conflicts.

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The logo of the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati is a circular emblem. It features a central stylized figure with three rounded protrusions, resembling a traditional Indian motif. The figure is set against a background of a large, light-colored circle. The text "Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati" is written in English around the bottom half of the circle, and the same text is written in Assamese at the top. The logo is rendered in a light gray color.

**Chapter 5 ASSESSING CONVERGENCE HYPOTHESIS AND ITS  
POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

In the preceding chapter it was discussed how pragmatists were ready to accept value pluralism despite the difficulty associated with value pluralism on issues like incompatibility and incommensurability. The pragmatists' contention is that those issues remain but only as a theoretical debate and not at the policy formulation and that is where the contribution of pragmatists rest. In this chapter, it is to be discussed if some of the pragmatists claim that environmental conflicts do get resolved based on their methodological principles do bear fruit or not. Specific methods like Norton's 'convergence will be discussed. Their claim that diverse positions in environmental ethics gets resolved while engaging in policy decisions is to be seen. Their ability to resolve the conflicts with their methods is to be studied in this chapter.

### 5.1. INTRODUCTION:

In the earlier chapters, discussions were undertaken on the anthropocentric–ecocentric positions and instrumental - intrinsic values in environment ethics. These types of various value perspectives play an important role in theoretical debate in the environment ethics literature. Environmental pragmatism claim to pay less attention in such theoretical debates. Instead, as mentioned, they talk about practical environmental problems and solving them with methodological tools.

One of the important beliefs of environmental pragmatism is reducing the debate between various theories related to environment. B. G. Norton defines that to come to a policy consensus, such various groups should converge to one another leaving aside the theoretical dogmas. In this framework he talks about the convergence hypothesis. (Norton B. G., 1991).

Norton proposes 'convergence hypotheses as a model that can be tested in empirical cases. He claims that it may be taken as touchstone for the environmentalists. According to this hypothesis, though there is value difference between the non-anthropocentric and the extended or weak anthropocentric views, their goal is ultimately same in policy implication and implementation. For Norton, non-anthropocentric and weak anthropocentric in practice, should 'converge' on the same set of environmental policy. He also stressed that this hypothesis can be taken both as an article of environmentalists' faith and as an empirical hypothesis that could be falsified by subjecting to experimental test.

*Provided anthropocentrism consider the full breadth of human values as they unfold into the indefinite future, and provided non-anthropocentrism endorse a consistent and coherent version of the view that nature has intrinsic value, all sides may be able to endorse a common policy direction.*(Norton B. G., 1991, p. 237).

Norton sees a possibility of convergence between the anthropocentric and the non-anthropocentric because of their aim in preserving the environment. Norton endorses the distinct views on nature and environment, that is, the intrinsic and instrumental value perspectives. Norton says that while debate between these two perspectives is inevitable at the theoretical level, it is to be seen whether these two perspectives come to converge to arrive at common environmental policy in the practical level. Norton thinks that these two diverse positions converge at the policy level.

B. G. Norton finds that environmental entities or ecosystem as a whole can be valued by different individual in various ways. In other sense, environmental values are contextual in nature. The individual values nature or natural entities according to his or her own context and contents.(Norton B. G., 2003). Here Norton admits of various non-instrumental values for nature. According to Norton, human beings may value natural entities for ecological,

economical, aesthetic, historical, scientific, medicinal and cultural reasons. (Norton B. G., 2000) So, there is not only intrinsic value, but there are many instrumental values with which one perceives the nature and environment. This suggests the instrumental way of perceiving the nature, though labeled as anthropocentrism; still, there can be remarkable differences amongst the instrumental value in perceiving the nature.

According to Norton, recognizing moral worthiness beyond the human beings resulted in differences against anthropocentrism. Bryan Norton has divided the anthropocentric view as strong and weak anthropocentrism. (Norton B. G., 1991) Strong anthropocentric argues that humans are at the centre and only the humans possess the intrinsic value and all other things, if they possess any value, then they do have it as an instrumental value. The weak anthropocentrism might acknowledge that significantly a greater amount of intrinsic value is given to humans compared to other beings and therefore protecting humans as against the other nonhuman beings is always justified. This position though recognizing the intrinsic value of other beings, try to place humans in the higher level compared to other beings' value. As the humans possess greater intrinsic value, than any other beings, the humans' well-being is given preference over the other beings.

Norton sees strong and weak anthropocentric to have different preferences towards nature. He maintains that strong anthropocentric have 'felt preference' and weak-anthropocentric have 'considered preference' on environment. (Norton B. G., 1984) The 'felt preference' for Norton refers to those instrumental values humans attribute to nature merely on their 'felt' need. There is no thought of preserving the nature and environment and the nature is used merely to satisfy the human needs. This 'felt' preference takes one to a strong anthropocentric position with respect to nature. If natural resources are used unabatedly, then it cannot sustain for long. It will lead to a rapid destruction of nature. Norton does not support such values which are based on the mere felt preferences. Instead he prefers

instrumental value to nature based on considered preferences. Considered preferences indicate the use of the natural resources in a regulative and reasonable way. The considered preference is the one in which decisions are taken in a regulated way and it also thinks of future people and generation. So considered preference shows the sustainable use of the natural resources and thus, for Norton, it is weak anthropocentric. It is weak anthropocentric in the sense that natural resources should be preserved and conserved for the future people. According to Norton, considering the future generation, the weak anthropocentric converges with the non-anthropocentric value perspectives and proceeds to the same policy decision. In other sense if one is to ask why environment or ecosystem should be preserved or what the value of preserving the ecosystem is, the answer from the weak anthropocentrists would be for the benefit of the future generation. This future generation principle in fact leads to a common policy decision on preserving the nature despite of variance in valuation of nature. For Norton, if one reasonably think and interpret convergence hypothesis for policy formulation between non-anthropocentric and weak anthropocentric then one will arrive at the same result that is a healthy ecosystem. As Norton says,

*...The view that if reasonably interpreted and translated into appropriate policies, a non-anthropocentric ethic will advocate the same policies as a suitably broad and long-sighted anthropocentrism.* ((Norton B. G., 2003, p. 119).

