

Environment- The Problems, The Laws and An Untraditional Approach to Find a Solution in Spirituality

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Abstract

Environment pollution is a major concern now a days as we can see its negative impacts in the form of high temperature, floods, melting ice caps, unseasonal rains and many more. The United Nations Climate Change 27th Conference of Parties has already been started, in which various stakeholders such as States, Intergovernmental and Non-Governmental Organisations, United Nations Secretariat, etc., are participating to discuss on the course to be adopted for net zero carbon emission. The present and the past conferences on environment pollution talk only about building a resilient community by introducing better technologies but the problem will not be resolved unless we hit the root cause. Problem is not fossil fuels or industries but the careless and unsustainable human conduct.

Humans are full of greed, lust, anger, envy etc. The greed to accumulate more and more resources is the problem. The “karma” of exploiting nature has inevitable consequences which we face today such as pollution and climate change. In the holy book Bhagavad Gita, the supreme power itself gives advice on the just human conduct. Lord Krishna in Gita himself has mentioned that he is present in every living and non-living element of nature and each of them is beautifully arranged. If one of these is affected then the whole system will become unstable. The Bhagavad Gita has considered earth as a mother and never considered it as a hostile element to be ruled and exploited. Today’s environment problem is focused only on scientific solutions with no element of spirituality and hence creating a void for common man to understand. And The Bhagavad Gita is capable of fulfilling this spiritual void and act as a guiding light to the world and community in resolving environmental problems.

Keywords: Environment, Pollution, Spiritual, Bhagavad Gita.

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Introduction

Environment is the external system encompassing all living and non-living things in which an organism interacts. Air, land, water, humans, animals and plants are all its components¹. The pollutants such as chemicals, dust, sediments, sound waves, heat, radiation, etc., introduced intentionally or unintentionally by humans in the environment leads to

¹ Ramamohan Reddy Appannagari, *Environmental Pollution causes and consequences: A study*, 3 NORTH ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES 151, 151 (2017).

environmental pollution. Environmental pollution can be categorized into air, water, soil/land, noise, radioactive and thermal pollution, of all air pollution is the major concern due which increases greenhouse gases in the environment². Greenhouse gases are the reason for global warming. Global Warming is caused by trapping long-wave energy (infrared radiation) emitted by the earth surface. Nowadays the term global warming is being used interchangeably with climate change³. Climate change is an utmost problem before the world community to be resolved because its impacts are evident in the form of high temperature, melting ice caps, rising sea level, unseasonal rains, frequent drought, floods and many more⁴. According to the sixth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the climate is expected to be warmed by three-degree Fahrenheit in future from the pre-industrial times⁵.

Presently, several International Environmental Agreements are in force for guiding the nations on their duties towards the environment. By analysing these International Environmental Agreements, we can say that the provisions provided are not enough to resolve environment issues as the solutions provided are majorly scientific or political and it lacks the spiritual dimensions. Industrialisation, burning of fossil fuel and commercialisation of agriculture are condemned for causing climate change but the real wrongdoer is human greed. The greed to accumulate more and more resources is the problem. The ancient Hindu texts such as Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Charak Samhita, Bhagavad Gita demonstrate the link between nature and humans. The ancient text could be explored for finding the solution to contemporary issues. The researcher in this paper has confined itself to the principles and the teachings of Bhagavad Gita on nature, which could be the guiding light for the world. While narrating the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna, Lord Krishna himself mentioned that he is present in every living and non-living element of nature. The Bhagavad Gita has considered earth as a mother providing nourishment to its children and never considered it as a hostile element to be ruled and exploited.

Research Objectives:

The formulation of research objectives will help: -

1. To assess the International Environmental Agreements to resolve the issue of environmental pollution.
2. To identify the inefficiency of International Environmental Agreements.
3. To analyse the verses of Bhagavad Gita in the context of nature.
4. To suggest a new approach to resolve environmental pollution.

Research Methodology:

The methodology of this paper is qualitative, exploratory and descriptive in nature. Firstly, the researcher introduces the issue of environmental pollution while elaborating the causes and the consequences of pollution. Then the researcher analyses the major

² *Id.* at 152.

