ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH IN ANCIENT INDIA_ATHARVA VEDA PREACHING

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**Abstract:** It’s almost 72 years of the independence India has become self-sufficient in agricultural production. It is now the tenth industrialized country in the world and sixth nation to have gone into outer space to conquer nature for the benefit of the people. Indian ancient philosophy and literature advocates peace and harmony with nature. While the ancient Rulers then and Government Officials now are kin towards development, natural resources are becoming scarce by every passing day. This paper illustrates the environmental approach prevalent in India since ancient times, put forward by Ancient Rishis through Vedas and Puranas. The global environmental crisis faced by contemporary world is endangering the existence of our planet and all beings both living as well as non-living beings. These crises are result of human greediness, race for power, and extensive devastation of natural resources and can be countered by restoring moral, ethical values and religious preaching.

I. INTRODUCTION

India is one of the oldest civilizations in the world with a kaleidoscopic variety and rich cultural heritage. It is seventh largest country with an area of 32.87,263 sq. km.[1]. India is a country of abundant diversity, having the snow-covered Himalayan heights to the tropical rain forests of the south, multidisciplinary religions living in harmony in States of Jammu Kashmir in North to Kanyakumari in South, and numerous rivers as like the Ganga, Indus, Brahmaputra, Narmada, Tapti, Kaveri, Godavari, Krishna, Mahanadi and many more tributaries. Since ancient times, the river Ganga is believed to be the most virtuous river of India while mountain Kailash is considered the abode of Lord Shiva – one of the most significant Gods of the Hindu religion[2]. India have the plethora of natural resources endowed by nature. Today Indians enjoy these natural resources because of the wise resource management and allocation strategies adhered by their ancestors. It is attributed to Indian ancestors for establishing numerous social, religious and cultural norms and practices to conserve their natural heritage[3]. However, we need to note that, Natural resources available in the nature are limited, over exploitation of these resources is causing the environment crisis faced by contemporary world.

India has forest cover of 7,08,273 sq. kms., which is 21.54% of the Geographical area of the Country[4]. It is India’s extensive 7,517 km of coastline[1], that, since ancient times have been fostering overseas trade and maritime activities and gave impetus to cultural expansion in far off countries. It was from different ports of ancient India that her enterprising sailors and navigators maintained commercial and cultural relations with countries like Egypt, Babylonia, Greece, Roman Empire and different countries of the Southeast Asia[2].

II. ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACH IN ANCIENT INDIA

Environmental awareness, is not a recent phenomenon. The vital element of the Indian culture is its unity in enormous diversity[2]. The relationship between culture and ecology was the integral part of ancient Indian societies[5]. One of the major religion in India is Hinduism. It is revealed in the Vishnu Puran that once the Goddess Earth was imprisoned at the bottom of the ocean, in the nether world, by a demon who had laid waste on the Goddess Earth, causing havoc to the order of things. To rescue the Goddess Earth from the demon, Lord Vishnu incarnated as a Boar, known in ancient Hindu mythology as Varaha Avatar. Lord Vishnu fought and killed the demon and released the Goddess Earth by carrying her on his tusk to float free once more on the cosmic waters. Environmental ethics had always been upheld as an inherent part of Indian philosophy. Indian ancestors believed Man, Nature relationship is at the centre of Vedic vision and they proclaim man’s duty to preserve environment - “harmonious living with nature”. Worship of nature-Sun, Moon, Fire, Earth, Air and Water was not merely primitive man’s response to the fear of the unknown but arose from the deep reverence shown to the forces of nature which sustained and preserved human life on earth. Hindu tradition acknowledges that all life forms – humans, animals and plants – are equal and sacred, and thus appropriately placed to take on contemporary
concerns like deforestation, intensive farming of animals, global warming and climate change[6]. Most ancient Indian cultures have grown in the lap of Nature with reverence for nature in which all its elements, mountains, rivers, forests, animals, etc., considered sacred. The Hindu scriptures like the Upanishads, Srimadbhagavatam, Purananas, Vedas, and Bhagavad Geeta have also expressed the sacredness of various aspects of the environment and its conservation. The Upanishads provide a vision of cosmic piety and harmony with the natural environment. The Vedic lifestyle was environmentally ethical. The ancient Indians had a great respect for environment and worshipped different objects/manifestations of nature with utmost devotion and sincerity. They worshipped Tulsis (a holy basil plant), Neem, Pipal or Ashvattha, Bel, Vat (banyan), Sal, Banana trees not only as having religious importance but also of medicinal value. The trees also symbolize the concept of fertility. Tree worship in India probably was the earliest prevalent form of religion predated to the Vedic period[2].

