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**ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PHILOSOPHY:
A DIALOGUE BETWEEN GANDHI AND AUROBINDO**

Dr. Mukul Bala

Introduction:

The environmental challenges of the twenty-first century—climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological degradation—have prompted a search for philosophical and ethical frameworks capable of guiding sustainable human behavior. While global discourse often emphasizes technological and policy-based solutions, a deeper moral and spiritual dimension is increasingly recognized as essential for ecological renewal. In this context, contemporary Indian philosophy offers profound insights, particularly through the environmental visions of Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo.

Gandhi's environmental perspective is grounded in his ethical philosophy of *ahimsa* (non-violence), *sarvodaya* (welfare of all), and trusteeship, which emphasize simple living and ecological responsibility. His critique of industrial modernity, articulated in *Hind Swaraj*, anticipates the destructive consequences of unrestrained materialism and mechanization. For Gandhi, environmental harmony is inseparable from moral discipline and social justice, requiring a life of self-restraint, community engagement, and non-violent coexistence with nature.

Sri Aurobindo, in contrast, situates environmental thought within a cosmic and spiritual framework. In works like *The Life Divine* (2005) and *Essays on the Gita* (2005), he presents nature as a manifestation of the Divine and envisions conscious evolution as the path to human and planetary fulfillment. Environmental crises, in his view, reflect humanity's disconnection from its spiritual essence. Aurobindo's philosophy calls for an inner awakening that leads to ecological harmony not as an imposed ethic but as a natural expression of spiritual consciousness. Communities such as Auroville illustrate the practical possibilities of his ecological vision.

The dialogue between Gandhi and Aurobindo thus represents a unique synthesis in contemporary Indian philosophy. Gandhi offers the outer ethical framework for immediate environmental action, while Aurobindo provides the inner metaphysical foundation for a transformative ecological consciousness. Together, they bridge practical sustainability and spiritual depth, presenting an environmental philosophy that is both locally grounded and globally significant.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

This paper explores their complementary approaches to environmental ethics, examining their convergences, divergences, and relevance for global ecological thought. By engaging their philosophies, we can envision a path toward holistic environmental renewal, where outer sustainability is harmonized with inner transformation.

Gandhi's Environmental Philosophy:

Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), the leader of India's freedom movement, is rarely described as an environmentalist in the modern sense; nevertheless, his life and philosophy contain profound ecological insights. Gandhi never composed a formal treatise on environmental ethics, yet his writings, speeches, and personal practices reveal a consistent vision of human responsibility toward nature. For Gandhi, the root of ecological harmony lies in moral self-restraint, non-violence (*ahimsa*), and an attitude of trusteeship toward the resources of the Earth.

Gandhi's critique of modern industrial civilization in *Hind Swaraj* remains strikingly relevant to contemporary environmental debates. In this work, he argues that the Western model of progress—defined by unrestrained industrial growth, consumerism, and mechanization—inevitably leads to moral and ecological decay. He famously warns:

“This civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.”¹

Although Gandhi's critique was framed primarily in terms of spiritual and social health, its environmental dimension is clear: a civilization driven by greed and material excess inevitably exhausts natural resources and disrupts ecological balance.

Ahimsa and the Ethics of Non-Violence Toward Nature:

Ahimsa, or non-violence, constitutes the moral foundation of Gandhi's thought. While *ahimsa* is frequently discussed in relation to human relations and political struggle, Gandhi also extended this principle to the natural world. In a speech delivered in 1931, he observed:

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.”²

This insight implies a broader environmental ethic: if cruelty toward animals signifies moral failure, then the reckless destruction of ecosystems and species likewise reflects ethical violence. Gandhi's vegetarianism, his commitment to cow protection, and his aversion to hunting exemplify his attempt to live in non-violent coexistence with other living beings.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

Simple Living and Sustainable Communities:

A central tenet of Gandhi's environmental thought is his emphasis on simple living and self-sufficient village communities. Gandhi maintained that large-scale industrialization and rapid urbanization promote excessive consumption and alienation from nature. His vision of *gram swaraj* was grounded in decentralized production, local self-reliance, and the dignity of manual labor. Such a socio-economic arrangement, according to Gandhi, would not only foster moral growth but also minimize ecological damage by restricting the reckless exploitation of natural resources.

