

ENVIRONMENT AND SPIRITUALITY: GITA — A NEW VISION

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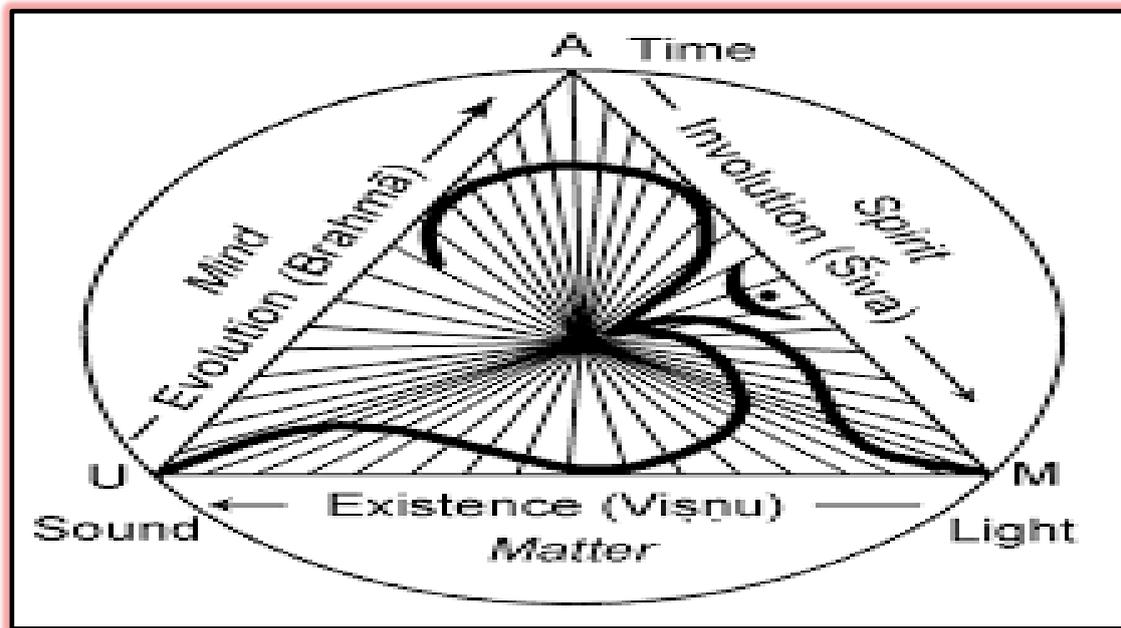
Abstract: In the face of growing environmental deterioration, the need to blend spiritual insights with ecological action has become more evident. This paper presents a comprehensive "Gita Vision," an interpretation of the Bhagavad Gita's teachings focused on environmental ethics, sustainability, and ecological stewardship. Using textual analysis, comparative philosophical study, and modern environmental theory, the article asserts that key Gita concepts such as dharma, nishkama karma, yajna, the three gunas, and the unity of the Self (Atman/Paramatma) offer a strong basis for an ethical framework that can shape current environmental policy, education, and personal practices. The study presents a conceptual model for spiritual-ecological change and explores the practical implications for environmental governance, community initiatives, and individual lifestyles. Lastly, the paper suggests future directions for interdisciplinary research that connect Indological studies, environmental humanities, and sustainability science.

Keywords: Bhagavad Gita, environmental ethics, spiritual ecology, dharma, nishkama karma, yajna, sustainability, Indian philosophy

1.0 Introduction

The twenty-first century presents unprecedented ecological challenges—climate change, biodiversity loss, soil degradation, water scarcity, and pollution—that require not only technological solutions but also profound cultural and moral changes. The environmental humanities and spiritual ecology movements have argued that values, worldviews, and spiritual sensitivities are essential to this transition (Taylor, 2009; Callicott & Tucker, 2014). Among scriptural resources, the Indian Bhagavad Gita has long offered ethical and ontological viewpoints that can be reinterpreted for ecological purposes. This paper presents a systematic research article outlining a "Gita Vision" for environmental sustainability. The Gita is a dialogic text set within the Mahabharata epic. Though traditionally seen as a guide to individual liberation and righteous duty, its metaphysics and ethics contain rich material for an ecological reinterpretation: the presence of the Divine in nature, the duty of right conduct (dharma), the ethic of action without attachment (nishkama karma), and the idea of cyclical reciprocity (yajna). This article asks: How can these teachings be re-examined to create a coherent spiritual-ecological ethic suited to today's environmental crises?

