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## Dharmic Environmental Ethics: Tree and Animal Worship in Indian Tradition

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### Abstract

Dharmic environmental ethics, deeply rooted in the ancient Indian philosophical and the religious traditions, offers with a holistic, value-oriented, and spiritually grounded framework for ecological consciousness as well as conservation. Something that is inherently tied to the life of a human being and that cannot be regarded as an active resource that could be utilized can be regarded as something divine and incredibly valuable to nature as a property of Dharmic approach to nature. This viewpoint is heavily opposed to current anthropocentric worldviews of the late industrial society that tend to incompletely balance the human utility with the ecological balance.

The present study examines the ethical foundations of environmental consciousness embedded in Indian cultural practices, with particular emphasis on tree and animal worship as significant expressions of ecological reverence. Through predominantly primary sources, the Vedas (and those particularly consisting of the Rigveda and Atharvaveda), the Puranas, and other of the Dharmashastric texts, and on the example of folk traditions and oral cultural practice the paper can narrate how this signifies that the traditions are used to explain a divine union between man and nature. These sources depict that trees, animals, rivers and forests have come to have spiritual connotations and thus, creating spirit of preservation inhibiting and co-existing.

By critically analyzing this tradition of text and cultural practices, the article asserts that the practice of tree and animal worship has been primordial in nature of functioning as an aboriginal method of environmental protection, and has been utilized in the safeguarding of the biodiversity and carrying ecological balance. The practices are never ritual or symbolic but an ecological ethic and inherent in nature and they determine man in his relationship with nature.

The Dharmic environmental ethics is one such viable and applicable alternative paradigm that is being used amid contemporary global environmental crisis of climate change, deforestation and depletion of biodiversity. The study, therefore, implies that re-appraisal of these ancient ecological values and re-defining the same can equally teach some useful lessons and meaningful examples to guide the contemporary environmental protection and sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Dharmic Environmental Ethics, Deep Ecology, Tree and Animal Worship, Ecological Conservation  
Sustainable Development

### 1. Introduction

Environmental Crisis and Ethical Reorientation

The contemporary world is witnessing an unprecedented ecological crisis characterized by environmental degradation, climate change, deforestation, pollution, and the rapid loss of biodiversity. They could not have been pure scientific / technological matters as they are too entrenched in the moralities of man-nature dealing (Das et al., 2020). This nature has been defined as the resource that should be utilized by the human beings to deliver benefits through the grand paradigm of the modernity that is majorly industrialized whose

anthropocentric worldviews sustain the notion of human advantages. The patterns of mis-consumption-production are not sustainable and imbalances in ecological form actually exist in such utilitarianism perspective.

In reaction to this problem, there has been a greater significance of redefining and rethinking ethical attitudes that moderate environmental behavior. To find sustainable solutions to the problems that the world is experiencing, environmentalists are dealing with the alternative knowledge and traditional wisdom (Cairns et al., 2020). The Indian religious and philosophical traditions are one of the few ones that have shaped the ecological consciousness that encompasses not only the ethics of the environment but also full range of spiritual and moral values.

### **Ecology and Spirituality in Indian Thought**

Ecology and spirituality the Indian culture had evolved a distinct form of ecology and spirituality where the nature is not seen as a detached entity by the human beings but it is a constituent of the general order in the cosmos (Das et al., 2020). It is very anti-dualistic worldview in this view of the world that divides human beings and nature. Rather, it fosters totality wherein, there is interdependence of everything in the universe and they depend on one another.

The different schools of thought known as Dharmic that constitute various schools of thought including Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism are founded on the concept of harmony, balance and respect towards people of any kind as long as life is present. The idea of the cosmic order that determines the natural and moral worlds, in its turn, is known as Vedic tradition, the concept of Rat. To keep this order, human race requires to settle the natural environment in accordance with a consensus of ethical principles that will not harm them, but instead assist in developing harmony of the surroundings (Dimri et al., 2022). It is the ecological mindfulness and spiritual discipline that has the duty of creating a system of morale such that conservation of the environment should also be part of the righteousness.

Moreover, Indian philosophical beliefs fail to make the man superior to other animals. They covertly improve a culture of humility and responsibility where in everything to do with human wellbeing is all connected to the wellbeing of the environment. With this understanding has developed a culture of reverence and personal care towards the nature surrounding that may be viewed in the existing religious practices, rites, and culture.

