Language matters: Analysing the national environmental policy of India (2006) from an ecolinguistic discourse analytic perspective

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Midhun Mohan

Department of English, Central University of Tamil Nadu, India.
Email: midhunmohan764@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to scrutinize the discursive practices which are as important as the practical steps when it comes to environmental management. The role of discursive practices when it comes to environmental preservation is overlooked by the practitioners. While the previous studies were focusing more on the political and ideological side of the policy taken for the study, the discursive side remained unexamined. By focusing more on the harmful discursive practices regrading environment such as anthropocentric language, phrases, usages used in the National environment policy, the study offers a fresh perspective to Indian environmentalism and policymaking regarding environment. By analyzing the environment policy under the lens of Ecolinguistic discourse analysis, the invisible disparities that are there in the policy will be made perceptible. The study also highlights the importance of incorporating Indian ecosophy (ecological philosophy) when formulating such policies, which advocates interconnectedness, interdependence and environmental stewardship. By addressing and rectifying harmful discursive usages, policymakers can contribute to enhancing environmental awareness, correcting misconceptions and fostering a deeper understanding of the interconnected relationship between humans and environment. The findings of the study remind of the need for holistic and inclusive linguistic usages and the problematic side of the existing language used in the environmental policy.

Contribution/ Originality: This study deals exclusively with the linguistic side of National environment policy, which was unexplored in the previous studies undertaken. The paper's primary findings are the revealing of hidden ideologies and problems regarding representation that was there in the linguistic devices employed.

1. INTRODUCTION

National Environment Policy (2006) was formulated by the Ministry of Environment and Forest and was approved by Union Cabinet on 18th May 2006. National Environment Policy (2006) was formulated to radically escalate the importance of environment protection and sustainability to the common people for the future good. Educating the masses regarding the future consequences of mistreating the environment is necessary. That's the one way to avoid the further consequences caused by environment mismanagement. Another major goal of the policy is to achieve the following:

This policy's central claim is the fact that preserving the environment's resources is crucial to ensuring everyone's livelihood and well-being. It highlights that the most dependable basis for conservation is to guarantee that people who rely on certain resources enjoy better livelihoods as a result of conservation rather than depletion of those resources (National Environment Policy, 2006).

The language used by the members of a society are those terms which are available to them, those which are created to express new things or events. Thereby, language inherently had a dynamic and fluid nature, so in turn it "can have meanings or interpretations more than what was intended by the speaker in the first place" (Schultz, 2006). The statement "language reflects reality" is long gone and now we come to the realization that, more than just reflecting it has the "power to actively create reality" (Srivatsan, 2022). When we say, language reflects reality, we are indirectly saying reality is 'pre-made' and it just require the agency of human-made language to be perceptible. Conversely, when we say language actively creates reality, we are acknowledging language its value and agency (Halliday, 1975). If we accept this stance that language reflects reality and not creating it, we can't change the same reality by using the language. It will be like accepting that statement that language is merely reflecting something which is already made. The role language plays in the subjugation and plundering of the environment is quite huge. The statement is quite debatable, but it led to dehumanization and anthropocentric stances in the past. Halliday (1975) describes language as "a part of reality, shaper of reality and a metaphor for reality" (p. 180). Sapir (2006) argues that the vocabulary of a language reflects the environment, that is, "there is a definite relation between language and the environment" (p. 21). Enlightening and educating the masses alone is not enough to face the unprecedented perils at hand, reframing and unlearning certain things at the grass root level is necessary for the well implementation of such a task. To attain such a 'lingual inclusiveness' we need to reframe and re-evaluate certain terminologies and usages that got normalized over the years. The need of the times is a grammar which is neither ecologically destructive nor which sides with what Alwin Fill (as cited in Stibbe (2015)) called the 'surface ecologization of discourses. Surface ecologization is the nominal, superficial uses of greening in commercials, public advertisement campaigns and marketing in order to show the concerned product is eco-friendly. This will be seen in the Indian scenario as labelling products as ayurvedic, people have this inherent thought that everything ayurvedic is healthy and eco-friendly. Obviously, there are good ayurvedic products, but those who misuse the branding for their personal gains is mentioned here. This in turn shows the power and influence of language and cultural narratives on customer perceptions. If discursive practices worsen the plight of environment management, through the same discursive practices we could find possible solutions for the revival of the environment. Peter Finke states that language is "a missing link between natural and cultural ecosystems (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006). Ecolinguistics helps in scrutinizing the ways in which environment is framed and portrayed in various ways which are held harmful. Especially when it comes to acknowledging the agency of non-humans and other than humans, M. A. K. Halliday (as cited in Fill and Mühlhäusler (2006)) argues even if we did it will not be acceptable by most speakers. In initial days the focus of ecolinguistics was on grammar, because certain grammatical features were strong enough to welcome "ecologically destructive behavior" (Stibbe, 2015). Ecolinguistics is indeed investigating those language systems which favors an 'unecological fragmentation' which separates human beings from living and non-living beings (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006). Halliday (1975) further reinforces this argument by stating about "those aspects of grammar which has the ability to conspire, to construe reality in a way that is not at all healthy for human species" (193). By grammar Halliday (2001) meant the language system as a whole and he criticized this language system for its "ecological and unecological features" (p. 176). Halliday (1975) further states that the "ideologies of growthism, sexism and classism" are inherent in the language structure and not just in the vocabulary and grammatical aspects (p.48). He further states the major problem that is there with language use regarding natural resources is that, they are always stated using uncountable nouns and mass nouns. This will invoke a feeling of inexhaustibility and immeasurability, inviting further depletion of the natural resources.