2.0 OM kara concept in the Environment



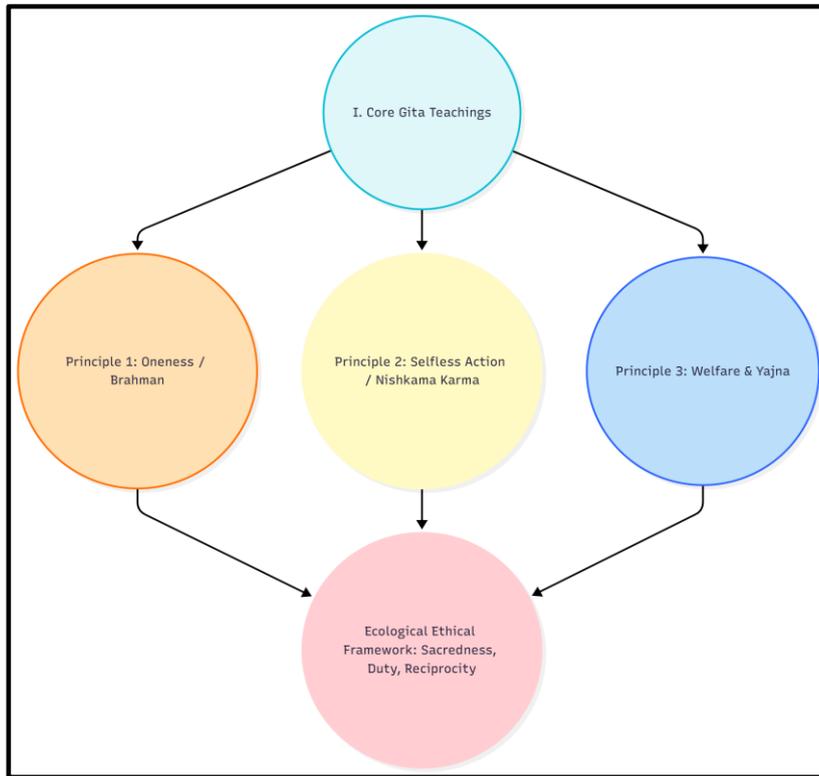
The Triad of Om kara (Pokhrel, 2023)

Several Vedic texts describe the origin of creation as emerging from a primordial sound called OM (Pranava). This sound is considered a composite of the phonetic elements A, U, and M, representing the fundamental vibrational frequency from which the universe and celestial bodies originated. In this conceptual framework, Om functions as a universal resonance or energy field that facilitates the connection between individual consciousness (the inner self) and the cosmic source or creator of the universe (Pokhrel, 2023). Within environmental philosophy, this tripartite interpretation of Om offers a holistic ecological worldview, where the material, energetic, and unmanifest aspects of nature are understood as interdependent. The sound Om thus signifies the unity and continuity of all life forms and natural processes, resonating with the principle that human consciousness (atman) is inherently connected with the universal ecological fabric (brahman) (Śaṅkarācārya, Commentary on Maṇḍukya Upaniṣad). Meditation on OM is therefore not merely a spiritual exercise but a philosophical acknowledgment of environmental interconnectedness, urging humans to recognize themselves as participants within, rather than masters over, the biosphere.

