हरित संकल्प

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आज का अवसर ही सर्वोत्तम है ।”

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Timeless Traditions, Modern Lessons: Hindu Nature Worship and Environmental Conservation

Dr. Devinder Pal Singh
Professor of Religious Studies, Arihanta Institute, California, USA

Abstract

Hinduism, one of the oldest and most environmentally integrated religions, has long held nature in sacred regard. This is exemplified in the worship of trees, plants, animals, and rivers, a practice deeply embedded in its Dharmic granthas (religious texts). Scriptures such as the Vedas, Upanishads, and Puranas not only reflect a divine presence in the natural world but also prescribe specific ethical and spiritual duties toward it. This article examines how these texts regard trees like the Peepal and Tulsi, animals such as cows, snakes, and monkeys, and rivers like the Ganga as sacred entities. Their worship is interpreted not merely as ritual, but as a profound ecological principle. In the context of today's environmental challenges, these practices are not relics of the past but living philosophies that can inspire a sustainable future. This paper examines how spiritual ecology in Hinduism aligns with modern conservation efforts.

Introduction

In the cultural and spiritual landscape of Hinduism, nature is not viewed as separate from the divine but as its very embodiment. Trees, plants, rivers, mountains, and animals are imbued with sacred significance, and their worship is a practice rooted in both devotion and environmental consciousness. Hinduism's reverence for nature is not symbolic alone; it is theological, ritualistic, and deeply integrated into everyday life. From sacred groves (*Dev Vanas*) to river festivals and animal sanctuaries, nature is treated as divine and alive. Ancient Hindu scriptures, such as the Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads, contain numerous references to this reverence, illustrating a vision of the world where humans live in harmony with nature (Dwivedi, 2009). These *Dharmic granthas* are replete with verses and stories that emphasize the sanctity of all life forms, establishing a spiritual ecology wherein nature is not only respected but worshipped (Dwivedi, 2009). This paper explores how the worship of specific trees and animals in Hinduism serves dual purposes: spiritual elevation and environmental stewardship.

1. Worship of the Peepal Tree (Ficus religiosa)

The Peepal tree holds a revered place in Hindu scriptures and is symbolically linked to the eternal nature of life. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (15.1), Lord Krishna describes the universe through the metaphor of the Ashvattha tree, with roots above and branches below, signifying the eternal, indestructible reality from which all life emerges (Prabhupada, 1986). The Peepal is not just spiritually symbolic but also biologically remarkable; it performs photosynthesis at night, unlike most trees, thereby releasing oxygen even in the absence of sunlight (Pandey & Pandey, 2016).

According to the *Skanda Purana*, it is believed that Brahma resides in the roots of the Peepal, Vishnu in its trunk, and Shiva in its leaves, making it a divine trifecta (Tagare, 1995). This belief makes the tree sacred, leading devotees to worship it especially on Saturdays and during the full moon.

The ecological implications of such reverence are significant. Worshipping the tree ensures its protection and propagation. Planting Peepal trees, traditionally seen as meritorious, contributes to biodiversity, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration. By safeguarding trees due to their sacred status, Hindu traditions preempt modern ecological goals. Sacred groves around temples often begin with Peepal trees and evolve into sanctuaries for a diverse range of flora and fauna.

Thus, the Peepal tree represents not only the cosmic order (Rta) in Hindu cosmology but also an effective model for ecological conservation embedded in spiritual practice.

2. Worship of the Tulsi Plant (Ocimum sanctum)

Tulsi, or Holy Basil, is one of the most sacred plants in Hindu households. It is often found growing in central courtyards and is worshipped daily, especially by women. In the *Padma Purana*, Tulsi is described as a form of Goddess Lakshmi and the consort of Lord Vishnu. She is venerated during the *Tulsi Vivah*, a symbolic marriage ceremony that signifies the beginning of the wedding season in Hindu culture (Bhandarkar, 1980).

From an ecological perspective, Tulsi plays a vital role in environmental health. It emits oxygen for up to 20 hours a day and absorbs harmful gases, such as sulphur dioxide. Additionally, it possesses antimicrobial properties, and its leaves are used in Ayurvedic medicine for a variety of ailments (Singh et al., 2007). Worship practices that include watering the plant daily and refraining from plucking leaves at night promote care and sustainable harvesting.

The spiritual significance ensures the plant's propagation across Indian homes and temples, turning every household into a miniature ecosystem. Furthermore, the plant is never uprooted; instead, it is treated as a living deity. This ensures long-term sustainability and prevents habitat destruction.