Goatly (1997) rightfully says, "modern scientific theory demands a grammar which does not explicitly separate actor from the affected participant", because the relationship between the actor, the one who acts, in this case human beings and the affected participants, the one who has to bear the consequences of actor, environment in this case is dialectical (p. 213). The actor will have to face the consequences of his deeds, they did to the affected participant in

the future. Modern grammar inherently divorces the actor from the affected participant thereby creating a false conception that the actor will never have to pay for his deeds. The way this misconception affected the natural world is beyond measure. Rather than highlighting the interconnectedness of all living and non-living beings, such misuse of cultural narratives blurred the inherent correlation and interconnectedness. In fact, ecolinguistics analysis could bridge this gap and has the potential to make this potential danger perceptible. This consequence will come to the actors quite slowly and will not be visible till it reached, Rob Nixon called this phenomenon 'slow violence'. However, changing the language for the necessary benefit of ecology is not practical, "but to use that same language in a way not to further harm the environment" (Stibbe, 2015). Moreover, separating linguistic history from human history is fairly impossible, because "human history constitutes linguistic history" as well (Halliday, 1975).

Ecolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which examines the interplay between language and ecology in discursive domains. Examining how language affects our perception of ecological issues, nature and our place in the ecosystem. Ecolinguistics is trying to give the same importance to both 'natural ecology and linguistic ecology' (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006). Natural ecology's focus will fall on the correlation between living organisms and their environment. Linguistic ecology strives to establish the imperceptible connections between languages and its environment. Language which was made for human communication always looked at the natural world as secondary to humans when it comes to language practices regarding everything other than humans. Humans are given special pronouns such as 'he', 'she' and 'them' while the natural world is always represented with the pronoun 'it', 'that' etc. (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006). Such provisions might seem apparently harmless but the damage it could cause is likely high, ecolinguists are specializing on such lingual aspects which should be avoided. Unlike other strands of linguistics which focuses more on language structure, syntax, morphology and so on, ecolinguistics goes beyond such traditional study of language to include the relationship between language and ecology. Rather than confining to the internal linguistic features of ecological discourse, ecolinguistics goes beyond such non-contextual study to indulge in a more dynamic, interactive kind of study. Rather than seeing language as an isolated realm of study which doesn't have any connections to humans and culture, it views language as an integral part of human-ecological interaction. This departure from traditionality is because of its acceptance of "ecosophy as its normative framework" (Chen, 2016). In this study an Indian ecosophy is considered as the necessary framework to analyze the ecological discourse. Although, there is no standard definition or formulations regarding Indian ecosophy, those qualities which are prevalent in the eastern ecological atmosphere such as interdependence, non-anthropocentrism, interconnectedness between living, non-living and the natural world are foregrounded here. This non-anthropocentrism comes from the acceptance that everything in the nature has an intrinsic value (Murdy, 1975). Thereby, resisting the hegemonic discourses which promotes degradation and destruction of the natural world, could be averted to some degree and to propose an alternate way of living in harmony with the natural world.

