

## MAN'S EXISTENTIAL STAY: ENVIRONMENTAL THOUGHT OF SREE SREE THAKUR ANUKULCHANDRA

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### **Abstract**

*This is an inquiry into the unique worldview of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra about the environment, who fuses spiritual, ecological, and existential perspectives into a unique thought of "Being and Becoming." Unlike conventional environmental discourse, which often limits itself to physical or biological factors, Thakur's holistic approach calls for an integrated understanding of the physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions of the environment. His thoughts enhance a return to both natural harmony and inner balance as the cornerstones of sustainable living and civilization. Drawing inspiration from cosmology, ecological ethics, and contemporary environmental challenges of Vedic paradigms, this study explores Sree Sree Thakur's thought as a compelling alternative paradigm—one that addresses today's ecological crises through value-driven ecological awareness and integrated living.*

### **Keywords:**

*Satsang, Being and Becoming, Ecology, Environment, Existence, Sustainability etc.*

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## **Introduction**

The word “environment” in general understanding refers to the areal, territorial and aquatic realms, along with the entire living world around us. But with such narrow compartmentalization, the term contemporary environmental crisis is deeply existential, not just ecological. While mainstream environmental studies are rich in data and policy analysis, they often overlook the psychological and metaphysical roots of humanity’s estrangement from nature. In this context, Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra’s environmental thought offers a transformative perspective: the environment is not merely an external backdrop but the very foundation of existence. The idea of the environment is established by differently by the different environmentalists and scholars, this work shall attempt to reproduce and analyze Thakur’s unique view on the same as reflected in His life and works. His understanding and exposition of the concept of the environment are so novel and all-encompassing that to understand His, approach, one has to transcend the limiting boundaries within which one has to conceive and visualize the environment. This paper seeks to explore and interpret Thakur’s environmental ideas as expressed through his life, actions, and writings. Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra, born in 1888 in Himaitpur (now Bangladesh) (Hauserman, 1962), was a spiritual leader, physician, educator, and the founder of the ‘Satsang’ movement—a unique synthesis of science, spirituality, philanthropy, culture and social reform. After the partition of India, He relocated to Deoghar (now in Jharkhand, India), where the ‘Satsang’ continues to thrive under his successors. Sree Sree Thakur’s thought blends Vedic insight, scientific reasoning, and ethical activism into a life-affirming, nature-centric worldview.

The Scholars of traditional Environmental Science like, Allaby and Park (2017), define ‘environment’ as the sum of external biotic and abiotic factors influencing organisms. Similarly, Douglas and Holland (in Filho) describe it as the external influences on living beings. More recent scholarship, however, has broadened this view. Warde, Robin, and Sorlin (2018) see the environment as a discourse on human responsibility across history. ‘Psychological ecology,’ as advanced by Kurt Lewin, focuses on how individuals perceive and develop within their environments (Heft, 1988).

These perspectives resonate with Sree Sree Thakur’s view, which sees the environment not as a static object but as a dynamic field shaped by consciousness and moral agency. The environmental thought of Sree Sree Thakur is rooted in a deeply integrated view of Nature, Man and Morality. This work adopts a qualitative, interpretive approach, analyzing Sree Sree Thakur’s discourses, letters, and writings.

These texts are examined alongside classical Vedic literature and modern environmental thought to contextualize his philosophy. The study spans multiple disciplines—including spirituality, ecology, sociology, and psychology—to present a comprehensive view of the environment as both cosmos and consciousness.

**I. View on Ecology and Inter-interestedness:** Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's perspective on ecology transcends conventional environmentalism by rooting ecological consciousness in a deeply spiritual ontology. For Thakur, all forms of life—from the microscopic to the cosmic—constitute an integrated, dynamic continuum wherein each entity's existence is inherently linked to the well-being of the whole. This mutual interdependence is not merely a biological fact but a manifestation of a divine order, reflecting the universal rhythm of creation, sustenance, and transformation. The ecological fabric, therefore, is not an inert backdrop for human activity but a sacred matrix in which human beings must participate with reverence, responsibility, and insight. Sree Sree Thakur emphasizes that any disruption in this harmony—caused by ignorance, apathy, or exploitation—results not only in environmental degradation but in a deeper spiritual and societal unraveling. He equates the maintenance of the environment with *Man's existential stay* and in doing so warns in unequivocal terms:

“When understanding of the environment is hazy, Unaccomplished and inactive—destiny is doomed” (Anukulchandra, 1986, Pg. 41).

