



Deep Ecology: A Contemporary Response of Islam and Hinduism for Sustaining Man-Nature Relationship in an Era of Environmental Crises

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ABSTRACT

Man and nature are two inseparable entities. The bond between them is so inextricably interwoven that whatsoever happens to the phenomena of Earth is reflected on the life of man, and whatever is the action of man is sure to have impact on the natural resources. The modern secular worldview has changed the harmonious attitude of man and created disequilibrium in nature. In present scenario of environmental degradation, this paper describes the deep ecological approach of Islam and Hinduism. The discussion comprises of a detailed description of significance of religious understanding of man and nature. This research also explores the contemporary eco-religious understandings of Seyyed Hossein Nāsr, Fazlun Majeed Khālid, Mahātmā Gandhi and Ranchor Prīme, to shift Man-Nature relationship from secular interpretation to sacred understanding to eliminate environmental crisis of our only home planet earth. On the basis of deep ecology, this article attempts to solve present ecological crisis in purely religious understandings. Nāsr's and Khālid's ideas are addressed from an Islamic understanding of nature while the eco philosophy of Gandhi and Prīme is discussed to deal with ecological crisis from Hindu faith. This interfaith research presents a comparative analysis of the deep ecological thoughts of contemporary scholars of Islam and Hinduism to sustain Man-Nature relationship in 21st century. Through discussion of their eco-religious views, this paper brings the value and sacredness of earth and natural resources in the mind of modern secular man and considers him as an equal partner with the rest of God's creatures. It also motivates humans to divert their negative destructive attitudes into positive constructive ones to avoid future catastrophes.

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1. Introduction

Deep ecology is a contemporary approach to define human relation with nature from the very root of existence in the era of environmental crisis. It is also a study of interrelationships between organism and their natural environment. Nature as the physical surrounding of mankind including plants, animals, and landscape or other products of earth collectively is the basic need of human survival in this phenomenal world. Man's life is entirely dependent on this diversity of earth. Historically, man has been interacting with this nature since he first walked on earth. He felt the need to interact with natural resources to obtain his food, water, medicines, fuel, shelter, building materials and other things. A good environment, accessible clean air, water, fertile soil, and diversity of living organism all are aspects of the natural resources of Earth that enable man to live and thrive. Conversely, a very worse environment, polluted air, limited and dirty water, infertile land, and lack of biodiversity, make it difficult for people to survive. These can lead to the destruction of livelihood, loss of life, and

displacement of people. This interdependent relationship has been recognized by almost all religious traditions of the world. Most of them consider earth as sacred creation and describe the sanctity of natural resources in different context. They give the meaning to human existence on earth and tie the non-human residents of the universe to the divine. Therefore, this traditional understanding never separates human beings from Divine and nature.

In this respect, this present study is focused on deep ecology of Islam and Hinduism that is rooted in sacred scriptures of both faiths. It also explores the philosophies of four eco-pioneering scholars in contemporary discourse namely Seyyed Hossein Nāsr, Fazlun Majeed Khālid, Mahātmā Gandhi and Ranchor Prīme. Their works are representative of Islamic and Hindu understanding of ecology at international level. This paper is devoted to answer the following questions: How modern secular view has challenged the sacred understanding of man and nature? What is the significance of deep ecological approach in the present scenario of Environmental degradation? How far the Contemporary Response of Islam and Hinduism for sustaining Man-Nature Relationship are relevant to eliminate ecological crisis? In this respect, the deep-eco understandings of these contemporary scholars are compared and analyzed for eco-friendly coexistence of man and nature in the hierarchy of cosmos. Based on previous fountain of knowledge, this new research presents an interfaith study as a contemporary response to shift Man-Nature relationship from secular interpretation to sacred understanding to eliminate environmental crisis of our home planet earth.

2. Literature Review

During the 20th century, research has been increasingly drawn toward understanding the Man-Nature Relationship from diverse perspectives. The influential works in this field are many and multi-dimensional too. These includes "*Silent Spring*"(Carson, 1962), "*The End of Nature* (McKibben, 1989) and "*The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis* (White Jr, 1967) drew attention to the negative impacts of human activities on earth, and natural resources. These works are entirely written on secular paradigm of environmental crisis. Lynn White blamed religions for allowing anthropocentric view of nature. Moreover, these works are acknowledged to play a key role in drawing academic attention to the ecological crisis and became the cause of the emergence of environmental movements in the last decades of 20th century. Arne Naess's "*Self-Realization: An Ecological Approach to Being in the World* (Guha, 1989) defines the sacred view of nature. By inspiring Gandhi philosophy of self-realization, Naess developed his approach of deep ecology to avoid ecological crisis.