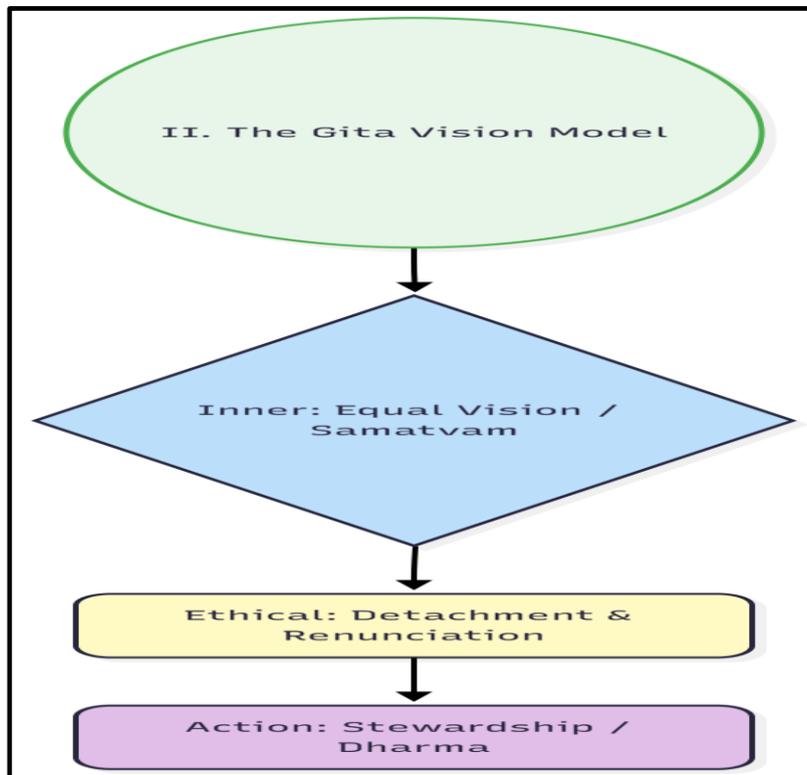
By emphasizing that the same cosmic vibration permeates the human being and the environment, the Upanishad's understanding of OM promotes an ethic of ecological harmony, sustainability, and reverence for all forms of life. In the context of contemporary environmental challenges, this worldview encourages a shift from anthropocentric exploitation to eco-centric responsibility, affirming that the well-being of humanity is inseparable from the well-being of the Earth.

2.1 Objectives

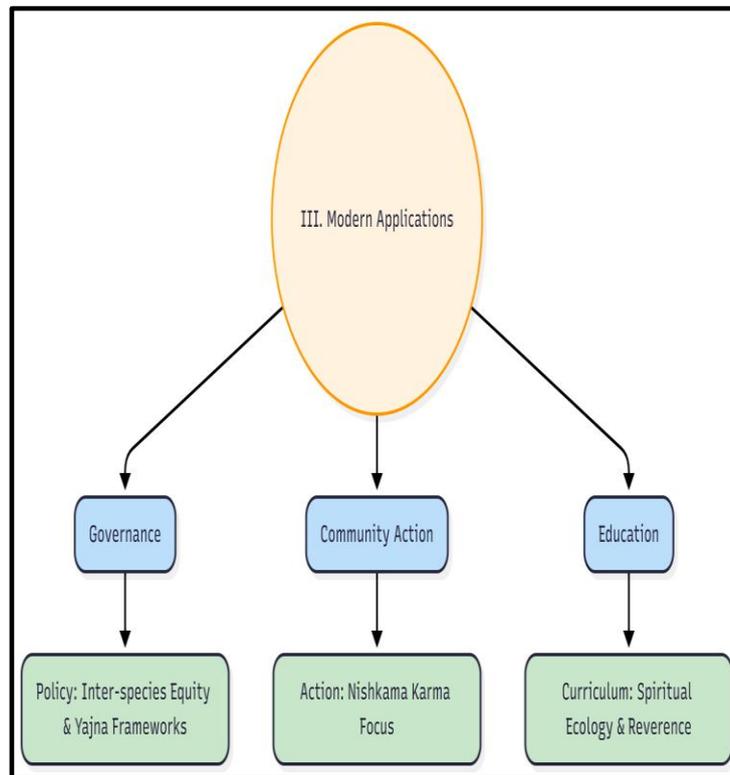
- Systematically interpret central Bhagavad Gita teachings to develop an ecological ethical framework.
- Propose a conceptual model of the Gita Vision that links inner transformation with ecological practice.
- Describe applications of the model to modern environmental governance, education, and community action.



Core Gita techniques related to the Ecology system



The Gita Vision Model



3.0 Modern Environmental Application

3.1 Core Gita Concepts Relevant to Ecology: A philosophical framework based on connection, management, and moral obligation toward nature is presented in the Bhagavad Gita to underpin an ecological worldview. The Gita contains a few fundamental ideas that are closely related to sustainability and environmental ethics.

