

Green Manifesto for 2014 General Elections

The Indian sub-continent had for centuries, nurtured a civilization which lived in harmony with nature (in a symbiotic relationship). People in the past were keen observers of nature and developed deep knowledge and respect for it. Protection of environment was for them a way of life. They never exceeded the limits of nature, while pursuing their efforts to meet their needs. Gandhiji's popular quote "There is enough in nature to meet the needs of all but not sufficient to satisfy the greed of the few", aptly reflects their perception of nature.

India awoke to freedom in 1947 in a bipolar world. Govt. of India took certain concepts of development from the capitalist, and certain from the socialist models, and came up with a model of growth, which they labeled as a "Mixed Economy". Successive governments in the name of development, have marginalized, displaced and dispossessed its people of their livelihoods and caused serious damage to different ecosystems. The relief and rehabilitation(R&R) packages doled out for them in the name of compensation, were often found inadequate.

The Govt. of India, in the year 1972 gave expression to its commitment for protection of environment by constituting a parliamentary committee for the purpose of drafting the water (Prevention of Pollution) bill, which was enacted in 1974. Based on the provisions of these acts Central and State PCB's were established in the year 1976. The other important legislations that followed, being the Forest Conservation Act 1980, the Air Act of 1981, Environment Protection Act 1986, The National Environment Tribunal Act 1995 and the National Environmental Appellate Act 1997. The Constitution of India 42nd amendment, directs the state to protect the environment, while making it a fundamental duty for its citizens.

We appeal to all political parties to take note of the 'consensus' arrived at various Global Summits right from 1972 Stockholm Conference, to 1992 Rio Conference, to 2012 Johannesburg Conference on Sustainable Development. We appeal to all political parties to include the recommendations arrived at the above mentioned global submits in their manifestos, and pledge sincerely and honestly to implement them.

It's unfortunate that not a single political party has so far defined development in its proper perspective. Some political parties think building Nuclear Reactors, Major Dams, haphazard and destructive mining, as development without even assessing their impact on Environment and People.

UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framed in the year 2000 set ambitious targets for nations, to be realized by the year 2015. MDGs focus on tackling poverty, hunger, thirst, Illiteracy, Women Exploitation, Child Mortality, Disease and Environmental Destruction.

UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) held in 2012, felt that the Millennium Development Goals could be further fine-tuned to achieve sustainable development.

We appeal to all the National parties to include the following green agenda in their manifestos

- Ecological conservation and equitable access to natural resources.
- Food production should be ecologically sustainable
- Preventing diseases - focus should be on preventive care & community health.
- Access to energy to be equitable and production processes should be clean, renewable and sustainable.
- Education for all, to ensure not a single child is left out.
- Safe and Sustainable housing for all with adequate Sanitation, Civic Facilities and transportation.
- To constitute Environment Protection Authority (EPA) immediately on a war footing.
- To constitute National Court for Environmental Justice on the lines of World Trade Organization (WTO).
- To create a Trust to be called the Trusteeship Council of India, on the lines of UN Trusteeship Council. {To place all the common property resources of the people of India (Mountains & Forests, Rivers & Water Bodies, Oceans, Biodiversity, Agricultural Lands, Deserts etc)}
- To educate & sensitize the people of India and make them responsible citizens dedicated to the protection of environment. (Because protection of environment is now the fundamental duty of all Indians)
- A balance sheet on natural resources to be presented every year to the parliament of India before the railway budget & the financial budget is presented. (To inform the people of India, the rate of depletion of natural resources and the impact of pollution).
- The present system of calculating the growth rate of our economy should be more transparent and should take into account the cost of depletion of natural resources and the cost of pollution.

- To ensure that every roof top in India produces solar energy.
- To phase out Nuclear Reactors in a stipulated 5 year period; while emphasizing renewable energy, such as Solar, Wind, Tidal, Geothermal and Bio-Energy etc.
- The National Disaster Management Authority be renamed as The National Disaster Prevention Authority.
- Every river in this country should be managed by an autonomous board which will take care of its catchment area sanitation, and to ensure judicious use of its water in its command area; and also to ensure the ecological health of the River.
- A total ban on the export of natural resources like Iron Ore, Granite and other minerals.
- No industry should ever come up in the midst of prime agricultural lands.
- To ensure that all buildings that are being constructed in the country shall comply with the GRIHA guidelines(MoEF guidelines)
- Should redefine “Green” Revolution to ensure that Green Revolution will be really green. (Green Revolution as promoted by the government now is nothing but hybridization of seeds and chemicalization of agriculture)
- The present export oriented industrial policy should be changed to meet the needs of the 1.25 billion Indians and with clean developmental mechanisms (CDM).
- The forest cover should be increased to ensure 33% of the geographical area. Forest laws should be strictly implemented.
- The consensus emerged from the different UN conventions on Biodiversity, Climate Change, Desertification etc should be implemented.

It is important that we all realize that we are not the last generation to live on this planet Earth, we have a role to perform and we need to march in the direction of sustainable, inclusive growth – we should fulfill our needs without compromising the needs of the coming generations.