9TH HIMALAYAN POPULAR LECTURE

Prof D.D.Sharma
Vice Chancellor
Sardar Patel University, Mandi (H.P.)

September 10, 2022

G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment
(An autonomous Institute of Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Govt. of Bharat)
Himachal Pradesh Regional Centre, Mohal, Kullu - 175 126,
Himachal Pradesh, Bharat

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Vice Chancellor
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Prof. Dev Dutt Sharma is currently Vice Chancellor Sardar Patel University Mandi Himachal Pradesh. He also held the additional charge of VC Atal Medical Research University Ner Chowk HP. He is Chancellor's Nominee to the Executive Council of Himachal Pradesh University Shimla. Dr Sharma has been recently nominated as Member of Expert Appraisal Committee for EIA of Projects, Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate change, Government of India. Earlier He served as Director UGC HRDC at Himachal Pradesh University Shimla during 2018-2022. He has an illustrious career with high first division throughout his career. He is serving in the capacity of Professor for the last about 12 years while research and teaching experience spans over about 29 years.

He has supervised 14 students for their PhD degree and 37 students for M. Phil on varied research issues and many more are currently working. His areas of research interest are Environment, Disaster Management, Regional Disparities, Urbanization and Applications of Geospatial Technology. He has published 2 books titled (i) Forest Economy and Environment (ii) Environment and Development Issues of Micro Hydel Projects and edited one book (Managing Our Resources : Perspectives and Planning). Beside this he has published 65 research papers in International and National Journals of repute. He has also completed research project on Disaster Risk, Response and management in Himachal Pradesh. He has attended more than 100 National and International Seminars and has delivered Key Note Addresses and invited talks in many of them. Professor Sharma is also holding a position of President Geographical Society of Himachal Pradesh and he is life member of several academic bodies including Indian Science Congress (ISC), Asian Environmental Council (AEC), National Association of Geographers India (NAGI), Indian Institute of Geographers (IIG), Indian Meteorological Society (IMS), Punjab Geographers etc. named a few. He has also remained President of the Association of Punjab Geographers during 2014-2016 and Vice President of the National Association of Geographers India.

Prof. D.D. Sharma has remained Chairman Department of Geography Himachal Pradesh University Shimla for more than 8 years during 2009-2011 and 2013 to 2018 and Oct 2019 to 2021. He has also served as Director Pre Examination Coaching Centre for about 2 years during 2011- Jan 2013. He has also worked as Director IQAC, Himachal Pradesh University Shimla. Dr Sharma is member of BoS, RDC and BoM of various universities and institutes in India. He remained Visitors nominee of the University Court of Delhi University and Visitors nominee at Tezpur University Assam and Central University Jammu. He has been the recipient of Global Scholarship and visited UK in 2014 and 2015 and 2018. He had the opportunity to visit Bath Spa University Bath and Universities of Highlands and Islands, Perth Scotland UK for his academic pursuits. He has been working on a joint collaborative research project on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with College of Liberal Arts (COLA) BSU (UK) and Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.

Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development in Himalayas

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2022
Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development in Himalayas

(Foundation Day Lecture at G.B.Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment Himachal Regional Centre Mohal Kullu, H.P. 10th September 2022)

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Environment has been on the political agenda for the last about 70 years especially after the World War-II. Much has happened since that time, but the planet is no better as the human actions and more particularly the greed of grabbing natural resources in order to increase income and GDP has led to the depletion of these resources and has questioned the sustainability of fragile ecosystem like Himalayas. According to one popular heuristic measure of the state of the environment, the ecological footprint which is a measure of the amount of nature it takes to sustain a given population over the course of a year is bad and getting steadily worse. Environment has become an important issue in the present time, especially after the Stockholm Conference (1972) and Earth Summit held in Rio de Janerio in June 1992 which served as catalysts to focus the attention of mankind on the deteriorating environmental quality. This is equally applicable to the Himalayas which is young mountains in its orogeny and have a brittle geography. Ever growing economic activities like Hydro-power generation, Tourism and inclination towards mechanised farming besides growing population and/or enhanced consumption level has telling impacts on the Himalayan environment. Economic activities in turn, affect the quantity and quality of natural resources which calls for appropriate trade-off between present and future generation so that the activities are taken as per the carrying capacity and sustainability of the infirm environment of the Himalayas. This has been an established fact that mining, lumbering, manufacturing, construction of roads and buildings with inappropriate layout and base and other activities without environmental considerations can cause serious damage to the quality of life over there. The environmental damage already inflicted can not be reversed unless there is collective thinking and respect to the natural laws and ethics. All this calls for public awareness and participation for bringing about an attitudinal change and thus restricting further damage to the