Although, sacred scriptures of Islam and Hinduism have clear description of Man-Nature Relationship in the hierarchy of cosmos, but in the present scenario of environmental crisis, the contemporary response is more relevant. In this regard, the eco-religious contributions of Islamic and Hindu scholars have been used like: "*Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (Nasr, 1996) and "*Religion and the Order of Nature* (Nasr, 1996). *Islam and Ecology* (F. M. Khalid & O'Brien, 1992) and "*Ecology, and Modernity: An Islamic Critique of the Root Causes of Environmental Degradation* (F. Khalid, 2003) are the basic sources of current Islamic environmentalism. Through these works they describe the root of the ecological crisis is a modern secular worldview that has desacralized the nature and allowed humanity to exploit it. They suggest a shift from secular understanding of man and nature to sacred view of both phenomena. Furthermore, "*Hinduism and Ecology: Seeds of Truth* (Prime, 1996), *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Gandhi, 1987) and *The Essence of Hinduism* (Gandhi, 1987) are the foundation of this present study. These works are an example of advocating the new eco-friendly coexistence of all living species on earth.

Despite the variety of scholarly publications in the field of ecology and environmentalism in both faiths, their perspectives differ as well. There is still need for comparative study of deep ecological teachings of Islam and Hinduism to avoid further catastrophe.

3. Research Methodology

This research work is descriptive, analytical, and comparative in nature. The data is collected by following the qualitative method. The previous works in the field of Islamic and Hindu environmentalism are used thoroughly. In this regard, author has explored primary and

secondary sources like sacred scriptures and contemporary written literature of both faiths to describe the peaceful co-existence of man and nature. By using comparative method, this study highlights certain similarities and disparateness among both religions regarding the deep ecological understandings. Therefore, this research is based upon previous fountain of knowledge in order to generate new eco-religious understanding of both faiths in 21st century.

4. Discussion

4.1 Modernity and Challenge of Understanding Man-Nature Relationships: A Historical Background

There were certain historical factors behind the rise of humanism and the crisis of Man-Nature relationship in modern era. History narrates that in fourteen century, material life, political loyalty, social relations, and religious faith worsened rapidly. Between 1300 and 1500, humanity lived in a high-risk environment. There was breakdown of many technological, biological, and climatic forces that informed Europeans that their civilization was facing a huge scale failure. Consequently, their social and economic institutions collapsed. These crises of late Middle Ages, indicate that the social and technical tools of Europe were no longer adequate to form a civilization (Opie, 1987). Due to these circumstances, the renaissance movement was started in Northern Italy. People of the renaissance, after a long period of chaos and disturbance, came to believe that there was more to life than mere survival. Renaissance man was characterized by his mental power as on a superior level and the rest of creature was humbled before him. Huizinga writes: "*Modern (Renaissance) culture has developed the idea that it is beneath human dignity to serve anyone or anything, be it God or nation, fellow man, or natural harmony (Opie, 1987).*"

This new egocentrism view of humanism marked a fundamental separation and harmony between man and nature. It abandoned all pretense of balance between human beings and external world. This suggests that humanity must produce its own vision of the universe. Ficino defines this type of new man-God in following words:

"I will fill and penetrate and contain heaven and earth: I fill and am not filled because I am fullness itself. I penetrate and am not penetrated, because I am the power of penetration. I contain and yet am not contained, because I am the faculty of containing. Opie (1987) suggests that the unique superiority of human beings is centered. Bernard Berenson explains that this type of egocentrism had some special qualities:

Belief in the infinite power of human reason to gain truth
An almost adolescent sense of fresh independence
Confidence in man's ability to attain glory through knowledge and power

Man is no longer attached into a medieval hierarchy. He had self-consciously placed the separation between himself and nature. Nature was believed to be indifferent, mindless and without direction, it could not be granted sympathy. So, man is not merely one being among many, but an independent being of both the nature and supernatural worlds. This view of nature made him a cosmic destroyer and vagabond. As Pico Della Mirandola (a renaissance philosopher) noted with substantial dedication:

"We have given you, Adam, no definite place, no form proper only to you, no special inheritance, so that you may have as your own whatever place, whatever form, whatever gifts you may choose, according to your wish and your judgment... I created you as a being neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal, so that you may freely make and master yourself, and take on any form you choose for yourself. You can degenerate to animality or be reborn toward divinity(Cassirer, 2000).