### **Scriptural Foundations of Environmental Consciousness**

The ancient Indian literature is rich in details about the environmental ethics that advocates about nature divinity and holiness. Vedas and Upanishads, Puranas and epics as Mahabharata and Ramayana are full of examples that make it imperative to ensure a certain equilibrium in the ecology (Kaushal et al., 2023). In them nature is frequently addressed as a personality, and to raise it above the material things, as the expression of the divine nature.

One of the oldest existing books is the Vedas which as well includes hymns praising the elements of nature (the sun, the wind, water and the earth). These things are venerated as gods and the reason that they are also one of the manifestation of gratitude and piety. To be more precise, the prayers in the Atharva Veda talk about the harmonious state of humans and the earth and the necessity to take care of the nature and preserve it properly.

The Upanishads also have an ideological view of the world on the same tune as being an incarnation of the ultimate reality, Brahman (Jain et al., 2022). The way this non-dualism philosophy works is that people need to treat nature like they treat themselves by taking advantage of others and this philosophical understanding is what the morally responsible individuals, suggest is moral. To further enhance the concept of divinity of nature, Sahasya edam sarvam concept is encompassed in which there is an expected presence of a divine in every part of the world.

The influence of these religious teachings on the way of living and social values on the India society and the aspect of environmental awareness has taken its niche in the heart of the Indian society (Ottuh et al., 2020). The worship of rivers, mountains, forests, animals and plants is not symbolic but useful as well and can be considered a practical tool of environmental preservation.

### **Dharmic Environmental Ethics as a Sustainable Framework**

The Dharmic traditions are ethically conceptualized in a holistic manner and this provides a holistic sense of environmental sustainability. The Dharmic ones are contradicted to the new environmental ethics when the majority of the methods are founded on the law and scientific interventions, though the moral, spiritual, and cultural aspects are also used. Through the integration, the issue of environmental responsibility is internalized as a personal and collaborative responsibility and not the requirement as a result of such integration.

Restraint and moderation can be considered one of the most remarkable components of the Dharmic environmental ethics (Khangai et al., 2020). Ethics of aparigraha (non-possessions) is that, excessive consumption is discouraged, which is in contrast to ahimsa (non-violence) whose practice is governed by feelings of concern to all living things. Collectively, these values will promote the need to lead sustainable lifestyles that do not influence the ecological backdrop in a high way.

Further still, even the Dharmic values appreciate nature as having its own value independent of its utility to the male (Awasthi et al., 2021). This self-respect has been closely coinciding with the existing ecological thinking including the deep ecology that accuses the intrinsic value of all living beings. The Buddhist ethics of environmental sustainability can be given by the traditions of Dharma which aims to develop the feeling of unity and respect.

### **Relevance in the Contemporary Context**

The growing environmental pressures have led to Dharmic environmental ethics gaining more significance (Emina et al., 2022). The green movements of the modern day are starting to realize that the sustainability has to do with the presence of the cultural and moral aspects. The integration of traditional ecology with the scientific approach must also be in a position to provide extremely efficient solutions to intricate environmental challenges.

The Indian traditions with its Savor motive and the equilibrium can also add something significant in the general environment debate in the rest of the world. The culture belief which involves but is not limited to worshipping of trees, worshipping of animals and their sacred groves show that the cultural beliefs are conservation oriented. They are also practices that are not only useful in preserving the biodiversity but they enhance more interactions and integration within the communities.

In this way, the Dharmic environmental ethics cannot be perceived merely as a historical and cultural value since it possesses practical undertones to the modern environmental issues (Chalise et al., 2022). It proposes another paradigm with ethical responsibility and spiritual awareness, and comprehensive conception of the green life.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF DHARMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

### **Dharma and Ecological Responsibility**

The concept of Dharma will take one of the prevailing places in the Indian philosophy and the basis of the ground on which the ethical conduct is raised. Dharma traditionally as we all know it to be, meaning duty, righteousness, moral law, is not merely an instance of individual and social responsibility, but a whole universe of cosmos. Through it, the universe is universal and the universe is orderly, harmonious and balanced.