environment. Environmental thinking i.e., ethics of environment of philosophical thinking is deeply entrenched in human civilization. From Pythagoras (572-497 BCE) and Parmenides (515- 450 BCE) of ancient Greece to Laozi and Confucius of China, the early pioneers of philosophy all were concerned with the question of how to balance human civilization and natural systems, proposing views and justifications which shaped the history of philosophy in the West as well as in the East (YAO,2017). There is no denying the fact that the origin of environmental philosophy is the very sources of existence of human being in the cosmos. Nonetheless, the issue of environmental ethics has got its recent focus as a result of ecological and environmental problems-the awareness of the ecological crisis in all its manifestations by the intellectual community, government policymakers, and the general public-that has served as an impetus for a specialized literature in environmental philosophy and ethics (Katz,1991).

Leopold (1949) observed that "there is yet no ethic dealing with man's relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it." Further, he realized that such a alteration in our collective conscience must follow a fundamental change in our collective conscious. A suitable environmental ethic, then, is only possible given the metamorphosis of our axiomatic epistemologies and metaphysics. In common parlance, the environmental ethics is the discipline that studies the moral relationship of human beings and also the value and moral status of the environment and its non-human contents. It considers the ethical relationship between humans and the environment. The philosophical base of ethics can be understood by analysing the following questions.

What is morally good behaviour?

What makes a person good? and.

What principles we must use in decision making?

Once a Greek philosopher said, the goal of studying ethics is not to know what is good, but to become good; otherwise, there is no meaning of studying it. Ethics involves lot of reasoning; hence it is based on logic. Yet emotions influence the human mind more than reasoning, therefore an easier way of motivating people to do anything is to create, encourage and enhance moral emotions in them. There are controversies and several conceptual dualisms dominate the discussion

in environmental philosophy. In the words of Katz (1991) following issues may be helpful to understand the dichotomy that surrounds the philosophy of the environment:

(1) Anthropocentrism vs. non anthropocentrism: is an environmental ethic based on human values, interests, and goods, or the value, interests, and goods of nonhuman nature?

(2) Instrumental vs. intrinsic value: does nonhuman nature have value in itself, or is nature valuable solely for the production of human goods?

(3) Individualism vs. holism: is moral concern directed towards individuals, as in human-based ethical theories, or can it be directed towards non-reducible groups, collectives, communities, or systems?

(4) Shallow resource conservation vs. Deep ecology; the shallow view justifies environmental preservation on the basis of human interests, such as long-term survival; deep ecology proposes a modification of human consciousness or attitudes towards nature so that humanity is seen as unified with the natural system.

The word Resource is a dynamic one as it stands for available assets. The prefix re with source is indicative of both function & process. Thus, the word "resource" does not refer merely to a thing or substance, but to a function that a thing or a substance may perform. It has been rightly mentioned that resources are not they become. There is an intricate relationship between human, culture and nature. Many of the resources are just a neutral stuff if the culture of the area does not permit so. The culture may also be expressed in terms of the abilities which is both the social and technological resistances. The resources are also required to be seen in multi-dimensional ways which means in terms of spatial context they are to be seen in terms of its importance i.e., local, regional, national and international. In terms of time period resources change from past to present and future while there are other ways to analyse resources e.g., biophysical, social, economic, political, legal, institutional and technological etc. The roles of analysts, managers and developers in resource analysis is of varied nature and it is always better if they work in consonance to each other's.

The field of environmental philosophy has now become so diffuse that anthologies with a specific subject focus are widespread and there are two contrasting world views.

1. Technological-scientific worldview

- See nature as something to be manipulated. Though the technology is an essential instrument for the achievement of sustainable development but it is also through the application of such technology that human has most impact on the environment. The modern technology has given human beings more power to alter and manipulate the nature. With the advent of such technology the follower of scientific worldview, see nature as something to be manipulated.

2. Natural worldviews

- Emphasize connection between humans and nature. The philosophy of the natural worldview is inherently based on the interdependence of human beings on different components of environment. This worldview emphasizes that the interrelationship between environment, population, resources and development must be considered while taking up any developmental activities. It emphasizes the Natural Environment is also a stakeholder. Following points needs to be considered.

- The Environment is a stakeholder without a "voice"

- Human will only consider the natural environment when the consequences impact on firm or the individual

- Current world population – more than 7 billion people, living on 17% of earth surface

- Population growth causes ever scarcity in resources

- Lead to the need for environmental ethic – human as part of the natural community rather than managers of it.