3.2 The Cosmic Unity of Existence: The creator: According to the Gita, all things, living and non-living, are expressions of the Creator, the one universal truth. This suggests that there is a spiritual nature shared by people, animals, plants, water, land, and air (Bhagavad Gita 7:7; 10:39) (Radhakrishnan, 1948). The damaging nature is the same as injuring the Self wider; this ontological oneness promotes care for the environment.

3.3 Nature as a Living, Transforming System: According to Bhagavad Gita 7:4, Prakriti is not inanimate matter but rather a self-regulating, dynamic ecological force made up of five basic elements: fire (agni), water (Jal), air (vayu), space(akasha), and earth (prithvi). This comprehensive explanation reflects how biotic and abiotic elements interact to maintain equilibrium in modern ecosystem research. (Sharma, 2011)

3.4 Interdependence of All Life Forms: According to Lord Krishna, the cosmos is a complex web in which all living things are interdependent (Bhagavad Gita 9:10; 13:27–28). This is like the contemporary ecology concept of environmental interaction.

3.5 Harmony in Sacrifice with Nature: In accordance with the Gita, humanity, spirits, animals, and nature itself all exchange and sacrifice with one another to perpetuate existence (Bhagavad Gita 3:10 -16). This illustrates an early example of ecological reciprocity, according to which people must give back to nature rather than just take use of it. (Dwivedi, 1993)

3.6 The Modern Framework of Sustainability: A significant topic in the present global discussion is the concept of sustainable development, which aims to balance the limited resources of the natural world with human desires for expansion. It aims to strike a balance between social justice, economic growth, and ecological integrity so that current demands are satisfied without endangering the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own. (World Environment and Development Commission, 1987). Through frameworks like the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the international community has accomplished progress in

recent years in determining ecological thresholds and setting quantifiable sustainability objectives (United Nations, 2015). However, escalating consumer demands, climate change, biodiversity loss, and unequal resource distribution make it difficult to put sustainability principles into effect, even with more knowledge and international agreements (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, while sustainable development offers a framework for peaceful advancement, real sustainability necessitates environmental awareness, collective ethical responsibility, and revolutionary adjustments to economic institutions, government, and human conduct.

3.7 Cooperation among Humanity and Nature and Moral Responsibility: The biosphere - the portion of the Earth where the hydrosphere, atmosphere, and lithosphere interact to support living systems is essential to human life (Odum, 1971). The same components that make up the Earth also make up the human body, which sustains itself through constant interaction with the natural world. Humans, however, frequently overuse natural resources beyond their fundamental needs due to excessive desire and possessiveness, which causes pollution, ecological imbalance, and crises connected to climate change (Rockstrom et al., 2009). This ethical aspect is explored in the Bhagavad Gita, which emphasizes the idea of *Yajna*, or the reciprocal feeding of humans and nature, and cautions that failure to fulfil this obligation leads to chaos and misery (Bhagavad Gita 3:10–16).

4.0 Conclusion

Although the Bhagavad Gita was composed several thousand years ago, its spiritual ecology emphasizes that nature is a living manifestation of the Divine, interconnected with all beings, rather than an external object to be dominated. Together, the principles of cosmic unity (Brahman-Atman unity of being), ecological reciprocation (*Yajna*), and selfless action (*Nishkama Karma*) form a holistic ethical framework that can guide humanity toward sustainable living. The "Gita Vision" put forth in this study reinterprets these teachings as a model for contemporary ecological ethics that combines environmental responsibility with inner transformation. It acts as an indicator that true sustainability begins with awareness-realizing that damaging the environment is essentially damaging oneself. Humanity is being encouraged to realign its awareness with the cosmic rhythm of harmony and balance through the meditative consciousness of OM as the vibrational essence of creation. In practical terms, this is inspired by the Gita perspective suggests the implementation of laws, educational programs, and neighbourhood initiatives that foster ecological awareness, moderation, and respect for life. Even if policy changes and technological advancements are essential, they are not complete without a corresponding shift in human values. The Gita Vision thus provides a route toward an eco-centric civilization that upholds both material progress and moral duty toward the planet by fusing spiritual insight with environmental science. Ultimately, the Bhagavad Gita's ecological message is clear: to live righteously (*dharma*) is to live in harmony with the Earth. When humanity embraces this unity of the self and nature, sustainability ceases to be a policy goal and becomes a way of being rooted in wisdom, compassion, and sacred responsibility toward all creation.

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