In essence, the worship of Tulsi promotes air purification, medicinal plant propagation, and emotional attachment to nature. The fact that such a small plant is given such enormous reverence showcases how Hinduism transforms ecological consciousness into daily spiritual routines. It also exemplifies how religious traditions can offer scalable models of conservation beginning at the individual and family level.

3. Worship of the Banyan Tree (Ficus benghalensis)

The Banyan tree, known as *Vat Vriksha*, is regarded as immortal in Hindu tradition. It symbolizes eternal life and is associated with the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In the *Garuda Purana*, the Banyan tree is mentioned as one that should be worshipped to gain longevity and

divine blessings (Shastri, 2002). Its large canopy provides shelter and becomes a center for spiritual gatherings and village councils, highlighting its social as well as ecological utility.

From an environmental perspective, the Banyan plays a significant role in biodiversity. Its expansive root system prevents soil erosion and recharges groundwater. The tree also supports hundreds of animal and bird species, creating a micro-ecosystem within its branches. Its thick foliage and aerial roots make it effective in capturing carbon and regulating temperature.

Spiritually, the tree is associated with Lord Shiva and Lord Dattatreya and is venerated during *Vat Savitri Vrat*, where women circumambulate the tree and pray for the longevity of their husbands. This ritual ensures that the tree is neither cut down nor harmed, contributing to its long life and conservation.

Because of its sacred status, the Banyan tree often stands protected in both rural and urban India, even amidst rapid development. It serves as a living reminder of the Hindu view of nature as sacred and integral to human life. As an ecological keystone species and a religious symbol, the Banyan illustrates the seamless blend of sacred belief and sustainable practice.

4. Worship of the Cow (Gau Mata)

The cow, or *Gau Mata*, occupies an exalted position in Hinduism as a provider, protector, and symbol of the divine feminine. The *Rig Veda* (10.87.16) refers to the cow as *Aghnya,* one who should not be killed. It is considered a source of life-sustaining products, such as milk, curd, ghee, and dung, each of which is used in rituals and daily life. The cow is also associated with Lord Krishna, who was raised as a cowherd, making her central to Vaishnava devotion (Doniger, 1991).

Environmentally, the cow represents a cornerstone of sustainable rural life. Cow dung is used as an organic fertilizer, reducing dependence on chemical inputs. Cow urine is utilized in traditional medicines and pest control, while milk products support nutritional needs. The cow's multipurpose utility supports the idea of a zero-waste economy.

Traditional practices like *Gopashtami* (a festival dedicated to cow worship) reinforce the idea of treating cows with compassion. Killing a cow is considered sinful, and protecting them is viewed as a religious duty. Many Indian villages and cities maintain *Gaushalas* (cow shelters), often run by temple trusts or charitable organizations.

In a world grappling with industrialized animal farming and ecological damage, the Hindu veneration of the cow offers an alternative model rooted in coexistence and gratitude. While challenges remain, the foundational idea of sacred animal ethics has the potential to shape humane and sustainable livestock practices.

5. Worship of the Snake (Naga Devata)

Snakes hold a unique place in Hindu cosmology. They are both feared and revered, symbolizing fertility, protection, and cosmic power. In many *Puranas*, such as the *Bhagavata*

Purana, the serpent Ananta Shesha is depicted as the cosmic bed on which Lord Vishnu rests, representing infinity and timelessness. The *Nag Panchami* festival is dedicated to snake worship, where devotees offer milk and incense at snake holes or temples (Narayan, 2016).

Theologically, snakes are closely associated with Lord Shiva, who is often depicted wearing a cobra around his neck, signifying his control over death and primal energy. In the *Katha Upanishad* (1.3. 3 & 4), the image of a chariot is used to describe the human soul's journey, where the senses are likened to wild horses and the reins are self-control. Snakes, in this context, represent both danger and wisdom (Hume, 2007).

From an ecological standpoint, snakes play a crucial role in controlling rodent populations and maintaining ecological balance. Worship traditions, though symbolic, reduce the tendency to kill snakes, fostering a degree of human-wildlife tolerance. This is crucial, especially in agrarian societies where snake presence is common.

Despite modern fears and urbanization, reverence for snakes continues to contribute to their survival. Temples with snake idols often become informal conservation zones. By transforming fear into reverence, Hinduism fosters a psychological shift that supports species protection. This cultural reverence stands in stark contrast to attitudes of extermination prevalent in other parts of the world.