Ethics do not exist in a vacuum. That is, we do not behave in certain ways or think others ought to behave in a other ways "just because." We prescribe the actions

we do for reasons. Many of the reasons that we understand certain actions to be right or wrong, good or bad depend upon what we take to be the status of the world we find ourselves. All ethics rest upon a single premise that individual is a member of a community of interdependent parts. Ethics is the preferable way that society can achieve the right decisions without having to use codes, laws, courts, boycotts, diplomacy and physical force etc. The central concern of the ethics is to consider not only yourself but all others who stand to be affected. The need of environmental ethics is increasingly realised to establish a sense of right and wrong at every level of society e.g.:

Individual
Community
Organizational
National
Global
There are three different worldviews, with regard to

Anthropocentrism – considers the effects of environmental actions on humans only

Emphasizes human domination over nature and views non-human environment as a bundle of natural resources to be managed and exploited for maximal human gain. The ecosystems have only instrumental value, not intrinsic worth.

Biocentrism – considers the effects of environmental actions on all living things

Ecocentrism – considers the effects of environmental actions on all components of our environment, both living and non-living.

The term "sustainable development" (SD) has gained widespread use as a development paradigm. It is now used by international aid organizations, development planners, academic papers, conferences, and as a rallying cry by environmental and development activists (Ukaga, Maser, & Reichenbach, Citation 2011). According to Scopelliti et al. (2018) and Shepherd et al.'s (2016) research, the notion appears to have garnered the widespread interest that other development concepts lacked. It is also expected to continue to be the dominant development paradigm for a considerable amount of time. Development that ignores its repercussions on the environment will destroy the environment that

sustains life forms. To overcome the repercussions "sustainable development" is call of the hour.

The report Our Common Future defines sustainable development as meeting the basic needs of all and extending to all the opportunity to satisfy their aspirations for a better life". (NCERT, Indian Economic Development). The Brundtland Commission placed a strong emphasis on safeguarding the next generation in order to maintain a better environment as a measure of people's quality of life. The Brundtland report made reference to sustainable development. The word "sustainable" has become a buzzword in the fields of urban planning, development, and the environment. Sustainable development has been a popular buzzword for the most recent developments in the previous several years. (Olalade, 2017). Up to a certain extent, development at the expense of the environment is possible, but beyond that, it would be foolish, like the man who tried to chop the same branch of the tree on which he was sitting. Without consideration for the environment, development can only be temporary (Ariani et al., 2015). World Commission on environment and development of UN defined "Sustainability development as development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

Policy makers and scholars have given sustainable development a lot of attention. According to many nations' commitments to achieving the sustainable development goal (Linnér and Selin, 2013; Bexelland Jönsson, 2017), Sustainable development is seen as the culmination of the United Nations' plan for the world. Second, sustainable development supports the idea of a sustainable earth for all future generations. sustainable development is regarded as an all-encompassing development goal and is anticipated to have long-lasting socio-economic benefits for everyone and the environment (Szymaska, 2021). The goal of sustainable development is to advance economic growth, increase worldwide demand, and uphold a wholesome local environment, thereby helping to address a serious issue with global environmental management. Sustainable development plays a dominant role in maintaining balance between human interactions with nature and environment, affecting larger society. There is connection between all living forms on the earth's surface and their wellbeing needs to be ensured. Sustainable development is a precautionary solution for assisting issues such as global warming, emission of greenhouse gases. The issues are unavoidable but can be reduced keeping in view the concept of sustainability. There is a need to care

about quality of life of nature and culture correlated together. The growing issues is regarding the environment and threat to it. The issue such as low water supply, spread of epidemics and low productivity are multiplying at an alarming rate. U sustainability may lead to problems for the future generation, if practices adopted are unsustainable in long run. Sustainable development is a multi-dimensional concept to meet requirements of the environment for reducing ill effects on the environment and improve quality of life. The real meaning of sustainable development is optimum utilisation of natural resources having multi-dimensional concept, incorporating interactions among societies, economy and environment. There is a need to adopt reduce, reuse and recycle approach and proper utilisation of resources according to the carrying capacity, thereby improving economic, social and cultural dimensions by using appropriate technology. Humans are part of society and each and every species has right to exist and utilise natural resources therefore, sustainable development is best way for sustaining ecological integrity, biodiversity and adaptability. Sustainable development goals which are also known as global goals are collection and combination of 17 interlinked goals formulated to serve as a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. The SDGs emphasize on environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainable development by holding sustainability as the key idea. The SDGs try to fabricate the true essence of definition of sustainable development i.e., development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs; to reality.