Ecolinguistics is the "study of ecology through language and linguistic study of ecology" (Kumar Dash, 2021). Traditional linguistics might not have the adequate tools to effectively address the problems related to environmental discourse. Linguistics as a branch of study always tries to study language as a system, which is divorced from the real-world vigorous act of speaking. This view can be problematic, because it does have the potential chance to downgrade language as an object distinct from human beings. This is where ecolinguistics has to offer something other than just the traditional study of the lexical aspects, thanks to its focus on the relation between environment and language (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006).

What we need is an 'integrationist approach', which states language "not as a fixed, static entity rather as a dynamic and evolving phenomenon". This change happens over time, when the speakers, listeners interact with the environment and thus evolving eventually. This integrationist approach shows the relationship between language, speakers and the environment (Harris, 2001). Ecological linguistics as Trampe (2006) defines as "the study of language and language practices, he further criticizes language of industrial agriculture with its techno-economic ideology: the word production, for instance, replaces 'growing' and 'giving' and euphemizes the 'taking away' and

'killing' which actually happens" (as cited in Fill and Mühlhäusler (2006)). Moreover, plants and animals are being excluded from "collocations such as think, believe, amiable, sympathetic, know etc." (Halliday as cited in Fill and Mühlhäusler (2006)). Environmental injustice is on the rise these days due to the unequal distribution of ecological burdens among people and the marginalized section of society has to bear the burden due to this unequal distribution of resources. Ecolinguistics as Stibbe (2022) explains "questions the stories that support our current unsustainable practices and further trying to create new stories that are environmentally friendly and causing least damage to the entire ecosystem" (p. 117). The stories here imply discourses, metaphors, frames and those linguistic features which fosters to create a particular worldview. Stories does not imply the traditional sense of a narrative (p. 118).   Grammatical constructions kept evolving which fostered language habits that are not good for the environment and contributed deeply to the destruction of the environment even further (Fill & Mühlhäusler, 2006).

The language used by environmentalists and activists who advocates environmental sustainability and justice is called 'greenspeak'. Greenspeak proved useful with its environmentally friendly terminologies and other related discourses. But one drawback with greenspeak is that it combines a wide range of discourses such as scientific, political, ethical, spiritual etc. Due to this hybrid nature, it could generate confusions and contradictions among the public. For instance, it could advocate things from a scientific and rational angle on one side and it could come up with things that will align with the subjective and emotional aspects on the other. This study aims at analyzing ways in which environment is framed and represented and certain problems regarding "greenspeak" within the National Environmental Policy, which is considered a seminal document in environmental policies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many previous studies tried to study the impact and practicality of the Environmental policies such as Reich and Bowonder (1992) who were trying to focus on the environmental policies spanning over the decade 1982-1992. The study focused on governmental regulatory procedures and other policies and acts concerning the environment. The study further delves into the formulation and implementation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied a qualitative method. The study involves conducting textual and discourse analysis. The data is taken in the form of metaphor, linguistic usages, terminologies, statements and certain linguistic features regarding the environment from the National Environment Policy (2006). Furthermore, the text is analyzed from an ecolinguistics perspective and finally the findings will be evaluated and assessed in milieu with Indian ecosophy in a broader context. India had a unique kind of ecosophy which is rooted in ecospirituality and environmental stewardship. To us, "our body is earth and this earth is the extended form of our body" (Painadath, 2006).

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study combines Ecolinguistics, Ecosophy, and Discourse analysis to examine the ways in which language is used in the National Environment Policy (2006) and its implications for environmental management. Discursive practices play a big role in the mistreating of the environment and paving a hindrance for the proper environment management. Stibbe (2015) states, changing the language for environmental conservation is an impractical endeavor, instead "what is possible is to use the English language, however imperfect or flawed, to tell different stories about the world" (185). These ideas will be contrasted against an Indian ecosophy, which blurs the boundaries between nature and culture, rooted in interconnectedness, sustainability, traditional ecological knowledge and respect for diversity. Discourse analysis in environmental studies is a useful method for understanding how language and communication shapes our attitude, perceptions and behaviors towards the environment. The expression and revelation of certain hidden ideologies regarding certain social events can be unveiled using discourse analysis (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Fairclough (2003) further states the analysis part when

comes to analyzing discourses will be more than just a textual analysis since it touches upon "the production process, interpretation and social condition or social context" (p. 56).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Government of India has formulated numerous environmental management policies during the past few decades for sustaining the environment. Some of them listed in the National Environment Policy (2006) was intended to fill the gaps that exist in the previous legal policies. It represents India's recognition of the constitutional directive, as specified in Articles 48A and 51A(g), to endorse a clean and secure environment (Verma, 2020).

