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Evolving Environmental Ethics and Accountability: A Philosophical Reflection on Human Responsibility and Species Rights in a Changing World

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abstract
In the face of accelerating ecological degradation, ethical responses to environmental crises remain fragmented and culturally biased, often dominated by anthropocentric and Western paradigms. The paradigms do not recognize the more spiritual and ethical connection between people and the natural world. Environmental ethics needs replenishment, and this time with the assistance of the different schools of thought that recognize the moral significance of non-human life. This gap is addressed in the current paper through research and synthesis of three accounts, Upaniṣadic metaphysics, Buddhist ecological ethics, and contemporary moral philosophers like environmentalism as proposed by thinkers such a thinker as Peter Singer, to come up with a responsive model of environmental accountability through philosophic reflection and moral awareness. The methodology of the paper is qualitative and philosophic-conceptual. Comparative mapping and normative arguments are employed to gauge how consistent each framework is, and this is attained in the study by textual analysis of canonical texts. The texts include Upaniṣads, Buddhist suttas, and Animal Liberation by Singer, which is supported by peer-reviewed sources in environmental humanities and comparative philosophy. The findings show that there is a shared starting point in anthropocentric rejection and the emphasis on interspecific moral responsibility. The Upaniṣadic paradigm is centered on the unity of the cosmos and the sanctity of duty, as compared to Buddhism, which offers practical applications to the paradigm of interdependence and non-harming. Conversely, the framework by Singer is clear and policy-oriented in terms of rational ethics of sentience. Comparative analysis reveals the fact that a combined approach of rational universality, spiritual reverence, and behavioural ethics can create a moral consciousness in environmental crises. The article states that the Anthropocene is dependent on a pluralistic, cross-traditional framework. This kind of approach cuts across cultural boundaries and provides a paradigm that is inclusive and brings together reason, spirituality, and ethics in a cross-cultural sense.
Keywords: *Environmental Ethics; Interspecies Morality; Non-Dualism; Buddhist Philosophy; Ecological Accountability*

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is characterized by extraordinary advancements in technology and globalization, while these developments have been accompanied by profound ecological and moral challenges. Humanity is now facing environmental crises of unprecedented scale, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation, which demand urgent ethical reflection (Oksanen, 2020). Climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem degradation are not merely ecological phenomena; they reveal a deeper disconnection between human consciousness and the moral order of life itself. Despite advanced scientific knowledge and predictive models (Hourdequin, 2021), humanity remains ethically unprepared, lacking the values and philosophical vision needed to navigate the Anthropocene. This is not simply a technical issue but a profound erosion of principles that once anchored human responsibility toward the natural world.

This moral deficiency is in great measure related to a persistent anthropocentrism inherent in the prevailing socio-political paradigms. The anthropocentrism, which can be defined as the perception of the world where human life and consciousness are prioritized over other forms of existence, has shaped modern thought and estranged humanity from the web of life (Lehman, 2021). Anthropocentrism is based on the Enlightenment rationalism and institutionalized in the process of colonial expansion and capitalist industrialization, which historically defined non-human entities, animals, plants, and ecosystems as the objects of exploitation, control, or conservation only to promote human interests. Within this system, the moral value depends on the human relevance, consciousness, or utility, and thus most of the biosphere is excluded from ethical consideration.

Although certain branches of Western philosophy, e.g., utilitarianism and rights-based environmental ethics, have attempted to criticize this anthropocentric disposition, they are still restricted by their epistemological presuppositions and narrow cultural horizons. Utilitarianism, as an example, tends to quantify moral relevance in terms of sentience or the ability to feel pain and pleasure, and thus moral agency is reduced to a small set of

standards. Rights-based strategies, as strong as they may be in legal terms, often depend on an individualistic, human-centred conception of autonomy and subjecthood that is difficult to apply to collective ecosystems or non-sentient life forms. These models, while progressive, fail to evoke the deeper sense of interconnectedness and reciprocity essential for a planetary ethic.

Against these constraints, both scholars and activists have advocated a broader moral imagination that moves beyond anthropocentric constructs and includes the inherent value of non-human life, ecosystems, and future generations. It is not the first time such a call is made, but it has now acquired new urgency as ecological disaster looms. Such influential philosophers as Martha Nussbaum (2023) suggest a capabilities approach to justice, which "extends the scope of moral and political concern to non-human animals". Her contributions imply that ethical theories should be broad enough to include the thriving and the abilities of all sentient beings, rather than human beings. In a parallel manner, Freeman (2020) develops the idea of the "human-animal-earthling identity", a natural articulation of moral interconnectedness that takes account of the mutual susceptibilities and liabilities of living creatures on a precarious planet. These measures hint at breaking the speciesist hierarchy but require deeper philosophical grounding to fully transform our moral vision.

But the enterprise of environmental ethics cannot be left under the domain of Western liberal traditions. The fact that Euro-American models of thought, even progressive or reformist ones, tend to result in "some version of conceptual monoculture", which marginalizes or distorts the cosmologies of the Global South, is noted by Sharma and Biswas (2024). Classical Indian philosophical traditions like Upanisads, Buddhism, Indigenous environmental knowledge, and African eco-ritual systems are just some of the traditions that offer profound metaphysical and ethical insights essential for reimagining humanity's place within a sacred ecological order. Such systems do not view human beings as distinct and superior, but as nodes in a larger web of life, which is a more ecologically sustainable and just orientation.

Among special interests are the ethical worldviews of Indian and Buddhist thought, which present unexploited resources toward reconsidering environmental responsibility. The Indian scriptures, including the Upaniṣads, postulate a non-dual cosmology (Advaita Vedānta) in which Ātman (the individual soul) and Brahman (universal consciousness) are ultimately the same. In this kind of worldview, damaging nature is equal to damaging the self; moral duty is not based on logical calculation, but on spiritual insight. It is a metaphysical foundation of an ethic of reverence, humility, and *dhārmic* responsibility to all forms of life (Sharma & Biswas, 2024). Equally, Buddhist doctrine focuses on *ahimsā* and *karuṇā*, and "ecological responsibility is thus a practice of embodiment and not a dogmatic requirement". These customs encourage an ethical paradigm that is based on mindfulness, restraint, and interdependence, which are very much needed in the present age of planetary crisis. Along with being philosophically rich, these Eastern frameworks also provide pragmatic, culturally meaningful paradigms of environmental action. The Buddhist Forest monasteries, the tree ordination ceremonies, and the Upaniṣadic-inspired conservation movements like the sacred grove protection are concrete examples of the spiritual ethics that can be applied to the ecological praxis. These practices are not symbolic rituals; they embody a living philosophy that challenges extractive worldviews and reaffirms spiritual responsibility toward nature.