The Renaissance offered Adam the opportunity to transport himself from the natural world into other worlds. It makes him increasingly independent of the external world and allows him to do with nature whatever he wants to please himself. Western world sought to exploit nature to reach for higher things while denying the authoritative religious faith and its worldview to cope with the phenomena of nature. They considered themselves as the planner or king of creatures because nature was valueless and without a thought of its own. Consequently, modern man for centuries went about destroying the earth in the name of

success and development. Now he can see the results of his astonishing freedom toward nature which depleted him spiritually and externally.

4.2 Environmental Crises

As a result of the modern secular worldview, many global environmental issues are on the rise including deforestation, desertification, biodiversity loss, water, air, climate change, and soil pollution.

4.2.1 Deforestation

Deforestation was strongly started in Uttar Pradesh in 1730. Amrita Devi Bishnoi was a Hindu woman who was killed to save trees by king's men. More than three hundred people who did the same and were sacrificed their lives to save the trees (Arihant, 2019). The Vrindavan forest also facing this problem. The problem of deforestation was also held in spiny forest of Madagascar, and it was faced by the Muslim communities living in Southern Madagascar (Foltz, 2005). The plight of the forests of the northwest region of United States, the Himalayas, and the Amazon are its best example and extinction of various species are stark witnesses to this tragic fact (Mirakhor, Iqbal, & Sadr, 2020).

4.2.2 Desertification

Desertification is a growing and genuine issue our world is facing today. The most affected regions are Africa, one of the most obvious affected parts of it is the Sahara Desert, and the Middle East and Western Asia are also facing it bitterly (Khitoliya, 2021).

4.2.3 Air Pollution

Humanity is facing the problem of air pollution on global level. According to the estimates of "*World Health Organization*." Around 90% of the people breathe in air containing elevated levels of pollutants. Although, humanity is facing this problem worldwide, but some countries are facing it bitterly in such Africa, Europe, and India (Earth.Org, 2021).

4.2.4 Water Pollution

The contamination of water occurs mainly because of human activities such as accumulation of plastic, the bioaccumulation of persistent organic chemicals, oil spills, industrial chemicals, addition of pathogens from sewage and urban runoff (Iqbal, 2007).

4.2.5 Soil Pollution

Soil is getting heavily polluted day by day by industrial wastes and sludge, radioactive pollutants, urban wastes, agricultural practices, and chemical pollutant which enter the air, water, and the food chain (Mirakhor et al., 2020).

4.2.6 Plastic Pollution

The plastic waste eventually ends up in the oceans causing severe damage to the marine ecology. This type of pollution is most visible in developing countries such as Pakistan, India, and African countries where waste collection, treatment, disposal, and recycling systems are not efficient.

4.2.7 Biodiversity Loss

WWF has reported approximately 68% reduction in the population of certain birds, fish, reptiles, mammals, and amphibians between 1976 and 2016 (Earth.Org, 2021). All this is result of incessant exploitation of earthly resources by human greedy nature. This problem is also faced by Saudi Arabia in Jabal Aja Biosphere (F. M. Khalid & O'Brien, 1992).

4.2.8 Climate Change

The rapid rise of the global temperature is the most severe problem as it is changing the climate too fast for all living beings including humans, plants, and animals to adapt to. This problem is seriously facing by Muslim and Hindu communities living in Rajasthan and Sindh (Pandeya & Lieth, 2012).

4.3 Deep Ecology as a response to an Environmental Crisis

The most recent approach to study Man-Nature relationship is ecological approach which is based on the mutual interaction between organisms and physical world (earth) on one

hand and the interaction among organisms in an ecosystem on the other hand. The ideology of this approach states mankind as an integral part of nature and developed eco-centric view of nature. This approach suggests human beings a wise and restrained use of earth and its variety of resources for a healthy and productive environment. This view is opposite to anthropocentric vision and this kind of interaction between man and nature is symbiotic in character (TL, 2021).