Gandhi's ideal of simplicity was not an ascetic denial of material life but a moral discipline aimed at regulating human desires. He famously remarked that the Earth provides enough to satisfy human needs, but not human greed. This ethical insight remains highly relevant in contemporary debates on sustainable development and environmental conservation.

Trusteeship and Sarvodaya: Moral Responsibility for Resources:

Gandhi's concept of trusteeship occupies a central place in his socio-economic philosophy and has significant implications for environmental ethics. According to this principle, individuals who possess wealth or resources are not absolute owners but trustees who must use them for the welfare of society as a whole. Gandhi extended this moral responsibility beyond material wealth to include natural resources such as land, water, and forests. From this perspective, environmental exploitation for private profit constitutes a violation of ethical duty toward both present and future generations.

Trusteeship thus offers an alternative to both capitalist exploitation and state-centered control of resources. It emphasizes moral obligation, self-regulation, and social responsibility rather than coercive legal mechanisms. In the context of environmental ethics, Gandhi's doctrine of trusteeship anticipates contemporary notions of intergenerational justice and sustainable resource management.

Influence on Environmental Movements in India:

Gandhi's environmental philosophy has had a lasting impact on India's ecological movements. His method of Satyagraha, or non-violent civil resistance, inspired campaigns for forest and river protection in post-independence India. The Chipko Movement of the 1970s, led by Sunderlal Bahuguna and Chandi Prasad Bhatt in the Himalayan region, explicitly invoked Gandhian methods. Villagers,

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

particularly women, embraced trees to prevent their felling, declaring that forests were life—a principle Gandhi had long upheld.

Similarly, the Save Ganga Movement and Narmada Bachao Andolan adopted Gandhian principles of non-violence, community mobilization, and moral critique of exploitative development. These movements illustrate the practical ecological relevance of Gandhi's ethics in confronting modern environmental challenges such as deforestation, river pollution, and displacement caused by large dams.

Summary of Gandhian Ecological Thought:

Gandhi's environmental philosophy may be summarized as an ethic of self-restraint, non-violence, and trusteeship. He identified the roots of ecological degradation in greed, industrial excess, and disconnection from nature. By living simply, consuming minimally, and treating resources as sacred trusts, Gandhi envisioned a society in harmony with the Earth. His legacy continues to inspire both local and global ecological movements, making him a key figure in contemporary environmental philosophy.

Sri Aurobindo's Spiritual Ecology:

Sri Aurobindo (1872–1950), a philosopher, poet, and yogi, developed one of the most profound spiritual visions of modern Indian philosophy. While Gandhi approached the relationship between humans and nature primarily through ethics and socio-political practice, Aurobindo's philosophy situates environmental harmony in a cosmic and evolutionary context. His thought provides what may be called a spiritual ecology, where nature is recognized as a living expression of the Divine, and ecological responsibility arises from the realization of spiritual unity with all life.

Nature as a Manifestation of the Divine:

Aurobindo's philosophy begins with the Integral Advaita perspective expressed in *The Life Divine* (2005). In contrast to classical Advaita Vedanta, which often regards the material world as illusory or secondary to spiritual reality, Aurobindo affirms that matter and spirit are two poles of one Divine Reality. He writes:

“All life is yoga. All life is the manifestation of the Spirit in form and movement.”³

This statement captures Aurobindo's holistic vision: nature is not inert matter to be exploited but a living field of spiritual evolution. Rivers, forests, animals, and human beings are all expressions of the same universal consciousness. To destroy nature recklessly is, in this sense, to act against the Divine manifestation itself.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

In his *Essays on the Gita* (2005), Aurobindo interprets the Bhagavad Gita's teaching on *Lokasangraha*—the welfare of the world—as a spiritual mandate to act harmoniously within creation. Human beings, endowed with self-awareness, have a unique responsibility to cooperate with nature's evolutionary purpose rather than oppose it.

Conscious Evolution and Ecological Responsibility:

Central to Aurobindo's thought is the concept of conscious evolution. He believed that evolution is not limited to the biological or material domain but is a divine process of consciousness unfolding through nature. Human beings represent a critical stage in this process, as we possess the capacity for self-reflection and spiritual growth. In *The Life Divine*, he explains that the next stage of evolution will involve a transformation of consciousness, culminating in the supramental consciousness—a state in which human beings live in harmony with the Divine will and experience unity with all life. Environmental degradation, in this light, is a symptom of humanity's spiritual immaturity—a failure to recognize its role in the larger cosmic purpose.