However, there are also some difficulties in including these non-Western traditions in the mainstream environmental ethics. According to Padilla (2021) and Sadler-Smith & Akstinaite (2022), the contemporary ecological crisis is not just the result of moral failure but also the structural and political domination the technocratic governing, global capitalism, and neo-colonial models of development that systematically exclude alternative epistemologies. Environmental justice, then, should be thought of as both a philosophical and political undertaking. According to indigenous scholars (Whyte, 2020), Indigenous environmental justice is based on the principles of relational accountability, land sovereignty, and ethics of kinship, which are hardly present in liberal environmental discourse. In that sense, the Eastern and Indigenous structures must be merged with caution not to harm their philosophical purity, and keeping in mind their cultural backgrounds. Miao and Nduneseokwu (2025) further develop this point by saying that ethics in environmental leadership is important in the environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). In this regard, they argue that culturally situated and reflexively malleable ethical decision-making is the case in such settings. Environmental responsibility cannot be achieved just through top-down government or technical expertise; it requires deep moral commitments and ethical systems, which are culturally sensitive and which appeal to the experience of the different communities. This paper is premised on the meeting of these philosophical, political, and ecological imperatives and examines the crossroads where they intersect. It carries out a comparative philosophical study of the moral grounds of environmental responsibility based on three larger traditions: Indian metaphysics and

Buddhist environmental ethics (focusing on the notions of interdependence, compassion, and non-harming), and Western practical ethics as championed especially by Peter Singer.

The paper hopes to contribute towards resolving, in whatever measure it may, the looming environmental crisis by emphasising the endeavours and concerns contained in works past to present across the world, and particularly wishes for the following objectives:

- To analyze human moral responsibility toward the environment through both Western and Eastern philosophical frameworks.
- To assess the philosophical justification for species rights as grounded in diverse ethical traditions.
- To develop an ethically consistent and culturally integrative model of environmental accountability suitable for the ecological challenges of the 21st century.

Subsequently, post a thorough examination of these frameworks separately and in their interaction with each other, the paper aims at building a consistent, ethically sound, and culturally inclusive model of environmental responsibility. The model seeks to bridge secular and spiritual ethics, guiding humanity toward a more reflective and inclusive moral paradigm for the Anthropocene.

THE THREE ETHICAL APPROACHES TO SPECIESISM: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

Environmental issues have been analyzed and approached from many different viewpoints. Given that the world in its entirety partakes in the only environment common to humanity, the concerns about it are also commonly shared human concerns. Consequently, the ecological challenges have been addressed from all possible fields with every conceivable solution, from academic to practical, from pre-emptive to damage control. The paper has taken up the following three approaches from among so many more. This comparative inquiry does not merely analyze ethical systems; it contemplates how different worldviews reveal humanity's moral place within the cosmic order.

Ethical Foundations in the Upaniṣads

As roots of the Indian philosophical tradition, the Upaniṣads present a highly metaphysical and ethically dense view of the world that refutes the anthropocentric premises of several Western ethical theories. In contrast to the ethics that are based on rational calculus or legalistic formulations, the Upaniṣadic vision has ethics based on an ontology of interconnectedness and sacred unity. This vision is based on the philosophy of *Advait*a, according to which *Atman* and *Brahman* are essentially the same. According to scholars like Angiras (2022), Srinivasan and Aithal (2025), this non-dual ontology breaks down the borders between the self and the environment, the human and the non-human. In the context of this framework, the degradation of nature cannot be only unethical, but also a form of spiritual suicide, because damaging the outside world is the same as damaging oneself. Thus, environmental responsibility emerges not from external law but from inner realization that all life is sacred and indivisible.

Environmental ethics has vast implications in this metaphysical assertion. Unlike instrumental perceptions of the natural world, the Upaniṣadic tradition acknowledges that all forms of life, sentient and non-sentient, are manifestations of the same divine nature. Such radical interdependence implies that it is not a legal or social contract that forces one to be ethically responsible towards nature, but it is an inherent consequence of the spiritual understanding of the oneness of being. As a result, the Upaniṣadic model also fosters a kind of spiritual environmentalism, in which respect, moderation, and rite are ethical reactions to the environmental facts.

Angiras (2022) expounds the nature of the twin philosophies of karma (moral causality) and dharma (righteous duty) in dictating the morality of the Upaniṣadic philosophy. Ecologically, dharma means the need to synchronize human behaviour with the wider balance of the universe. Any disturbance of this equilibrium, whether it be pollution, overutilization, or destruction of habitat, is not only immoral but a crime against the order of the universe, an offense against harmony which keeps things alive. With this, the *Upaniṣadic* ethics do not render sustainability as a policy rather a divine duty that is engraved like the world itself.

Srinivasan and Aithal (2025) develop this argument further by using the Iśa Upaniṣad and the Bhāgavat Gītā as their interpretations. These readings foster renunciation (*tyāga*), austerity, and satisfaction as ethical responses to human lust and material prosperity. Iśa Upaniṣad is another example that describes "one should enjoy by renouncing", which is the total contrast to the consumerist ideologies leading to the exploitation of the ecology. In the same way, *Niṣkāma Karma*, "action without caring about consequences", is also an ethical way of action as suggested by the Bhāgavat Gītā, which will not end up in the pit of egoism and equilibrium. All these doctrines are used to come up with a system of ecological moderation and harmonious coexistence with nature.

In his analysis of the Mundaka Upaniṣad, Bhandari (2021) introduces one more aspect by focusing on the shift between *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā*. There is a direct ecological implication of this epistemological shift. It demands a paradigm shift where the technological or material control will be replaced by spiritual humility and ecological caretaking. This kind of worldview is an invitation to societies to re-conceptualize progress not as the growth of GDP or consumption, but as the growth of inner harmony and well-being of the planet.

Although the Upaniṣads contain such deep teachings, scholars like Sinha (2025) note that these teachings are not being utilized fully in the modern environmental policy and activism. Although their symbolic representation in ethics is still dominant in the cultural practices, they have not been incorporated systematically into the management of the environment. To give an example, even though some spiritual activities, such as river and sacred grove pujas, are still practiced in most societies, most of these activities are not institutionalized and are usually individualistic. As Sinha notes, a viable and functioning Upaniṣadic environmental ethic is still an unfulfilled dream, instead of a complete paradigm.

However, the principles of the Upaniṣads have been used in the modern ecological movements, especially in India. Such programs as the Ganga Action Plan, the Namāmi Gange campaign, and the protection of sacred groves in states such as Kerala and Himachal Pradesh indicate the cultural vitality of such teachings. These actions are an ethic of respect and concern, but not on the basis of utility thinking, but on the basis of metaphysical awareness. Also, legal innovations such as the personhood of rivers, such as the Ganga and Yamuna, are an indication of an attempt to fit sacred cosmologies into modern law-though haltingly.