In 1970s, Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher coined the term "deep ecology" to aim that like human beings, our earth and its multidimensional resources as a whole have the same right of living and flourishing. In 1973, Naess made distinction between shallow and deep approaches to environment. He used the term 'shallow ecology movement' to highlight the fact that most ecological groups have an inadequate approach to nature. They fight against pollution, desertification, and biodiversity loss but with the aim of human health and their affluence in the developed countries. In comparison, the term 'deep ecology movement' aims to shift away from human-centered anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. The deep ecology, as a philosophy involved an 'ecological egalitarianism' in which all living things are interrelated with a larger self. Deep ecology as a movement provided a platform that has inspired many people all over the world.

Guha defines this ecological movement in following words: "*Decrying the narrowly economic goals of mainstream environmentalism, this new movement aims at nothing less than a philosophical and cultural revolution in human attitudes toward nature (Pandeya & Lieth, 2012)*". He describes that Naess has developed the idea of deep ecology on the basis of Gandhi's philosophy of self-realization and non-violence. In 1984, An American philosopher George Sessions revised Naess's principles of deep ecology. Sessions and a sociologist Bill Devall published these principles. These principles include:

- Rejection of anthropocentrism in favor of inherent value of all living things on earth regardless of human use.
- Diversity and richness of life forms contribute to the realization of intrinsic values.
- Humans are only allowed to satisfy their vital needs and have no right to reduce the diversity on earth.
- The excessive use of the nonhuman world by human beings is rapidly worsening the environment.
- "The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease in the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease."
- The ideological, economic, and technological policies must be changed.
- The ideological change in the form of inherent value is the basic point to maintaining the quality of life.
- The obligation of action is necessary. It is the duty of those who have subscribe to the preceding points, try to implement them for necessary changes.

Haigh (2006) describes that Naess, through following Gandhi's philosophy of ahimsa, emphasis on non-violent approach toward other living beings and refuted the right of human dominance over other forms of life. Humans should live with harmonious attitude and do as little harm as possible to other biodiversity of earth (Haigh, 2006).

4.4 Transmigration from Secular Worldview to Religious Understanding of Man and Nature

After discussing the historical progression of Man-Nature relationship it become clear that the modern secular worldview has shifted the eco-friendly attitude of man to hostile relationship with nature. So, humanity needs a "paradigmatic shift" from the global vision of Man-Nature relationship to religious understanding of "self and surrounding." Because religion is one of the most universal and pervasive characteristics of human society that has directed human lives since the earliest times. It guides man in every sphere of his life and shapes the worldview of man to perceive the Absolute reality and phenomena of world.

In the view of contemporary eco-scholars of Islam and Hinduism, the only solution to these crises is returning toward the traditional understanding of man and nature. As it has been realized that religions are necessary partners in the present situation of environmental degradation, and they are able to provoke environmental change in human practices. In this respect, Islam and Hinduism as well-known religious traditions of the world have a deep sense

of respect and consideration for earth and its marvelous resources; they provide a paradigm solution for various crises our home planet earth is facing on global level. Both religious traditions strongly advocate sustainability of earth and natural resources by forbidding humans from harmful activities.

4.5 Manifestation of Islamic Ecological Teachings: A Contemporary Response

In Islam, the foundation of natural order of creation is found in the authorized scriptures, like the Holy Qur'an as the word of Allāh SWT and the hadith of Prophet Muhammad SAW^(Esposito, 1999). The Qur'an, as the primordial scripture addresses the whole of the cosmos not only men and women. In this paradigm, the nature with all its richness also participates in the revelation of Qur'an. In many verses of Holy Qur'an, Allāh SWT addresses non-human creature as His creation or Khālq such as animals, trees, moon, sun, stars, mountains, and rivers. Therefore, the nature and man are not separate in Qur'anic view of creation. Both are created by Allāh SWT with definite purposes. Khālid describes that the Qur'an refers to nature as the Āyāt (signs or symbols) of Allāh SWT. The verses of Holy Qur'an are also named as Āyāt. In the understanding of many scholars of Islam, the word Āyāt means signs, symbols, and proof of the divine which suggests that the creation and the Holy Qur'an, both are the proof of Allāh's existence. The Qur'an also talks about some signs within the creation and the self of man. In a sense, nature and man are the signs of Allāh SWT and an equal member of His creation.