On this hypothesis Norton says the interest of human and the interest of nature differ only in short-run. But if one sees in the long-run and if one realizes and considers the need of the future generation then there will be no difference between the weak anthropocentrists and ecocentrists. Rather there will be congruence between their interests on nature and human. Norton says,

*According to that hypothesis the interest of humans and the interest of nature differ only in the short-run. If we recognize the extent to which the human species is an integral part of the community of life, long –term human interests coincide with the “interest “of nature. To protect the fullness of life is to protect the far-distant future of the human species and its evolutionary successors, and vice-versa.(Norton B. G., 2003, p. 217).*

## 5.2 RELEVANCY OF THE CONVERGENCE HYPOTHESIS IN THE PATH OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:

Norton introduces his notion of convergence hypothesis to boost environmental policy formulation by trying to accommodate various groups and environmental perspectives. He pointed out that in a world where human and other nonhuman natural entities exist in parallel, it is needed to have some policy initiatives which can take care of all such various groups and approaches. His point is that in emerging environmental situations, various ideological groups can be merged and converged for a consensus policy decision.

B. G. Norton sees the environment from the anthropocentric perspective and insists that natural resources and other entities should be preserved for the benefit and welfare of the future generation. He has a long-sighted anthropocentric view. Norton confesses that he comes to such a decision after consulting and serving with several environmental organizations in United States. During all these time he finds that policy issue usually comes up when human beings get affected or get harmed by any natural or human and nonhuman made causes. His point is that when human beings come into the picture as victims because of one or the other causes of harm, then government and organizations, agencies often come up to introduce a policy.

Norton upholds that while engaging in such types of policy formulations, there is a possibility of diverse view points to converge. Examining from both the anthropocentric and

non-anthropocentric perspectives, Norton declares there may be a possible convergence in which all these ideological groups share a common policy plan. A policy is a specific proposed document to bring opportunities or some obstacles in a given environment by government.

*...a proposed course of action of a person, group, or government within a given environment providing obstacles and opportunities which the policy was proposed to utilize and overcome in an effort to reach a goal or realize an objective or a purpose*(Friedrich, 1963, p. 79).

Earlier, Norton critically analyses the position of the non-anthropocentrism and argues why it cannot be a sole source for policy formation in environmental ethics.(Norton B. G., 1984). In his discussion, he finds that adoption of non-anthropocentric world view is not philosophically viable and politically necessary. Non-anthropocentric value is abstract and static and it admits the intrinsic value of the nature. But, according to Norton, in this world, going by static, intrinsic value may be hindrance for introducing environmental policies. For instance, earlier discussion carried out in the last chapter shows that J. B. Callicott takes the intrinsic value as the sole basis for the environmental preservation and he insists on this principle alone. His point is that anything which seems to threaten the ecosystem as a whole cannot be permitted as a policy or for any kind of decision. From this perspective, a policy can be formed only to save the ecosystem and its intrinsic value. Norton finds that while Callicott's holistic approach for preservation of the environmental entities is a philosophical one, in the practical field it fails to resolve the environmental problems. Norton finds that Callicott and other intrinsic value supporters take the intrinsic value as the basic principle and apply it to environmental ethical issues. These philosophers think that with intrinsic value alone the integrity of the ecosystem can be preserved. But Norton and other pragmatists insist that it may not be enough. He says that mere theoretical or philosophical principle will not

help in solving the real environmental problems. To resolve the real environmental problems, one has to be practical which helps one to make the policy formulations.

Besides, Norton finds that Callicott's intrinsic value perspective is abstract and lopsided; it cannot decide from more than one angles. Any political decision comes through a democratic consensus and understanding, and if the intrinsic value perspective is going to be lopsided and not ready for consensus, it cannot be enough for the policy formulations.

On the other hand, Norton sees that merely from the strong anthropocentric perspective, policy cannot be formed, because human values non-human natural properties in various ways such as aesthetic, ecological, historical, and scientific. So, environmental policy should be formulated keeping the various aspects of the humans' relationship to environment.

Norton, therefore views that though in the worldview, the weak-anthropocentrists and the non-anthropocentrists differ, but, in choosing the policies, they come up with the same set of policies and procedures through consensus building. The convergence thesis is a hypothetical one. It predicts that if person A is a consistent weak anthropocentric and person B is a non-anthropocentric with a consistent notion of the intrinsic value of the environment, then for Norton, both A and B will end up supporting the same environmental policy position.(Norton B. G., 1991).

The ecocentric groups do not accept Norton's anthropocentric perspective. They insist that all the environmental policy should be formed for the sake of nonhuman natural entities for preserving their own values. In other words, nonhuman natural entities have their own intrinsic value and policy has to be introduced for conservation of such intrinsic value of these entities. This is opposed to the anthropocentric view in regard to the environment. However, Hull maintains that whether the policy is for present generation and the future

generation or for the ecological health as a whole, Norton's position do play an important part.

*The maintenance of multigenerational ecological process, as he (Norton) says, the only way to preserve ecological health, integrity and biological diversity over the long run whether this is done for present or future generation(weak anthropocentric) or for the value that such ecological health, integrity and biological diversity possesses in or for itself( non-anthropocentric position).*(Hull B. R., 2009, p. 186).