To conclude, Upaniṣads introduce the ethical vision which is very ecologically efficient and which is founded on the unity of the cosmos, spiritual duty, and pious restraint. While their integration into modern systems may be incomplete, the Upaniṣads hold the power to reshape environmental thinking by reawakening humanity to its sacred bond with the Earth. Not merely their spiritual imagery, but their capacity to re-constitute the connection between human and nature on the axis of domination to devotion, exploitation to sacred reciprocity. The Upaniṣadic spirit is the potent reminder in the age of ecological disintegration that the stewardship of the environment is initiated by a shift in attitude.

Buddhist Environmental Philosophy

The Buddhist philosophy gives a very experiential and spiritual dimension to environmental ethics, which dissolves the illusion of separateness that continues to bring environmental destruction. The worldview of Buddhism dissolves the ego-self into the relational existence and offers an ethical paradigm that is both metaphysical and practical. Such a paradigm is centered on the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda* or dependent origination. The principle is that "there is no phenomenon which exists in itself", that there is not a thing which exists or comes into being outside of other things. The ramifications of ecological thinking are huge: human beings, animals, ecosystems, and even inanimate forces are interconnected in a web of mutual causality. This ontology, according to Loy (2019), dispels the illusion of separateness, which is one of the main factors of environmental exploitation by redefining the ecological crisis not as an external disaster, but as a symptom of inner delusion, attachment (*tṛṣṇā*), and craving (*lobha*). In this vision, caring for the Earth is not an obligation imposed from outside but a natural expression of awakening to interdependence.

The ethical foundation of Buddhist environmentalism, wholly glimpsed through the framing of *ahiṃsā*, is the notion of avoiding harm. Buddhist ethics, unlike Western legal or rights-based systems, are more likely to be self-developed, and the Threefold Training of *śīla*, *samādhi*, and *prajñā* is a means of developing the self. These practices are interconnected, and they enhance a greater sense of connectedness with all life, thus creating empathy, restraint, and reverence. It is not that the moral agent is only required not to harm but rather is called to live in a *karuṇā* way. Kaza (2019) highlights that "compassion, especially in the context of climate anxiety and ecological despair, is an effective affective and practical tool" for environmental action.

The adaptive vitality of Buddhist ecological ethics can further be vouched for by the applications of the same in the real world. In Thailand, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka, there have been ecological ordination ceremonies where forests have been declared monastic communities, hence symbolically protected against logging and commercial exploitation. The trees are covered with saffron robes and blessed with chants, which makes them associated with the sacred world, and the destruction of these trees a kind of sacrilege. These rituals, though symbolic, embody the philosophical truth that spirituality and ecology are inseparable dimensions of the same reality. The cultural flexibility of Buddhist ethics is also seen in such practices, which can answer the challenges of the modern world and be based on the continuity of doctrine.

Cairns (2020) and Sinha (2025) also state that Buddhist environmental ethics can be of value not only due to their spiritual appeal but also due to the fact that they can help people cope with the psychological and emotional aspects of the climate crisis. The contemporary environmental discourse tends to use fear, guilt, or utilitarian reasoning as an incentive to action. Buddhism, on the other hand, promotes the concept of *sati*, *upekkhā*, and interbeing and thereby assists people in developing inner strength and clarity. This moral psychology is supplementary to the thesis that Cafaro (2022) has articulated, namely, that any significant environmental ethics needs to worry about the inner moral structure of human beings, their beliefs, emotions, and attitudes, rather than just about the outer policy framework. Through the development of mindfulness and minimization of self-centered actions, Buddhism fosters sustainable decisions that are made out of understanding and not duty.

Outside its conventional arenas, Buddhist environmentalism has increasingly been a factor in international environmentalism. Interdependence and non-anthropocentric ethics are also echoed in the Deep Ecology School, which is a Western school of thought but with an Eastern influence. Likewise, the emergence of Engaged Buddhism, which was promoted by such a leader as Thich Nhat Hanh, is a good example of the ethical transformation of the religion that reacted to the crises in the world. Engaged Buddhism carries out spiritual doctrine in civic/ecological life through civic teachings, eco-retreats, grassroots activism, and mindfulness-based environmental programs. Such development proves that Buddhist morality, which has always been focused on individual emancipation, could be redefined successfully to explore global health.

However, there is controversy on the level of ecological activism, whether it is part of Buddhist teaching or a new interpretation of Buddhist teaching based on the new exigencies. Other researchers warn of the retroactive application of environmentalism to classical literature, which did not focus directly on ecology. Nonetheless, this issue does not have to discredit Buddhist environmental ethics. Buddhist thought has the flexibility and dynamism that enables it to produce a doctrinally consistent yet ethically responsive approach to novel situations (Loy, 2019; Kaza, 2019). The issue is how to make sure that these adaptations are based on the genuine interaction with the tradition, not on opportunistic exploitation.

To conclude, Buddhist environmental philosophy provides a psychologically sound and ethically holistic answer to the problem of ecological degradation. The focus it has on interdependence, non-harming, and compassion produces a moral agent who will act not in fear or obligation but in profound awareness of relations. Buddhist traditions have been underutilized as a source of ethics in the face of the ecological crises of the Anthropocene: whether in the form of forest ordinations, meditation-based environmental education, or mindfulness-based activist networks. They can be credited with not only the formulation of an environmental ethic but also a transformation of the ethical subject, which can be a key to sustainable futures. Ultimately, Buddhism reframes environmental care not as a technical duty but as a spiritual practice of compassion that heals both the world and the self.

Singer and the Evolution of Species Ethics

Peter Singer is one of the most powerful and controversial thinkers in the field of moral philosophy at the present time, particularly on the issue of extending moral consideration to non-human animals. The book, Animal Liberation Now (Singer, 2023), is his seminal work that remains a philosophical foundation in the study of animal ethics and that questions the anthropocentric presumptions that have long been at the centre of Western ethics. Placing the ability to suffer rather than the membership of a species as the primary criterion of moral status, Singer created a paradigm shift that transformed the way sentient beings are considered in the normative context. His attack on speciesism, a term he coined to refer to the unfair prioritizing of human interests over those of other sentient beings, has been one of the most influential contributions to contemporary ethical thought.

Singer is highly ethical and his ethical orientation is on preference utilitarianism, a consequentialist theory, which gauges actions in terms of how they satisfy the preferences of all affected beings. Unlike classical utilitarianism, in which the principal notion is to maximize the pleasure and to minimize the pain, preference utilitarianism considers the preferences and interests of sentient beings, provided they are in a state of being able to have conscious experiences. This egalitarianism of morals overturns the traditional hierarchies of species, mental capacity, or social position. According to Johnson (2024), Singer is analytically rigorous and politically radical in his position as explained in Ethics in the Real World. It produces strong normative implications that include the necessity to reform the food systems, such as the abolition of factory farming, a ban on experiments on animals, and the institutional guarantee of animal welfare.