As Nāsr describes: *"Muslim sages referred to the cosmic or ontological Qur'an... they saw upon the face of all creature letters and words from the cosmic Qur'an...they remained fully aware of the fact that the Qur'an refers to phenomena of nature and events within the soul of man as Āyāt...for them forms of nature were literally Āyāt Allāh."*^(1993, p. 66) The Holy Qur'an vividly says about these matters in many verses. The environment of our innermost selves and the universe in which we inhabit are sign of God's creation. The Holy Qur'an says in this respect (Ali, 2000):

﴿سُرِّيهِمْ آيَاتِنَا فِي الْأَفَاقِ وَفِي أَنْفُسِهِمْ﴾

The origin of both creation is in one supreme source known Allāh SWT in Islam. They both are created with one or same purpose that is to fulfil the divine will. This bond reflects the primary relationship between the Creator and the rest of His creation, the Creator Himself determined a subsidiary one, that between man and His other creation (F. M. Khalid & O'Brien, 1992).

In Nāsr view, the nature is both veils and reveals Allāh SWT because Qur'an portrays creation as being a theophany. The components of nature are so many masks that hide various qualities of divine and in the meantime also revealing these qualities to those who have developed a spiritual vision or have deep feelings.

4.6 Nāsr's Deep Ecological Understanding of Islamic Teachings

Nāsr has interpreted al-Muhit, the attribute of Allāh SWT in a spiritual or a deeper sense of Islam. He said that Allāh Himself is the "Ultimate Environment" which encompasses or surrounds man. Because Allāh is said to be Muhit (All-Encompassing) in Qur'an and man is immersed in the divine environment. But due to the negligence or lack of knowledge man is ignorant of this understanding of himself and nature. Nāsr suggests a way to overcome this negligence by remembering Allāh SWT. To remember Allāh is to see nature along with all its resources and understand them as His reality as Muhit. The destruction of natural resources is the result of modern man's attempts to view them as an ontologically independent order of reality. The quality of Allāh as Muhit reminds human beings the sacred quality of earth, and all natural resources as the signs of Allāh. Human beings should understand the existence of natural resources as filled with divine presence which alone is the ultimate environment (Nasr, 1996).

4.7 Khālid and Deep Ecology of Islam

In Khālid view, deep ecology of Islam is based on the "Fiṭrah" principle. This principle explains the origination of man within the primordial nature of creation and his position in it. The term Fiṭrah means natural pattern, natural state, or original state of good. The "Fiṭrah" is

a noun and its verb form, "fatarah" appeared in Qur'an fourteen times. In following verse of Qur'an, the noun and verb both are occurred as (*The Holy Qur'an*, p. 30:30):

﴿فَأَقِمْ وَجْهَكَ لِلدِّينِ حَنِيفًا فِطْرَةَ اللَّهِ الَّتِي فَطَرَ النَّاسَ عَلَيْهَا لَا تَبْدِيلَ لِخَلْقِ اللَّهِ ذَلِكَ الدِّينُ الْقَيِّمُ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ﴾

"Set yourself firmly towards the Deen, as a pure natural believer, Allāh's natural pattern on which He made man. There is no changing Allāh's creation. That is the true, Deen But most people do not know it (Ansari, 1988).

Khālid define this Fiṭrah as "*the natural primordial condition of man in harmony with nature.*" In his view, this verse indicates two messages: the first is a sense that man is originated in the bosom of creation like all other creatures and are equal pattern with the rest of Allāh's creature. Second, it establishes the foundation of deep ecology inherent in Islamic tradition. The Holy Qur'an defines our place and relationship within this pattern which lead humanity to address the present-day ecological crisis at its root of Fiṭrah. F. M. Khalid (2004) also explains Fiṭrah in broader context as: "*we have lost the art of living in the fitra state that is the natural state, in balance and in harmony with creation...everything is connected with each other and each with the whole (F. M. Khalid & O'Brien, 1992).*

4.8 Hinduism in Understanding of Deep Ecology: A Contemporary Perspective

In Hinduism, the foundation of deep ecology is found in sacred scripture like Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and Bhagavad-Gita. The Purusha Śukta, a famous hymn of Rig-Veda beautifully describes the theory of one divine principle behind this phenomenal world and everything in it.