³ N K UBEROI, ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT 87 (2nd ed. 2003).

⁴ Press Release, World Meteorological Organization, Eight warmest years on record witness upsurge in climate change impacts (Nov. 06, 2022) <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/press-release/eight-warmest-years-record-witness-upsurge-climate-change-impacts>.

⁵ IPCC, 2022: Summary for Policymakers [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösschke, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lösschke, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK and New York, NY, USA, pp. 3–33, doi:10.1017/9781009325844.001.

International Environmental Agreements and their outcomes. Lastly, the researcher will try to introduce Bhagavad Gita as a new approach to resolve environmental issues.

Literature Review:

- *Edith Brown Weiss, The Evolution of International Environmental Law (2011)*: In the concerned article the author lays stress upon highlighting the early environmental laws, how they came into existence, what cause for their need and how they eventually took shape. Starting off with the earliest of conventions, the most successful of them are still taken into account namely CITES and Rio Conference (1992). These basically made the framework for the modern environmental laws which we currently emphasize on. The Stockholm conference in 1972 addressed the conflict between environment and economy which ended up with the establishment of the first international intergovernmental organization “United Nation Environment Programme (UNEP) in Nairobi, Kenya. And here we are now with hundreds of bilateral and multilateral environmental agreements and several legislations.

Owing to that many of the new legislations have improved and paved the way for more stricter laws enforcing the environment prevention.

- *Mary Ellen O’Connell, Enforcement and the Success of International Environmental Law (1995)*: Professor O’Connell discusses the compliance, and not the enforcement of the International Environmental Law. According to her most enforcement of the environmental laws isn’t carried on as it should, even though it gets less consideration than the domestic laws. Mere enforcement through the word of law isn’t enough. Just like the domestic laws were those who disobey are imposed with fines and other sanctions, the environmental laws too should have such provisions. It has always been a topic of discussion whether the environmental laws coming under international laws are even a legal system or not. THIS view arises because the domestic legal system has enforcement institutions whereas environmental laws do not. However, ICTFY (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia) has been established for the enforcement of international humanitarian and human rights law. This does not mean that the work is done as we are not sure if such institution can emphasize domestic compliance. In order to comply with the laws, the domestic legal system has improved enforcement through the advantage of control over persons and assets.
- *Jayita Pramanik & Bijan Sarkar, Environment and Environmental awareness in the Bhagavad Gita (2018)*: The author focuses on the environment related verses and their modern age interpretation as mentioned in the Holy Bhagavad Geeta. The book itself is a vast spread of knowledge covering all the aspects of nature, humans and ethics. It teaches how one should act, how one should live and how nature is to be treated. Along with that it also warns about the mysterious ways the nature can affect the life if treated ill and that the whole life cycle is interdependent on the very existence of life. The book covers the topics with precision explaining the detailed interpretation of the verses and the solution of modern environmental problems.

Literature review shows that there is no noteworthy research has been done in exploring the spiritual dimension as the possible solution to resolve environment problems. This study is worth undertaking, as Bhagavad Gita could provide new approach to environmental issues in addition to environmental laws.

Genesis of Environment Degradation:

Besides poverty, hunger, health and well-being, etc, Environmental pollution is a major concern nowadays as it affects every aspect of human life. Environmental pollution causes hindrance in fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals as agreed by the members of the United Nations⁶. Pollution is caused when an element which is being recklessly used by humans⁷. Before moving towards the solution let us understand the cause of environment pollution. The causes of Environment Pollution can be broadly classified as following:

1. **Social Causes:** Increase in the population pushed the demand for more resources resulting in abnormal extraction of natural resources⁸.

Forests are being cleared for agriculture, multipurpose river projects, industries, residential settlements, etc., to provide for the needs of an increasing population.

Exponential Increase in population and limitation of resources leads to increase in poverty resulting in a burden being borne by the environment in order to fulfil their basic need of food, fuel, and employment. Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi in her address to the Stockholm Conference said that poverty and need are the greatest polluters⁹.