6. Worship of Monkeys (Associated with Lord Hanuman)

Monkeys, particularly the species *Rhesus macaques* and *Hanuman langurs*, are venerated in Hinduism due to their association with Lord Hanuman, the monkey god of strength, devotion, and courage. The *Ramayana* narrates how Hanuman played a pivotal role in rescuing Sita and defeating the demon king Ravana (Valmiki, trans. Goldman & Goldman, 2022). Temples dedicated to Hanuman can be found across India, and feeding monkeys is considered a sacred act, especially on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

This religious reverence has direct ecological implications. Monkeys are often left undisturbed in temple areas and forests, contributing to their conservation. While urban monkey populations can sometimes create challenges, the overall cultural ethos promotes non-harm and coexistence. Temples like Galta Ji in Jaipur or Jakhu in Shimla act as de facto sanctuaries for monkeys, where religious beliefs enforce protective attitudes.

From an ecological perspective, monkeys are seed dispersers and play a role in maintaining forest health. In traditional rural settings, their presence is accepted as part of a larger natural order. Hindu scriptures teach devotees to see all life forms as manifestations of divinity (*sarvam khalvidam brahma*, Chandogya Upanishad 3.14.1), further encouraging harmonious relations with animals.

Thus, Hanuman worship fosters not only spiritual values such as loyalty and service but also environmental attitudes that emphasize compassion, tolerance, and coexistence. By deifying

the monkey, Hinduism transforms human-animal interaction into an ethical relationship, a principle highly relevant to today's conservation strategies.

7. Worship of Rivers (e.g., Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati)

In Hinduism, rivers are not merely water bodies but divine mothers. The Ganga is regarded as a goddess who descended from heaven to purify humanity's sins. The *Rig Veda* (10.75) reveres rivers as sacred flows of life, and the *Skanda Purana* extols the Ganga as a purifier of the soul and a redeemer of sins. The daily offering of prayers (*aarti*), rituals of immersion of ashes, and festivals like *Ganga Dussehra* reflect this deep reverence (Eck, 1998).

Theologically, rivers are symbolic of the spiritual journey, from origin to liberation (*moksha*). The *Yamuna* is associated with Lord Krishna's leelas (divine play), while the invisible *Saraswati* represents the flow of wisdom. These narratives sacralize water and discourage its misuse.

From an ecological perspective, reverence for rivers can foster water conservation. Ritualistic cleanliness before offering water to the gods promotes hygiene, while prohibitions against polluting sacred waters establish early principles of environmental ethics. The *Namami Gange* project, initiated by the Indian government, aims to revive traditional attitudes toward river conservation (MOEFCC, 2020).

However, industrialization and urbanization have led to increased pollution in rivers, despite the religious reverence for these bodies of water. The challenge lies in translating symbolic respect into actual preservation. Religious institutions and communities can play a pivotal role by aligning rituals with ecological best practices, such as eco-friendly immersions and riverbank afforestation.

Worship of rivers in Hinduism exemplifies how spirituality can inspire water ethics. By nurturing cultural attitudes that sanctify rivers, Hinduism fosters water stewardship, —a crucial aspect of environmental sustainability.

8. Integration of Environmental Ethics in Hindu Dharmic Granthas

Hindu dharmic texts, including the *Upanishads*, *Vedas*, and *Puranas,* contain numerous references that encourage a respectful and sustainable relationship with nature. The *Isha Upanishad* (1.1) states: "Everything in the universe belongs to the Lord. Therefore, take only what you need and leave the rest for others" (Hume, 2007). This conveys the principle of minimalism and ecological balance.

The *Atharva Veda* (12.1.12) praises the Earth as the mother of all and calls for her protection and care. The *Bhagavata Purana* (8.1.11) portrays nature as part of God's body, mountains as bones, trees as hairs, and rivers as veins, thus creating a theology of

interconnectedness. Similarly, the *Manu Smriti* contains guidelines on protecting trees, avoiding pollution, and treating animals ethically (Bühler, 1886).

These texts reflect an early form of environmental jurisprudence. Concepts such as *Rta* (cosmic order), *Dharma* (duty), and *Ahimsa* (non-violence) also extend to nature, indicating a holistic ethical framework. Worship becomes a medium to internalize these values. Festivals tied to agricultural seasons, rituals involving natural elements, and temple architecture integrating sacred groves illustrate the practical application of these texts.