More to the point, the contributions of Singer have been practically influential beyond the academic circle. His arguments have mobilized social movements, shaped public policy, and influenced legislation. As an example, his works have contributed to discussions of fur farming prohibitions in Europe, the rise of vegetarian cultures of food, and even new legal theories of animal personhood in the law (Singer, 2023). His impact is also evident in the university curricula, bioethics centers, as well as the environmental law reform movements worldwide (Johnson, 2024). Therefore, the ethical theory of Singer is not an abstract concept, as it has triggered real changes in the way societies think and react to the suffering of non-humans.

Nevertheless, as powerful as it has proven to be, the Singer model has not escaped criticism. The reductionism of utilitarian calculus is one of the main streams of criticism. Critics also say that preference utilitarianism may oversimplify the moral relations between people by turning them into quantitative judgments of interests or preferences (Albersmeier, 2021). Such a mechanistic perspective may exclude the affective, relational, and cultural aspects of ethical life (Bauhn, 2023). This reveals a deeper limitation: an absence of the metaphysical or spiritual resonance that inspires lasting ecological transformation. The fact that Singer views ethical value in terms of "preference satisfaction only" leads his approach to neglect the wider contexts within which moral beings live and thrive: ecological, spiritual, and communal.

Moreover, other researchers argue that the focus of Singer on sentient beings might not be sufficient to support the importance of ecosystems, species, or non-sentient life forms. By concentrating on the suffering of individuals, the utilitarian framework might not consider the whole ecological system or spiritual ontology in which nature is not only considered as a set of sentient beings but as something sacred and interdependent (Sharma & Biswas, 2024). This has been subjected to criticisms by environmental ethicists and cross-cultural scholars who claim that Singer's framework does not have the metaphysical grounding and moral symbolism that would inspire ecological responsibility in diverse societies (Loy, 2019).

The other criticism focuses on the assumptions of Western rationalism in the work of Singer. Although his arguments are persuasive in the secular, liberal philosophical traditions, they may not be as appealing in societies where ethical action is based on spiritual doctrines, ritual, or metaphysical cosmologies (Loy, 2019; Sharma & Biswas, 2024). Unlike such traditions as the Upaniṣads or Buddhist ethics, which base environmental responsibility on cosmic unity or interdependence, the model of Singer is working within a more procedural, rights-based framework. This would make it very effective in policy-making and legal reform, but possibly lacking in spiritual or cultural resonance, at least outside the Western world.

However, one must also appreciate that some of these limitations are known to Singer himself. He has written later on the challenge of utilizing the utilitarian principles in a variety of cultural and ethical situations, in such works as his public essays and interviews (Singer, 2023; Johnson, 2024). He is, nevertheless, adamant about the idea that ethical thinking should be transparent, universalizable, and empirically based, and the latter idea is still influencing the discussions on the moral status of animals, environmental ethics, and even artificial intelligence (Albersmeier, 2021).

Therefore, the legacy of Singer is complex. He has drastically extended the scope of moral interest and has given a new sense of urgency to the debate on animal rights and ecological justice (Singer, 2023). Meanwhile, the difficulties presented by his framework, especially its poor ability to deal with metaphysical interconnection and cultural pluralism, point to the necessity of additional ethical frameworks (Loy, 2019). His utilitarian morals offer a strong foundation for institutional change, legal activism, and logical moral discourse. However, Singer's rational ethics must converse with spiritually grounded traditions to form an ethic capable of addressing the full depth of the Anthropocene crisis.

Overall, Singer has left a legacy that cannot be ignored when serious research is conducted in the field of environmental and species ethics. His framework is morally clear, logically sound, and institutionally applicable. But in order to address the multidimensional needs of the ecological breakdown and the extinction of species, his model has to be put in dialogue with other philosophical systems that emphasize relationality, transcendence, and ecological integration (Sharma & Biswas, 2024; Loy, 2019). Thus, Singer's contributions, while revolutionary, remind us that reason alone cannot save the Earth; it must be joined by the wisdom of traditions that see life as sacred and indivisible.

TOWARD A CROSS-TRADITIONAL ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

The need to weave a cross-traditional ethical vision uniting Western rationalism with Indian and Buddhist metaphysics has gained strong support in environmental philosophy (Dahlmann, 2025). According to Dahlmann (2025), Burke (2023), and Bebbington et al. (2020), scholars emphasize that, although every philosophical tradition is capable of introducing crucial insights into ecological responsibility, no one system alone can be

adequate to respond to the complexity, plurality, and moral urgency of the present-day environmental crisis. In the Anthropocene, a time of planetary interdependence and mutual vulnerability, it is not merely a matter of choosing the most persuasive model of ethics but of combining different ways of seeing the world in a manner that is intellectually tenable and culturally accessible. This epoch calls for a moral awakening that transcends boundaries, inviting humanity to rediscover its place within a sacred and interconnected cosmos. Utilitarian ethical traditions, Western ethical customs, such as those proposed by Singer, place the main emphasis on rationality, sentience, and quantifiable harm as the main factors of moral concern. This rationalist model is clear in its policy and is highly adaptable to the institutional environment, like law, governance, and environmental regulation. Nevertheless, it has been criticized as lacking the affective, spiritual, and cultural dimensions that nurture a deeper ethical bond between humans and the natural world. It is inclined to instrumentalize moral decision-making and dismiss the more ontological and metaphysical commitments that inform ecological worldviews in non-Western settings. Conversely, orthodox Indian and Buddhist schools put primary emphasis on non-dualistic metaphysics and a morality psychology based on compassion, respect, and cosmic interdependence. These models espouse the values of dharma, *ahiṃsā*, and *pratītyasamutpāda*, which aid in intrinsic moral consideration of non-human life. While their philosophical depth and spiritual resonance offer profound guidance, their metaphysical principles are not easily translated into secular law or policy, as they speak primarily to inner transformation rather than procedural norms.

Dahlmann (2025) proposes a thought-provoking reconsideration of sustainability as the pursuit of life, and claims that such a vision requires an ethical vision that goes beyond the utilitarian calculus and adopts the life-affirming principles of various traditions. On the same note, Burke (2023) coins the concept of "interspecies cosmopolitanism" that criticizes anthropocentrism and promotes moral theories that acknowledge non-human agency, relationality, and dignity. Such interventions are essential since they offer a critical take on the long-standing belief in human exceptionalism that continues to define environmental governance in the world. These ways of seeing take the illusion of human dominance to task and imply that the restoration of the ecology starts with the re-emergence of a sacred relationality with all life. At the institutional level, Bebbington et al. (2020) and Barrett et al. (2020) refer to the legal changes that encompass the legal personhood of rivers and forests, which means that Indigenous, Indian, including Buddhist, spiritual worldviews can inform new ways of environmental responsibility. Examples of these recognitions, that are already applied in such countries as New Zealand, India, and Ecuador, give an experience of how the metaphysical worshiping of nature can be transmuted to legally enforceable rights. The models introduce an innovative combination of pluralism and innovation in ethics and institutions.