Through the process of environmental ethics, Dharma would be the moral duty of resources like the saving and conservation of nature (Ojha et al., 2022). As the members of the cosmic rule, the human beings are supposed to behave in an environmentally friendly manner. This vision attacks the predatory nature of the contemporary society by the presence of being of responsibility and not of control of the nature.

Dharma also gives the idea of responsibility within the framework of which the ecologically damaging practices are viewed as the infringement of the cosmic order. Such activities can cause an ecological, moral, and spiritual imperfect balance (Dwivedi et al., 2021). Environment conservation can be propagated as part of the things that people should incorporate in their daily lives through such an ethical system that encourages people to engage in the right things that are sustainable.

### **Interconnectedness of Life**

Oneness of all forms of life is one of the most important ideologies of the entire Dharmic philosophy. It has been signified in one word as Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam meaning, the world is a family (Rao et al., 2023). The reason of this inclusive vision of the world is that the issue of the kinship is not restricted to the human community but will be made available to the animal and vegetable world and thus to even the inanimate objects. The empathy and care to all that lives is created through interrelatedness. It also dissolves the top-down approach of humans towards the other living organisms, but rather encouraged equality and appreciation among the two. Here without wellbeing of nature the wellbeing of the human being did not exist.

This principle has a practical implication to the environment as far as conservation is concerned which is also pragmatic. By viewing nature as the extension of a self, individuals can be urged more to behave in a fashion that will leave and maintain ecological systems. These inter-relatedness's of life may also be a cause and perhaps a stimulus by environmental ethics.

## **Sacredness of Nature**

The environmental ethics is a type of Dharmic that is associated with the holiness of the nature. According to the Indian philosophy, nature is not a material entity but a divine one. Brahman, the ultimate reality, involves all the facets of existence even the nature one. This sort of demeanour makes nature as that which is sacred and worthy of purchase.

This divine vision of the world is also described and is supplemented by the theory of Panchamahabhutas or five great elements that include earth, water, fire, air and space. It is presumed that such abstracts are the atoms of the universe and without them nobody can have life (Vicziány et al., 2023). Their holiness is manifested in different rites and other practices that highlight the holiness, balance, and sanctity.

Dharmic religions establish a strong ethical force that people can adhere to in order to take care of nature by ascribing it to otherworldliness. The annihilation of the natural resources is deemed to be an ecological problem, moral, spiritual sin. This can be explained by the fact that this marriage of spirituality and ecology has guaranteed establishment of the environmental ethics on cultural or religious practices.

## **TREE WORSHIP IN INDIAN TRADITION**

### **Religious Significance of Trees**

One of the oldest and environmentally topical issues of the Indian culture and religion is the tree worship. Since even in primitive times trees were not considered as biological objects but as objects that lived and had a divinity, this life and eternal continuity of the universe. This spirit is impacted by the larger Dharmic metaphysics where everything in nature is impregnated with spiritual indicateance and mysticism spirit (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Trees are specifically thought to be the givers of life, as they offer shelter, food, Oxygen among others and even a medicinal purpose hence it plays a leading role in the ecological arrangements and even a culture conscious itself.

The Indian culture recognizes certain trees unique and therefore they are worshipped as the embodiment of the gods on earth or their habitat. An example will be the Peepal tree that is believed to be sacred and associated with lord vishnu, the savior of life and provides life continuation. The broad branches of the Banyan tree, which have a great length and are defined by immortality and endless existence, may be alluded to immortality and eternal life and in most instances, is simply referred to the mythological cosmic tree, which joins heaven, earth and the underworld. On the same note, the Tulsi plant is considered significant in the religious practices of most houses since it is worshipped on a daily basis due to the claim that it is pure and dev ner and protective (Valpey et al., 2020). The other one that is worshiped and is identified with well being and curing is the Neem tree that comes with its medicine.

These correlations are not mere associations in mere metaphor but there is an ecology that is attached to them. Another cultural tradition attributed to trees is that under the name of a religious connotation, their indiscriminate killing and sNrksnn (protection) is discouraged. Trees are a big concern in the religious practices, festivals, and day to day activities in which the communities indulge in and therefore made sacred and holy. In this, the tree worship is first and foremost the native environmental ethic, and has brought about the concept of spirituality and conservation in a way that ecological resources are conserved together with the norms and values.