2. **Economic Causes:** Industrial development¹⁰ provides an edge on economic development to a state due to which all countries are in the race to establish more and more industries. These industries require raw material and in order to meet that demand the forest covers are being cleared, land is being mined, groundwater is being withdrawn. Industrial development has provided material comfort to humans but at the cost of environmental pollution. Besides producing the desired products these industries are emitting pollutants in the environment such as industrial waste, smoke, aerosol, ashes and many more.

To support the industrial development there should be better transport and communication¹¹ and hence the fossil fuel emission by the transport and communication has further aggravated the issue of environmental pollution.

3. **Political Cause:** Pollution is a worldwide phenomenon. Pollution is generated locally but has its impact all over the world. Environment Pollution knows no boundaries and in that case no state is ready to take responsibility for the pollution. Developed countries are heavily industrialised and also have the resources to fight environment pollution but this is not the case with developing countries. Fight over funds to support the environmentally affected communities by the developed nations clearly show the lack of political will to address the problem¹².

No country is ready to invest huge amounts in environmentally sound technologies and put trade barriers for bad technologies¹³.

4. **Legal Cause:** Many countries gave importance to the safe and clean environment in their constitutions expressly or impliedly but Environmental Law is relatively a new

⁶ Peter Rafaj et al., *Outlook for clean air in the context of sustainable development goals*, 53 GLO. ENVIRON. CHANGE 1, 3 (2018) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2018.08.008>.

⁷ ENVIRONMENT 55 (Shankar IAS Academy Book Publications 7th rev. ed. 2019).

⁸ Rinkesh Kukreja, *Cause, effects and wonderful solutions to Environmental Pollution*, CONSERVE ENERGY FUTURE <https://www.conserve-energy-future.com/causes-and-effects-of-environmental-pollution.php>.

⁹ *Looking back at Stockholm 1972: What Indira Gandhi said half a century ago on man & environment*, Down To Earth (May 31, 2022) <http://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/looking-back-at-stockholm-1972-what-indira-gandhi-said-half-a-century-ago-on-man-environment-83060>.

¹⁰ Appannagari, *supra* note 1, at 156.

¹¹ MITSUO MATSUSHITA ET AL., *THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION: LAW, PRACTICE AND POLICY* 719 (Sir Frank Berman 3rd ed., 2015).

¹² 'Stand and deliver', *U.N. chief tells faltering climate summit*, THE HINDU (Nov. 17, 2022 09:56 PM)

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/stand-and-deliver-un-dhief-tells-faltering-cop27-climate-summit/article66150297.ece>.

¹³ K. Bharat Kumar, Text & Content, *Who should pay for climate change*, THE HINDU, Nov. 17, 2022, at 8.

subject and still at its infancy. The environment law is not easy to implement as the victim and offender vary and are in different jurisdictions, many times it is hard to prove which source caused the damage to the victims and the multiplicity of the legislation for the environment makes it more difficult¹⁴. International environment conventions and protocols are less effective because of the lack of sanctions and enforcement.

Above stated causes are not exhaustive and there are many other causes for the environment pollution. The multiplicity of causes and their effect makes it difficult to resolve the issue of environmental pollution amicably. Causes of Environment pollution is rooted through a complex structure¹⁵ but short-term profit maximisation is common consequences of all.

Consequences of the Environment Pollution:

After we are aware of the sources of the environment pollution, it's important to understand the fallout it has on different form of life on earth:

1. **Humans:** Environment Pollution can affect humans' health variedly in form of asthma, irritation in eyes and throat, cancer, allergic diseases, skin diseases, etc¹⁶.
2. **Animals:** Humans can wear facemasks, use air purifiers and get medical help but animals are absolutely at risk in this case as the environment in which they live becomes toxic because of the environment pollution and makes their survival difficult. The Red Data Book issued by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) gives information regarding the status of both birds and animals. The Pink pages in the book includes the critically endangered species which are at brink of extinction and the green pages includes the species that were formerly endangered¹⁷. Increasing pink pages and decreasing green pages in the Red Data Book clearly indicates the harmful impact of environment pollution on plants and animals.
3. **Ecosystem:** It is the structural and functional unit of Nature consisting of living and non-living organisms interacting with each other. Environment pollution has impacted the ecosystem in several ways. Chemical fertilisers have increased the salinity of soil and reduced its fertility. Waste generated from household, manufacturing, hospitals and electronic components have contaminated the soil and water¹⁸. Oxides of sulphur and nitrogen emitted by the burning of fossil fuel has reduced the pH of Rain causing Acid rain¹⁹. Emission of chlorine gas in the environment is depleting the ozone layer. Ozone layer acts as a sunshield which absorbs Ultraviolet radiations and thus it is vital for survival²⁰.