Aurobindo's ecological implication is profound: human survival and spiritual evolution are inseparable from ecological harmony. Environmental ethics, for him, is not an external obligation but an inner necessity that arises from awakening to our place in the cosmic order.

Aurobindo's Approach to Nature and Ecology in Practice:

Although Aurobindo himself did not lead environmental movements, his spiritual ecology inspired practical applications through his followers and the integral yoga community. The creation of Auroville in Tamil Nadu is one such example. Founded in 1968 by Mirra Alfassa (the Mother), Auroville was envisioned as a "city for human unity" and a living laboratory of Aurobindo's teachings. Over the decades, Auroville has engaged in extensive afforestation, soil conservation, and the creation of ecologically sustainable infrastructure. Through initiatives such as reforestation of the barren Auroville plateau and the development of renewable energy systems, the community has demonstrated that spiritual consciousness can guide ecological restoration. In this way, Aurobindo's spiritual ecology moves beyond theory into living practice, albeit indirectly through communities inspired by his philosophy.

Aurobindo and Contemporary Ecological Thought:

Aurobindo's philosophy resonates strongly with modern environmental movements such as deep ecology, eco-spirituality, and integral ecology. Deep ecology, as formulated by Arne Naess (1973), asserts the intrinsic value of all life forms and calls for a radical shift in human consciousness.⁴

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Aurobindo anticipated this perspective by emphasizing that the Divine pervades all forms of existence, making the exploitation of nature both morally and spiritually misguided.⁵ Similarly, Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* (2015) and the field of eco-theology call for a recognition of nature's sacredness, which parallels Aurobindo's vision.⁶ His idea of supramental consciousness also aligns with the aspiration of eco-spiritual movements that advocate for a transformation of human values as a prerequisite for ecological survival. Aurobindo's thought also complements Gandhian environmentalism: while Gandhi focuses on the outer ethics of simple living and non-violence, Aurobindo calls for an inner awakening to the spiritual significance of nature. This dual approach—ethical restraint and spiritual evolution—offers a more comprehensive foundation for environmental philosophy.

Summary of Aurobindo's Spiritual Ecology:

In summary, Sri Aurobindo provides a cosmic and spiritual framework for environmental ethics. His key insights can be summarized as follows:

1. Nature is Divine: The environment is a manifestation of the Divine, and harming it is a spiritual dissonance.
2. Conscious Evolution: Humanity's task is to evolve in harmony with nature, recognizing its sacred purpose.
3. Inner Transformation as Ecology: True ecological responsibility arises from the awakening of spiritual consciousness.
4. Practical Application: Communities like Auroville demonstrate how spiritual principles can guide sustainable ecological practices.

Aurobindo's philosophy encourages a shift from anthropocentrism to cosmocentrism, where human life is understood as part of a larger spiritual ecosystem. His vision provides the metaphysical depth that contemporary environmental ethics often lacks, offering not just a framework for survival but a pathway to spiritual fulfillment through harmony with nature.

Dialogue Between Gandhi and Aurobindo: Convergences and Divergences:

The philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, while emerging from the same broad currents of Indian thought, represent two distinct yet complementary approaches to the environmental question. Placing their ideas in dialogue allows for a nuanced understanding of how contemporary Indian philosophy can contribute to environmental ethics. This dialogue highlights convergences in their

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

critique of modernity and reverence for life, while also illuminating divergences in method, focus, and ultimate vision.

Shared Foundations: Convergences in Environmental Vision:

At the most fundamental level, Gandhi and Aurobindo share a **holistic view of life** rooted in Indian spiritual traditions. Both reject the **mechanistic and materialist worldview** of industrial modernity, which reduces nature to a mere resource for human exploitation. Their common ground can be summarized in four key areas:

I. Critique of Materialism and Industrial Civilization:

Gandhi and Aurobindo were both early critics of the industrial paradigm that dominates modernity. Gandhi's critique, expressed in *Hind Swaraj* (1909/1997), denounces industrialization and modern consumerism as morally corrupting and ecologically unsustainable. He writes:

“A man is not necessarily happy because he is rich, or unhappy because he is poor... this civilization is such that one has only to be patient and it will be self-destroyed.”⁷

Aurobindo, while less socially polemical, also critiques the dominance of materialist thought in modern life. In *The Human Cycle*, he observes that a purely utilitarian and mechanistic approach to existence diminishes the higher purpose of humanity, which is the integration of spiritual consciousness with life. For both thinkers, unsustainable development is ultimately a spiritual failure, not just a social or environmental one.