Science the publication of Norton's books a lot many philosophers criticized the convergence hypothesis. J. Baird Callicott rejected the convergence hypothesis as 'dead wrong' (Callicott J. B., 1995). Critics remarked that the basic value differences between the anthropocentrists and the non-anthropocentrists shall lead to different policy formulation. For Paul Taylor, "It makes a practical difference in the way we treat the natural environment whether we accept an anthropocentric or a biocentric system of ethics"(Taylor P. , 1986, p. 12). Similarly Mikael Stenmark(Stenmark, 2009), Laura Westra(Westra, 2009), criticized Norton's convergence hypothesis, but often such criticisms are theoretical in nature.

### 5.3. CRITICISM OF THE CONVERGENCE HYPOTHESIS:

Mikael Stenmark on convergence hypothesis and policy making:

Mikael Stenmark sees that divergence in basic value only leads to a divergence of policy implication and there cannot be convergence happening between those divergent values. (Stenmark, 2009). Norton's convergence hypothesis cannot give a common platform for policy formulation among the different groups of environmental philosophers. There is no such consensus in environmental policy when it is from different backgrounds. His point is that if one thinks from the anthropocentric position, then all policy will be in favor of the

people. Again if one sees from the non-anthropocentric position, then policy will be for bettering and preserving animals and forests.

Stenmark shows there are various kinds of philosophical approaches to evaluation of nature. He sees within anthropocentrism, two different positions –traditional and intergenerational anthropocentrism. According to him traditional anthropocentric is the position that people's behavior toward nature should be evaluated solely based on how it affects now-living human beings. On the other hand, intergenerational anthropocentrism is the view that people's behavior toward nature should be evaluated based on how it affects both present and future generations. Stenmark supports intergenerational anthropocentrism, but, he thinks the intergenerational anthropocentrism shall not converge with nonanthropocentric values.

Stenmark believes that policy and plan will change with the basic value change (Stenmark, 2009). If one thinks from the non-anthropocentric position then all the natural things have their own value and therefore every aspect of it should be preserved as far as possible. But if one thinks from the anthropocentric position then one finds that natural things have no such value and all these things are for the mere use of the people. In this way there is a vast theoretical and ideological difference between these two positions. Again these ideological differences lead to different policy goals. Stenmark takes for an example that if one wants to preserve a forest or a national park from the anthropocentric position then one always think the forest and its things are for the use and benefit of the people. So the forest has an instrumental value for the people. On the other hand, if one thinks from the non-anthropocentric position then one will feel the forest is to be preserved for its own intrinsic worth. In this case the forest is considered as intrinsic value. Likewise, environmental policies are differing depending upon different environmental perspectives, such as

ecocentric, biocentric, anthropocentric etc. These different approaches and attitude leads to different policy implications along with population growth. He concludes,

*Distinguishing between different forms of anthropocentrism and nonanthropocentrism, contrasting the different goals that anthropocentrists, biocentrists, and ecocentrists set up for environmental policy making, and identifying three important policy areas (population growth, wilderness preservation, and wildlife management) where differences in basic values generate divergent policies..(Stenmark, 2009, p. 93).*

### J. B. Callicott's view on convergence hypothesis:

To nullify Norton's convergence hypothesis Callicott takes the USA's 1973, Endanger Species Act (ESA) to defend his argument. Callicott sees that if there is any act or programme which is based solely on the intrinsic value of natural things then Norton's convergence would be falsified. Citing the USA's the ESA 1973<sup>rd</sup> act Callicott is thinks that every natural entity has its own aesthetical ecological, educational, historical, recreational and scientific values.(Public Law, 2003). He sees that these type of assigning values to the natural entities shows that at least such entities have some intrinsic value. This act should not be taken as the result of purely instrumental values of nature; rather it carries several intrinsic values. His point is that such public act is enough to falsify the convergence hypothesis which emphasizes that all the process whether anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric lead to the same policy goal.

*If we can identify a public policy that is clearly based on non-anthropocentric intrinsic values, and it would not be the same policy had it been based exclusively on anthropocentric instrumental values, then the convergence hypothesis would be unequivocally falsified. There is one such public policy- the U.S. Endangered Species Act of 1973. Therefore the convergence hypothesis is falsified.(Callicott J. B., 2009, p. 143).*

Callicott sees that this type of public policy on environment and natural objects are formulated considering intrinsic values. These policies and laws thus help one to preserve the natural things for the years to come.

*The ESA implicitly allocates some intrinsic value to listed species and awards them the operational equivalent legal rights and de facto standing to sue in federal district courts. I argue that the ESA would do none of these things-contrary to the convergence hypothesis-if it were, in fact, based solely on anthropocentric instrumental values.* (Callicott J. B., 2009, p. 144).

Similar to Callicott's position, there are some thinkers who try to argue from ecocentric position, by trying to talk about rights of natural objects like trees and rivers. Christopher D. Stone urges for the moral standing for the trees and the nonliving things like rivers and mountains (Stone, 1988). Even before Stone, such opinion has been taken by some other natural and environmental activist such as John Muir, who appealed for the natural rights of natural creation. Muir wrote, "How narrow we selfish, conceited creatures are in our sympathies! How blind to the rights of all the rest of creation!" (Muir, 1916, p. 98).

As John Baird Callicott takes the help of the USA's ESA (Endangered Species Act) 1973, to record his counter position against Norton's convergence hypothesis, Laura Westra's position in environmental ethics is to preserve the integrity principle in the environment. Laura Westra has taken two main points of Norton the weak or the longsighted anthropocentrism and his refusal of intrinsic value of nature. She questions his concept weak or longsighted anthropocentrism and claims it to be a non-existential concept. Westra argues that ecological sustainability depend more profoundly on intrinsic value of nature rather than future generation. Westra argues that weak or longsighted anthropocentrism are utilitarian in nature. Westra accuses that this position is vague and unspecific and even more problematic for their unclear description of their own position.