The Vedic literatures like the Vedas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas, Upanishads, Samhitas, Upavedas are replete with references to different aspects of environment. Ecological wisdom, is discernible in the Vedic texts. The early Aryans had the knowledge of seasons which promoted agriculture, and Rig Veda mentions five seasons. It said that, nobody will destroy vegetation, and no one shall kill animals. The River-Hymn of the Rig Veda mentions as many as ten sacred rivers. The rivers were so vital and sacred to the Aryans that, Punjab, during the Rig Vedic period was known as the land of the Sapta- Sindhavah or Seven rivers i.e. Sindhu, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Satlej and Saraswati. The Atharva Veda stressed upon the purity and quality of water. It is mentioned that pure water cures many ailments and it acts as preventer of diseases which are not yet contracted[2]. Sacred groves and Gardens are the home of local flora and fauna, a veritable gene pool of animal, insect, bird and plant species and a mini-biosphere reserve, small packets of forests dedicated to local deities[6]. They are a common phenomenon in many parts of the country. Similarly, Divine Waters such as River, Lake, Temple tank, Sacred Trees, Sthalavirksha, Yakshas, Yakshi, are the best example of the human nature relations[6]. The Puranas had also great concern for environment, flora and fauna. They conceptualized the trees to feel happiness and sorrow[7].

Buddhism recognizes that, the human life and other forms of life have a continuum of existence. This view presented by Buddha makes it ecologically most significant. It is viewed as enlightened approach of Hinduism which confers respects to Mother Nature. Buddhism believes that, when human beings attains enlightenment it becomes part of the nature through becoming (bhava), evolution (parinama) and dissolution (nirvana). Buddhism advocates that, human beings cannot survive in the nature without accepting and respecting consciousness of nature, this forms as a doctrine for everyday human life which forms basis for the environmental ethical concern in Buddhism. The concept of Emptiness (Sunyata) also known as Buddhahood and interdependent existence more specifically give meaning and liveliness to environmental ethics in Buddhism. These preaching of Buddhism advocates more harmonious and less harmful ways of dealing with our environment, believes it is responsibility of everyone to guide global family in right direction. Buddhism assigns role for even a minutest creature on the Earth for sustenance of the Earth. Buddhism advocates that the human being is the custodian, guardian and overseer and affirms a duty towards nature for sustaining life. His Holiness The Dalai Lama in his preaching of 'A Prayer for All Sentient Beings’ pays his respect for Mother Earth and appeals all Tibetans to abstain from using products made out of endangered species, is good example of compassion[7].

The basic thrust of the Jainism is on the minimum destruction of living and non-living resources for the benefit of man. People following Jainism also believe in the principle of simplicity, i.e., to meet their minimum needs without over-exploting the nature and natural wealth. Jainism is also based on the principle which is in close harmony with nature and help in protecting and preserving the nature. Vedic vision revolves around Karma – a duty to preserve environment, as Man, Nature relationship. The Vedic people use to strongly believe that, for plenary existence of human beings on earth, it mandates a balance of water, vegetation and human life. Therefore, they consciously made a deliberate attempt to enunciate this ultimate truth through sacred incantations. In Indian philosophy this was also articulated as rituals for repeated reminding of the need to sustain and foster ecological balance[8].

III. ATHARVA VEDA

Indian ancient Rishi, Muni and Saints use to preach that the God lives in all the living creatures and exists everywhere around us. Vedas are the most revered treasure of Indian culture. These four Vedas are sacred transcripts referred for religious rituals, way of life and reverence. Hindu ancient literature ascribe Vedas are the preliminary ancient manuscripts available. There are four main Vedas: Rig Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. All these four Vedas are believed as the source of knowledge mainly focused on how human beings should leave in harmony with nature. Veda hymns are represented in Sanskrit language in poetic mode. While Rigvedais believed as the oldest one of all four Vedas, Atharva Veda is youngest of all. Sanskrit meaning of Atharva is ‘rigid’, ‘fix’, however, Acharya Vedanta Tirth narrates that, the meaning herein is not intended as ‘motionless’, but it denotes the Vedic knowledge which is broad, settle and comprehensive knowledge of almighty God[9]. Atharva rishi and Angiras rishi are the author of Atharva Veda. While, Atharva Rishiarchitected Philosophical, Spiritual, Meditative, and life accomplishing predictive hymns, Angiras rishi

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architected predictive hymns related enemy defeat, hypnotism, black magic, and death. Vedic knowledge in Atharva Veda explains various ways and means to achieve accomplish the benefits of these hymns by way of chanting and practising mantra, tantra and yagna.