### **Sacred Groves as Conservation Models**

The sacred groves might be considered one of the most impressive examples of the primitive ecological conservation which was implicitly contained in the Indian religious life. These are groves (called by a variety of local names like Kavu, in Kerala or Sorna, in central and eastern India) maintained and a reserve on the belief of a religious meaning (Gohain et al., 2023). They may be devoted to the god of the place, or the lineage, or the earth, [and are held to be sacred,] and where the meddling of the man is not very great, or, at all, forbidden. Sacred groves are conserved under the customary laws/culture taboos which do not allow logging, hunting and mining of resources. The infringement of these norms is usually perceived as the target of the fury of the gods consequently safeguarding the conservation activities has been preserved in sensitive measures. Thus, sacramental groves have been preserved over centuries in part as biodiversity and sound ecological storehouses. One more ecological feature with these groves is creating microhabitats, as a result of which a significant number of plant and animal species can be located, most of which can be either rare and endemic or may be threatened. They also contribute towards the preservation of soil, water and they regulate the climate that makes them quite significant in ensuring that the ecological position of the locals is not disturbed. On top of that sacred groves in most situations may be the seed banks, genetic reserves in such a way that in the future

restoration of the neighboring ecosystems may take place.

The fact that they tend to ethically maintain the sacred groves is a testament to a respect of nature that was bestowed down to, and nature was seen to have a value. The sacred groves are preserved as part of cultural belief system and engagement unless being engaged in the alternative activity rather than the current trends of conservation of using laws and scientific management (Saryal et al., 2022). This validates the efficiency of ecology and spiritual values combination and it is a practical model in the conservation of the environment that cannot be restricted to a local one, but also a culturally valuable one.

### **Temple Trees (*Sthala Vriksha*)**

The next important element of the Indian tradition of admiration of the trees is suggested in the name, *Sthala Vriksha*, or in the temple tree. Some temples, especially the South Indian ones always have a tree that is projected due to the deity and this is said to be part of the temple and spiritual area. Not only it is a decorative tree, but it is a sacred thing because of the deity and it is typically a large part of the rituals, mythology, and local folklore.

*Sthala lusha Vriksha*. is considered to be of spiritual nature of the temple and it is largely attached to mythological plot lines outlining the importance of the *Sthala lusha Vriksha*. . The worshippers therefore present sacrifice in form of dance and circumambulating around the tree thus crowned the tree as a holy one (Navneet et al., 2020). The trees are kept in consideration of looking at them with religious respect since any damage inflicted on the trees is perceived as his sacrilege.

Planting of temple tree would be beneficial in maintaining plant species, and increase green cover within the urban and rural environment at the ecological level. These trees can provide good habitats to birds and insects among other living organisms and, consequently, the biodiversity. They are also certain that such ecological assets will be preserved in the long-term due to the fact that the tradition is bequeathed through the generations. Such application of religious activities is evident in the Sthala Vrika institution which is a custodian system of the environments. It is through this tradition that we are able to perceive the persistence and accountability that the ecological values added in the middle of rituals and cultural buildings were under process and this might suggest that the conservation process is not going to be discarded with time.

### **Tree Worship and Ethical Ecology**

The Indian culture of creating a shrine to worship trees is limited not only to the rituality, but to the ethical larger view of gratefulness, non-greediness and sustainability. It implants the spirit of awe in regards to the nature and makes people understand their role in the utilization of trees as it supports life.

Such an ethical view is rather consistent with the postulates of the Dharmic environmental ethics, with which the emphasis is made on harmonisation between a human being and nature. This conservation of the ecology is mandatory since the worship to the tree has guaranteed that most individuals in the society act on it thus acting on it efficiently (Chudali et al.). It also creates a sense of shared responsibility in which it is more of a shared cultural value that is a part of preservation of the trees as opposed to an individual decision.

Moreover, the tree worship helps in sustainable exploitation of the resources since it gets rid of over exploitation and distributes the regeneration. The ecological explanation of sustainability Fests and rituals of trees might also be centered on the notion of the renewal, the fertility and the repetition. This act of worshipping of trees would therefore be a metaphoric and effective means of bringing an act of environmental ethics and establishing a mechanism of stripping in the absence of connection in ecologically and spiritual irrationality.

