The need to have a recast vision of Indian Philosophy suggests that Indian Philosophy is alienating from masses and it gives the wrong notion that Indian philosophy is oriented only towards spiritualism. Although spirituality is the limited in spiritualism alone.

So it is very important to have a recast vision of Indian Philosophy in tunes with applied philosophy and practical ethics. The beginnings of Indian Philosophy were from the speculative nature of man for several centuries.

One remarkable feature of Indian Philosophy is that in its periods of formation, it was largely un affected from outside influence. Although Indian philosophy is highly speculative in content it is also highly practical in nature. This point it is evident from the fact that Indian Philosophy resulted in creating several systems of thought and great international religions of Buddhism and Hinduism.

This shows that the reflective spiritualistic thought of Indian Philosophy gradually evolved into a systematic form of religion. The point substantiates the view that Indian Philosophy is equally engaged in both theory and practice.

In ancient Indian contexts there was not much difference between thinking and doing. Life and thought of sages were running in a parallel manner. The thought finds its expressing through life and the message of ancient Indian philosophy is to turn inwards - Atmannam vidhi – to turn in wards to our own being and act accordingly. It does not proclaim for the denial of life, instead preaches us to rise above the problems by facing them and be spiritual in thought.

The best example for practical dimension of Indian Philosophy can be shown from the Bhagavat Gita. The Gita is known as laymen’s practical guide for living. The most complex truths of Upanishads are explained in a single manner in the form of Gita.

According to BhagavatGita, the path of action and the path of knowledge are complementary to each other and are to be practiced serially one after another.

"the path of action is a means to an end, not directly, but only as a preparation to the path of knowledge; whereas the latter, which is attained by means of the path of action, leads to the goal directly without extraneous help."¹

The element of practically was not only confined with Indian Philosophy alone, but also the whole Indian tradition. The process of interpreting and re-interpreting the traditional texts were very much alive through put the period. This process of interpretation has a prominent role in Indian Philosophy. It reflected the socio-cultural aspects and helps us to understand the social pattern of the time. The act of interpretation helped to grow the Philosophy become part of the ordinary vocabulary. The epics are the result of reflective experience of people lived during the time of Ramayana and Mahabharatha. They contain the universal messages which people conveyed from generation to generation. There are multiple interpretations and translations to these epics in each Indian language and are alive till date.

Like the epics, the message of Mahavakyas also influenced people from generation to generation. The re-interpretation and re-assessment of these texts are done even today.

This shows that Indian tradition is practical and this element of practically enables us to have a new persective in such texts based on our day to day experience in society. The fascinating things about epics like the Mahabharata is that its universal application of moral principles and eternal relevance of truths. The moral dilemma presented in Mahabharata is applicable even in todays world. The characterization of moral dilemmas which fits even in today’s world and its morally valid alternatives makes Mahabharata as a classic work. The ancient Indian tradition greatly succeeded in harnessing the possibilities of using literature for philosophical exposition.

One remarkable feature of Indian tradition is that we exposed and made use of all the contexts for learning and practicing the things learned while the Upanishads take in the form of dialogues between teacher and disciple under calm conditions of serenity the BhagavatGita is the conservation which took place in the midst of a war. The BhagavadGita is mainly meant for reformation of society. All the profound truths exposed in Upanishads were made into practice in society.
through Gita. It proposes an action oriented philosophy. This point is clear in the Gita when it proposes that “every man should uplift by himself” (the Gita-6.5). The Gita asks to take responsibility to each individual in society. It asks to rise through mental power.

Swami Vivekananda says that “we read in the BhagavatGita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All works are by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not cause some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action bad.”

The universal and practical element of Gita is visible in its writings itself. It is because this work was composed mainly to address common people, not to any particular religion. “i. l ost of the scriptures and philosophies were elaborated long before there were any other religions in the world – Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or Muslim. These distinctions did not exist then. The great sages elaborated their concepts of religion with no such distinctions.”

The two classical epics of Indian tradition namely Ramayana and Mahabharata beautifully narrate about the eco-system of that day. The striking feature of these epics is that, although each one is having its own particular social and political contexts both narrates the ecosystem in a beautiful manner. “A Striking feature shared by these two narratives the Mahabharata and Ramayana which are in many respects so different in character that they may even be seen as opposites, is that each contains a “Book of the forest” (the formers Aranyakas and the latter Vanaparva or Aranyakas parv) which sends his heroes into the wilderness for a period which in chronological if not narrative terms, accounts for a major portion of the central story.”

The narratives on environment are not limited in epics alone. Our puranas, Vedas, Upanishads and even folk stories are rich with descriptions above nature.

From time immemorial, Indian life has been harmonized with nature. It is mainly because we conceived nature and God to be one. We believed that everything is the manifestation from the single source. So our nature is sacred with sacred beings. “We Known that God pervades the whole universe. The nature in all its infinite forms and countless modes is nothing but a manifestation of God himself. This is why all beings in the universe are interrelated. There is nothing in nature which is not related to other things.”

It is because of this concept that ancient Indian never thought of exploiting nature. All our ancient literature is rich with divinity of nature and its relation with God. This created a notion in the average Indian mind that everything in nature should be worshipped.

Spiritually is the fundamental direction of almost all traditional Indian thinkers. The environmental philosophy of India is not an exception. Exploration of natural environment was a major interesting point for an Indian. In the forest, he recognized all the trees and species as dearer to God. They enjoyed the beauty and charmless of forest and different themes based on nature was produced. “The beauty of the forest through which Rama and Sita proceeded; the peace and tranquility of the famous hermitages visited by the Pandavas, the greatness of the Himalayas and the awesomeness of the Vindhyas are immortalized in a beautifully articulated lanugage. It has remarked on the richness of vocabulary employed in these descriptions of nature, the astonishingly great number of species of fauna and flora identified by name and described in details”. Thus, we inherited a tradition of worshipping and valuing nature. This tradition was passed on into Indian culture which resulted in an intimate bond between humans and nature.

The harmonious and peaceful relation between man and nature is visible in all ancient texts. Our tradition gives sanctity of all life forms. The excavations in Mohenjadaro revealed that there existed some form of animal worship which was very common. This shows that we gave sanctity to all forms of life. Hinduism believes the whole creation as the unfolding of supreme being into many forms, of which man is one among them. This expressed clearly in Yajurveda.

“The loving sage beholds that Being, Hidden in mystery. Wherein; The Universe comes to have one home; Therein unites and therefore emanates the whole; The omnipresent one pervades souls and matter like war and woof in created beings.”

References
2. Selections from the Complete works of swami viveknanda (Kolkata: Advaita Ashram, 2002), p.20

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6. Ibid.