II. Reverence for Life and Ecological Interconnectedness:

Both Gandhi and Aurobindo affirm the intrinsic value of nature and all forms of life, although they approach this affirmation differently. Gandhi grounds his reverence in the principle of Ahimsa, which entails non-violence toward all sentient beings. For him, harming animals, wasting resources, or polluting nature constitutes moral violence. Aurobindo's reverence is metaphysical, rooted in the recognition that nature is a manifestation of the Divine, evolving toward higher consciousness. In his view:

“The Spirit in the world is the supreme object of all experience and all knowledge... in all things He dwells.”⁸

This shared foundation of respect for life forms a bridge between Gandhi's ethical environmentalism and Aurobindo's spiritual ecology.

III. Emphasis on Inner Transformation as Key to Environmental Harmony:

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

Both thinkers locate the solution to environmental degradation in human transformation, rather than in technological or purely legislative measures. Gandhi's call for self-restraint and simplicity is essentially an appeal to inner moral reform. Aurobindo extends this principle into the spiritual realm, arguing that human consciousness must evolve to realize unity with nature and the Divine. In both visions, environmental healing begins with self-healing.

IV. Resonance with Global Ecological Thought:

In their convergences, Gandhi and Aurobindo both anticipate elements of modern environmental philosophy. Gandhi's principles resonate with deep ecology and sustainable development movements, while Aurobindo's vision aligns with eco-spirituality and integral ecology. Together, they provide a philosophical and ethical foundation for a global ecological ethic that bridges East and West.

Points of Divergence: Method, Focus, and Goal:

Despite these convergences, Gandhi and Aurobindo differ significantly in method, scope, and ultimate environmental vision. These divergences are essential to understanding how their dialogue can produce a complementary synthesis rather than a simple overlap.

I. Ethical Pragmatism vs. Spiritual Metaphysics:

Gandhi's environmental approach is fundamentally ethical and pragmatic. His concern was primarily with human action in the social world: how individuals and communities could live sustainably through simple living, trusteeship, and village self-reliance. His environmentalism is applied, oriented toward policy, lifestyle, and social reform.

Aurobindo, in contrast, is a philosopher of metaphysical depth. His environmental insights are implicit, emerging from his cosmology of integral evolution. He offers fewer practical prescriptions but provides a spiritual rationale for environmental care. Where Gandhi focuses on outer action, Aurobindo emphasizes inner realization as the precondition for sustainable living.

II. Immediate Social Reform vs. Evolutionary Transformation:

Gandhi was primarily concerned with immediate social and political transformation. His philosophy of environmental harmony was part of a broader vision for an independent India built on village-based, self-reliant economies. His solutions are here and now, offering a template for small-scale, community-driven sustainability.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

Aurobindo's vision is long-term and evolutionary. He situates environmental harmony within the larger process of cosmic evolution toward supramental consciousness. In his framework, lasting ecological change requires a deep shift in human consciousness, which may unfold over generations rather than through immediate reform.

III. Social Activism vs. Spiritual Realization:

Gandhi's environmentalism manifests in social activism and political engagement. His influence is visible in the Chipko Movement, Save Ganga Movement, and numerous ecological campaigns that embrace Satyagraha as a tool for protecting nature.

Aurobindo, however, did not engage directly in environmental activism. His focus was on yogic practice, literary work, and spiritual teaching. The ecological application of his ideas is indirect, as seen in initiatives like Auroville, which attempt to integrate spiritual consciousness with sustainable living.

Toward a Complementary Synthesis:

A dialogue between Gandhi and Aurobindo does not end in opposition but in complementarity. Gandhi offers the ethical foundation and practical strategies for immediate environmental action: non-violence toward nature, simple living, and the principle of trusteeship. Aurobindo provides the metaphysical depth and spiritual inspiration, situating environmental ethics within a grand evolutionary narrative.

In practice, a synthesis of their thought would involve three layers of environmental ethics:

- i. **Outer Action (Gandhi)** – Concrete practices like sustainable consumption, local self-reliance, and non-violent activism.
- ii. **Inner Transformation (Aurobindo)** – Development of spiritual consciousness that sees nature as Divine.
- iii. **Integrated Future Vision** – A society where ethical restraint and spiritual awareness together shape ecological policy and culture.