In modern times, these teachings offer an indigenous foundation for environmental ethics. Instead of relying solely on legal regulations, societies can draw upon religious texts to cultivate ecological responsibility. Reviving these scriptural teachings and integrating them into education and policy could create a sustainable path informed by ancient wisdom and spiritual duty.

Conclusion

The worship of trees and animals in Hinduism, as rooted in the Puranas and Upanishads, reflects a deep spiritual ecology that sees the divine in all life forms. These practices serve as powerful tools for conservation, offering models of sustainable living long before the advent of modern environmentalism. In an era of climate uncertainty and ecological crisis, returning to these roots may offer both moral guidance and practical strategies. Revitalizing these traditions with ecological consciousness can serve as a bridge between ancient wisdom and modern sustainability.

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Dr. Devinder Pal Singh, Ph.D., is a teacher-researcher and an author. He specializes in writing on science, religion and the environment. Currently, he is Professor of Religious Studies at Arihanta Institute, California, USA.
https://www.arihantainstitute.org/faculty/20433-devinder-pal-singh-phd

Enhancing Agro-Ecological Stability with Tree-Based Land Use Systems in Punjab

Sapna Thakur, Arshdeep Kaur, Rajni Sharma and Harmeet Singh Saralch

Tree plantations are becoming increasingly important not only for restoring ecological balance but also for enhancing farm income, diversifying cropping patterns, and building resilience against climate change. According to the *Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020* by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), forests cover around 31% of the world's land area, amounting to approximately 4.06 billion hectares. Out of this, plantation forests occupy about 131 million hectares—roughly 3% of the global forest area—yet contribute significantly (45%) to the total planted forests. These plantations offer essential ecosystem services alongside their material benefits like timber and wood products. Tree plantations also play a critical role in mitigating soil erosion, improving water retention in the soil, enhancing biodiversity, and increasing carbon sequestration, which is crucial for combating climate change.

In India, trees growing outside forests (TOF)—such as those on farmlands, homesteads, along bunds, and on non-forest private lands—play a vital role in meeting the nation's growing demand for fuelwood and industrial timber. TOF in India spans about 30.70 million hectares, contributing 37.11% of the total forest and tree cover, which currently stands at 25.17% of the country's geographical area. These plantations have been estimated to produce approximately 91.51 million cubic meters of industrial wood annually. Short rotation plantations of fast-growing species such as *Populus*, *Eucalyptus*, *Melia*, *Casuarina*, and bamboo offer a viable alternative to natural forests, reducing pressure on native ecosystems while providing economic benefits to farmers. Furthermore, these systems help farmers diversify their income streams by offering options like fuelwood, timber, fruits, fodder, and medicinal products, thus promoting socio-economic stability.

Scope and Challenges in Punjab

Punjab, however, presents a unique challenge and opportunity. With forest and tree cover at a meagre 6.59%—of which TOF accounts for only 2.92%—there is significant potential to integrate trees into existing agricultural landscapes. Most of Punjab's land is under intensive agriculture, primarily due to private ownership and the dominance of traditional cropping systems. Introducing trees into these systems not only helps diversify income sources but also enhances ecological stability. Recognizing this, the Punjab Government has launched several initiatives to encourage

land-use diversification and afforestation, such as the Green Punjab Mission under Tandrust Punjab, the Bamboo Mission, and the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry. Plantation drives are routinely organized across the state on occasions like World Forestry Day, Earth Day, and Van Mahotsav to raise awareness about the benefits of trees. Despite these efforts, the success rate of plantation drives remains low due to multiple factors, including poor-quality planting material, incorrect species selection, lack of technical knowledge, and inadequate post-planting care. To achieve sustainable outcomes, it is necessary to emphasize scientific planning, species selection based on site-specific conditions, and integration of trees into farming systems.

Planning for Success: Key Considerations

Ensuring the survival and success of plantations requires proper planning and management, especially during the initial establishment years. Failed plantations not only waste time and resources but also discourage future efforts. To improve outcomes, tree plantation efforts must begin with clear planning—from selecting the right species to ensuring quality planting stock, proper site preparation, timely planting, and consistent post-planting care.

Choosing the Right Tree Species

The choice of tree species should align with the purpose of the plantation:

- **For environmental protection:** Long-rotation, hardy trees like Shisham, kikar, bohar, etc.
- **For household use:** Fruit or multipurpose trees like kinnow, *Jamun*, *Toot*, *Moringa*, *etc.*
- **For commercial income:** Market-demand-driven species like *Poplar*, *Eucalyptus*, *Dek*, sagwan and bamboo.