The UN general assembly adopted the 17 SDGs as part of 2030 Development Agenda titled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development" on 25thSeptember 2015. This Agenda has 92 paragraphs, 17 SDGs, 169 targets and 232 indicators. in present times the world faces severe challenges of poverty, hunger, inequality and climate change and these need to be addressed urgently. The world can overcome these challenges by following the 17 SDGs. Although these goals are not 100% achievable but keeping these in the core of every developmental activity will surely make world a better place to live. In present times the concept of sustainability or sustainable development has been related with the circular economy dealing with the concepts of recycle, reuse and reduce. This would promote overall development of the economy without degradation of the resources and its utilisation by the present generation without compromising the needs of future generation. Green environment technology is call of the hour implying natural organic farming without harming human life and mother nature.

There is a need to strike balance between renewability and sustainability for enhancement of equitable sustainability. The action plan should be adopted that will reduce damage to the ecosystem and for sustaining community feelings. The ideals pertaining to resilience, narrowing inequality and stimulating sustainability should be implemented. Countries are coming together to take measurable steps for the survival of the planet for ensuring the reduction of problems and preventing them to get worse.

The Himalayas are delicate and fragile amalgamation of different rocks both in terms of their age and composition, numerous peaks and valleys, vast areas of perpetual snow, biodiversity hotspot, source of mighty rivers and a tourist attraction besides home of several million indigenous population. The Indian Himalayan Region (IHR), occupies a strategic position along the entire northern and northeastern boundary of the country and administratively covers ten states in their entirety namely Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and two states partially having the hill districts of Assam and West Bengal. This young and highest mountain chain of the world has wide-ranging ecological and socio-economic significance and therefore any irrational use of resources and unplanned activities have telling impact on its bio-geophysical and socio-economic environment. The use of natural resources can be called irrational if they are not used in the best possible known ways to further the aims which is required for the sustainability of that region. Sustainable development, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder; it promises something for everyone. As Lele has put it, with just a hint of irony, 'Sustainable development is a "metafix" that will unite everybody from the profit-minded industrialist and risk-minimising subsistence farmer to the equity-seeking social worker, the pollution-concerned or wildlife-loving First Worlder, the growth-maximising policy maker, the goal-oriented bureaucrat, and, therefore, the vote-counting politician' (Lele 1991). Of late the anthropogenic activities in the Himalayan region has gone up many folds and the development models which may have worked well in other ecosystems does not suits to this fragile ecosystem and therefore it is imperative to have a synergy between the social, economic and ecological spheres of this region. There is an utmost need to redress the conflict of environment and development in the Himalayas and to have a long-term vision with judicious actions and guided growth which can be developed if we develop environmental thinking and ethics of environment before the coming generations curse us for our unjustifiable use of resources and thoughtless development.

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G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (NIHE)

G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (formerly known as G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development, was established in 1988-1989, during the birth centenary year of Bharat Ratna Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant, as an autonomous Institute of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Govt. of India. The Institute has been identified as a focal agency to advance scientific knowledge, to evolve integrated management strategies, demonstrate their efficacy for conservation of natural resources, and to ensure environmentally sound management in the entire Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). The Institute functions under a Society, guided by a Governing Body and Science Advisory Committee. It has a decentralized set up, with its Headquarters at Kosi-Katarmal, Almora, and at present six regional centres are operational at Srinagar (Garhwal Regional Centre), Mohal-Kullu (Himachal Regional Centre), Tadong-Gangtok (Sikkim Regional Centre), Itanagar (North-East Regional Centre), Ladakh (Ladakh Regional Centre) and Mountain Division (at MoEF&CC, New Delhi). The R &D programmes of the Institute have been reoriented in to four functional Centres based of stakeholder needs, viz., Centre for Land and Water Resource Management (CLWRM), Centre for Socio-Economic Development (CSED), Centre for Biodiversity Conservation and Management (CBCM) and Centre for Environmental Assessment & Climate Change (CEA&CC). (Details: http://gbpihed.gov.in).

Himachal Pradesh Regional Center (HPRC)

Himachal Regional Center is located in Mohal of the Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh state. The Himachal Regional Center was established on July 01, 1992, in a rented building at Dhalpur, District Kullu, and continued up to June 1993. The foundation stone of the center's office and residential complex was laid by Shri Kamal Nath, Hon'ble Union Minister for Environment and Forests on June 2, 1993, in Mohal village of Kullu district. During the construction of the office and residential complex, the work of Himachal Regional Center was conducted from June 1993 to March 1999 at the rent building of Shamshi, Kullu. After the construction of a permanent building in Mohal in the year 1998, on April 02, 1999, the office and residential complex were duly inaugurated by Hon'ble Shri Suresh Prabhu, Environment Minister, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government

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