Deep Ecology

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Arne Naess is considered to be the founder of deep ecology movement. The term deep ecology became prominent when Arne Naess published a paper namely; “The shallow and the Deep, Long Range Ecology Movement: A Summary”. Deep ecology is a movement, which seeks alternative models for metaphysics, epistemology and environmental ethics. It was a reaction to the excesses of social paradigm. According to deep ecology, the present relationship between man and nature is an unhealthy one and the characteristic feature of such a relation is exploitation, manipulation, disrespect and domination. As a result, there is no harmony between man and nature and both exist as distinct entities. Under the term deep ecology, there is a wide range of writers with different intellectual positions. One of the varieties is explained by Peter Hay. He says “we are left with two interlocked but distinct and not always mutually comfortable senses of the term ‘deep ecology’: 

• The first of these is deep ecology as a movement,
• the second deep ecology as a philosophy.
In the former sense ‘deep ecology’ is an umbrella term its meaning somewhat smeared.”

The environmental crisis of today’s world is the result of unhealthy relationship of man with nature according to deep ecologists this relation is artificially created one. So a break from such artificial bond is needed and harmonious relationship should be established.

Deep ecology movement comes under synergistic environmental philosophy, Peter. S. Wenz defines synergistic environmental ethics as follows.

“Synergistic environmental ethics is the view that simultaneous respect for people and nature improves outcomes for both. In general, people benefit from valuing nature for itself because this helps people avoid oppressing one another. It also helps people attain their own highest good. In general nature benefits when all people are respected, because biologically diverse environment that many poor people depend on will be spared, out of respect for those people. Also, toxic pollution will be reduced when all people are respected, because not a person’s exposure to this pollution will be considered acceptable.”

Under synergistic environmental ethics, he includes deep ecology, eco feminism and land ethics.

Concept:

The concept of deep ecology emerged as a result of streams of environmentalism in the twentieth century. Many thinkers and writers were questioning the dominant attitude of modern societies in their approach to environment. This ‘ecological consciousness’ is the starting point of deep ecology. The dominant attitudes of modern society with regard to environment and deep ecologist’s reaction are noteworthy. Timothy Doyle and Doug mc Eachern point out some main differences.

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<th>Dominant Attitude</th>
<th>Deep Ecology</th>
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<td>Domination over nature</td>
<td>Harmony with nature</td>
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<td>Nature a resource, intrinsic value</td>
<td>Natural environment</td>
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<td>Confined to humans</td>
<td>Valued for biocentric egalitarian</td>
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<td>Ample resources or substitutes</td>
<td>Earth supplies limited</td>
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<td>Material economic growth a predominant goal</td>
<td>Non material goals, especially self-realization</td>
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<td>Consumerism</td>
<td>Doing with enough / recycling</td>
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<td>Competitive life style</td>
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Arne Naess questioned the dominant assumption that nature is a resource. The concept of nature as that which is rich and resources is the unquestioned concept in western philosophy. Deep ecology works as a thread, which bonds between humans with non-human nature. The main assumption of Deep ecology is interconnectedness. According to Deep ecologists, the world is intrinsically interconnected. There is no dividing line between living and non-living humans and humans have the same role in nature. Deep ecology is a process, which is trying to surpass all sorts of divisions. It is a liberating movement, which stands for educating the masses to the spiritual development and local autonomy.
The major influencing factors in the process of Deep Ecology movement include Eastern and Western thoughts. Eastern traditions provided a radically different aspects of relationship with man and nature. The leading social philosophers of west who were critical of modern societies and its dominant attitudes towards environment were failed to give a strong metaphysical out look to their views. Deep ecology filled his gap by providing a new metaphysics, which identified humans with non-human nature. Arne Naess calls this identity as “biological equalitarianism”. The contrast between shallow ecology and deep ecology is interesting, shallow ecology is called shallow in the sense that the paradigm is mainly oriented towards anthropocentrism.

The main purpose of shallow ecology is to protect environment for human well being. Deep ecology is calls for a rethinking our relationship with nature. It lies in being identifies with self and nature. According to Val Plumwood this identification of self and nature is of three kinds, in distinguishability, expansion of self, and transcendence of self.

Explaining deep ecology movement, Arne Naess says that “in so far as ecology movements deserve our attention, they are eco philosophical rather than ecological. Ecology is a limited science, which makes use of scientific methods. Philosophy is the most general forum of which debate on fundamentals descriptive as well as prescriptive and political philosophy is one of its subsections. By an esosophy I mean a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. A philosophy as a kind of soft- wisdom is openly normative, it contains both norms, rates, postulatars, value priority announcements and hypothesis concerning the states of affairs in our universe. Wisdom is policy wisdom, prescription, not only scientific description and prediction.

Arne Naess lists the seven basic principles, which are fundamental to deep ecology.

1. Rejection of the man in the environment image in favor of the relational total field image.
2. Biospherical Equalitarianism in principle
3. Principles of diversity and of symbiosis
4. Anti class posture
5. Fight against pollution and resource depletion
6. Complexity not complication
7. Local autonomy and decentralization

Thus, deep ecologists have a world view that are deviating points and holistic views in contrast to the advocates of unlimited resource utilization and optimum economic growth.

REFERENCES:
6. Carolyn Merchant, ed; *op.cit.*, pp.123-24
7. Peter Hay, *op.cit.*, p.43