International Environment Laws:

The Industrial Revolution started in the 1700s when humans invented machines. To run these machines the demand for coal increased so its extraction. Humans were oblivious of the effect of burning coal back then. The source of environment pollutants may be local but its impacts are definitely international. Environment knows no boundaries, for example; melting of ice in Arctic region increases the level of sea, leading to submergence of coastal areas in tropical and subtropical region, increase of sea temperature in South America

¹⁴ Mary Ellen O' Connell, *Enforcement and the success of environmental law*, 3 INDIANA J. GLOB. LEG. STUD. 47, 54 (1995).

¹⁵ Edith Brown Weiss, *The Evolution of International Law*, 2011 Japanese Y.B. Intl. L. 1, 7.

¹⁶ ENVIRONMENT, *supra* note 7, at 57.

¹⁷ IUCN, *The IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*, 2015. <https://www.ibat-alliance.org/pdf/iucn-redlist-overview.pdf>.

¹⁸ ENVIRONMENT, *supra* note 7, at 66.

¹⁹ ANUBHA KAUSHIK & C P KAUSHIK, *PERSPECTIVES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES* 260 (New Age International publishers 6th ed., 2018).

²⁰ *Id.*, at 262.

disrupts the monsoons in Asia and also the general atmospheric circulation of winds carries pollutants from one region to another region. The basic issue arises here is that the problem is not national, how could it be limited to nations²¹? Whenever there is disruption in the general course of society, the legislation should step in and lay down some ground rules to put back order in the society. And in this case environmental laws could play the part. International Environment Law is a new area yet to be developed. The environmental laws have developed considerably in the last forty years in the form of Multilateral Environmental Agreement, Treaties, Conventions and Protocols. The reason for this development is because the environmental risks have now become apparent and started affecting human development²². The development of International Environmental Laws can be categorised into two distinct periods i.e.; “before 1992”, “1992 and after”.

Before 1992: During this period there was little development in the field of environment laws due to the prevalence of national sovereignty over natural resources. The growth of International Environment Laws started with the 1972 Stockholm Conference.

- The United Nations Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment²³: it was the first international conference on environment in which the countries from all over the world came together to discuss the issue of environment pollution. The conference was not to resolve the environment pollution exclusively but to resolve the environmental issues which were Achilles’ Heel in the process of economic development. This conference led to the development of the concept of Sustainable development and the first international intergovernmental organisation: the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). This conference sets the stage for several specific and global environment rules and regulations, some of them are discussed below²⁴.
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, 1971: It is the intergovernmental treaty which requires national and international actions for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. By listing wetlands in Ramsar list the government shows their commitment towards the conservation of wetland and by giving the listed wetland international recognition.
- Convention on International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1973 (CITES)²⁵: The wild animals and plants were traded without any regulation due to which most of the species became endangered. CITES is the only international agreement regulating the trade in wild flora and fauna so that the international trade does not threaten their survival. This agreement provides different levels of protection to the species of animal and plant. For example, it is illegal to trade any animal species or plant variety which are threatened with extinction.
- Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, 1989²⁶: It is the legally binding international environmental agreement which requires state parties to control the movement of hazardous waste in order to protect health and environment from the toxic and untreated waste. This

²¹ Editorial, *A call to action to avoid climate catastrophe*, THE HINDU, Nov. 16, 2022, at 6.

²² Weiss, *supra* note 15, at 1.

²³ U.N. Conference on the Human Environment, *Rep. of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment*, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1 (1972).

²⁴ Louis B. Sohn, *The Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment*, 14 HARV. INT. LAW J. 423, 434 (1973).