According to her opinion, to keep this integrity of the environment, it is necessary to admit of the intrinsic value of the natural things. Westra insists that the principle of intrinsic value of objects can provide a balance in preserving the various species in the environment.(Westra, 1994). Due to her emphasis on the intrinsic value of the nature, Westra finds it difficult to admit the instrumental value of natural entities. As she proposes that only the intrinsic value of the nature is the main source of keeping the integrity of the environment, therefore any other approaches such as anthropocentric, either strong or weak, are not sufficient for the integrity of the environment. With this view Westra criticizes B. G. Norton's convergence hypothesis. Westra emphasize that if one can admit the intrinsic value of nature, then there would not be a need of such convergence for the integrity of the environment. Admitting intrinsic value alone can take care of other relevant issues in keeping integrity of the environment. Following Aldo Leopold's 'stability, beauty and integrity' principles Westra finds that integrity of the environment would be possible if the intrinsic value of the nature is realized by every human being. On sustainability, she emphasizes that we have to first save our core areas of the environment. "The primary concern must focus on the wild (core areas), even when sustainability is the question at the issue"(Westra, 2009, p. 51). It is dependent on the people and the society as a whole to keep the integrity of the environment.

But, it can be argued that merely from the non-anthropocentric perspective our environment cannot be kept in an ecological integrity. Humans heavily depend on the natural entities such as trees, fruits, and firewood for their livelihood. In such position human need to use these natural resources. Even Arne Naess, the founder of the deep ecology movement insists that for vital human need some of the natural entities can be used. He also suggests that natural resources should not be used in rapid and excessive way.(Naess, 1973). Thus it is seen that when come to the vital human need, non-anthropocentric philosophers usually yield

to the use of the natural entities.(Beckerman & Pasek, 2010). It is accepted by some non anthropocentric thinkers the nature can be used for vital human needs. So, mere intrinsic value or non-anthropocentric attitude in fact cannot keep the integrity of the environment. Thus it can be assumed that to keep the ecological integrity, it is imperative to keep the balance of both the intrinsic and the instrumental values of the natural entities. In such context, Norton's convergence hypothesis between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric is relevant for the ecological integrity of the nature.

But, it becomes a matter of concern as what determines the vital human needs and the manner in which the nature and its objects can be used. The technological developments can make use of nature and its elements for satisfying vital needs. But while doing so, it may land up in unforeseen consequences harming the nature and its entities. For instance, Westra points out that with technologically improvised grill net and other modern ships and vessels, fishing in ocean these days are much easier and this has led to rapid and large-scale catching of fish. This type of an activity can hardly be justified as taking care of humans' vital needs. (Westra, 2009). It is contestable that use of technology will be exploiting the principle of satisfying vital needs. If the vital needs are taken care of, then any species can be protected after considering socioeconomic factors.

Norton does talk of protecting the species after considering socioeconomic costs. He calls this Safe Minimum Standard (SMS) criterion that stipulates that all species be protected as long as the socioeconomic cost of doing so is bearable. Norton describes the merits of the SMS criterion in this way,

*It sets as its goal to save all species, but accepts that efforts to save species must be politically and ecologically viable, and that choices will have to be made as to how preservation dollars will be spent. The SMS criterion states the commonsense position: In the extreme case, costs might override*

*the strong presumption in favor of preservation, but the burden of proof always rests on those who would degrade a resource or destroy a species.*(Norton B. G., 1991, p. 153)

Brian K. Steverson argues against Norton's SMS criterion on the ground there would be a value difference between the deep ecologists and weakanthropocentrists. He claims that Norton's overemphasis on overall framework for policy formulation centre on a 'contextualist' position which will not share the values of deep ecology. Therefore, the possibility of convergence between deep ecology and longsighted anthropocentrism is minimal, or even nonexistent. For instance, based on the principle of inter-species impartiality, Norton argues that human have the rights and morally justified in culling elk and other species to control their population and their activities in a given geographical location. Norton's view in his contextualist framework can have value conflict with the deep ecologists' position. With the idea of equal intrinsic value principle, deep ecologists will not be satisfied with the culling and exploiting some organisms basedoncontextualists position. Some ecologists do admit like Naess did, when he said, "any realistic praxis necessitates some killing, exploitation and suppression."(Naess, 1973). But, Steverson remarks in those cases where the ecologists admit culling and control on species population, they do that based on standards of ecological health, and not on strictly anthropocentric standards.(Steverson, 2009)

Here, it can be observed that though there is a value conflict between weak anthropocentrists and deep ecologists as Steverson claims, there can be still some convergence in policy formulation can happen. For instance, as discussed, it is possible to culling some animals either to sustain or support future generations or according to the demands of ecosystem. Here, one can argue that culling is permitted in both the cases even though the reasons for culling may differ. Similarly, there can also be a case that both the viewpoints support culling, and specific species to be culled and maybe even specific

numbers. Norton, perhaps, claims this as convergence, as both supports culling and come to a consensus on this issue even though they have diverse value perspectives on environment.