## **ANIMAL WORSHIP IN INDIAN TRADITION**

### **Philosophical Basis: Ahimsa and Compassion**

The origins of Indian animal worship will be ancient with Indian doctrine of Ahimsa, which means non-violence, being one of the primary ethical governances of Dharmic religions. Ahimsa is more than the physical imperative of non-harmfulness to others and goes further towards compassion, empathy and respect to any living being. This principle is the declaration of the view point which any form of life is inherently precious, and they interact with one another in the scheme of universe.

This model argues that animals are not lesser than individuals and ordinary and they are equal co-prisoners on the Earth as well, sharing the same sphere of being and sharing the same spirit. Even this general perception of life creates the sense of ethical obligation towards the animals, their conservation and welfare (Kar et al., 2022). This perception is the opposite of exploitative attitude towards animals as a means of materialism and pleasure offered by human beings.

Though Ahimsa is an ethical word with ethical connotation in many aspects, it is represented in the Indian

culture that could be traced in the food people eat, religious practices and even the social code of conduct. The veganism movement is an indicator of an attempt to regulate the degree of the evil caused to the living creatures. On the other hand, various religions have highly stressed on the willingness to treat animals in a pleasant manner and some religions denounce any activity that causes pain.

### **Animals as Sacred Symbols**

The religious traditions of the Indians in the vast majority of their religious practices attribute the animals deities and regard them as means of their transportation or protection or even as their incarnations. It is the presence of these associations that make animals to have divine status hence protectable and treasured by the society (Das et al., 2020). One animal specifically is the cow that is viewed indirectly as the bringer of abundance, fertility as well as motherhood and is respected and treasured. It has been interpreted that the snake is related to Lord Shiva spiritually and is the god in such festivals as Nag Panchami.

Similarly, the monkey is a god to personify the disclination and power by relating with Hanuman, the elephant is the god of wisdom and prosperity by relating with Lord Ganesha (Cairns et al., 2020). Although these symbolic relations do not only aid in spreading beliefs of the religion; they also aid in conservation of the species of the animals by discouraging their mistreatment.

One such culture would be to sacrificial an animal, which would in essence maintain the biodiversity. The Indian lifeways are entrenched with protective systems that involve use of animals to both stories and endeavors of the religion thus ensuring they are not abused. The process is highlighted on the possibility that there exist cultural and symbolic systems in making sure that the environment is conserved.

### **Folk Traditions and Animal Deities.**

The local and folk conventional in India are also represented by significant levels of diversity of the practices that are supposed to worship animals along with the classical texts about religion. The culturally religiosity of this type of belief is habitually denoted by the animal gods and spirits that are believed to have existed in the natural geography e.g. forests, mountains, rivers (Das et al., 2022). These theories are exceedingly exaggerated especially in tribal and rural as their character is inextricably tied to the culture of spirituality.

To see the examples of how cultural beliefs could be employed to fight in an attempt to protect wildlife, one can refer to the example of the cultural beliefs based on the help of tiger gods, which were accepted in particular locations as Waghoba. The factions also proceed to co-existence and respect to the creature in order to worship the tiger as a protective power hence lesser degree of conflict and conservation of the habitat. Similarly, the majority of tribal society considers animals as the spirit of the ancestor or totem of the ancestor; hence, would establish a connection with the animals and would not encourage the exploitation of the animals.

These folk culture depict local and situational environmental ethics in which environment conservation has taken place as being part of the cultural identity and social practice (Dimri et al., 2022). They also highlight the importance of indigenous body of knowledge in addressing the ecological issues and present practical body of knowledge whose accessibility is impossible through the scientific means.

### **Ethical Implications of Animal Worship**

The moral worthiness of the animal worship in Indian tradition is far-reaching as it creates the feeling of empathy, compassion and respect to the non-human existence. The anthropocentric attitudes are also altered in the practices and the ethical system becomes more egalitarian and inclusive as the anthropocentrism is replaced by the animal as a sacred creature.

It is an ethical orientation that enhances protection of the biodiversity through the avoidance of activities that harm the biodiversity and encouraging others that protect the animals. It is also what brings about the social behavior, it rubs against the treatment that one has to the wildlife and it gets the co-existence vibe (Kaushal et al., 2023). These values and ethics practice will ensure that long run sustainability of the conservation process will be present and community promotes the same.