The environment is defined thus National Environment Policy (2006) all things, natural or artificial, outside of oneself and their interactions that benefit humanity either now or in the future are collectively referred to as the "Environment (National Environment Policy, 2006). We could see the anthropocentrism lurking in this statement. Environment is evaluated from the use and value it has to offer humankind. This framing implies that environment exists primary for human needs, downgrading it to the level of an object. Thus, overlooking its holistic and nuanced factors and its importance beyond human utility. A more eco-centric or rather bio-centric definition would have provided instead of this narrow anthropocentric one. Painadath (2006) an Indian academician states, the one way to mistreat environment as an object to plunder is to "look at earth as mother-base out of which we are born" (p. 149). Human beings have become increasingly disconnected from nature, because of humanity's unending affinity towards the conversion of everything in nature into objects, even human resources (Painadath, 2006). These terminologies and statements will further worsen the nature-culture dichotomy. Developmental philosophy is delineated in National Environment Policy (2006) in a way it drags environment to the periphery. It is framed in this manner:

Developmental philosophy giving all significance to human beings and giving no importance to environment as such. Development and other economic fortification should not be at the expense of the environment. Giving all agency and vitality to human beings and invalidating environmental aspects to a bare minimum. Through these discourses certain ideologies will be formed, Stibbe (2015) defined Ideologies as "stories shared by group of people" (p. 186). He further says, "ideologies are the most general form a story" (p. 186). The excessive focus on human beings will exacerbate the marginalization of the environment and encourage harmful actions by humans. These "stories are not holistic descriptions of reality, but rather shapes how we perceive reality" (Stibbe, 2015). Another important factor that has to be changed is the language used to frame the policy. Educating the masses for the urgent need for environmental protection is one of the major aims of the policy. By educating the masses, the policy aims to foster a sense of environmental responsibility at both individual and community levels. To attain such an adequate level of environmental health, certain linguistic terms have to be revisited. It is better to avoid certain terms such as 'resources', because it is such a vague and implicit term especially when referring to something as holistic and nuanced as the natural world. When someone uses the terms such as forest, ocean or a river, they might be referring to these natural bodies as resources for wood, fish and water. Instead of referring those natural bodies as resources, we could call them specifically as forests, ocean and river (Schultz, 2006). Mathias Jung a German Linguist published a paper after conducting a study about the evolution of environmental action over a certain period of time. As an example, he said, consider the word nuclear energy, it could have connotations such as growth, energy, development, war etc. But over the time the word nuclear energy was closely linked with 'war' (Srivatsan, 2022). Creating environmental consciousness, promoting sustainable behavior, building public support and encouraging change are some of the promised goals of National Environment Policy (2006). To attain this objective, the language employed in the document should be accessible and easily comprehensible to all citizens of the nation. Sentences such as.

Institutional failures, referring to unclear or insufficiently enforced rights of access to, and use of, environmental resources, resulting in environmental degradation because third parties primarily experience impacts of such degradation, without cost to the persons responsible for the damage (National Environment Policy, 2006).

It would have been beneficial if additional footnotes were included to enhance the understanding of these terms. Policies should be accurate and appropriate, because policy failure can lead to "changes in commonly managed systems, with adverse environmental outcomes" (National Environment Policy, 2006). Penman (1994) argues that environmental discourse is largely 'semantically undifferentiated', which means the terminologies that are used in environmental discourses are quite vague and implicit. It could bear ample number of significations, which are not beneficial to the environment (p. 146). Penman (1994) provided the term 'growth' as an example for this, because this could imply "natural growth, man-made growth, exponential growth etc." (p. 147). The entire policy is written from a human perspective overlooking and invalidating the nuances and complexities environment have. Objectives mentioned in the National Environment Policy, asks for the preservation of ecological systems for human well-being, economic growth, life support and livelihood (8). As I mentioned earlier there is total negligence about the preservation of environment, because we are a part of it. The relationship human beings have with environment is reciprocal, one contrasting the other. Saroj Chawla asserts the visibility of two realities when one talks about the relationship between natural environment and human beings: objective and cognitive reality. He further states.