In vedic literature, Atharva Veda is also known as, "श्रुदितद्" (Shridharm), "भैरवस्यवेदम्", or "अथवाविद्यार्हम्". Atharva Veda has 20 Chapters (Skandas or Kandams), including 726 vedichyms ("शूक्तं" – Sukta), and 5977 Shlokas, written in Sanskrit.

It’s First Chapter narrates various Shlokas for illness prevention including birth-delivery, long life and body building, etc. Second chapter deals with safety, power and enemy elimination. Third chapter illustrates about the State affairs, Fourth chapter deals with self-protection, Fifth chapter reiterates importance of Bhramana, in addition to illness prevention. Sixth Chapter states remedies for bad-dreams, snake bite, and Water therapy. Seventh Chapter consists of hymns about religion, fire, God. Eighth chapter has mantras related to long life, defects in foetus and birth defects. Ninth chapter has hymns related Cow (Gaumata), Sun, Kam, Bull, Hospitality, Soul, Solar systems and mother-father’s teachings to their siblings. It also has a hymn which states Earth is round. Tenth chapter has hymns describing victory, self-control and "श्रुदितद्". Eleventh Chapter illustrates hymns which prove that Indian ancient rishis had knowledge of Aeroplane technology and describe about sin-elimination, spiritual. Twelfth chapter has hymns on "मातृभूमि" - Motherland2, eternal world, sky, and has main focus on Land, special hymns mentioned for Land as "भूमिसूक्तम्" (Bhumi Sukta). Thirteenth chapter hymns describe spirituality and attainment of happiness, while Fourteenth chapter has hymns related to marriage, and marital life. Fifteenth chapter ascribes hymns on spirituality and explains the importance of spirituality, whereas Sixteenth chapter hymns explains about pain and sorrow prevention and Seventeenth chapter hymns explain about Blackmagic. Eighteenth chapter hymns describe post-death rituals. Nineteenth chapter hymns dwell on astrology, yagna. Twentieth chapter is the biggest of all the chapters in Atharva Veda. It is preliminary focuses on Rig Veda and Sam Veda hymns. It also describes hymns praising God Indra[9]. All these chapters of Atharva Veda are dedicated to the God and hymns within are revered on him. It is believed that, Atharva Veda explains the key for achieving Dharma, Karma, Arth, and Moksha in human-life. By rigorous practicing of Atharva Veda, one can achieve the spiritual wisdom, self-realisation and peace of mind.

"भूमिसूक्तम्" (Bhumi Sukta)

According to Hindu mythology Lord Bharma is believed as Creator of the Shrushti (Universe), Lord Vishnu as the Operator of the Shrushti and Lord Mahesh (also known as Lord Shiva) as the Destroyer of the Shrushti. Here the Shrushti means the entire Universe involving all the living and non-living creatures. Ancient Hindu mythology believes that the universe is made up of Panchmahabhutas - physical creation five Great Elements composed of Akash (Ether), Vayu (Air), Agni (Fire), Jala (water) Prithvi (Earth)[2]. Atharva Veda in its Eighth Chapter, tenth Sukta, First Shlokas mentions about origin of Universe (Shrushti):

"विरावधामयः आसीत्तात्त्वत्वात्त्वत्।

सर्वविभिधे येवेदं दंदोऽविभिधतीति॥९॥

It means, there was a gigantic power before the Shrushti. It is known as Eternal Power. It is believed that Shrushti originated out of this Eternal Power, this Eternal Power lies in every life on Shrushti. Further in its Ninth Chapter, First Sukta, First Shlokasit narrates that Cow (Gai Mata) is originated from Heaven, Earth, Ether (Solar System) and Sea.