However, it must be also stated that the effectiveness of the animal worship as the conservation policy will be characterized by its applicability and flexibility in the contemporary society. Since the modernization and urbanization would bring in the change in the realms protocol of the traditional lifestyles, there would be the necessity of redefining the same practices in a way that would be capable of accommodating the current environmental demands (Jain et al., 2022). Even in such a manner the ethical values of this animal worship can still be implemented on the environmental management which is sustainable.

## **INTEGRATION OF TREE AND ANIMAL WORSHIP**

### **Ecological Unity in Dharmic Traditions**

Indian culture has been imported to venerate the trees and the animals and this is a sign that these people are extremely conscious to the environment but cannot cut across the broken perspective to the nature. The Dharmic traditions split nature and its creatures into two items, whereas the Dharmic traditions consider nature and life as the trustworthy aspects of the identical universe (Ottuh et al., 2020). The ideologies that facilitate this holistic vision of the world revolve around the fact that all other life forms are interdependent, and would assist in realizing that fact that there would be a balancing of the ecological equilibrium.

In this case, forests may also mean material landscape yet space, a sacred space, of which there is a deity, spirit and ancestral forces. Their existence is usually envisaged as the supporting being, which is the materialistic and the spiritual being. These sacred spaces are so consecrated such that they possess trees and beasts that live in a symbiosis of each other and this is how the connection between the nature becomes complicated. The trees offer shelter to the animals and also feed them, provide shelter to the birds, the animals also have other purposes of pollination, seed sowing which replenish the ecosystem.

The indicated ambivalent strategy is also supported with the assistance of the mythological and religious symbolism teachings according to which the forest is represented as the world of the divine and spiritual transformation (Khangai et al., 2020). The photography background of sages in the forest amongst the animals and trees strains the perfect harmony wording between a human and nature. Such like stories are not alone in the delivery of the ethics, but also an avenue of culture of helping to increase the level of awareness in the aspects of the environment.

### **Ritual Integration of Flora and Fauna**

The aspects of flora and fauna are generally incorporated in the Indian practice in rituals because, they are viewed as the life and the ecology as a whole. Most of the generally used plants, flowers, fruits and animals are utilized in the ceremonies and celebrations and this is an indicator of how it is synonymous with the giver of life. Such rituals do not just exist as symbols but they are meant to sensitize about practicality of ecological ethic of the necessity to take care of fauna and flora.

As a case in point, offering of leaf and flowers to gods and respect of the animals of gods have a range of rituals attached to them (Awasthi et al., 2021). This dual attention situation is applied to clarify the fact that it is the cultural imagination of the non-differentiation of the flora and fauna. These ceremonies are not continuous and these initiations are largely interrelated to the change of the seasons, they also reveal that they had some knowledge of the ecological process, and cycles.

Ecological ethic in its totality is therefore the unity of tree and animal worship since all the elements of life are interdependent. In comparison to this knowledge linking and connecting to both the religious and the cultural systems, the Dharmic traditions will be the promises that there is not a single issue related to transfer of ecological values violated between the individuals and the natural channel in a sustainable way.

### **Holistic Environmental Worldview**

A merge between the animal and the tree worship is internalized to assume the form of the general world of perception of the environment that elevates the reductionism and anthropocentrism (Emina et al., 2022). It emphasizes that there is no specific section of the ecosystem that is self-sufficient, or that is not interconnected with the wellbeing of other sections through its wellbeing. The current ecological arguments have the same perception, which stresses on the importance of the biodiversity and inter-dependence of the ecosystem.

Dharmic traditions build a moralizing of harmonious morals eluding exploitation and proceeding with conservationism and conservation, by spreading reverence to the animal and plant life. It is not just a question of conserving the ecological systems but of spiritual association with nature due to this holistic form of relating to the nature, and thus rendering it responsible in the purview of ethics.

## **DHARMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **Traditional Practices as Ecological Tools**

The dharmic environmental ethics is not merely just another emerging group of philosophers, it is a reverent practice too that is still in development in the varieties of practices of old traditions which may be good ecological tools. The practice of such has been built through centuries and it is what entails a stellar approach of sustainability of the environment and management of resources.