The natural world, which includes the air, water, mountains, oceans, and climate, is objective reality. Human perception and creation constitute cognitive reality. The creative dimension alters objective reality in a variety of ways, from constructing nuclear power plants to utilizing animal power to building huts or skyscrapers. Language and cognitive reality are intimately intertwined because language makes it easier to change objective reality. Words have the ability to conjure up images and abstract concepts (Chawla, 1991).

There are two ways of dealing with the nature, the first way is to look at it from a material perspective, as something to be possessed and plundered, the second way is to "respect them as the matrix, the subject, in and through which humans attain integral well-being" (Painadath, 2006).

Stibbe (2015) in his book *Language, Ecology and the Stories We Live By* talks about concepts such as framings and metaphors in the context of ecolinguistics. Stibbe defines framing as "stories about a specific area of life that make use of small packets of general knowledge called frames" (p. 186). We could frame some event in different ways and each way will be different from one another and how we think about it. Environmental conservation can be framed as a security threat, or a problem which affects the people who are directly connected with the environment or protecting environment is for the benefit of humanity only. Stibbe (2015) defines metaphors as "a type of framing which can be particularly powerful and vivid since they use a specific, concrete and clearly distinct frame to think about an area of life" (p. 186). Once metaphors become normalized within a culture, they transform into the very quintessence of the way we perceive and experience life. Metaphors could have positive possibilities as well, as Harris (2001) argues. Harris (2001) says, "when global warming is being compared to that of a thermostat, it becomes easier for a layman to relate to it and understand the consequences of leaving a thermostat plugged in for a long-time". In such a situation, unplugging the thermostat is the solution and nobody had to teach that person about this. In this way metaphors have the power to combine scientific discourses(impacts of global warming) and moral discourse (suggesting responsibility or blame for action or inaction) (Harris, 2001). Metaphors whether conveying positivity or negativity will have certain influences on collective social actions regarding environmental matters (Mey cited in Al-Shboul (2023)). Metaphors such as 'environmental emergency is a hoax' or 'environmental emergency is overhyped' could lead to overlooking the seriousness of the issue at hand. The same applies to euphemisms as well, they have this inherent ability to downplay certain events that are quite harmful. Minimizing and overlooking such word usages could even influence the policy makers when it comes to taking immediate action regarding environment. A well-known example will be 'global warming'. Schultz (2006) contends, global warming can be misleading in two different ways, firstly the term warm is used always in a positive tone, such a warm

greeting or regards. The second one is that, people might think global warming is over if we have a very cold winter (p. 110). This is how Al-Shboul (2023) picturizes the institutionalization of certain unecological ideas into a reality: Ideologies → (discursive practices) → reality → social change (willingness of action) (p. 209).

There are 14 principles mentioned in the *National Environment Policy*, principle (i) of the National Environment Policy (2006) is framed thus "Human beings are at the center of sustainable development concerns" (p. 10). This framing has to be the most problematic of all the other statements. The statement acknowledges the relevance of human beings in sustainable development, but this has to be broader and more comprehensive taking into account the environmental stability and the health of the ecosystem. Sustainable development should be undertaken in a way respecting the interconnectedness of all living and non-living beings, emphasizing the need for ecological balance between human and more-than-human world. There are certain terms which are added to show the mask the exploitative nature of certain means. 'Sustainable development' has to be one of them, later they added the term 'ecologically sustainable development' to this phrase to further confuse the public about their intentions. There is no sustainability, just development and this term will cover up the hidden agenda regarding developmental goals (Schultz, 2006). Such framings should be avoided, frames are cognitive frameworks enabling individuals to comprehend and, at times, even shape the perceived reality (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Principle (iii) of the National Environment Policy (2006) states "environmental protection is an integral part of the development process" (p. 11). Contrasting environmental protection with development could generate negative impressions about environmental protection. Such usages should be more balanced and, in a way, not harmful to the environment. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980) puts it, "words can be chosen to activate desired frames" (p. 73). Environmental protection is an integral part of our well-being as a community should have been more appropriate. Developmental process should align with sustainable environmental goals. A healthy environment is a prerequisite for sustainable development and the well-being of present and the future generations to come. Schultz (2006) talks about three major linguistic devices which are formulated for the commercial use of environment. One is the employment of words that, while ostensibly neutral, actually carry implications that are supportive to exploitation, even though the reality they represent is entirely different. The second tactic is called "euphemism," which is the practice of referring to bad things by nice names. The third is a less popular but no less effective tactic of using derogatory language to describe things that are pleasant or neutral (Schultz, 2006).