This can be further supported by the results of Favotto et al. (2022), who argue that the current paradigms of accounting and governance cannot capture ecological responsibilities founded on kinship and, thus, produce ecological externalities. Boudreau LeBlanc et al. (2022) go even further and propose reflexive, pluralistic governance that would encompass a range of ethical epistemologies. Such frameworks would enable decision-making processes not based on only economic or scientific measures, but also moral, cultural, and spiritual factors. Morand and Lajaunie (2019) also stress that scientific pluralism should be combined with ethical pluralism, because the lack of morality cannot be offset by technological solutions. This argument is advanced further by Ugwuanyi (2025), who demonstrates how the African eco-ritualistic ethics can be integrated into ancestral, communal, and land-based practices that can present more templates of cross-cultural ethical discourse. This wide body of literature reveals not a hierarchy but a mosaic of complementary worldviews, each offering a distinct yet interconnected path toward a shared moral horizon. The purpose is neither to absorb traditions into one ethical formula but to realize dialogical interaction and enrichment. The integration here should not be understood as the homogenization, but as the respectful translation of philosophical values into common moral horizons.

An effective cross-traditional ethical framework must combine metaphysical coherence with moral imagination, inspiring not only practical solutions but also spiritual renewal. It has to combine the procedural clarity of Singer's rational ethics with the Upaniṣadic respect of cosmic order and the Buddhist ethic of compassionate interdependence. All of them provide an essential layer, logical universality, spiritual rootedness, and psychological resonance. The integrative ethical momentum is part of a larger epistemological change toward the intersectional, intercultural, and interdisciplinary perspectives on moral inquiries. Ethics must evolve as an intercultural dialogue of wisdom traditions, merging rational clarity with spiritual reverence to face the escalating ecological crisis. The following part describes the methodological framework that this paper will utilize to make

such an integrative vision operational-drawn on Western, Indian, and Buddhist philosophies to formulate a globally responsive model of environmental accountability.

THE JUSTIFICATIONS, BASES AND THE WORLDVIEW

A holistic mindset is a prerequisite for an integrated, synthesised, and composite worldview, and such a mindset cannot result from a cut-and-dry problem-solving approach. This is not merely an intellectual exercise but a transformation of consciousness where humanity realizes its existence as part of a greater cosmic order. It needs to emerge from somewhere deep within the human consciousness where the ego dissolves into oneness, the world merges with the cosmos, making humanity collectively accountable for one and all.

Cosmological Basis for Responsibility in the Upaniṣads

Environmental ethics (in the Upaniṣadic scheme) does not follow from rational calculation, but from a profound metaphysical sense of *Advaita Vedānta*. In this case, the integrity of the unity of Ātman and Brahman demolishes the difference between self and nature. This oneness means that destroying nature is self-destruction. Ethical responsibility becomes an inner alignment with cosmic harmony, a spiritual act rather than a legal or externally imposed obligation.

In the analysis of *Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Brihadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, it was noticed that environmental security is regarded as a continuation of *dharma*, a sacred duty, and a cosmic order. It was not doctrine of environmentalism, but a self-assertive overtone of veneration, sobriety, and fusion of rituals that defines the environmental behaviour. This is an ethical position that dissolves the line of distinction between human and nature and environmental care is perceived as a reverence rather than obedience.

There is an apparent disparity in the performance of the model when it comes to concerns of different areas of ethics. Comparing the respective dimensions of ethical impact, the Upaniṣadic model proves to be spiritually rich and culturally continuous though it is not as compatible with secular legal frameworks. This is due to the fact that it is based on transcendental metaphysics as opposed to procedural rationality. What is obtained is an ethic that resonates strongly in a traditional society but needs a philosophical translation to work in a pluralistic society. This is a result of the lineage of the tradition in transcendental metaphysics where ethical motivation is based on spiritual understanding and not procedural rationalization.

One might suppose that the practical implication of Upaniṣadic ethics can be viewed in such practices as the conservation of sacred grove, the divinization of rivers or rivers as a legal person. These are not creations of law but the reflection of spiritual culture of a civilization. The two traditions influence environmental ethics. The utilitarian ideas of Singer have contributed to the legal rights and advocacy on behalf of animals, and moral veganism through NGOs. The Upaniṣadic worldview has informed Indian laws that accommodate *dharmic* principles and have also led to the creation of the field of spiritual ecology and grassroots movements such as the protection of sacred groves and the recognition of rivers as persons. Likewise, Buddhist morals have been referred to in the ordination of trees, eco-monasticism and climate justice retreats that incorporate spiritual veneration and practical conservation.

The tradition is outstanding in societies in which spirituality continues to dominate society. Nevertheless, its unconcreteness and procedural uncodification might be a problem in exporting it into a pluralistic or post-secular-oriented society.

Environmental Ethics Rooted in Buddhist Practice

According to Buddhism, environmental responsibility is presented as *pratītyasamutpāda* and *ahiṃsā*. In this case, beings are not individuals, but part of a chain of causality. The doctrine creates a culture of caring, not harming, with the belief that infliction of harm on individuals creates chains of sorrow, which binds both the victim and the perpetrator. Thus, Buddhist ethics transforms environmental care into a spiritual practice where compassion heals both the planet and the human heart.

Doctrinally, this scheme is more concrete than the one in the Upaniṣad, and more based on principles of behaviourism and psychology. Buddhist ethics does not lend itself to the abstract argumentation, but instead, it is based on the practices of mindfulness, compassion, and right livelihood. These values lead to tangible practice such as the forest monasteries as ecological refuges or the ordination of trees in case it would not be deforested. The Buddhist ethics goes far beyond monastic tradition and may be observed in such spheres as ecological activism, meditation-based education, and interdisciplinary environmental programs. This adaptability of Buddhism makes it very useful for the purpose of linking spirituality with action in the environment. In contrast to Singer and his institutional model of morality, or the Upaniṣadic worldview with its metaphysical reverence, Buddhist ethics is both contemplative and practical, and it is also spiritually founded, providing a realistic yet

spiritual way of taking care of the environment. The fact that it incorporates compassion and mindfulness into practical ecological projects makes it increasingly important both in the Eastern and the global context.

Further, Buddhist ethics are gaining currency globally because the trend of "Engaged Buddhism," which combines the ancient wisdom with climate activism, is on the rise. Since the 1970s Buddhist environmental ethics have gradually grown in their impact on the ecological thought of the world. Such growth is a sign of agility of the Buddhist principles, such as interdependence and compassion, which are both spiritual and practical. These ideas have penetrated climate activism, eco-dharma retreats, and interfaith dialogues over time as they have become more prominent in the contemporary environmental conversation.