Sacred groves are regarded as an ecological paradise, in which the biospecies are held protected and the ecological balance is ensured (Chalise et al., 2022). The rituals also indirectly have an effect known as fasting that lessens the use of resources and consumption and about ritual fasting, only in certain days or religiously

we can say it is practiced in the seasons, and hence contributes to the environmental sustainability. Most of the festivals are also seasonal festivals and are aligned with the natural life cycles and agricultural cycles; this is one of the reasons which leads to ecological awareness and culture of friendly relationship with the environment.

Vegetarianism is also another major practice of ecology and it is a common practice among most of the Dharmic religions. It also guarantees that the environment is harmed off as it does not depend on animal based food systems save on the resources as well as the moral value of non-violence (Ojha et al., 2022). All these actions are still indicative of the way in which cultural and religious values can be the instrument in the sustainable living.

The good thing about these practices of meditated customs is that this is what life is and it is also supported by the cultural values and social norms. This is upheld in the deep-seated belief about the morality of morals and engagement to the life of the community in comparison to the modern policy of environmental life which is imposed instead of in-community.

### **Lessons for Modern Environmentalism**

Dharmic environmental ethics can make significant contributions to the current environmentalism. The devotion to sustainable consumption is one of the most crucial ones. Temperance and non-drinking cultures of Dharmic cultures are opposed to consumerism culture in which destruction of the environment is practiced. The philosophy teaches that man must lead spiritual and environmentally friendly lives. The other critical point that was also gained is the personification of the biodiversity in regards to its divine and essential nature to the ecological systems. This gives spiritual essence to the various forms of living things by making sNrksnn and sNrksnn to co-exist between the Dharmic traditions (Vicziány et al., 2023). This can be related to the modern conservation movements which are fundamentally oriented to conservation of diversity of ecosystem and species. In addition to this, the Dharmic ethics provide the sense of moral duty towards the nature and environmental protection is not an option, but a need. This moral aspect cannot be generally noted on the current models of the environment, which are more technocratic and regulatory in the remedy. In reference to the issue of sustainability, the Dharmic traditions are more comprehensive because they integrate the spiritual and moral values.

### **Convergence with Contemporary Sustainability Frameworks**

The conflict between the sustainability frameworks and the dharmic environmental ethics are seen to be clashing in an increasingly expanding scholarly and policy discourse. Some notions that tend to be close to the ideas of harmony, the interconnectingness, as well as responsibility in the Dharmic traditions are ecological balance, environmental justice, and sustainable development. One such analogy can be that of the idea of moderate approach of economic development against nature-preservation with the appropriate priority of the Dharmic tradition of life-on-the-set (Dwivedi et al., 2020). Equally, the intergenerational equity as a priority issue to the discourse of sustainability expresses the Dharmic survival and disenfranchisement to the future generations. This convergence means that the ancient systems of knowledge have the ability to contribute immensely in the processes of resolving the new environmental problems. The new culturally tested solutions could be brought up in the regions where the Dharmic principles societies merge with the science methodology, and they will be more inclined towards the sustainable development.

## **CASE STUDIES OF ECO-DHARMIC TRADITIONS**

### **The Bishnoi Community and Environmental Ethics**

An example of one of the most important efforts to market the Dharmic environmental ethics is the Bishnoi community, to which its application can be offered in practice. The Bishnoi culture had been developed in 15 th century and was developed by Guru Jambheshwar which operates on a system of values which are related to nature preservation and nature biodiversity conservation (Valpey et al., 2020). They are morals that bear powerful norms of taboo and this implies that one should not cut down the green trees or kill animals because this implies the office of environmental protection. Ethics based on compassion, non violence and reverence to any form of life is among the ethics that Bishnoi community has. The culture is also prolific in conservation of wild life and in that regard, the wildlife such as the deer and the antelope which is seen as holy are the ones that are engaged. They are also exercising sustainability and this has lowered the degree of environmental influence and ecological balance.

One of the brightest examples of Bishnoi environmentalism is the case when the representatives of the community sacrificed their lives in the 18 th century to put an end to the practice of deforestation (Gohain et

al., 2023). The incident highlights how deeply the environmental ethics is being imprinted on the society that one is willing not only to appreciate ecological preservation fully but is also ready to sacrifice his life to his planet. An example is the case of Bishnoi because the cultural and religious doctrines can be used to conserve the environment. It also reveals the suitability of a community based approach to reference to reality of community sustainability.