The Vedic hymn, in Atharva Veda BhumiSuktais dedicated to the Goddess Earth is unquestionably the oldest evocative environmental invocation, is a sacred text. The BhumiSuktais described in Twelfth Chapter First Sukta in Sixty-Three Shlokas. The Mother Earth was celebrated for all her natural bounties and particularly for her gift of herbs and vegetation, her blessings were sought for prosperity in all endeavours and fulfilment of all righteous aspirations[9]. Atharva Veda Ninth Chapter, Tenth Sukta, Twelfth Shlokas recognizes Earth as Mother Earth:

"मातृभूमिविभिधविभवान् प्रकाशम् श्रुदितद्।

भूमिसूक्तिविभिधविभवान्। सर्वविभिधर्यामातृभूमिविभिधविभवान्॥१२॥

It also recognizes that five

1 First time the concept of 'Mother Land – मातृभूमि is narrated in Atharva Veda.
2 Acharya Vedanta Tirthe written Book ‘Atharva Veda’ in 2018, Published by Manoj Publications Delhi. It is available in two Volumes – Volume 1 & Volume 2. This shloka is mentioned in Volume 1, Shloka 8.10.1 Page No. 473
3 Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 9.1.1 Page No. 482
4 Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 9/10/12, Page No. 529
5 Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/12, Page No. 91
6 Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/63, Page No. 101
types of human races on earth belongs to Earth, which is stated in Shloka - "तम्ममूर्धीप्रववमानव". The Mother Earth stimulates the fertility of the soil from its dormant state, therefore Earth is also understood as Sacred Womb. She mediates between the mystery of life and death. Thus, Earth is the dwelling from which all life forms are born and into which it returns. Mother Earth while sustaining all life forms, never make difference and bias, irrespective of caste, creed, origin and gender. This approach of Atharva Veda and "भूमिस्वात (Bhumi Sukta)" advocates 'Eco-centric Environmental Approach'. Atharva Veda depicts various synonymous words for Environments in its various Sanskrit Shlokas which are used in conjunction to describe Mother Earth such as, विश्वनामामीशार (means Sky is cover over the Universe), तम्ममसूक्त (means one which is covered with Darkness), तत्तात्संपन्नव (means Covered with Seasons), वरविश्वम (means Earth is covered with rains). Atharva Veda’s "भूमिस्वात (Bhumi Sukta)" depicts, the Worship (Bhakti or Aaradhana), Praise, and request (Yachana) made to Goddess Earth for peaceful and harmonized leaving of all beings. It also unveils various other aspects including Environmental, Physical, Cosmic, Ethical, and Organic. This is more clearly elaborated in one of the Shlokas in the Eighteenth Chapter, First Sukta, Seventeenth Shlokas which means this Earth is covered with Water, Air, and medicinal plants / herbs which are planted on Earth by God and exists before commencement of the world:

$$\text{तीणिष्ठादसिक्खवीर्यतेरुपुरुषंपन्नतिविश्वक्षणम्।}$$

"भूमिस्वात (Bhumi Sukta)" clearly establishes that ancient Indian Rishis were having ample knowledge about the environment. Atharva Veda’s Ninth Chapter, Tenth Sukta, Fourteenth Shlokas, clearly illustrates that ancient Indian Rishis were aware, Earth is round / spherical in shape.

12th Chapter, First Sukta, Ninth Shlokas describes about the equal rotation of Day and Night on earth:

$$\text{यस्यामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं।}$$

"भूमिस्वात (Bhumi Sukta)" describes Mother Earth as, विश्वनामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं. One who supports and takes load of entire Universe, विश्वनामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं. containing all wealth; जगतीविवेशणी - abode of whole universe; praise the beauty of immortal splendour of Earth in its Shloka; विश्वनामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं. जगतीविवेशणी. It means Mother Earth as विश्वनामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं (Visvambhara – as representative of Universe) has जगतीविवेशणी (having a heart of molten gold), जगतीविवेशणी (where all beings from the world resides), विश्वनामासपूण्यायामीशादशक्षणंक्षणं (which holds the Fire), including Snow-clad mountains, गीत्यान्त्यशहारहस्तिभवन्ति - (which are planted on Earth by God and exists before commencement of the world), जगतीविवेशणी. favourite of God and Earth to bless them with that fragrance. Earth is round / spherical in shape.