Many of the criticisms cited earlier like Stenmark's Laura Westra's or Callicot's are often at the theoretical level. While some defense of Norton's position can be given at the theoretical level as well, but, primarily Norton's convergence hypothesis is a hypothesis which he claims to be tested on ground as well. Despite its widespread criticisms, some philosophers take the convergence hypothesis to prove it to be true empirically. One such case study is Bermont's Green Mountain Forest where convergence hypothesis is found to be true. For the empirical proof of the convergence hypothesis Ben Minter and Robert E. Manning has taken a project known as Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest protection project and they show that in such environment protection cases, convergence may be a true proposition among different groups of people. In this project after getting response from the Vermont's publics they come to several conclusion for example there is value pluralism in response to environmental values, convergence hypothesis is proved to be true in this case, and almost all the public voted for protecting the environment for the future generation. They find that their study bring out a firm support for Norton's convergence hypothesis. They say,

*We believe that his (Norton's) hypothesis is even more persuasive in light of our data because it holds not among narrower camps of environmentalists, but among the broader Vermont public. While ours is but one empirical study offered in support of Norton's thesis, and is obviously constrained by demographic and situational parameters, we believe that our results nevertheless provide support for his convergence hypothesis. Moreover we think that our findings provide a firm response to Norton's philosophical critics.*(Minter & Manning, 2009, p. 78).

Some other authors also find that Norton's weak –anthropocentric approach has its credibility in conserving and protecting environment. They support Norton's weak-anthropocentric attitude with SMS approach to make a pluralistic stewardship for the sustainable development of the environment. For them mere monistic attitude to nature cannot provide enough scope for the various value stakeholders in this complex cultural world. Considering practical necessity, one has to observe the variety of usable value and with such variety of values, one can move for a practical sustainable development of the environment (Barnett & Grizzle, 1999).

Despite its theoretical criticisms, some empirical studies tried to prove the convergence hypothesis. One such case study is Vermont's Green Mountain Forest where it is found that convergence did take place. For the empirical proof of the convergence hypothesis Ben Minteer and Robert E. Manning has taken a project known as Vermont's Green Mountain National Forest protection project and they showed that in such environment protection cases, convergence may be a true proposition among different groups of people. In this project after getting response from the Vermont's public they concluded there is value pluralism in response to environmental values, but almost all the public voted for protecting the environment for the future generation and thus convergence hypothesis can be proved to be true. They observed,

*We believe that his (Norton's) hypothesis is even more persuasive in light of our data because it holds not among narrower camps of environmentalists, but among the broader Vermont public. While ours is but one empirical study offered in support of Norton's thesis, and is obviously constrained by demographic and situational parameters, we believe that our results nevertheless provide support for his convergence hypothesis. Moreover we think that our findings provide a firm response to Norton's philosophical critics.(Minteer & Manning, 2009, p. 78).*

One can see that convergence hypothesis has been criticized at the theoretical level, but at the same time, it can also be seen that some empirical research do vouch for convergence despite plural values existing. As a matter of fact, Norton points out that in many organizations and societies like Audubon Society, Duck Unlimited, and National Wildlife Federations, which take care of birds and animals, the members from those organizations do belong to different ethical positions and orientations but still are able to come to consensus for making decisions. In this way one can witness such convergence among different groups.(Hull B. R., 2009). At the same time, it is to be stated that more empirical studies are needed to show the feasibility of the convergence hypothesis across space and cultures.

Convergence hypothesis is one of the important features of the environmental pragmatism and there are empirical studies to assess this hypothesis in policy formulation in different environmental issues. Curry observes that in some cases convergence may happen within diverse environmental groups though it cannot be sure in all cases (Curry, 2011). Apart from the consensus between anthropocentric and ecocentric attitude to resolve the environmental crisis, Evanoff finds that Norton's convergence hypothesis can be extended as a tool to cross-cultural understanding of among different groups. Evanoff finds,

*Although Norton's convergence hypothesis was specially developed to show how disputes between anthropocentric and ecocentrist might be successfully resolved, it can be usefully applicable to a variety of other disputes, including disputes arising out of different cultural approaches to environmental issues(Evanoff, 2011, p. 432).*

Though, the convergence hypothesis claims the weak anthropocentrists and ecocentrists come up with the same solution for the given issues, but, the hypothesis needs to

be reinforced through more practical cases spanning over different time and space and more importantly, different culture. This gives a great challenge for environmental pragmatism and with one or two cases of convergent hypothesis or more cases from one particular geographical area alone will not be enough in upholding the usefulness of it. One has to study with more cases, more number of empirical studies cutting across space and culture, to see the effectiveness of the pragmatists' attempt of reconciliation. So, one such case study from India is taken to see the effectiveness of this convergence hypothesis.

Subansiri is a tributary river of Brahmaputra in Assam, India. The government of India has proposed a big dam and the work is halfway through. The dam has the potential to generate 2000MW electricity. The construction of the dam is being opposed by the local people led by some organizations such as AASU (All Assam Students Union) and KMSS (Krishak Mukti Sangram Samittee).<sup>3</sup> The government of India, including state governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh where project site is located, thinks that producing electricity would benefit the people of the region. One of the arguments of the anti-dam groups is that if completed, this dam will force different flora and fauna of that region to extinction. This anti-dam group has been opposing constructing this big dam by demonstrating 'Dharna', and 'Roadblocks', which forced to halt the work progress in the project site. Their demand is that such big dam will dry out the river's natural flow, causing a great danger to the riverside people as well as aquatic lives. Apart from that, they also appeal that in case of failure of the dam or at the time of natural calamities such as earthquake, it will cause immeasurable damage for the downstream areas including human and natural resources, because the site

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<sup>3</sup> It is a non-governmental organisation in Assam which works for the poor people in the state. It also appeals against the mega dam like Subansiri, claiming that it may cause serious damage to the riverine people and aquatic life.

where the dam is being built is a fragile mountain. These groups urge the government of India and project implementer NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation), to relook and modify the present project proposal.