²⁵ Convention on International Trade in endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Mar. 2, 1973, 27 U.S.T. 1087, 993 U.N.T.S. 243.

²⁶ Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, Mar. 22, 1989, 1673 U.N.T.S. 125.

convention also obligated the states to develop sound waste management technologies in accordance with the environment principles to dispose of the hazardous wastes.

- Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer²⁷, 1985: It provides the framework for the elimination of the use of substances which deplete the ozone layer. Ozone layer is important to shield earth from ultraviolet radiation making the survival of life on earth possible²⁸. This convention was formed in order to limit the use of chlorine substances which is the reason for depleting Ozone layer. However, it does not include legally binding goals.
- Montreal Protocol on substances that deplete the Ozone Layer, 1987²⁹: This Protocol is supplementary to the Vienna Convention and fulfils the gap left by the above stated convention. As the Vienna convention is not legally binding, the Montreal Protocol lists the ozone depleting substances and makes it mandatory for the parties to the convention to phase out those substances in a prescribed time. New substances are being added from time to time such as the list was amended in 2016 by the Kigali Agreement³⁰.

More than thousand environmental agreements were formed after the Stockholm conference but all the agreements are targeting specific problems³¹ and have their own administrative system of reporting and financing. The environment law was not limited to the specific treaties but also became a significant part of other areas such as the Law of the Sea Convention in 1982 also. The Stockholm conference and later environmental regulations set the ground for the earth summit in Brazil which sowed the seeds of environmental laws and commencement of a new era in International Environmental Law.

1992 and After: Several specific agreements on environment and environmental provisions in other multilateral and bilateral treaties lead to the “treaty congestion”³². States, Intergovernmental organisation, non-governmental organisation decided to meet on the occasion of twentieth anniversary of Stockholm conference and remove the treaty congestion by adopting a comprehensive agreement to resolve the environmental issues amicably. Earth summit in Brazil shifted the focus of stakeholders from local and regional solutions to the international efforts for all environmental problems.

- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), 1992³³: This conference was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. It is also known as Rio Summit or Earth Summit. The conference was held to address the issue of production of toxic components which are causing environmental pollution, reduce the vehicular emission and congestion in cities causing health problems and to find an alternative for fossil fuels. The Rio conference resulted in the enactment of three documents namely, Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21³⁴ and Forest Principles

²⁷ Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer, Mar. 22, 1985, 1513 U.N.T.S. 323.

²⁸ Kaushik & Kaushik, *supra* note 19, at 262.

²⁹ Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Sept. 16, 1987, 1522 U.N.T.S. 3.

³⁰ Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA), *Kigali Amendment to the Montreal protocol: A crucial step in the fight against catastrophic climate change* (2016), <https://eia-international.org/wp-content/uploads/EIA-Kigali-Amendment-to-the-Montreal-Protocol-FINAL.pdf>.

³¹ Edith Brown Weiss, *International Environmental Law: Contemporary Issues and the Emergence of New World Order*, 81 Geo. L. J. 675, 679 (1993).

³² Weiss, *supra* note 15, at 7.

³³ U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development*, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.151/26/Rev.1 (Vol.1), annex 1 (1992).

³⁴ *Id.*, at annex 2.

and two legally binding agreements as Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)³⁵ and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)³⁶.

- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992³⁷: This Convention acknowledges that the climate change is the result of greenhouse gas emission by the developed nations and calls for the world community to address the issue by participating in international response and enacting national environmental legislations. It also sets out the principles for the adaptation and mitigation measures to be taken for climate change.
- Later in 1995, the countries realised that the emission reduction measures as laid down in UNFCCC are not adequate and there is need for further action. In 1997, Kyoto Protocol³⁸ was adopted by the parties to UNFCCC and it came into force in 2005. This Protocol operationalises the Climate Change Convention by setting emission reduction targets for the developed countries. It also provides the mechanism through which the developed countries can achieve their target such as Emission trading, Flexible Market Mechanism and the Clean Development Mechanism. The Protocol sets two reduction phases: from 2008 to 2012 and from 2012 to 2020. In the first phase of 2008 to 2012, the top-down approach was followed but in the Doha meeting in 2012 the parties shifted to the bottom-up approach because of the disagreement between the parties over the emission reduction targets. In the 2015 as per the Paris Agreement the parties have to submit the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC)³⁹, which is an achievable target committed by the parties.
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992⁴⁰: The objective of this convention is to address the unsustainable use of biodiversity. It is a legally binding convention with the main goal to conserve biodiversity through the sustainable use and sharing the benefits arising out of biodiversity in an equitable and fair manner. Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety in 2000 and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation in 2010, supplemented the Convention on Biological Diversity.