Buddhism has an entire spiritually and ethically holistic model, in accordance with which the necessity of the ecological responsibility is a logical result of inner awareness and compassion. Its focus on mindfulness and compassion enables the very powerful use in the multicultural context. Alongside Upaniṣadic and Singerian moralities, the Buddhist system forms an invaluable moral structure for a more accommodating environmental paradigm.

Ethical Justification for Interspecies Moral Consideration

Preference utilitarianism offers a distinctive point of departure to the anthropocentric morality proposed by Peter Singer. He claims that moral status should exist because people can suffer and have preferences beyond species membership (Albersmeier, 2021; Singer, 2023). Such an argument provides a broad framework which may include animals and, perhaps, intelligences which are neither human nor non-human, too, in the moral framework. Through this approach, Singer identifies speciesism as an arbitrary form of discrimination, akin to racism or sexism, that has no rational basis for excluding non-human sentient beings. While rationally sound, this view lacks the deeper metaphysical insight that ties moral duty to the sacred fabric of existence.

The analysis confirms that Singer's framework maintains strong internal consistency and moral clarity. Because it is grounded in universally applicable criteria like sentience, his ethics are both scalable and adaptable across institutional contexts. Laws advocating for animal welfare, bans on factory farming, and the expansion of rights-based discourses into ecological spheres are consistent with this model.

Singer's ethical logic also supports a rights-based, calculative moral system, ideal for legal or procedural environments (Hancock, 2019). However, the same logic is limited in cultural and spiritual resonance. The ethical attributes of the three traditions, Singer's utilitarianism, the Upaniṣadic worldview, and Buddhist ethics, reveal distinct strengths. Singer's approach excels in rational coherence and policy applicability, providing clear criteria for ethical action through sentience. However, it lacks spiritual and cultural depth. The Upaniṣadic point of view in its turn is deeply spiritual, based on a metaphysical interpretation of the unity of self and cosmos, but cannot be easily integrated into contemporary policy. Buddhist ethics is an example of how the two areas can be integrated as it unites spiritual wisdom with practical guidance on how to behave to create a state of mindfulness and compassion, acting as a means of ecological care. Utilitarian model is the most rational and coherent and policy-relevant and least spiritually and culturally compatible and thus it shows its limitations when it is applied to non-secular or non-western situations.

Peter Singer grounds his ethics theory on the existing Western philosophy, particularly, in his book Animal Liberation and Practical Ethics, where the analytical thought and preference-based utilitarianism are the approaches that are employed in ethical decision-making. On the contrary, the Upaniṣadic and Buddhist traditions are founded on the metaphysical and spiritual world views, whose ethical standards imply the unity of being and connectedness of life. This distinction is clear as we compare their doctrinal foundations: the model is developed by Singer and is anchored by the idea of moral inclusion on the basis of sentience, the focus on rational calculation and the individual suffering. On the other hand, the Eastern systems ground moral responsibility on the cosmic order, ontological non-duality, and the current environmental care as a state of sacred reciprocity rather than utilitarianism. The distinction between the sentient dependent type of utilitarianism and metaphysical ethical obligation becomes clearer still when we go back to the Upaniṣadic conception of cosmic responsibility.

The model provided by Singer is a good starting point as far as environmental ethics is concerned especially in the policy circles. But its non-transcendental depth or practice of a ritual prevents the motivational possibility in societies where ethics cannot exist in isolation without metaphysical affiliations. This constraint preconditions the path to ethical systems in which the ecological responsibility is not a procedural issue but the acknowledgment of the human role in a moral universe. Among them, the Upaniṣadic tradition is capable of supplying the rich metaphysical optic with the assistance of which the environmental responsibility can be reinvented.

COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS, EMERGING ETHICAL SYNTHESIS, AND THE ENSUING DISCUSSION

Synthesizing these findings, we see that each tradition contributes uniquely to environmental responsibility:

- **Upaniṣadic ethics** root ecological care in cosmological unity and ritual, deeply motivating within traditional societies.
- **Buddhist practice** provides a psychologically integrative, compassion-driven framework that adapts well to global discourse.
- **Singer's utilitarianism** offers clarity, measurability, and policy compatibility, but lacks transcendence.

The traditions are unified by the fact that they oppose the anthropocentrism and demand that the moral consideration must be applied to all life. However, they come to this conclusion through different paths: Singer through rational reasoning, the Upaniṣads through religious obligation and transcendental self, and Buddhism through personal experience and the morality of mindfulness.

The model proposed here is not an attempt to do away with such differences but to establish a pluralistic coherent framework that will celebrate the merits thereof. This pluralism is necessary to a global environmental ethic which has to address policy-makers and monks and activists and philosophers, secular societies and sacred communities. This is not an academic finding only: it has been used in ethics education, climate change communication, biodiversity policy and even in lifestyle choices of individuals. The combination of rational ethics, spiritual reverence and compassionate practice allows the construction of a composite framework of ecological responsibility that is flexible enough to be adopted by the institutions, but also profound enough to transform the cultures and the individuals. This kind of integration is not merely a conjunction of theories, but it is a moral vision that brings together reason, spirit and compassion in order to lead humanity to a new harmony with the cosmos.

The results of the present research provide a major shift in the philosophical assumptions that have traditionally controlled the relationships between people and nature. In a comparative view of preference utilitarianism of Singer, Upaniṣadic metaphysics, and Buddhist ecological morality, a profound ethical convergence is evident, which challenges anthropocentrism and asserts non-human life to be morally considerable. Although the three frameworks have developed out of radically different cultural and doctrinal backgrounds, all of them oppose the hierarchical and human-centred worldview that has supported the exploitative attitude of much of Western modernity towards nature. On the contrary, they each suggest different, but not mutually exclusive, ethical visions, which re-contextualize environmental responsibility as an existential calling, a moral and spiritual necessity that transcends technical or regulatory solutions. The consistency that is evident in these traditions is an indication of an emerging agreement: environmental crisis is not simply a matter of scientific or technological shortcomings but a moral failure. Celermajer (2023) echoes this by making a convincing claim that the "world is burning not only due to fossil fuels but also due to the inability to understand ethical boundaries". The ecological meltdown that we are experiencing today thus requires a profound philosophical accounting of ourselves, an accounting of our notions of value, metaphysical assumptions, and the limits of moral obligation. The remarkable fact is that all these different traditions overlap in their promotion of the relational and broad moral circle, which encompasses not only animals and ecosystems, but also future generations and the whole planet.