### **The Chipko Movement and Cultural Environmentalism**

Chipko Movement is an environmental movement that was established in the 1970s in the Himalayan region because of which the Chipko Movement is considered to be one of the most crucial examples of a traditional-based environmental activism. The villagers, particularly the women were those who adopted the movement in which they literally encircle trees to make sure they are not torn off by the business interests. This uprising marked high levels of interdependency which was present between the communities and the physical space. The Chipko is established on the Dharmic philosophy which assumes the importance of respect to nature and dependence on life (Saryal et al., 2022). The movement was also worried with the environmental and social importance of the forests besides giving the economic benefit but constituting great parts of the ecologic balance and livelihood.

Chipko Movement had the privilege of capitalizing on cultural and spiritual beliefs in capturing a mass recruitment of individuals and establishing an awareness bearing relevance in coming up with the issues of concern in relation to issues of concern in the environmental issues. It has also influenced the government policies as well as development of conservation strategy in India. In the case study, how the traditional ecological knowledge can be harmonized with the ecological activism existing is described. It unveils the significance of cultural ethics in the claim of the environmental behavior and applicability of the community in the conservation effort.

## **CRITICAL ANALYSIS**

### **Limitations of Ritualistic Practices**

Although the Dharmic environmental ethics has been the strongest framework of the morality and cultural approach to the ecosystem conservation, it is not so glowing in restrictions. The only probable problem is that there is a possibility that certain of such practices may be symbolic and ritualistic rather than practical (Navneet et al., 2020). When they dilute these practices so that they achieve an ecological meaning of overtime, they would be useless in resolving environmental issues in the contemporary world. There might also be some cases of rituals where the individuals usually engage in the worship of trees and other animals but not aware of the moral implications. This inability to relate practice and the sense may limit the prospects of the traditions on the contribution by environmental sustainability.

### **Impact of Urbanization and Modernization**

Such properties of urbanization and modernization have been noteworthy in the sense, the old fashioned modes of life were changed, and the cultural orientations, which refer to the environmental ethics were actually disempowered (Chudali et al.). The values of restraint, reverence and interrelation are likely to be engulfed by the materialistic desires with the rising trends of industrialism and consumerism in the societies. The consequences of this movement have led to the disappearance of the ancient preservation values such as the conservation of sacred groves and carrying out environmental rituals. The extinction of such activities is among the dangers to the sustenance of the Dharmic ethical ethics towards the environment in the modern society.

### **Need for Integration with Scientific Approaches**

Nevertheless, the other important limitation is that the integration of the traditional ecological knowledge to the existing scientific practices should also become a reality. Although the Dharmic ethics has the correct facts about the sustainability of the environment, this do not appear to be enough to ensure such a multifaceted problem as climate change, pollution and depletion of resources. Social ecological argument requires the Interco-ordination of ethical, cultural and science perspective to be encompassed in it to embrace the holistic conservation approach (Kar et al., 2022). The technological novelties and policy models may be presented as well as the importation of the Dharmic principles, in an effort to conceptualize the solutions that are more efficient and robust.

### **Revitalization and Future Prospects**

Despite these questions, Dharmic environmental ethics can be extremely refreshed and reconfigured to the

modern environment. The old tradition could be reconsidered and implemented to the issues of the current environment and begin functioning again, which would give them the appropriate presence and cost. This can be used to prevent such practices and values with the help of the policy, community involvement, and educational personnel (Awasthi et al., 2021). The direct effect of the new emphasis on Dharmic environmental ethics is that the societies will be environment conscious and will seek their niche in the progress of sustainable approach to the lifestyle.

## CONCLUSION

Dharmic eco ethics refers to the ecological philosophy knowledge which is abstract and is expansive as far as sustainability is concerned. The Indian tradition has succeeded in preserving the environment through embedding environmental values to the religion and culture like worship of trees and animals. These cultures are concerned with interlinked Ness, caring and love more and offer a sustainable paradigm of the existing issues concerning the environment. The Dharmic ideas can now manifest themselves again during the ecological crisis and be re-popularly adjusted to provide a moral, not to mention a practical solution of sustainable life. This can be termed as a combination of ancient experience and the contemporary method of looking at nature and this is sure to lead towards a wholesome and friendly relationship between the man and the nature.

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