While addressing in the Indian parliament the then environment and forest minister, Mr. Jairam Ramesh said, "I cannot give a clear and categorical assurance that the Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project will be stopped. I can assure to minimize the adverse impact on the environment and ensure that the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) implements all the measures to protect the environment (Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013). On the power scenario of Assam, power minister Pradyut Bordoloi said, "We want a minimum of 600 MW power from the project, apart from the free power of 25 MW. If we buy the power now, we would get it at Rs 2.44 per unit. If the project gets delayed because of such protests, the price escalation will reflect in higher purchase price of power, may be Rs 5 per unit,"(Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013). So this anthropocentric attitude shows that they are keen to build the dam.

One can find a non-anthropocentric standpoint in some of the arguments made by the anti-dam camp. Some expert committee members say the proposed dam site will still affect the biodiversity of the area. The expert committee cautions about the danger of the dam to the biotic and terrestrial ecosystem of the river.

*It was reported to the Environmental Appraisal Committee that the Lower Subansiri mega dam will affect the bio-diversity of the area. From water quality to hydrology, the dam is going to influence everything. If it's constructed without modifying the present structure, it will affect the terrestrial ecosystem of the river and the area,(Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013).*

Comparing the natural flow and the artificial flow of the Subansiri River the expert team finds a huge gap and opines that this would affect the ecosystem. A survey revealed the

Lower Subansiri mega dam area has 308 species of birds and 19 mammalian out of which five are in Schedule 1 status<sup>4</sup>. Besides, there are 26 reptiles, eight amphibians and more than 100 species of grass and fauna. The expert committee said all these species are going to get damaged if the dam comes up without the suggested modifications.(Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013)..

One can see the pro-dam and anti-dam camps are arguing from many angles like protection of downstream people, place being prone to natural disasters like earthquake, and other similar issues. Though the issues are from diverse angles, it can be categorized that those issues as emanating from either of two positions – that is anthropocentric and non – anthropocentric. Some of the arguments from the protestors can be taken to be emanating from the non-anthropocentric position like protecting flora and fauna, if that argument for protecting is to acknowledge the intrinsic value of ecosystem. The government may try to tackle questions related to anthropocentric perspectives, as evident from the minister’s comments, “I can assure to minimize the adverse impact on the environment and ensure that the National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) implements all the measures to protect the environment” (Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013).. The government may find it difficult to tackle questions related to non-anthropocentric positions. While Norton’s hypothesis state there will be a convergence between the weak anthropocentrists and ecocentrists, it is seen in this case, it is yet to happen. On the Subansiri dam project the then Prime Minister in his visit to the state capital said that a committee would be formed soon to measure the adverse impact in the downstream and he also reiterated that all dams do not have adverse impact.

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<sup>4</sup> According to the Wildlife Protection Act (1972) of India, animal and bird species that fall under the schedule 1 are to be given absolute protection. Any offence against protected species under schedule 1 will be liable to severe punishment.

*A study will be carried out to ascertain the optimum numbers by experts but I must say that all dams do not have adverse impact, some are rather helpful, Prime Minister Singh said.(Mitra, 2015).*

Regarding the current status of the Subansiri dam, it is seen that both the state government and the central government have taken initiative for the continuation of the dam after several years of suspension of work. It seems that there is a consensus building amongst various political and non-political groups for the Subansiri hydropower dam. The government has taken new measures for the downstream impact and height of the dam to continuation of the work (Das, 2012)

The case study of this Subansiri dam raises many questions. Will the convergence happen in this and similar cases? As a matter of fact, the convergence doesn't seem to happen even among the anthropocentrists group of the pro-dam and anti-dam camps. In these cases, convergence between weak anthropocentrists and ecocentrists seems a daunting task. This shows for sure that challenges for convergence hypothesis from the empirical field are many. With different cultures and different geographical locations, it is a challenging task to hold on to Norton's convergent hypothesis.



## Chapter 6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I shall overall assess the environmental pragmatists' position. There will be a sum up of environmental pragmatists' position and then I shall assess its effectiveness. I initiated this thesis to see how environmental pragmatism, as a school of thought is addressing the ethical issues related to environment. Thus, this chapter carries some observations and findings in my work about environmental pragmatism. These observations have been made based on my research objectives. My research objectives include seeing if environmental pragmatism can effectively tackle the issue faced by anthropocentrism and eco-centrism; how does environmental pragmatism negotiate value pluralism; does convergence happen between eco-centric and anthropocentric arguments; and finally is the environmental pragmatism sufficient enough to formulate policies on environment? While discussing the effectiveness of environmental pragmatism in the light of above mentioned questions, reference is made to some of the environmental related issues and cases pertaining to India, either to bolster the environmental pragmatists' position or to show some of the limitations to their principle.

It was discussed in the chapters that environmental pragmatism as a school of thought emerged to tackle the conflicting and contrasting positions that arise because of divergent and extreme positions of anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism on environment and its related issues.

According to environmental pragmatists, an attempt is to be made to reconcile different views to give a good policy decision in conflicting environmental cases. Usually in conflicting environmental cases, there is a clash between ideologies and viewpoints of two or more parties or groups. These groups may be belonging to various ideological backgrounds like anthropocentric, biocentric, or eco-centric view. It was discussed in detail in the chapters how these different positions are held by certain set of thinkers and the ethical implication of holding on to those positions. It has been seen that environmental pragmatists would often go

for some consensus amongst the diverse groups. The reason they provide is that these diverse viewpoints about environment will not be in a position to take decisions related to environment related ethical issues. For instance, B.G. Norton thinks that if both the parties are ready to come to a common understanding in a particular environmental case, then it will solve the disputed case. Both the parties can come together to implement an acceptable policy. For in an emergent environmental situation, it may be imperative to the anthropocentric and the eco-centric to come to a consensus for policy implementation.(Norton B. G., 2002).

