

EDITORIAL

Philosophers and theologians, scientists and statesmen, religious leaders and people of all disciplines earnestly discuss about the decisive question of the protection of our planet, the Mother Earth. Human consciousness, therefore, is in the process of becoming more and more aware of the environmental ethics and ecology. There are a number of crucial ethical and economic issues involved in the environmental decisions we take at various national and international summits and conferences. *Journal of Dharma* takes up in this number one of such significant issues - *Eco-harmony Vs Economic Equity* - for analysis and this may help our readers for further research, reflection and action.

Modern economy and technological developments have become a threat to the world's eco-system that supports life in the universe. The last three numbers of the *Journal* have exclusively discussed those aspects of ecology from a variety of perspectives and it has been concluded that we need to arrest the accelerating threats on environment and our life in this planet. Excessive use of fossil fuels subject the globe to severe ecological stress. Industrial nations are the great offenders in this case and developing nations do not seem to have fully realized the implications of this stress. Industrial waste and its dumping cause health hazards. While constant application of chemical fertilisers have made the soil sterile, extensive use of pesticide has poisoned the soil. Environmental degradation caused by massive pollution of air, water and land threatens our very life on the Mother Earth.

Ecology and economy must be seen as integral and both are vital for our existence in this beautiful planet. To have a sound economy we must have a healthy environment. Promotion of both eco-harmony and economic equity is very urgent for a sustainable development. Unfortunately, the basic mistake of modern economy is its false assumption that our environment has inexhaustible resources to be exploited and has infinite capacity to adjust to the ecological stress. This false notion takes the developing nations to over exploitative use of natural resources. It distorts ecological

balance and will destroy the environmental fabric of life. Modern economics has also failed to provide the world with economic equity and to take note of the sustenance of the ecological system as a vital factor of sound economics.

An alternative, equitable economics, which promotes eco-harmony, is the need of the hour. In our endeavour to create an environmental economics North and South, developed and less developed countries have to be united. On December 15, 1993 delegations from 117 countries approved by consensus the new General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). This was to spearhead global economic growth and to curtail the burden on earth's environmental systems in the 21st century. Will the New Agreement render a substantial contribution towards establishing eco-harmony and economic equity ?

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