International Environmental Laws consist of various treaties and agreements, some of which are discussed above. The countries, governmental, non-governmental organisations, etc., met in 1992 in Rio to create legally binding rules to combat environmental pollution and to provide for a concrete shape to environmental laws, in place 'soft legislations' were adopted with no binding laws⁴¹. The Kyoto protocol is a *de facto* failure till now as in absence of any agreement by the countries on the emission reduction target and any funding mechanisms for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The Bhagavad Gita:

the IPCC's sixth assessment report⁴² published recently in 2022 highlighted the poor environmental conditions and inaction by the nations to solve this problem. The solutions provided till now are limited to mitigating the effect of environment pollution by planting more trees and creating technologies which might help in removing toxic components from the environment and might neutralise them. Another solution to this is adaptation of

³⁵ *Id.*, annex 2, at 210.

³⁶ U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change*, U.N. Doc. FCCC/INFORMAL/84 (1992) (hereinafter UNFCCC).

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dec. 11, 1997, 2303 U.N.T.S. 148.

³⁹ Conference of the Parties, *Adoption of the Paris Agreement*, U.N. Doc. FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1. (2016).

⁴⁰ *Supra* note 35.

⁴¹ Mary Ellen O'Connell, *Enforcement and the success of environmental law*, 3 INDIANA J. GLOB. LEG. STUD. 47, 53 (1995).

⁴² *Supra* note 5.

environmentally vulnerable communities and making them resilient. Both of the above stated solutions are inefficient, expensive and difficult to implement due to limitations in technologies and the required resources. Earth summit was held in 1992 and we are here in 2022 with the situation getting worse, as now the developing countries have also joined the race to carbon emission. After thirty years of failed attempts, it is high time⁴³ we shift our approach of solving these issues merely through technologies but introducing the spiritual flavour to the scientific and technical solutions. The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient text and still holds the integrity to solve the problems faced by humans even in this contemporary world. In the text Lord Krishna explained the concept of the Dharma (right conduct) to be followed by every being in order to achieve overall development. Let us examine the treasure the Bhagavad Gita holds and try find the solution to environmental issues.

Chapter 2, verse 12,

“न त्वेवाहं जातु नासं न त्वं नेमे जनाधिपाः ।
न चैव न भविष्यामः सर्वे वयमतः परम् ॥ 12॥”⁴⁴,

Lord Krishna says that “Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be”. Accordingly, it is the human body which went through birth and death, the Soul is eternal and it will be born again and again.

Chapter 3 verse 12,

“इष्टान्भोगान् हि वो देवा दास्यन्ते यज्ञभाविताः ।
तैर्दत्तान्प्रदायैभ्यो यो भुङ्क्ते स्तेन एव सः ॥ 12॥”⁴⁵,

says that the celestial gods have created air, rain, crop, minerals, soil, etc., which are necessary for human survival. If humans enjoy these for its own selfish motive, then they are verily thieves.

Chapter 3 Verse 13,

“यज्ञशिष्टाशिनः सन्तो मुच्यन्ते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ।
भुञ्जते ते त्वघं पापा ये पचन्त्यात्मकारणात् ॥ 13॥”⁴⁶,

when the food is cooked it should be offered to the god first and then to be consumed as *Prasada*. According to Bhagavad Gita, it is sin to cook for oneself.