By integrating Gandhi's immediate, practical guidance with Aurobindo's long-term spiritual vision, contemporary Indian philosophy can contribute a unique model of environmental ethics: one that unites survival with meaning, activism with meditation, and sustainability with spiritual fulfillment.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
PEER REVIEWED

Global Relevance and Comparative Perspective:

The environmental philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo, though deeply rooted in the Indian cultural and spiritual context, hold profound relevance for the global ecological crisis. As humanity confronts climate change, biodiversity loss, and widespread ecological degradation, the need for ethical and spiritual frameworks that go beyond technological solutions has become increasingly clear. Contemporary environmental discourse—ranging from deep ecology to eco-spirituality—reflects many of the principles that Gandhi and Aurobindo articulated decades earlier.

Gandhian Environmentalism in a Global Context:

Gandhi's environmental ethics resonate strongly with global movements for sustainability and ecological justice. His principles of Ahimsa (non-violence), simple living, and trusteeship anticipate many ideas that underpin modern environmental thought:

- I. **Deep Ecology and Biocentric Ethics:** Deep ecology, articulated by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess (1973), emphasizes the intrinsic value of all living beings, independent of their utility to humans. Gandhi's insistence on non-violence toward animals and nature directly aligns with this biocentric perspective. By rejecting anthropocentrism—the belief that humans are the center of moral concern—Gandhi anticipates the moral foundation of contemporary ecological consciousness.
- II. **Sustainable Development and Ethical Consumption:** Gandhi's call for voluntary simplicity and self-restraint reflects a sustainability ethic long before the term became common in environmental discourse. The Brundtland Report (1987) defined sustainable development as meeting “the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” Gandhi's vision of Gram Swaraj, in which village communities live within their ecological means, offers a concrete model of such sustainability. His lifestyle critique remains highly relevant to today's consumer-driven climate crisis.
- III. **Environmental Justice and Non-Violent Activism:** Gandhi's method of Satyagraha has inspired environmental and social movements across the globe. Non-violent environmental activism, from the Chipko Movement in India to the Standing Rock protests in the United States, reflects Gandhian strategies of peaceful resistance against ecological injustice. In a world where environmental conflicts often involve marginalized communities resisting powerful industrial

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

interests, Gandhi's fusion of ethics and action remains a powerful model for global environmental justice.

In sum, Gandhi offers the world a practical, ethical blueprint for addressing environmental challenges through restraint, community-based action, and moral clarity—a framework that complements scientific and technological interventions with a deeper moral dimension.

Aurobindo's Spiritual Ecology and Global Eco-Spirituality:

Sri Aurobindo's thought speaks to the inner dimension of the global environmental crisis, which many contemporary philosophers and spiritual leaders identify as a crisis of consciousness. His philosophy of conscious evolution and the Divine manifestation of nature resonate with several streams of global eco-spiritual thought:

- I. **Eco-Theology and the Sacredness of Nature:** In recent decades, religious and spiritual traditions worldwide have emphasized the sacred dimension of the environment. From Pope Francis's *Laudato Si'* (2015) in Catholic eco-theology to the revival of indigenous spiritual practices, there is a growing recognition that environmental care must be rooted in reverence for life. Aurobindo's affirmation that all of nature is the Divine in manifestation provides a philosophical foundation for such eco-theologies, bridging the gap between metaphysics and environmental ethics.
- II. **Integral Ecology and Holistic Environmentalism:** Modern ecological thought increasingly calls for integrative approaches that connect environmental science with social justice, ethics, and spirituality. The Integral Ecology approach, championed by thinkers like Thomas Berry and Sean Esbjörn-Hargens, seeks to recognize the interdependence of inner and outer worlds. Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is directly relevant here: he sees no division between matter and spirit, and his concept of supramental consciousness envisions a future in which humans live in conscious harmony with all life forms.
- III. **Global Relevance for Environmental Movements:** While Aurobindo himself was not an activist, his ideas inspire ecological practices that combine spiritual awareness with environmental action. The community of Auroville, with its emphasis on reforestation, renewable energy, and spiritual living, has become a global symbol of eco-conscious community building. International visitors and scholars often recognize Auroville as a living example of how inner transformation can support sustainable environmental practice, echoing Aurobindo's vision that ecological change must be grounded in spiritual consciousness.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

Comparative Perspective: Bridging Eastern and Western Environmental Thought:

The dialogue between Gandhi and Aurobindo also offers a bridge to Western environmental philosophy, which has evolved significantly over the past century. Early Western thought, dominated by industrial and mechanistic paradigms, often separated humans from nature. Contemporary ecological philosophy, however, has moved closer to the holistic and spiritual vision that Gandhi and Aurobindo embody.