The *Upaniṣadic* system is remarkable for its ontological finesse. It is based on *Advaita Vedānta* and assumes a non-dualistic metaphysics whereby all beings are only manifestations of Brahman, the universal consciousness. This metaphysical statement has far-reaching ethical consequences: in case Ātman and *Brahman* are the same, it means that the destruction of nature is the destruction of the self. In this perspective, moral responsibility is not the result of external legal references or utilitarian considerations but the acknowledgement of a sacred ontological unity. According to Sharma and Biswas (2024), this kind of worldview erodes the man-made barrier between the human and non-human living and leads to the development of an ethic of reverence, humility, and *dhārmic* responsibility. This ethic arises not from external compulsion but from a realization that to care for nature is to care for the self and the cosmic order.

This contrasts with utilitarianism, whose moral basis is the ability to suffer, defined by Singer as a normatively powerful and politically practical criterion of moral considerability that is rational and secular. His preference utilitarianism theory expands ethical consideration to all forms of life besides human beings, and the concept of speciesism is "an unreasonable prejudice similar to racism or sexism" (Singer, 2023). The merit of the Singer framework is that it is logical and adaptable to institutional settings like law, governance, and policy. It has already impacted the ethics of the people and animal rights laws, as well as curricula in schools and universities in a meaningful manner (Johnson, 2024). Yet its limitations are clear: it lacks the metaphysical depth and cultural resonance that inspire moral transformation. As a number of critics have observed, the framework advanced by

Singer fails to elicit a spiritual or cultural appeal in those societies where moral conduct is grounded on a metaphysical or ritualistic worldview, rather than on rational calculation.

In spite of these contrasting orientations, the traditions under discussion have one underlying ethical intuition: the environmental responsibility demands "ethical extension of interest beyond human concerns". This extension is not only intellectual but transformative, asking humanity to "abandon its illusion of separateness in favour of relational ethics". This intersection is particularly relevant in the Anthropocene, a geological age characterized by anthropogenic ecological imbalance and planetary interconnectedness. It is revealed later how each of the traditions brings its best to the ethical discussion: argument skill and policy application under Singer, philosophical depth and rite integration under the *Upaniṣads*, and stillness practice and ethical behaviour under Buddhism.

The implications of these findings are very wide and incorporate a number of fields. In environmental ethics, the paper indicates that there is no way that moral responsibility can be synonymous with legal compliance or political obligation. Instead, one should consider it as an all-comprehensive effort that integrates logical reasoning, spiritual knowledge, and emotional realization. Rogova (2025) makes a valid point of the fact that post-anthropocentric paradigms need to draw on ethical knowledge of different traditions in order to construct just ecological futures. This philosophical pluralism validates that argument and gives a guidebook on the formation of morally acceptable and culturally suitable regimes of environmental governance.

The pragmatic importance of the traditions has already been translated into policy and law. An example of how spiritual cosmologies can inform new legal regimes is the *Upaniṣadic* conception of sacred nature on which the legal recognition of rivers as legal persons in the Indian context is based (Barrett et al., 2020). Similarly, Buddhist-based eco practices such as tree ordination in Thailand and eco monasticism in Sri Lanka show how ethical teachings can be established as culturally accessible and ecologically efficient institutions. The impact of Singer, in turn, has been present long in the legislative domain of animal rights, factory farming, and bioethics in the Global North, where the currency of morals is secular rationality. The examples indicate that philosophical traditions are not just intellectual constructions but living things in the development of morals and their influence on institutional structures.

Such educational results reveal that the curriculum needs to undergo a transformation urgently. Courses in philosophy and ethics have to go beyond Eurocentric approaches in order to integrate a variety of moral systems that are representative of the complexity of ecological interdependence in the world. Ethical education must include comparative philosophy, environmental humanities, and cross-cultural ethics at every level. It is not only an exercise in diversification but a prerequisite to the fact that monocultural moral reasoning has its limitations. Through the inclusion of such ideas as *dharma*, *ahiṃsā*, *karuṇā*, and sentience-based reasoning, learners and practitioners will be able to learn more about their ethical duties toward the planet.

But such possibilities must be cushioned with caution. The risk of misappropriation or decontextualization is one of the most important problems of the application of spiritual or metaphysical ethics to secular conditions. Such *Upaniṣadic* concepts as dharma, for instance, are heavily imbricated within a complicated cosmological and ritual framework; their removal to the policy realm can easily result in oversimplified applications. In the same way, Buddhist values such as *ahiṃsā* and *karuṇā* cannot be complete without discipline and spiritual dedication. Bauhn (2023) cautions against what he terms "moral inflation", which is the rhetorical application of high ethical ideals that lack any connection to practice or any cultural relevance. This criticism is especially relevant when applied to global policy making, where ethical theories have to be not only conceptually sound but also practical.

In order to overcome these tensions, philosophical humility, cultural sensitivity, and methodological pluralism should be given the most significant place in any integrative ethical model. It implies not just the respect of the internal consistency of each tradition but also recognizing its limitations. Solutions to ecological issues that are provided scientifically and technologically are not enough to solve the problem, as Morand and Lajaunie (2019) claim, "without ethical pluralism and moral imagination". This model, which is based on the rational clarity, metaphysical reverence, and psychological mindfulness, seeks to respond to this need by triangulating ethical perspectives of different traditions into a complex vision of planetary responsibility.

Besides, this research not only provides a contribution to the scholarly discussion but also to the practice of ethical frameworks. It confirms that philosophy is not only retrospective or speculative, it is prescriptive. These lessons may be applied to environmental education, interreligious dialogue, biodiversity legislation, and community advocacy. As an illustration, the integration of mindfulness-based ecological learning, which is evident in the eco-dharma retreats and climate justice movements, can both transform the individual and the

system (Kaza, 2019; Cafaro, 2022). In the same way, the *Upaniṣadic* respect of rivers or the Singerian ethical arguments as being institutionalized into sustainability planning can improve the affective and procedural aspects of policy.

Moreover, the research requires a different form of ethical literacy, which is intercultural, interdisciplinary, and interspecies. This type of literacy would not only work with philosophical texts, but also with cultural practices, legal change, and spiritual practice. It would educate both people and organizations to think and act ecologically responsive and ethically comprehensive. This kind of literacy is not elective; it is a necessity to the ethical problem of climate collapse, biodiversity loss, and ecological injustice.

Overall, the results of this paper suggest the need to develop ethical thinking in a new direction, which is scaled and broadened. Environmental responsibility can no longer be reduced to national policies or legal structures; it must rest on a planetary moral imagination, one that unites reason, spirituality, and ethical compassion. It has to be founded on a planetary moral imagination that is no longer species-bound, civilizational, or disciplinary. Such a transformation has a strong model in the triangulated ethical model presented here, based on the utilitarianism of Singer, the *Upaniṣadic* vision of unity, and Buddhist concepts of interdependence.