Chapter 3, verse 14,

“अन्नाद्भवन्ति भूतानि पर्जन्यादन्नसम्भवः ।
यज्ञाद्भवति पर्जन्यो यज्ञः कर्मसमुद्भवः ॥ 14॥”⁴⁷,

of Gita explained the connection of nature and humans. According to this verse the human and animals live on food, rain is important to grow food, the clouds induce rain which eventually is facilitated through the *yagya*. The *Yagya* is the selfless offering to the god. This infers that human survival is possible if humans respect the environment.

⁴³ World, *We're on highway to climate hell*, UN chief says at COP-27, THE HINDU, Nov. 08, 2022, at 13.

⁴⁴ Swami Mukundananda, *Bhagavad Gita- The Song of God* (2014), <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/2/verse/12>.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/3/verse/12>.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/3/verse/13>.

⁴⁷ *Id.* at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/3/verse/14>.

Chapter 3 verse 27,
“प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्माणि सर्वशः ।
अहङ्कारविमूढात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते ॥ 27॥”⁴⁸,

says that every work is done by the mechanism of mind, body and senses, controlled by *Prakriti* i.e., mother nature. Hence Every work is controlled by nature and if we harm nature then nature has the power to affect living beings adversely.

In Chapter 3 verse 34,
“इन्द्रियस्येन्द्रियस्यार्थं रागद्वेषौ व्यवस्थितौ ।
तयोर्न वशमागच्छेत्तौ हास्य परिपन्थिनौ ॥ 34॥”⁴⁹,

Lord Krishna emphasised that natural behaviour of senses is to feel attachment and aversions but one should not be controlled by the senses.

By analysing Chapter 7, verse 4,7,8 and 9
“भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥ 4॥⁵⁰
मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किञ्चिदस्ति धनञ्जय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ 7॥⁵¹
रसोऽहमप्सु कौन्तेय प्रभास्मि शशिसूर्ययोः ।
प्रणवः सर्ववेदेषु शब्दः खे पौरुषं नृषु ॥ 8॥⁵²
पुण्यो गन्धः पृथिव्यां च तेजश्चास्मि विभावसौ ।
जीवनं सर्वभूतेषु तपश्चास्मि तपस्विषु ॥ 9॥”⁵³,

we can say that the Lord himself confirms that he is present in the water, land, air, mind, intelligence, sun, moon and senses and he is enforcing all the elements. Each of these elements are beautifully arranged like a pearl necklace. If the string is pulled there will be no existence of the necklace. Same is for the environment, if any element is disturbed then the whole system will become unstable.

There is a mutual coexistence between man and nature and this cooperation brings happiness and peace in the world. The attitude of exploitation will only bring misery.

The lord has himself created the entire system and left it for humans to enjoy.

Chapter 14 verse 3 and 4,
“मम योनिर्महद् ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् ।
सम्भवः सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ 3॥
सर्वयोनिषु कौन्तेय मूर्तयः सम्भवन्ति याः ।
तासां ब्रह्म महद्योनिरहं बीजप्रदः पिता ॥ 4॥”⁵⁴,

⁴⁸ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/3/verse/27>.

⁴⁹ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/3/verse/34>.

⁵⁰ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/7/verse/4>.

⁵¹ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/7/verse/7>.

⁵² Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/7/verse/8>.

⁵³ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/7/verse/9>.

⁵⁴ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/14/verse/3-4>.

Nature is described as the womb from which everything originates and Lord Krishna is the seed giving Father for all the species.

According to Chapter 14 verse 5,
“सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥ 5॥”⁵⁵,

there are three *Gunas*, firstly *Sattva guna* (goodness), secondly *Rajo guna* (passion) and the last is *Tamas guna* (ignorance). These three *guna* binds the soul to the body.

Chapter 14 verse 6,
“तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥ 6॥”⁵⁶,

Sattva guna being the purer, the soul detached itself from the material world and realised the god.

Chapter 14 verse 7,
“रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥ 7॥”⁵⁷,

explains *Rajo guna*, arises from worldly desires and affections. It binds the soul to material existence. The person gets engrossed in worldly pursuit of career, family, home, prestige, status, etc.

Chapter 14 verse 8,
“तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥ 8॥”⁵⁸

elaborates *tamas guna*, an act which is born of ignorance. The person loses their sense to discriminate between what is right and what is wrong and practices immoral behaviour for fulfilling their self-will.