This pronouncement reflects his conviction that ecological awareness is a spiritual imperative—a duty that stems from recognizing the sacred interrelationship among all beings. According to Thakur, human destiny is inextricably tied to the degree of conscious alignment with this interrelatedness. Neglecting the interconnectedness of life leads to fragmentation—of self, society, and nature. In contrast, fostering ecological sensibility becomes a path to spiritual fulfillment, social cohesion, and sustainable living. Thus, for Thakur, environmental engagement is not optional or peripheral; it is essential to realizing one's existential purpose and actualizing a society grounded in Dharma. His vision anticipates modern discourses on deep ecology and spiritual ecology, positioning environmental stewardship as a cornerstone of holistic human development.

**II. Idea of Being and Becoming:** Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's notion of “Being and Becoming” encapsulates a dynamic evolutionary process wherein self-realization unfolds through an ever-deepening harmony with nature and existence. Far from being a static ideal, “being” represents the rootedness of the self in the essential order of life, while “becoming” reflects the unfolding of one's innate potential through purposeful engagement with the environment. This process is not

isolated within the individual psyche but is fundamentally relational—anchored in ecological awareness and reverence for life. As Thakur suggests, environmental sensitivity acts as a vital catalyst for the cultivation of inner consciousness, from which moral discernment and ethical conduct naturally emerge. The natural world, in this view, serves not merely as a resource but as a formative context in which human character, values, and awareness evolve.

Significantly, Thakur situates environmental crisis within a broader existential and spiritual framework. He identifies human greed, unchecked materialism, and alienation from nature not simply as causes of ecological imbalance but as deep moral and ontological disorders. These distortions, he implies, represent a severance from the evolutionary flow of “becoming,” leading to personal fragmentation and societal disintegration. As noted in Amritak (2024, p. 295), such deviations from the natural order are symptomatic of a failure to recognize the sacred interdependence that sustains life. For Thakur, restoring this bond is essential to achieving both personal fulfillment and collective well-being. His philosophy thus anticipates key themes in contemporary ecological ethics, especially those that view the environmental crisis as a spiritual crisis of modern civilization. The concept of “Being and Becoming” is not only a framework for individual spiritual growth but also a call to ecological responsibility—urging each person to live in attunement to the rhythms of nature, thereby actualizing their highest potential in service of a more harmonious and sustainable world.

**III. His View on Cosmology:** Anukulchandra’s ecological worldview is profoundly informed by a cosmological vision rooted in the Vedic tradition, particularly drawing upon the metaphysical insights of the Purusha Sukta and Nasadiya Sukta (Amritak. 2024, pp. 282-283). These hymns articulate the emergence of the cosmos from a singular, undivided Absolute—portraying the unity and interdependence of all existence, whether sentient (*chetana*) or insentient (*achetana*).

Thakur reinterprets this ancient cosmology to emphasize the inseparability of the individual and the environment, declaring:

Environment is constituted of individual existence, environment imparts impulse, existence adopts it according to its necessity; existence evolves into distinctiveness and becomes environment around other existences, therefore, no existence- no environment; Providence provides every individual according to its necessity through existential environment. - (Anukulchandra, 1986, Pg. 139)

Our world is a space defined by its diversity; it is an environment teeming with rivers, oceans, mountains, varied plants, variegated animal life and divergent climatic conditions; Thakur’s contemplations and composition present picturesque

visions of this very world. This extreme assertion reveals a reciprocal ontological relationship between the self and the cosmos. In this view, the environment is not an external entity or inert backdrop but an extension and expression of individual and collective beings. The absence of individual existence would negate the very notion of environment, and vice versa. Such a conception reflects a holistic paradigm, where the microcosm (individual) and the macrocosm (cosmic order) are inherently unified.

Thakur's cosmological stance parallels Vedantic thought, particularly Advaita Vedanta, wherein Brahman—the ultimate, undivided reality—is the substratum of all forms and phenomena. The perceived multiplicity of nature is, therefore, not a fragmentation but a manifestation of one indivisible essence. This ontological monism translates, in Thakur's thought, into an ethic of deep ecological responsibility. Since all beings share a common origin and essence, any harm to the environment is ultimately a violation of one's existential ground. By locating environmental integrity within the framework of metaphysical unity; Thakur transcends anthropocentric ethics and aligns with what modern ecological philosophy terms deep ecology. His interpretation calls for a re-sacralization of nature—not as an object to be exploited, but as a manifestation of the same reality that dwells within the self. Thus, ecological care becomes a spiritual necessity, inseparable from the realization of cosmic unity and the practice of Dharma.