Does it mean the pragmatists do not bother about theoretical debates? Or does it mean the theoretical debates do not carry any significance for policy formulation? Answers to both these questions are no. As it has been discussed in the chapters, environmental pragmatists by themselves are not a homogeneous group. There are anthropocentrists, biocentrists and ecocentrists amongst the environmental pragmatists, which suggests that they also do have a position to hold on to. Consequently, they accept and have to accept that it does have a value in discussing the ethical nature of the decisions that are taken on environment issues.

The whole deliberation is to see how ethical our acts are with respect to our environment and the deliberations get the relevance and significance by seeing the diverse positions that talk about these issues. Therefore, it is true from the pragmatists' perspective that these theoretical positions do have significance and similarly the discussions as well. In other words theoretical debate do nothing harm to the policy issues. But their claim is that holding on to these theoretical positions do not help us in resolving environment related issues. They hold on to the position that environmental issues are too complicated to be put in a single theoretical framework. And therefore they suggest that people holding on to diverse positions will be coming to a consensus for policy decisions. The environmental pragmatists, thus argue that methodological pragmatism would help to formulate 'good' policy among

various groups or ideologies in resolving to the environmental crisis. It implies that people in general and the policy makers or environmentalists in particular should engage to formulate policy which can give a 'proper' understanding amongst various groups (ideologies) for implementing environmental policy decision.(Light, 1996). Therefore, methodological pragmatism avoids theoretical debate and engages on the policy issues. This in turn means that diverse position holders have to yield down from their respective ideologies.

Is this position of pragmatists tenable? The pragmatists justify negotiating the diverse traditional viewpoints in environmental ethical discussion because of the insufficiency of the traditional viewpoints to provide satisfactory policy decisions. It needs to be seen if this pragmatist position is good enough. Mark Michael observes that though such methodological framework among various groups or ideologies is possible, still it is not necessary and mandatory for environmental policy making. He thinks that methodological pragmatism does not help in environmental problem solving rather environmental problems are taken care of according to its own traditional anthropocentric and eco-centric approaches separately. These two anthropocentric and the eco-centric can take care of the policy formation of the environmental related issues. It may be possible for the methodological pragmatism as a method or tool for discussion or for conversion of different views, but it does not necessarily imply that it would help in policy making. (Michael, 2012) It may be true that Michael was pointing out that the policy has to be taken either from an anthropocentric or ecocentric view and pragmatism can only supplement it. Michael, thus questions the insufficiency of the traditional view points on environmental ethical issues, as maintained by the pragmatists. He maybe partially true and I will discuss it in due course of this chapter.

Let us assume for now that environmental policy decisions can be taken either from anthropocentric or ecocentric position. If the anthropocentric and the eco-centric views are considered as the basic perspectives for environmental policy formation, then which one can

give better policy formulation? That is, which one is ethical? On framing of policies, it has been done from both the perspectives. For instance, USA endangered species act 1973 can be seen from the eco-centric view which insists on preserving the species for their intrinsic value.(Callicott J. B., 2009). On the other hand, HetchHetchy valley project has been taken for the water and the electricity for the Californian citizens. So both anthropocentric and eco-centric have their importance in policy making. In this way it is seen that some policies have been taken in anthropocentric view while some other in eco-centric view.

The question that needs to be addressed here is, how and on what basis certain policies are taken from the anthropocentric perspective and certain other policies are from ecocentric perspective? But, if we stick to the traditional viewpoints of anthropocentrism and ecocentrism as the alternate positions, then it means that either of the policy is unethical. For instance, an anthropocentric may claim that policy that has been taken favouring an ecocentric position is unwarranted and similarly an ecocentric may claim that a policy that has been taken favouring an anthropocentric position is unethical. If both the policies are an outcome of ethical decisions, then it suggests that ethical related to environmental issues are context dependent, depending on the content of discussions and this is what perhaps an environmental pragmatists would subscribe for.

Some thinkers suggest one perspective overtaking the other perspective, say for instance, anthropocentric perspective taking over the econcentric perspective. RamchandraGuha finds that from the Indian perspective in particular and the third world perspective in general, anthropocentric view often edge-out or has advantage over the eco-centrism in policy making. He finds that from the third world perspective, where many people depend directly on the forest and nature for livelihood, a pure kind of conservation with deep sense like deep ecology cannot be an easy way in a country like India.(Guha, 2001). Even if Guha's argument is accepted, it is to be noted that Guha maintains that having an ecocentric

environmental policy is not affordable in developing countries like India. Does it mean to say that developing countries can take as an excuse their inability to keep an eco-centric perspective in environment related issues? What Guha would have asserted can be a matter of fact, that anthropocentrism edges past over ecocentrism because of economical and financial constraints. But, still the position is unclear whether without those constraints what perspective one should hold on environment related issues. Guha's argument suggests the limits of ecocentrism in developing countries, but whether those constraints can justify the ethical nature of the decisions taken?

Pragmatists may suggest that depending on the circumstances, situations and the context the decisions are made. So, perhaps in their position, a pragmatic decision can well mean that an anthropocentric decision in context like in a developing country like India, and an ecocentric decision in context like in a developed country, and they both are ethical. The other idea is irrespective of whether some countries is a developed country or developing country, a decision will be taken by its stakeholders through coming to a consensus, often taking a weak anthropocentric position.