This is not an ideal vision. It is rooted in real practices, jurisprudence, and philosophies that have passed the test of time. It is not homogenizing and universalizing ethics, or trying to do so, but creating a dialogue of respect among worldviews. With the worsening of environmental crises and the increased awareness of the moral insufficiency of the current systems, the demand for such pluralistic, philosophically sound, and spiritually informed ethics will only increase. This paper thus points toward the possibility of an ethical Anthropocene, an epoch defined not merely by human impact but by humanity's awakening to its duty, humility, and wisdom within the cosmic web of life.

BROADENING THE HORIZON: AN ALL-INCLUSIVE APPROACH IS THE NEED OF THE HOUR

Even though there is an increasing focus on environmental ethics, there are still some major gaps. At the top of this list is the continuing division in the field, among academic disciplines, philosophical traditions, and political ideologies. Although the necessity of moral circle expansion is becoming more and more obvious, people still do not agree on the ways to combine the knowledge of other traditions into a consistent, practical manner. This is a theoretical as well as institutional problem: how to make pluralistic ethics accessible to the law, to education, to policy without turning it into a caricature or abstraction. Such bridging of divides must be done in a methodology that is dialogical, inclusive, and philosophically rigorous, wherein all of the following efforts are integrated in a unified approach:

- **Inclusive and Integrated Research Approach in Primary Sources**

Comparative ethical reflection is a central element of the design of any successful research. In this way, the research determines convergences and divergences between traditions that are reviewed, not only at the level of normative content but also regarding the metaphysical assumptions, the psychology of morals, and presumptions concerning the relationship between a human and a nonhuman. The comparative perspective allows shaping a philosophically informed framework that is conceptually rigorous and sensitive to the modern ecological reality. This approach does not merely analyze texts; it seeks to uncover the moral visions that each tradition offers for humanity's place in the cosmos. The design is suitable for answering the objectives of the research, which are the philosophical synthesis and formulation of a more comprehensive and globally informed environmental ethic.

We need to adopt a qualitative, philosophical-conceptual methodology grounded in critical reasoning and normative analysis. The ultimate goal is to analyze the moral grounds of environmental responsibility by a comparative analysis of all the contributing philosophies. Other than the attempt to find empirical verification or data-based generalization, the project has to be based on conceptual clarity, textual interpretation, and logical consistency to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the approaches of each of the traditions to environmental ethics and species rights.

Due weightage and Value for Peer Reviews

The conceptual analysis must be informed by a selected set of philosophical principles that the research works with. Besides the primary sources, the research should use scholarly analysis and criticism in peer-reviewed journals in the fields of environmental ethics, comparative philosophy, religious studies, and environmental humanities. The selection of these secondary sources was made on the basis of their scholarly quality, their applicability to the philosophical framework of the study, as well as their role in the continued debate on environmental responsibility. The dialogue between traditional sources and modern scholarship allows for an

analysis that is not only historically grounded but spiritually resonant, revealing how ancient wisdom can inform contemporary moral horizons.

- **Comparative Ethical Mapping**

The interpretation must be made in a systematic reading of the text, a deconstruction of ideas, and an ethical synthesis. All traditions should be discussed in their terms with respect to their internal consistency, their underlying assumptions, and competing normative commitments. For a genuine global perspective, ethical mapping done comparatively should note thematic parallels and differences between the traditions. Major frames of analysis are their grounds of moral consideration, their concept of ethical obligation and their construction of non-human beings within the frames This mapping does not rank traditions but seeks to weave their insights into a shared tapestry of ethical wisdom, forming a more holistic model of environmental ethics.

The last analysis phase is normative evaluation, which entails the critical analysis of the conceptual feasibility of the synthesis of elements in each of the traditions. This involves looking into the possibility of bringing harmony to philosophy, the potential of operationalization of principles in the real-life debate on ethical issues, and the consequences on environmental policy and education as advocated. The critical approach is based on philosophical forms of analysis, including argument analysis, the use of analogy, and dialectical criticism.

- **Avoiding Overreliance on Statistical Analysis**

A philosophical inquiry grounded in qualitative reasoning need not necessarily utilize statistical or empirical methodologies. The lack of numbers is not always a shortcoming but rather based on the epistemology of the issue addressed, which emphasizes a conceptual study more than counting. This reflects the philosophical nature of the inquiry, which values understanding and meaning over measurement, seeking truth through reflection rather than quantification. As per the existing conventions in the field, the research should be based on interpretive and normative instruments appropriate to assess abstract ethical principles and metaphysical constructs, and cross-cultural philosophical statements. This method will keep consistency in the methodology and the goals of the work, and be consistent with the nature of the source material.

- **Including Practical Considerations**

While a philosophical study is expected to keep a safe distance from rigid data-based and statistical inferences, the sheer magnitude of the problem necessitates a meaningful collaboration with such analyses, which can convince policymakers in a world lending itself to ever-increasing numerical equations. The research acknowledges that the rigid stance of excluding numbers encumbers it with definite limitations in developing alternative models of solution, which may help arrive at decisions to be made urgently. It is, however, impressive that no effort is directed towards establishing a particular tradition as superior. The aim is not to simplify ethical systems but to nurture a dialogue that honours differences while pursuing a higher unity, one where philosophical coexistence leads to a deeper moral awakening.

CONCLUSION

This paper has upheld intellectual honesty by engaging each philosophical tradition without reducing, distorting, or appropriating its essence, respecting the historical, linguistic, and spiritual depth inherent in them. The adherence to such ethical scholarship has made the inferences of the study intellectually viable as well as culturally accountable.

The findings reaffirm that environmental responsibility must be reimagined through an ethically pluralistic and philosophically awakened perspective. Uniting the metaphysical principles of the *Upaniṣads*, the Buddhist moral vision of environmentalism, based on compassion, and the current ethical academic works, the paper proves that the moral compass of humanity needs to be extended to the boundaries that are no longer anthropocentric. Along with their unique advantages, each of these traditions has ontological insight and ritual inspiration, psychological plausibility and engaged concern, and analytic insights and legal relevance. Together, these traditions form an ethical paradigm that harmonizes logic, spirituality, and practical relevance, addressing the profound moral challenges of the Anthropocene. This paper also highlights the need for having ethical models that are conceptually valid but also culturally flexible and institutionally accommodating. Whether it is ethical education, climate policy, biodiversity protection, or interfaith dialogue, the proposed philosophical synthesis can be relevant in all those fields because it promotes the idea of a framework that can go beyond disciplinary and civilizational silos. However, it should be integrated in a culturally sensitive manner without instrumentalizing or shallowly appropriating spiritual concepts. The current studies need to further this interdisciplinary course by integrating Indigenous knowledge systems and ecological jurisprudence, and in that

way, deepen the ethical frameworks of global sustainability. As the planet approaches irreversible limits, the call for transformation is no longer merely ecological; it is profoundly moral, demanding an expansion of ethics in scope, scale, and meaning. For philosophy to remain relevant, it must transcend abstraction and become a guiding force for ecological restoration, interspecies justice, and the moral renewal of planetary life.

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