- **Gandhi and Western Ethics:** Gandhi's stress on moral responsibility parallels Aldo Leopold's Land Ethic (1949), which calls for humans to see themselves as "plain members and citizens of the land community." Like Leopold, Gandhi extends ethical concern to the entire ecological system, but his foundation is Ahimsa and Sarvodaya, which add spiritual and social depth.
- **Aurobindo and Deep Ecology:** Aurobindo's thought parallels deep ecology's principle of self-realization, where humans expand their sense of self to include all beings. Arne Naess (1973) calls this the "ecological self," which resonates with Aurobindo's vision of spiritual unity with nature and integral consciousness.
- **Complementary Insights for Global Policy:** Together, Gandhi and Aurobindo offer both practical ethics and spiritual orientation, a combination that Western policy discourse often lacks. While the West has strong technological and regulatory mechanisms, the Indian philosophical approach contributes inner motivation and moral meaning, essential for fostering a genuine global ecological culture.

Global Significance for the 21st Century:

As the world faces accelerating climate change, environmental degradation, and resource scarcity, the ideas of Gandhi and Aurobindo provide a comprehensive philosophical foundation for ecological renewal. Gandhi's call for simpler lifestyles and non-violent economies addresses the immediate causes of environmental crises, while Aurobindo's vision of conscious evolution addresses the root cause in human consciousness.

Their combined insights point toward an ecological ethic that is both practical and transformative:

1. It demands outer reform through sustainable policies, local self-reliance, and ecological justice.
2. It fosters inner reform, awakening a sense of sacred interconnection with all life.
3. It offers a cross-cultural dialogue that integrates Indian spiritual wisdom with global ecological science and ethics.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY**PEER REVIEWED**

In this way, contemporary Indian philosophy, through the voices of Gandhi and Aurobindo, contributes not only to India's environmental discourse but to the global quest for sustainable and meaningful existence.

Conclusion:

The environmental philosophies of Mahatma Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo offer complementary pathways for addressing the ecological crises of the 21st century. Both emerge from the spiritual matrix of Indian philosophy, yet they approach the relationship between humans and nature from distinct vantage points: Gandhi through ethical and socio-political engagement, and Aurobindo through metaphysical and spiritual realization.

Philosophically, Gandhi frames environmental ethics in the language of moral duty and social practice. His principles of Ahimsa (non-violence), Sarvodaya (welfare of all), and trusteeship provide an applied framework for ecological living. Environmental harmony, for Gandhi, begins with self-restraint and sustainable community life, resisting the exploitative tendencies of modern industrial civilization. His vision is immediate and practical, addressing the moral roots of environmental degradation.

Aurobindo, by contrast, situates environmental ethics within the cosmic drama of consciousness. His concept of nature as the Divine in manifestation and his doctrine of conscious evolution propose that ecological crisis reflects humanity's spiritual immaturity. Genuine environmental harmony, in his view, requires inner transformation, culminating in a supramental consciousness that recognizes the unity of all existence. Where Gandhi calls for ethical simplicity, Aurobindo calls for spiritual awakening.

The philosophical synthesis of their ideas lies in the integration of action and consciousness. Gandhi provides the outer ethic of sustainability and non-violence, while Aurobindo offers the inner vision of ecological spirituality. Together, they form a holistic environmental philosophy: one that unites practical survival strategies with the quest for higher human fulfillment.

For the future, this synthesis has three implications. First, it calls for cultural and educational transformation, where ecological responsibility is internalized as both ethical duty and spiritual awareness. Second, it suggests that policy and community action must be rooted in Gandhian principles of decentralization and trusteeship, ensuring harmony between human needs and ecological limits. Finally, it situates environmental ethics within a global eco-spiritual dialogue, where Indian philosophical insights can enrich contemporary movements like deep ecology, integral ecology, and eco-theology.

SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

In conclusion, Gandhi and Aurobindo together illuminate a path where philosophy transcends abstraction and becomes a guide to planetary healing. By harmonizing outer sustainability with inner transformation, their thought offers a timeless foundation for ecological ethics that aspires not only to preserve the Earth but also to realize the higher potential of human consciousness.

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SKBU JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

PEER REVIEWED

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