

Nature and environment have always been close to Narendra Modi's heart. With "Convenient Action - Continuity for Change", 'green crusader' Modi has become the second politician in the world, after former US Vice-President Al Gore, to pen a book on climate change.

### **Modi-The Environmental Statesman**

As per Indian traditions and ethos, earth is revered as mother. We call it **Dharti-Mata** who gives us food to sustain, space to live, air to breathe and her bounty of resources to enjoy. This ethos is ingrained in the culture of India and assimilated so well in our day to day life. One of duties of the king as per 'Arthashastra' is to save the natural resources and natural assets of the nation. World over, you will find a very few politicians who besides politics, are also working as environmental statesman. India in this sense is fortunate enough to be headed by a statesman who is an environmental crusader besides being an environmentalist in the true sense.

As a child, Modi Ji has lived and grown up in an ambience which venerates the environment and in which the mother earth and its resources like trees, rivers, flora and fauna are worshipped. As a **Pracharak** in RSS, he lived a life of minimalism where you survive only with your very basic minimum material needs. This has had a profound impact on his views on environment and earth. Even as the CM of Gujarat, he has been a crusader of saving the environment. He has written a book "Convenient Action - Continuity for Change" which underlines his environmental ethos.

The views of Modi ji on environment resonate with the Indian-ethos which has evolved over many centuries. Everything in the planet is composed of five elements **Panch-Tatva** i.e air, water, space, earth and fire. So, to save these five elements is saving the environment. Human being is an extension of the planet. For him, Earth is the giver and sustainer of life, hence is hailed as mother-earth. The concept of 'Vasudev-Katumbkam' (whole universe is family) is the basis of this cultural-ethos where the cooperation and living in harmony of not only with the fellow human beings but all the other creatures like animal, birds and plants is followed. Man and nature has a complementary relationship, which is embodied in the ancient Vedic literature.

As per him respect for nature is integral part of our culture and comes naturally to us. Further, as per him, it is not that environment has failed us, rather we have failed the environment.

Living sustainable and ensuring a life-style which not only sustains us but also sustain the future generation is his core-philosophy. He has given a new concept of Trusteeship which means that we are not the owner of the natural resources but just trustee of these resources which belong to the future generations. So, to protect these resources, it is our moral duty. For this, as a human being we have to change our habits and develop habits which are in conformity with the nature. So, he calls upon us to bring small changes in our day to day life. He suggests Climate-Ethics which are environmental friendly habits and which envisage a sustainable future for our planet, as the basis of living as part of nature. To quote him "For me, this(saving environment) is a moral issue. You don't have a right to exploit what belongs to future generations. We are only allowed to milk the earth, not to kill it."

From Climate Ethics, he has moved to Climate Justice emphasizing sensitivity towards nature and natural resources, keeping in mind the interests of poor and downtrodden. He has been consistently urging the entire community of world leaders to take actionable steps for dealing with climate change without any delay. He speaks about Green economy when he says that we have to move towards 'zero defect and zero-effect' i.e zero defects in production with no adverse effect on environment. Economy and ecology are mutually inclusive. One cannot grow without the growth of other. Our economy should be so developed that it does not harm environment.

With these views in background, the environmental crusader has tried to put in practice each of his ideas as a part of policies of his government. Launching on October 2, 2014 at Rajghat, New Delhi, **Swach Bharat Abhiyan** is India's biggest cleanliness drive ever. To make it a mass movement, he even nominated nine prominent public figures from the country to support and encourage the initiative which will covers as many as 4041 towns and aims at cleaning streets, roads, and infrastructure.. **Namami Gange** project aims at a clean Ganga which is our most revered and important water-body. For this a total of Rs 20,000 crore to conserve and rejuvenate the river was allocated by involving the people living on the banks of the river, and helped them attain sustainable livelihoods and feel the impact first-hand. Focusing on bringing down soaring pollution levels in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's first national air quality index (**NAQI**) in April, 2015. IIT Kanpur will house the main server of the NAQI which will monitor air quality levels in 10 cities throughout the country. For water

conservation, the states of India to ensure that 50% of the work taken up by MNREGA, should be for the improvement of water conservation. This includes construction of check dams and de-silting of water bodies. Narendra Modi himself asked farmers across the country to adopt modern ways of conserving water. He gave the mantra: 'Pehle shauchalaya, phir devalaya' (first toilets, then temples). He is working tirelessly to ensure that affordable sanitation reaches the people who need it. Saving power by using LED lights and providing electricity to each household thereby reducing dependence on biodegradable resources, is a positive step in this direction. He is stressing on local technology and his campaign of Vocal for Local aims at reducing the carbon footprints.

### **International Approach:**

When Modi Ji was CM of Gujarat, hollywood action-movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger has praised Narendra Modi's "actions" as Gujarat Chief Minister to achieve sustainable development goals. Under him India and France has done one of its kind ever International Solar Alliance for developing solar energy. He is the person who brought into focus the concept of renewable energy. To highlight flora and fauna, he has appeared in a popular Discovery channel show Man vs. Wild with Bear Grylls. India is one of the few countries on the way to ban single use plastic. He has been given Champion of the Earth Award by UNEP and CERAWEEK Global Energy and Environment Leadership Award. India is emerging as a champion of sustainable-development and a crusader of global-warming under him. He is the forerunner green Prime-Minister, the world and India has ever seen.