"The Supreme Being hath a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet; pervading the Universe on all sides, He lay beyond it to the extent of ten inches. The Brahman was born from the mouth of Prajāpati; the Kshatriya, from His arms; the Vaisya, from His thighs; and the Sudra was born from His feet (Aiyar, 1898).

The order of creation is clearly mentioned in this poem, Purusha as a cosmic divine principle has created man and nature without any distinction. This sacred scripture also explains that the creation story presented here is not a human-centric rather God has created other creatures including, animals, plants, and human beings subsequently. There is no special status of Human beings is depicting through this hymn. Thus, the traditional view of Hinduism about the order of natural world is based on this understanding of relationship between divine and creation. The whole universe including animate and inanimate are regarded as the body of Purusha. The nature and man are not an independent order of reality but manifestation of single divine principle that is the origin and end of both man and nature.

Shankara's non-theistic school of philosophy is based on Upanishads, he believes on One Supreme soul that is called Brahman. He is pure consciousness and is devoid of all attributes (nirguna) and all categories of intellect (nirvishesa). Brahman associated with maya (shakti) appears as the qualified Brahman (saguna) or the Ívara. This qualified Brahman is the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe which is the appearance of nirguna. Hence, the nature and man need Brahman for their essence while Brahman does not need them for his essence. The universe and man have no existence apart from Brahman (Radhakrishnan, 1960).

His philosophy also presents the "anthropocosmic" view of the creation. It describes that earth, man and all natural resources including, water, mountains, forests, oceans, deserts, plants, and other biodiversity all are sprung from Brahman and return to it. Hence, Brahman and the universe are one. So, all should be treated with reverence.

4.9 Self-Realization: Deep Ecological Understandings of Gandhi

In deep ecological sense of Hinduism, Mahātmā Gandhi writes in 'Young India': *"Hinduism believes in the oneness not of merely all human life but in the oneness of all that lives. Its worship of the cow is, in my opinion, its unique contribution to the evolution of humanitarianism. It is a practical application of the belief in the oneness and, therefore, sacredness, of all life (Naess, 1987).*

Haigh (2006) described that although the concept of self-realization emerged from Vedantic philosophy, but the source is (Gandhi, 1987). In the term of self-realization, we mean that Gandhi was speaking about the supreme or universal 'Self' the 'Atman' that is to be realized rather than the 'self' or the 'Jīva' of egocentric interest. By reducing the dominance of the jīva or narrow self, Gandhi tries to reach self-realization. Through this wider 'self' everything or every living being is connected and identified.

As Gandhi vividly describes this truth in following words: *"I believe in advaita (non-duality), I believe in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore, I believe that if one man gains spirituality, the entire world gains with him and, if one man fails, the entire world fails to that extent (Naess, 1987).*

According to Naess (1987), Gandhi was a strong advocator of self-realization. He was very extreme about self-realization of other living beings than human beings. His Ashrams were living example of bio-spherical egalitarianism, He rightly proved the possibility of satisfactory coexistence of other living beings with humans. He recognized a common or basic right of living and flourishing. Gandhi made manifest the internal relations between two approaches of his environmental vision as the self-realization and non-violence which has been called by Arne Naess as bio-spherical egalitarianism (Naess & Drengson, 2010).

On the other hand, the people living in that Ashram were working for common good. They were living, eating, working, praying, and fasting together. They were not in favored of independent needs, isolatable goods, and services rather they developed the ability to cooperate and collaborate with people. They focused on the mutual welfare of a society. Naess called these tendencies as the basic norms of 'ego-trip.' He says, *"To identify self-realization with ego-trip manifests a vast underestimation of the human self (Haigh, 2006).*

According to Naess, if people habitually associated the term 'self-realization with life-long ego-trips then they will be introduced with the notion of a greater 'self,' and they seriously underestimate themselves. As *"You are much greater, deeper, generous, and capable of more dignity and joy than you think! A wealth of non-competitive joys is open to you (Haigh, 2006).*

Through ego-trips, Naess invited people to think in terms of deepening their selves. He is concerned about the opposite of the egoism of ego-trip, called the notion of altruism. This 'Alter' is an opposite of Latin term 'ego' which implies that ego sacrifices for the favor of others, the alter. The objective is generally that of duty, as it is said that *"we ought to love others as strongly as we love ourselves."* Unfortunately, based on duty it is difficult for human beings to love others. Arne Naess suggested humanity that if they want to survive peacefully in future then they have to widen and deepen their 'selves (Naess & Drengson, 2010).