**IV. The Symbolism of Sun and Water:** In the holistic worldview of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra, natural elements like the sun and water are not merely physical necessities but deeply symbolic archetypes central to both metaphysical understanding and sustainable living. The sun, referred to frequently in his discourses, represents the supreme source of energy, life, and order. He likens solar energy to the vital pranic flow that sustains biological rhythms and consciousness itself, stating that without the regulating influence of the sun, “life would disintegrate into chaos” (Alochana-Prasange, Vol. VII, 17.07.1946). The sun thus becomes a metaphor for divine presence and guidance, analogous to the Sadguru's radiant influence in human life.

Water, on the other hand, is revered as a life-giving, purifying force—a tangible manifestation of nurturing femininity and the cyclicity of existence. For Thakur, water's flow mirrors the dharma of life—to move, to nourish, and to rejuvenate. His emphasis on water conservation is not just utilitarian but deeply dharmic: to preserve water is to align with nature's sacred rhythm. This perspective is vividly realized in his practical involvement with the Ganga Darwa Project, (Diprakshi VI, 18.01.1960) a project envisioned to restore the sanctity and usability of sacred water bodies, and in the implementation of rainwater harvesting systems

at Satsang Ashram—long before such methods became mainstream in Indian environmental policy. These efforts were not isolated acts of conservation but part of a comprehensive spiritual ecology. The Satsang's practices around water resource management—recognized officially by the Ministry of Jal Shakti (1<sup>st</sup> prize, 2<sup>nd</sup> National Water Awards in the year of 2020)- embody what might be called 'Environmental Dharma,' integrating devotion, science, and sustainability. His teachings illustrate how symbolic reverence for nature's elements must translate into actionable care. As Amritak (2024) notes, "the ecological thought of Sree Sree Thakur was rooted in reverence but expressed through rigorous implementation" (p. 284). Thus, sun and water in Thakur's philosophy are more than metaphors; they are epistemological pillars of an integrated view of life where spirituality mandates ecological responsibility, and devotion manifests through stewardship of the Earth.

**V. The 'Satsang': A living Example of Eco-Spirituality:** The Satsang Ashram serves as a dynamic embodiment of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra's environmental philosophy, functioning not merely as a spiritual center but as a microcosmic ecological sanctuary. Designed to reflect his principle of integration between nature and nurture, the ashram operates as a living ecosystem where flora, fauna, human activity, and architectural structures exist in a carefully maintained balance. This harmonious coexistence is not incidental but deeply rooted in the Vedic principle of [ta—the cosmic order that governs both the universe and the moral conduct of life. Thakur's urge for every 'Satsang' ashram to integrate the spiritual with the ecological. Every tree planted, every animal tended, and every building constructed is guided by a consciousness of existential interdependence. The environment is not viewed as an external backdrop but as an inward extension of being, making ecological care a sacred duty. Practices such as organic farming, rainwater harvesting, biogas use, and native afforestation are embedded in the daily operations of the ashram—long before such practices were institutionalized as "green" or "sustainable." The Satsang "materializes a form of eco-spiritualism where sustainability is not a goal but a natural outcome of devotion" (Amritak. 2024, p. 284). In this way, the 'Satsang' not only disseminates Sree Sree Thakur's teachings but also enacts them as environmental praxis, demonstrating how spiritual ideology can manifest in ecological responsibility and how sacred geography can inspire sustainable living.

### **Concluding Observations**

The environmental thought of Sree Sree Thakur Anukulchandra visualizes a comprehensive and integrative vision that unites nature, spirit, and society into a coherent sociocultural, ethical and existential framework. Rooted in the principles of interdependence and reverence, his thought transcends conventional

environmentalism by placing ecological consciousness within a socio-spiritual and civilizational context. At the heart of his message is a call to shift the foundation of human behavior—from consumption to consciousness, from alienation to belonging, and from exploitation to reverence. This philosophical pivot requires more than policy reforms; it demands a transformation in human character and collective orientation. His teachings—simultaneously mystical, practical, and scientific—lay the groundwork for an eco-centric ethic of existence, where environmental stewardship is not an obligation but an expression of love and alignment with Being.

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