Compared to Guha's version of anthropocentrism edging past over ecocentrism based on a developing country argument, one can take a stand similar to Norton's which talks of convergence between ecocentrism and weak anthropocentrism. This position is seemingly a better position than to take a position that it is anthropocentrism that edges past over ecocentrism. Even if it is the case, it needs to be ethically justified. It can be partially true if it is to be bothered about the weak anthropocentric position. But, it is possibly an unhealthy and unethical position to argue for strong anthropocentrism from developing country argument. Therefore, a position of a possible convergence between ecocentrism and weak

anthropocentrism as an ethical principle for deciding is better than the principle of decision taken on the grounds of a developing country argument. That argument is not totally wrong, but it can give scope for its exploitation. For instance, it is true the present generation has a priority over future generations. But, it doesn't mean that present generation can do anything without having any consideration for future generation. A distinction of the sort of 'felt' preferences and 'considered' preferences is useful here. Anthropocentrism having an edge over ecocentrism for 'considered' preferences is acceptable, but anthropocentrism having an edge over ecocentrism for 'felt' preference is not acceptable. Hence, instead of saying that anthropocentrism having an edge over ecocentrism, it would be a better position to take that weak anthropocentrism converges with ecocentrism. It is not based on the idea of one edging past over other, but rather, a position where both the principles come together in policy making. To that extent, Norton's position or pragmatists position seem better than the other. The problem with pragmatists lies at another level.

Pragmatists claim that decisions related to environmental issues are to be dealt by case by case basis and on depending on the context of the issues. Through this, they agree to the position there is no absolute ethical standpoint related to environmental position. So, they do admit that decisions are context dependent and situation dependent and more often only those decisions that are sensitive to the context can be considered as ethical decisions.

Norton and other pragmatists talk about context dependent decisions in environment related problems. Context dependent decisions mean the decisions are taken specific to the context. It also suggests that some members taking the decisions are also specific to that context. It is not one individual taking the decisions for all issues, neither it is the case that one standard set of people or experts be taking the decisions for all issues. That may not be the recommendations of pragmatists in decision making process. As Norton points out that those types of decisions where local people's interests are not considered can well be prone to

raise conflicting situations among the concerned parties. If the government decides on its own without consultation of the local people, then this type of decision making process is called top-down policy decision. In this decision process the local people are not included. The higher body decides what they feel to be good and right. Instead of such top-down policy decision, B. G. Norton talks of 'bottom-up' pattern of policy decision.(Norton B. G., 2003). This bottom up pattern talks of including the local and indigenous people to the decision making process. The local representatives would inform of local conditions and social conditions, so government can consider those issues while making environmental decision. According to Norton, this 'bottom-up' pattern may be a good policy approach to make a successful implementation of environmental projects.

But Norton's and the pragmatists' opinion on this issue should be reflected on. There are stakeholders at varied levels. The environmental problems are complicated. Given these conditions, the decisions that pragmatists take based the context and claim those decisions to be ethical can well turn up into a political decision satisfying one or the other set of people's personal interests. There is always a growing tension amongst the government, opposition political parties, the MNCs and the people on the compensation made by the government for displacing a set of people for building a dam, or constructing a nuclear plant or for some natural resource conservation. In India, for instance, Kudamkulam nuclear project, Lavasa valley project, Narmada dam project, Subansiri dam project and like are some of the sites where environment related issues are discussed. Though contents and goals are different in each of this site, yet one can see a common feature of tussle amongst the local people, different political parties and government. (Chakraborty & Dutta, 2013). Nongovernmental organizations also do come into picture who generally tries to give voice for the down trodden and displaced people (Das, 2012) There are claims that many a time the compensation as promised by government is not being given to the displaced people.(Mitra, 2015) All these

problems and shortcomings do put a big question mark related to a context based pragmatic approach in taking policy decisions. The big question is what is the guarantee that a context based, case to case basis decisions on environment are primarily an ethical one and not a political one?

Given these limitations with pragmatism how then are we to decide? It may not help much again by taking a strong anthropocentric or ecocentric positions. Again one will get tangled to the extremes. Newer and newer problems keep coming on environmental issues. Some of the recent data and some of the Indian government and court orders can be cited as examples Assam is ranked at the top with an alarmingly decreasing forest land among other states.(Kumar, Gill, & Kumar, 2013). Indian government gave permission to five states to cull some animals, tagged as vermin, which are causing problems to people and their crops and livelihood (Venkat, 2016). A high court had handed down life imprisonment for three lions for killing human beings (Kumar, 2016).All these points out the complicated nature of environmental issues, we as humans are facing and shall face in the future. To address those concerns, It may not help much again by taking a strong anthropocentric or ecocentric positions, perhaps a weak anthropocentric position that takes care of present and future generation maybe of help to us. Even with weak anthropocentric position, one cannot blindly follow it. There can be instances where the interests of the weak anthropocentrists and ecocentrists may not match; similarly, there can be instances where the existing generation's interests cannot be addressed without compromising on the resources for the future generations. There can be priority of the existing one's against the future beings; true, but to what extent. Therefore, it may not be possible to apply blindly weak anthropocentrism, but, I think it can be a guiding principle. Therefore, I take a stand that it is by bringing into consensus different stakeholders and by responding to the context and situation and by being sensitive to the issues, can one take an ethical decision. It can be an ethical decision not only

by the decisions that are made, but also in the method adopted to take those decisions. Despite its drawbacks and despite its political nature, environmental pragmatism can give us the room to bring people to a consensus and to take decisions. It is my stand that flexibility, context dependence and sensitivity in understanding ethical principle is better than unalterable, uncompromising, context independent ethical positions, however it may be logically consistent, and as in environmental ethics we are not only dealing with humans, but with animals, our habitat and our universe as a whole.



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