The principle further states "environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it" (National Environment Policy, 2006). Not just developmental process, we cannot isolate anything from environment, because we are a part of the environment. That statement will further blur the interconnectedness and interdependence between human beings and environment. Neglecting this aspect will result in disastrous efforts from humans to deplete and exploit the nature for human needs without considering its long-term sustainability and well-being.

There is a mention of the term 'Incomparable values' in the principles section of the National Environment Policy (2006). The term is defined in the footnotes section as "Examples of entities with "Incomparable Values" are unique historical monuments such as the Taj Mahal; charismatic species such as the Tiger; or unique landscapes, such as the Valley of Flowers" (National Environment Policy, 2006). Environment should be there as well, there is a mention of unique landscapes such as the 'Valley of Flowers'. The footnote should have ended like, 'valley of flowers and environment as a whole'. Thereby we could invite the people's understanding about the overarching significance of environment and its connection with every aspect of life out there. The environment constitutes more than specific landscapes or charismatic species but also interconnected ecosystems, natural resources and the overall balance of Earth's ecosystems. If the term environment is included in the sentence, the person who reads will come to know more about the intrinsic value of the environment without defining its individual aspects. In certain instances, "the information or concepts not included in a text hold equal importance to the ideas and concepts present in a text" (Stibbe, 2015).

Climate change stands as a grave environmental peril that demands unwavering intervention to be ceased by any means necessary. The topic was reduced to a single page with some eight precautionary measures. Climate change should have been stated in a more elaborated way, regarding its irreversibility once it has manifested. Timely and elaborate action is required to fight a disaster like climate change, moreover how certain events such as greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation and anthropogenic activities leads to climate change can foster an understanding of the interconnectedness of all natural events. Such a reductionist approach regarding something as grave as climate change not only fails to capture the gravity of such an issue, but also slow down the required activism to combat the crisis. The document lacked substantial discussion about matters such as disruptions in weather patterns, sea level rise and other biodiversity loss. Asia plays a big role when it comes to climate and its consequences, because as a continent contributes a lot to its manifestation. At the same time, the people directly affected from climate change are from Asia (Ghosh, 2016). Even the section title should have been 'Anthropogenic climate change' rather than climate change. Although, this specific term is mentioned in the document, but no footnotes were provided, inclusion of such footnotes would have educated the general public further about climate change (National Environment Policy, 2006).

In section 6 of the National Environment Policy (2006) elaborating the process of formulation of the policy, states that the policy was formulated after vigorous discussions and consultations from different actors and agencies. Including government officials, experts, industry associates, voluntary organizations and the general public. It states thus, the public could comment on the draft between August 21, 2004, and December 31, 2004. At meetings of State Environment Ministers and top officials, consultations were held with relevant Ministries of the Central Government and all State/UT administrations. They were urged to conduct public consultations at the local level (National Environment Policy, 2006).

While analyzing the policy, environment is kept at a distance from humans and given a secondary status, as an object to be used and reused for human needs. Even its value is being assessed based on the usefulness it has to offer humans. When these language use, framings, metaphors and phrases are contrasted against Indian ecosophy, we could find the aforementioned statement to be true. The environmentalism which is practiced in the east is quite different to the environmentalism practiced in the west. For us, it is connected to our existence and we have a strong personal connection to the environment. This is what Pulido (1996) termed as the 'Subaltern environmentalism'. Majority of the westerners who are indulged in environmentalism will have very less personal connection to it. This aspect makes their environmentalism external to their lives and existence. We cannot abide by the ecosophy they follow because an Indian ecosophy demands living in harmony with the nature, environmental stewardship, respecting the traditional ecological knowledge and a reverence for all living and non-living things. Indian ecological tradition which was rooted in the stewardship and concern for the nature while contrasting it to the all dominating and conquering nature of environmental treatment. Biosphere is not an alien entity to possess, plunder and destroy for human needs, it should be respected in the same way as human beings themselves. Indian ecosophy advocates a holistic worldview where humans are considered as an integral part of the ecosystem, foregrounding the importance of developing a harmonious existence with nature. So, the necessary question will be, why do we need to make use of an ecosophy (ecological philosophy) for the evaluating eco-discursive aspects. When we deal with discourse analysis, we need a vantage point to delineate between what is wrong and what is right. An ecosophy could act a suitable vantage point to make such distinctions regarding questions which needs an ethical answer. If the National environment policy was analyzed from a western vantage point, the results might have been different.