16th Chapter, Tenth Sukta, Fourteenth Shloka articulates different energies which are generated from the form of the earth i.e. the centre, the navel and other parts of Earth, should shower that energy on us - तम्ममस्यद्वैतप्रहत्यमहाइलंति। तम्ममस्यद्वैतप्रहत्यमहाइलंति। Various Shlokas of Atharva Veda refer to numerous Animals i.e. Living Beings and natural landscapes like Mountains, Soil, Dust, Rocks, Springs, Waterfalls, Rivers, and Seas, not to forget Air, Sky, Fire, i.e. Non-living Beings and establishes their relationship with human beings for harmonious living. Atharva Veda pronounces Earth provides the ‘Couch’ for all beings both Living Beings and non-living beings in whatever shape, size and posture they are Earth provides them support and foundation. "भूमिस्वात (Bhumi Sukta)" Shlokas 23 and 24 appreciates Earth for the fragrance it instills into all products of the earth such as medicinal herbs, trees, plants, lotus, air, water and prays to God and Earth to bless them with that fragrance. It identifies Earth as an abode of all creations including animals and inanimate.

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1. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/15, Page No. 92
2. Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 1/32/4, Page No. 60
3. Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 10/1/30 Page No. 538
4. Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 10/8/31 Page No. 581
5. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/52 Page No. 99
6. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 18/1/17, Page No. 254
7. Atharva Veda, Volume 1, Shloka 9/10/14, Page No. 529
8. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/9, Page No. 91
9. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/6, Page No. 90
10. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/11, Page No. 91
11. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/48, Page No. 98
12. Atharva Veda, Volume 2, Shloka 12/1/12, Page No. 91
IV. INDIAN NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT POLICY 2006 AND ATHARVA VEDA'S "भूमिसूक्ति"

India’s National Environment Policy is a response to our national commitment to a clean environment, mandated in the Constitution in Articles 48 A and 51 A (g), strengthened by judicial interpretation of Article 21. It is acknowledged that maintaining a healthy environment is not only the State's responsibility alone, but also that of every citizen. It declares intentions of Indian Government to ensure adherence to international efforts on environment concerns and contributions towards various environmental initiatives. During World Economic Forum (WEF), meet at Davos, Switzerland, on 23rd Jan. 2018, our Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi in his keynote address at the plenary session highlights the importance of unity in solving the various Global problems, stressed India’s stand point as, ‘सत्येवकृष्णकर्म - the whole world is one family’. He said, India believes in Humanity and Unity as Value, it is a bridge to close distances created in humanity. He further mentioned the importance of standing in unison and examining ourselves. However, his focus was on bridging distances in technological developments, world peace, and stability. The concept is very well expressed in Atharva Veda’s "भूमिसूक्ति".

India’s present The National Environment Policy, is formulated and approved by the Union Cabinet on 18th May 2006[10]. Before finalizing the final Policy, the formulation process of policy goes through lots of deliberation, discussions, participation and consultation with experts from, Central Ministries, Members of Parliament, State Governments, Industry Associations, Academic and Research Institutions, Civil Society, NGOs and the Public. The opinion and feedback from all these agencies is discussed and deliberated before putting it on the policy agenda.

The National Environment Policy is written document which incudes, its objectives, principles stated therein, strategic themes to be implemented, the comprehensive legislative and institutional development requirement to achieve these strategic themes, through clearly outlined action plans and the key environmental challenges envisioned by country and international bodies. The National Environment Policy intends to inspire integrated involvement of different stakeholders, i.e. public agencies, government and non-government agencies, academic and scientific institutions, investment community, local communities, and the international development associates, in yoking their resources and strengths for environmental management in accordance with Policy objectives, principles and action plans.

The National Environment Policy, 2006, advocates use of Economic Principles in Environmental Decision-making, and Innovation. However, it is observed that, the present Policy have few areas which are not been addressed properly while formulating the Policy. It is observed that, over a period of time, the Objectives and corresponding Action plans governed through the Policy are formulated on similar grounds as that of the National Five-year development plans and are focusing for development of Industries, Infrastructure development and job creation as prime agenda. It also focuses on ensuring smoothening the process of approvals and compliances for new infrastructure developments/projects and industry. While the policy recognizes, uncontrolled increase in population, unrestrained forest tree cut for livelihoods and domestic waste management through Municipal Corporations are the challenges, for these challenges the adequate management control action plan is missing in the Policy. However, the Policy intends to encourage local communities for Traditional Knowledge (TK) management, referring to ethno-biology knowledge, for their livelihoods, and to unlock the value of genetic diversity. Since, all these challenges are related with behaviour of People, the Policy, Objectives and actions plans identified therein, are lacking in including the motivational factors for encouraging People participation and involvement.

