

## Role of “Religious Mythology” to Protect Environment in India

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**Abstract:** Environment Protection has major issue now a days since global warming, Industrial, Residential waste and sewerage pollutant mixing with pure environment. Area of green belt is no longer green. Mountains, Hills and Forest area are trespassing by many ways. Green House Effect (Ozone Layer) and Climate changing are main focus areas included in Earth Summit “Agenda 21”. Greedy motive of human causes depletion of natural resources. Many international forum and representations also inspired other countries to take effective steps on these challenges. To fight back these issues law maker made many legal texts to serve and protect it. According to our Indian Mythology “Panchtatva” are five elements of universe or the “Panchamababhutas”. These are- Prithvi (Earth), Agni (Fire), Jal (Water), Vayu (Air) and Aakash (Space). It gives a spiritually believe that our body and whole universe is composed of these Panchtatva. So, our ancient “Sanatana Dharma” of Hinduism teaches us to protect and wellness of these five elements. If any of these being harmed or unbalanced, God will be aggressive and curse since these five elements worships as god in this culture.

**Key words:** Environment Protection, Religious Mythology

### Introduction:

As a human being we live in and get affect with environment. We use, work, and growing in/with this environment. Since we get into civilisation till 21<sup>st</sup> century many incidences rise attraction to this sensitive issue, that it require some protection from/to all living things. Many efforts, initiatives, rules, legislation, act, statues, penal and strict provisions, regulations, suggestions, awareness, cultures, sacrifices and lots of reachers have done so far and continuously running with innovations. This study will help us to understand that how “Law” of Indian country made their contribution to protect environment and help to grow it.

Dictionary meaning of environment is “The surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates” or “The natural world, as a whole or in a particular geographical area, especially as affected by human activity”

### Ancient India:-

Hinduism from “Sanatan Dharma” is an ancient religion, their holy and spiritual Book/Granth “Bhagwat Geeta” (Gita) original in Sanskrit and translated into Hindi/other languages and commentaries by many “Smpradayas” have narrated lesson within 18 Chapters called “Adhyay”, almost 700 Sanskrit verses called “Shlok”, divided into three sections called “Yoga” (Six chapter each). The three sections “Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Janana Yoga” have many reference of spiritual talk, some of them tell about relation and protection of environment.

(Adhyay 3, Shlok 12) Narrate about relation of food and nature called “Prakriti”

(Adhyay 3, Shlok 27-29) Narrate about activities and nature

(Adhyay 7, shlok 4-10) Narrate about eightfold division and supreme spirit in nature

(Adhyay 9, shlok 4-10) Narrate about creator and their existence

(Adhyay 13, shlok 19-23) Narrate about nature, immortal soul and Spirit

Like Hinduism other religion in India Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism and Pharisaism have their own holy text through their ancient god, guru, Granth, quotes and culture.

Sikhism has their Holy Book/Granth in text “Shri Guru Granth Sahib” compiled and composed during the period of Sikh Gurus from 1469 to 1708. Along with Hinduism, this text is also narrated significance, relation and protection of environment. Quoted in Guru Granth Sahib

“The Gurus have strongly made us aware of our responsibility towards this earth.”

“Nature we see, Nature we hear, Nature we observe with awe, wonder and joy, Nature in the nether regions, Nature in the skies, Nature in the whole creation..., Nature in species, kinds, colours, Nature in life forms, Nature in good deeds, Nature in pride and in ego, Nature in air, water and fire, Nature in the soil of the earth, All nature is yours, O powerful Creator, You command it, observe it and pervade within it.”

Also they have narrated in following pages (SGGJ, p. 469, 463, 723, 6, 8, 464, 472, 1420, 464, 13)

So Our Veda, Sastra and Granth, Holy text, quotes and culture of ancient law also describe the environment as god and establish culture to worship, serve and protect them. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, Sikhism, Jainism and Pharisaism have given and connected environment with holy things. From ancient era all these holy things have taken as universal law to their followers. All believers have to follow them for being blessing, wellness, prosperity and wealth.

Jain Agams depict nature in a very unique way as it says that five main elements of nature; *Prithvi* (land, soil, stones, etc), *Jal* (Water resources including cloud), *Agni* (Fire), *Vayu* (Air) and *Aakash* (Sky) are living creatures and must be treated as living beings.

These five types of elements go on to form Five classes of beings (as shown alongside) such as vegetation, trees and plants, fungi and animals. This unique concept of Jainism restricts its followers to harm any creature and eventually leads to limited consumption as well as help in protecting environment<sup>14</sup>. The flowers of Ketaki assume superior meaning in Indian culture. The flowers are highly fragrant and are even used for making aromatic oils and perfumes, but they are not used as offerings to Gods. There is an interesting mythological story in the Shiva Purana explaining why that is the case: In the Puranic texts of Hinduism, Narasimha ("man-lion") a half-lion, half-man incarnation or avatar of Vishnu, is worshipped by his devotees and saved the child devotee Prahlada from his father, the evil demon king Hiranyakashipu.

The representation of wolves in Indian mythology as wily, conspiring, wicked creatures also perhaps contributed to their reducing numbers. In the Rigveda, Rjrsava is blinded by his father as punishment for having given 101 of his family's sheep to a she-wolf, who in turn prays to the Ashvins to restore his sight<sup>15</sup>. In Mahabharata, Bhima, the voracious son of the god Vayu, is described as *Vrikodara*, meaning "wolf-stomached".<sup>16</sup> In the Harivamsa, Krishna, in order to convince the people of Vraja to migrate to Vrindavan, creates hundreds of wolves from his hairs, which frighten the inhabitants of Vraja into making the journey<sup>17</sup>.

Dharma, one of the most important Hindu concepts, has been translated into English as duty, virtue, cosmic order and religion. In Hinduism, protecting the environment is an important expression of dharma.

In past centuries, Indian communities like other traditional communities did not have an understanding of "the environment" as separate from the other spheres of activity in their lives. A number of rural Hindu communities such as the Bishnois, Bhils and Swadhyaya have maintained strong communal practices to protect local ecosystems such as forests and water sources. These communities carry out these conservation-oriented practices not as "environmental" acts but rather as expressions of dharma. When Bishnois are protecting animals and trees, when Swadhyayas are building *Vrikshamandiras* (tree temples) and *Nirmal Nirs* (water harvesting sites) and when Bhils are practicing their rituals in sacred groves, they are simply expressing their reverence for creation according to Hindu teachings, not "restoring the environment." These traditional Indian groups do not see religion, ecology and ethics as separate arenas of life. Instead, they understand it to be part of their dharma to treat creation with respect.

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