5. CONCLUSION

Legal documents are great sources of research because of its authenticity, reliability and wider reach since it is coming from a trustworthy place of origin. But the language used in those documents should be revaluated, it could

promote ecologically harmful ideologies unintentionally. Legal language should promote environmental values, clarity and precision, should avoid ambiguity and should be inclusive. If it is not properly implemented, it could reverse every of its desired outcome. One such a case is the whole purpose of this paper where the researcher analyzed the National Environment Policy (2006) formulated by the Government of India, using ecocritical discourse analysis tool. The question an ecolinguist might face is the degree of impact ecolinguistics could bring into an already deteriorated world order which denies the actual agency and importance of the environment. The impact will be likely high, because we need a linguistic system exclusive for ecology to deconstruct the view that our existence is within the fabric of nature, not the other which implies "nature envelops us" (Trampe, 2006). Though National Environment Policy (2006) was written primarily for the conservation and sustainability of the environment, the language used in the document prioritized human needs and development goals. There is disconnect between rhetoric and reality when we analyze the legal document in today's standards. Some terms which were used in the document seems to be siding with the anthropocentric treatment of nature, which we renounced decades ago. Certain language usages paved way for the environment relegated to a such a secondary status in terms of importance. As Schultz (2006) rightfully stated "The future can be won or lost in the language adopted today" (p. 113). Certain linguistic expressions can prove fatal to environmental protection, because of its overemphasis regarding economic and developmental initiatives. This linguistic bias can foster anthropocentrism and the primacy of human beings and will further worsen the nature-culture divide. Encouraging and promoting an "ecologically conceptualized linguistics" a term coined by Trampe (2006) is what we need now (p. 232). As Chawla (1991) was arguing, changing the language habits we practiced for more than decades is not easier to break. But he emphasizes the fact that any such could ever happen, it will be in the "domain of language". Language has the ability to change and perceptions regarding certain things, especially something as holistic as the environment (p. 121). Sapir (2006) was arguing for an 'environment-based linguistics' on behalf of his hypothesis that, the environmental influence in a language will be mostly visible in the diction or vocabulary used by the speakers while using that language. Sapir (2006) further cites the language used by the fisher people and the desert people to further reinvigorate his statement. This shows their closeness and connection with the natural world and how much the natural world is part of their existence (Srivatsan, 2022). Although we cannot implement such an approach for the inclusion and proper management of the environment. It will result in further discrimination and differentiation among the people. What we could do is to use the same language without causing more damage to the environment as a whole. A more inclusive language is needed for framing a document as important as the National Environment Policy (2006) respecting the diversity, interconnectedness and inter dependence of all living and non-living things. Since the study deals with Indian environmental policy, an Indian ecosophy is required. As Stibbe (2015) further postulates, "an ecolinguistic ecosophy will always prioritize and acknowledge the interlinkage between living, non-living organisms and the environment "(p. 11). An Indian ecosophy, which proposes a non-anthropocentric model is the right alternative to the western anthropocentric one (Zhang & He, 2021). As Arne Naess was stating, this ecosophy will function as a framework to evaluate the hidden ideologies unveiled using discourse analysis (cited in Al-Shboul (2023)). We can conclude the discourse to be negative or positive by examining the way it aligns with the ecosophy of the linguistic analyst. It is quite emphatic that most of the ecological discourses delineated in the National Environment Policy (2006) are not that positive, as the juxtaposition of the document with Indian ecosophy reveals. A paradigm shift from biocentrism to ecocentrism was able to challenge the human-centered narratives endorsed by anthropocentric schools of thought. The flaws and shortcomings mentioned in this study will further question whether the intended goal of the policy is being properly met or not. It took horrendous amount of activism at individual and collective level to reverse the anthropocentric outlook towards nature. But irresponsible usages of environmental language in government documents and other related discourse could revert the scenario back to square one. This in turn shows the critical role language has to play in the environmental discourse which requires immediate plans and executions. Since, language is the one interstitial space that acts in

between material and discursive paradigms, proper usage of language is most necessary. Some might nullify this argument as it confines to the discursive realms, but we shouldn't forget the fact that humans and human-made language is the link between material and discursive domains.

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