Indian ancient literature particularly the "भूमिसूक्ति" (Bhumi Sukta) of Atharva Veda, preaches for harmonies living with nature, caring and nurturing both living and non-living beings by humans for betterment of humans. I believe, the Indian National Environment Policy is favouring Industrialization and Job creation, however, the efforts
towards environmental enhancement, increasing human-nature inter personnel relations, crating moral and ethical values for nature are not addressed in National Environment Policy, 2006. Any national environmental policy mainly focuses on factors such as Research& Education, Culture & Traditional Knowledge, Opportunities & Issues, Political, Government & Non-government Institutional requirements, National & International Commitments and Legal& Cultural Practices. Since, our country - India, is having rich cultural, natural heritage, and abundance of ancient literature preaching harmonious human-nature relationship, as illustrated in Fig. 1, National Environment Policy, I propose, Ancient Literature should another factor to be considered, studied and included into the Indian National Environment Policy.

‘Polluter Pays’ principal of India’s National Environment Policy 2006, is intended with purpose of curbing the pollution by taking deterrent punitive action against polluters. However, gap observed in the implementation of ‘Polluter Pays’ principal. It is resulting into giving liberty to Polluter, to continue to pollute and harm the environment by escaping paying a penalty for it. The Govindarajan Committee on Reforming Investment Approval and Implementation Procedures, identified delays in environment and forest clearances as the largest source of delays in development projects, and suggested for review of existing procedures of granting clearances and other approvals. Easy process of clearance and approvals, will help industry and new projects to speed-up, however, any Industrial process or construction project will be producing Industrial Waste or Construction Waste, in Nov. 2017, total Solid Waste generated per in India is 1,45,626 MT/Day[11], but there is issue with treatment and disposal of this waste. The use of Circular Economy principles – i.e. instead of treating a by-product or intermediate-product as garbage, it can be used as new resource or secondary raw materials, etc... in other industrial or project works, creating a virtuous cycle in tune with the environment.

V. CONCLUSION

Atharva Veda deliberates human beings to be caretakers of nature/environment, one who restocks the abundances of the earth, rather than spoils it. Thus, promoting conservation and protection of environment and natural resources. Environmental ethics is always being an inherent part of Indian philosophy. The daily rituals and routine and life styles of ancient people as gathered from Srutis, Smrities, Puranas and Nibandhas clearly indicate their reverence for nature. Even today, one can see this reverence reflected in the daily worship as routine life of Indian people. Today, it is necessary to change the minds of the people and hence it also needs spiritual education focusing on environmental ethics[12]. The traditional knowledge developed in the ancient age which teaches us the concept of the value of a simple life. We can follow the simple policies of our forefathers who probably had much better understanding of the environment than we currently have. Detailed studies are urgently needed to extract, analyze and implement the ancient Indian environmental and ecological conservation policies in modern societies, so that in near future we can get a more stable, clean, rich and healthy environment. Mohandas Gandhi once said, “Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed.” For achieving Sustainable development, environment protection constitutes an integral part of developmental process and it cannot be considered in isolation. Peace, development and environment are interdependent and indivisible[13].

Atharva Veda’s “भूमिसूक्ता” (Bhumi Sukta) Shloka narrates the Earth as, imperishable / non-destructible / endless one, and is stable, on which resides people of countless languages and religions as one family.

This introduces the concept of ‘वसुधैवकुटुम्बकम् - the whole world is one family’. The Atharva Veda’s Shloka profoundly reveals information about various ecological places, diversity of natural environment and it preaches the conservation of environment for instigating environmentally sustainable attitude and behaviour. It recognizes the intrinsic values of nature. Atharva Veda focuses on numerous significant characteristics of human and nature interconnectedness and it has outlined a profound ethos of ecological sustainability and total dependency on the earth. However, Earth in return requires reciprocal harmony, care and nourishment from Human beings, which is implicit meaning of all these Shlokas of Atharva Veda. I believe, by understanding and inculcating hidden meaning of Shlokas of Atharva Veda, Policy-makers and Scholars of Contemporary world can formulate a sustainable environmental policy for a harmonized and sustainable globalized world.

REFERENCES


