



How Modi turned global warming debate from regulations to environmental philosophy

Climate change is one of the biggest threats to human civilization today and it is as serious as Global Terrorism. From many years, the world is debating global warming issues and trying to find a way to balance between development and environment protection. But over the years, somehow a global notion has been developed that economic progress and environment protection cannot go together and those who claim they do it they do only the lip service to the world. In a scenario where every country was asking the other countries to go beyond their comfort zones to deal with climate change while continuing the exploitation of the natural resources back home, Prime Minister Narendra Modi identified the urgency of taking a collective stand.

In the year 2015 at Wembley Stadium, London PM Modi has shared his vision of an International Solar Alliance with the world and he invited all the Sun-Shine countries of the world which he called as the Surya-Putras (Sons of Sun) to join hands in this vision. Since its official launch in Paris on 30th November 2015, International Solar Alliance, a joint initiative of India and France, has emerged as one of the most successful treaty-based intergovernmental organizations. As of now, a total of 122 countries have joined the ISA and some 74 countries have signed the framework.

Earlier there was a vacuum on global leadership related to climate change issues as every country was eager to be a leader on economic and geopolitical matters but taking leadership on Climate change was seen like putting a country's development and progress on stake. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the leader of 1.3 billion population, whose country at that time was not even started its basic infrastructural development, decided to come forward and to lead the efforts in a right direction. He has given a fresh perspective to see the climate change challenges and he

directed the attention of the global community toward 'Climate Justice' too. While speaking at the 2015 Paris Climate Summit, PM Modi had said: "we have to ensure, in the spirit of climate justice, that the life of a few does not crowd out the opportunities for the many still on the initial steps of the development ladder. The advanced countries must leave enough room for developing countries to grow. We must strive for a lighter carbon footprint on our growth path."

A perspective which has given a direction to many developed and developing countries of the world about where the global warming related discussions were actually stuck in. In a way, he creatively disrupted the never-ending loop of global warming related discussions as he believes that an intellectual article or roundtable discussion cannot provide a solution to climate change or global warming issue, its solution lies in having a system in place just like the International Solar Alliance.

Due to PM Modi's outstanding leadership on promoting new areas of cooperation on environment protection, last year he received UN's highest environmental honor the 'Champions of the Earth' award which this time goes to only "world's six most outstanding environmental change makers." Along with PM Modi, our Cochin International airport also won the UN Champions of earth award for its leadership in the use of sustainable energy. While receiving the award PM Modi said: "This award is an honor of the ever-newer ancient tradition of India, who has seen God in nature. It is a tribute to our tribal brothers and sisters who love the forests more than their lives and an honor to millions of Indian farmers for whom the 'Ritu Chakra' (seasonal cycle) is the life cycle."

No other culture of the world is so deeply integrated with nature like Indian philosophy.

Modi's Three-pointers for Environment Protection

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided three key pointers which our country needs to recall to bringing a positive change for environment protection. First one is the internal consciousnesses, for which he suggest that there is no better place to look than India's glorious past. Co-existence and respect for the nature are at the core of Indian traditions.

In our several years back written Prithvi Sukta, which is a source of unprecedented knowledge on nature and environment, it is written that "Mata Bhumi putroham prithivyah" which means the earth is my mother and I'm her son. We have a concept of Panch Tatvas and we consider all natural elements as the manifestations of divinity. According to PM Modi, if we recall how we are flag bearers of rich tradition from centuries, it will automatically have a positive impact on our actions.

A second important aspect of environment protection according to PM Modi is public awareness, which is about making an environment through regular dialogues on serious challenges of our times and on ways to mitigate them. According to PM Modi when we as a society become aware of our strong links with environmental conservation and talk about it regularly then it will automatically inspire us to play a proactive role for a sustainable environment.

The third aspect thus is the proactiveness, on which PM Modi has worked really hard. He made 130 crore people to play a proactive role for a cleaner and greener environment through some of his revolutionary moves like Swachh Bharat Mission, Sanitation coverage drive in the villages, Ujjawala Yojana for reducing indoor air pollution, distribution of Soil Health card to farmers, making Green Skill Development programme a part of the skill India mission for training youth in environment, forestry, wildlife and climate change sectors. In fact, in our urban infrastructure development initiatives like Smart Cities and AMRUT, the emphasis is given to growth with environmental care.

For global environment protection, PM Modi has provided three action points too. First, educate the people, second regulate and enforce rules and third, keep inventing new alternatives to energy resources and plastic use.

India is a country which is deriving a rapid transformation along with a strong commitment to environment protection. Being a responsible global leader, India has set some ambitious targets too i.e. installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity and 100 GW of Solar power by the year 2022, abolishing single use of plastic by 2022 and producing 40 percent of its power capacity from non-fossil fuel based resources by 2030. As India is on its way to exceed the previously set target, recently it has decided to raise the renewable energy target from 175 GW to 227 GW. These targets are not ordinary for a country whose massive transformation and urbanization efforts are underway and it reflects a high level of leadership determination of PM Modi toward environmental protection.

In the BJP Manifesto 2019 it is mentioned that in the next term, the government will encourage the adoption of solar farming on a massive scale to enable our 'annadaata' to become 'urja-daata.' PM Modi has a rich experience on this approach, during his chief minister days in Gujarat he has successfully implemented a model of leveraging solar power not just as a source of energy but as an additional source of income for the farmers and he literally made 'Sun Shine' a new crop for the farmers. A model, which many countries in the world still aims to replicate.

But there is a need to recall that during the UPA government days there was a completely different scenario in the country. On one hand, the entire world used to give lectures to India for controlling pollution and tackling climate challenges, on the other hand, some of the Congress leaders had made Solar Energy a tool of corruption and scams too. In the years 2013, some of Kerala's top Congress leaders have been named on a serious solar energy contract scam. There was a vacuum of a leading voice and stand from our country to represent our glorious vision of environment protection on global platforms. In fact, it seemed that on climate-related issues we were willing to paint our country's image in the way others want to see us.

In his blog "A clean environment for Human Empowerment" published in the month of October 2018, PM Modi has written that "the world needs to shift to a paradigm of environmental philosophy that is anchored in environmental consciousness rather than merely government regulations." Prime Minister Narendra Modi has presented an example that deriving a massive economic transformation in parallel to environment protection movement is possible!

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