We are aware that a 'social self' is developing gradually as a norm within us that we do not want to eat a big meal without sharing it with other members of the society. We habitually feel pleasure in their happiness and sorrow in their grief. Now it is not adequate to identify 'ourselves' with the social 'selves,' but to identify with all living beings on our home planet earth and unite them under the greater umbrella, the ecosystems (Naess, 1987).

4.10 Prime and Deep Ecology of Hinduism

Prime describes that this entire world is a forest in Hindu beliefs, and everything is described in relationship with Supreme reality and in term of divinity. The different forms of this material world are in fact distinct aspects of one supreme reality. The Hindu scriptures of Ramayana and Mahabharata are full of descriptions about people were living, meditating, and teaching under the trees. It shows that the bond between Hindus and trees is strong. Prime

and Sharma (2004) describes that Krishna compares the world to a single banyan tree and all species of human beings, animals, and demigods wander in unlimited branches of that tree. Banwari states: "*Forest, at one level, means the world. It includes the whole creation. You are also part of that forest. It is not that you are outside the forest. You can reorder it, but you cannot bypass it (Prime, 1996).*"

Therefore, Prīme draws his philosophy of deep ecology based on banyan tree. He describes that God himself is the seed of banyan tree and its branches includes all creatures. Everything, whether it is animate or inanimate belong to this tree and are dependent on each other (Prabhupada, 1989).

5. Conclusions

From the preceding discussion, it is clear that although the founder of deep ecology is Arne Naess, but the ecological interpretation of Islamic and Hindu teachings by these four contemporary scholars are characterized as the deep ecological approach of both faiths. Because they shifted the Man-Nature relationship from secular interpretation to sacred understanding to eliminate environmental crisis of our only home planet earth. In deep ecological response, Nāsr interpretation of al-Muhit as Allāh Himself is '*Ultimate Environment*' in deeper sense of Islam, the eco-interpretation of Fiṭrah principle of Islam by Khālīd, Gandhi's concept of 'self-realization' and Prīme's understanding of 'banyan tree' forms the "deep realism" of Islam and Hinduism. This understanding would lead humanity to address the environmental concerns of today at its root and talk about the equality of all life forms. Hence, their basic right of living and flourishing. Although the scholars of both traditions viewed the intrinsic value of all diversity on earth including human beings, animals, plants, water, and mountains, but they do not compromise the position of God and His relationship with all phenomena of the universe and not reduce the status of human beings to other non-human beings as usually described in deep ecological movements.

Moreover, based on deep ecological principle inherent in Islam and Hinduism it can be analyzed that instead of Naess's ecocentrism, Islamic approach is theocentric or God-centered to understand the relation of human beings with nature. Man, and nature are Khālq or creation of Allāh SWT and are equal partner in order of creation. While Hinduism presents anthropocosmic view or believes on oneness of existence. Wherein it is belief that animate and inanimate all are part of Brahman. Both religions strongly rejected the western perspective of 'anthropocentric' where human beings have dominion over the other components of earth. When we realize the interconnectedness and interdependence of all creatures based on inherent principle of ecological self then automatically our actions become beautiful toward each component of nature. And change in environmental practices not only includes revering nature, but it also seems to inspire humans to restore, protect and conserve natural phenomena of earth.

This 'deepened realism' can also be observed by human beings when they understand nature as the signs or ayat of Allāh SWT by hearing the prayers of all things and by reading the signatures of the Lord upon their face. Then they establish a harmonious and a lovely relationship with them. These ecological understanding reminds humanity how each creature is precious as being created by God and how its destruction is great sin. Everything is witness to the supremacy of the Lord who is the origin and end of us and our natural world. Lastly, it is argued that the only solution to the crisis of our home planet earth is lies in harmonious attitude toward natural resources of earth. In order to bring peace and harmony with nature, humans must be in harmony and peace with the Ultimate or Sacred who is the source of everything. When humans are at peace with their God then automatically, they will be at peace and equilibrium with His creation.

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