Earth is the abode of God, created by him and given to humans for their self-development. God is present in each and every element. The Lord Krishna requires the living being to sustainably utilise the materials present on this earth and for that human requires senses. Lord Krishna recognises that it is the nature of senses to get attached which develops selfishness, in consequence the balance between man and nature is disturbed. He is not asking from the living beings to stop consuming what is necessary but to eradicate the sense of attachment. If humans observe the practice of utilising the material nature by realising if it is bare necessities for the maintenance of our body and with the consciousness to service the God then the imbalance caused by selfishness and greed can be corrected⁵⁹.

⁵⁵ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/14/verse/5>.

⁵⁶ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/14/verse/6>.

⁵⁷ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/14/verse/7>.

⁵⁸ Id. at <https://www.holy-bhagavad-gita.org/Chapter/14/verse/8>.

⁵⁹ Jayita Pramanik & Bijan Sarkar, *Environment and Environmental Awareness in the Bhagavad Gita*, 5 INT. J. RES. ANAL. REV. 251u, 252u-254u (2018).

Conclusion And Suggestions:

Mother earth comprises all the elements required by humans to survive. No other planet in our Solar System and beyond in our knowledge is conducive for life. Humans only have this planet to live until scientists might be able to inhabit some other planet as an alternative place to live. Humans in their act of ignorance have harmed nature to a great extent. The consequences are visible to everyone as the intensity and frequency of the natural calamities has increased. Every year higher temperatures are recorded by the scientists⁶⁰. The industrial revolution in the 1750s increased the demands of fuel for machines and transportation resulting in increased production. Resulting in increased production to suffice the demands of product from the far-off places and fuelled the human urge for accumulation of resources. By mechanisation now the humans are even able to exploit those areas and resources which were not earlier accessible. Economic growth after the second world war increased exponentially resulting in an increase of demand for resources and this demand came at the cost of environment which is being paid by every living being on Earth today. As the Environmental issues became an obstacle in the path of sustainable economic development, the international community decided to address this issue in the Stockholm conference in 1972. This was the first half-hearted international effort to combat environmental pollution. After this convention International environmental laws have become an important area for the legislators. Several agreements and treaties became part of international environmental laws. The Earth summit in 1992 was the first serious step towards the environmental problem but it too left the environmentalist with disappointment as no binding rules were agreed upon. Later in 1995 the countries again met and set some binding emission reduction targets for the developed countries. Since 1995 the countries meet every year to discuss the targets achieved and to be achieved. According to the scientists we have reached the threshold limit of greenhouse gases in the environment. The 27th Conference of Parties held in November 2022 under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change⁶¹ also concluded as another disappointment for environmentalists and the vulnerable countries. It's been three decades that the nations are trying to reach a consensus to combat environmental pollution. It's high time we should change our approach towards environmental problems. Efforts to resolve the issue of environmental pollution are already being made on the scientific and technological solutions lines but with no effective results. All humans on this earth should feel their responsibilities towards nature. But the question still arises is what an individual can do in its capacity to protect the environment. The answers lie in the holy Bhagavad Gita.

Environment influences rich and poor evenly. During COVID-19 pandemic the humans were confined to their homes and got the chance to realise that they should control their senses as this will only leads to destruction. Where the modern legal system limits the power of states, duties of individuals are barely mentioned. India is a land of cultural diversity where different religious communities live together in harmony. Preservation of nature is basic essence of Indian society since time immemorial. After the Second World War, India accorded the principle of Panchsheel⁶² which aided in averting the threat of Third World War. Now when the world community is going through another dilemma to resolve the environmental issues, India can guide and propagate the Bhagavad Gita as a lightning conductor.

⁶⁰ Text & Content, *Extreme climate is the new normal*, THE HINDU, Nov. 18, 2022, at 10.

⁶¹ Editorial, *The Guardian view on COP27: this is no time for apathy or complacency*, THE GUARDIAN (Nov. 15, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/15/the-guardian-view-on-cop27-this-is-on-time-for-apaty-or-complacency>.

⁶² MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, PANCHSHEEL (1954), https://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/191_panchsheel.pdf.

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