Both indigenous (*Shisham*, *Kikar*, *Toon*) and exotic species (*Poplar*, *Eucalyptus*) can be used, provided they are suitable to local conditions. Indigenous species are preferred for biodiversity conservation and land rehabilitation, while fast-growing exotics are ideal for quick economic returns. In Punjab and across northwestern India, *Poplar*, *Eucalyptus*, and *Dek* have become dominant in agroforestry systems. It is crucial to select species based on specific farm objectives, soil conditions, and water availability to maximize the benefits of tree-based land use. Additionally, the inclusion of medicinal plants like mentha and turmeric can further enhance the productivity of agroforestry systems.

Best Practices for Tree Plantation:

To achieve successful results, farmers should follow these essential practices:

1. **Use quality planting material** sourced from government institutions or certified nurseries.
2. **Plant at the right time**—preferably during the monsoon or in spring (for deciduous species with irrigation support).
3. **Prepare the site well,** with proper pit digging and addition of topsoil mixed with FYM (1:1 ratio).
4. **Plant correctly,** ensuring straight placement and good soil-root contact.
5. **Irrigate regularly,** starting immediately after planting and then at 1–2 week intervals as needed.
6. **Monitor the plantation for survival,** replacing dead plants promptly.
7. **Weed regularly** to avoid competition for water and nutrients.
8. **Protect the plantation from animals, pests, and fire.**
9. **Consult experts** for guidance on species management and disease control. Integration of soil and water conservation practices, such as mulching, can enhance the success rate of tree plantations by reducing evaporation and improving soil moisture retention.

Government Support and Financial Incentives

Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) provides high-quality nursery plants of various species such as *Poplar*, *Eucalyptus*, *Shisham*, *Neem*, *Sukhchain*, dek, willow, gmelina, bamboo, and more. The Punjab Forest and Wildlife Department supports farmers financially under the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry, offering ₹35 per surviving plant (over four years) to registered plantations. Registration ensures accountability and access to benefits. Additionally, the state offers support through the 'M-Governance' model, where farmers can easily access plantation-related information, including free sapling distribution, guidance on species selection, and post-planting care through digital platforms.

The *i-Hariyali app* allows farmers to access free saplings from the state. The Forest Department also promotes medicinal plant cultivation and supports marketing linkages.

Additionally, the department produces superior clonal varieties of *Eucalyptus*, *Casuarina*, dek, and ornamental plants for adoption. These efforts ensure that farmers are not only equipped with the right planting materials but also have access to technical aspects and market linkages for the sale of timber, fruits, and medicinal products, helping them gain maximum economic benefit.

The Path Ahead: A Greener Punjab

With supportive policies, financial assistance, and technical guidance, farmers in Punjab can make tree plantations an integral part of their agricultural practices. Doing so not only strengthens ecological resilience but also offers sustainable income, reduces dependency on traditional crops, and improves livelihoods. By promoting onfarm trees with crops and livestock, Punjab can build a more resilient agricultural sector that thrives despite the challenges posed by climate change. The real Green Revolution 2.0 in Punjab will be achieved not just in fields of wheat and paddy, but when rural landscapes are lined with trees that benefit the environment, economy, and communities alike. Ultimately, a sustainable Punjab will be one where agriculture and forestry are intertwined, creating an ecosystem that is both economically and ecologically viable. Presently the administrative and political atmosphere is also in favour of trees on farm to make the slogan of Honourable Prime minister a practical reality i.e., Har Med Pe Ped.

हरी भरी वसुंधरा: प्रकृति से प्रगति तक

लेखिका: श्रीमती सुनीता रहेजा
पर्यावरणविद् एवं NGO संयोजिका, हिसार (हरियाणा)

मैं, सुनीता रहेजा, हिसार (हरियाणा) से हूँ और इस वर्ष मेरी उम्र 63 साल हो चुकी है। जीवन भर मैंने पेड़-पौधों से विशेष लगाव महसूस किया, लेकिन पारिवारिक जिम्मेदारियों के चलते प्रकृति के लिए कुछ ठोस करने का अवसर नहीं मिला। जैसे ही जीवन ने मुझे कुछ खाली समय दिया, मैंने निश्चय किया कि अब वह सपना साकार करना है जो बरसों से मन में था – प्रकृति की सेवा। यह कोई तात्कालिक निर्णय नहीं था, बल्कि वर्षों की भावना थी, जो अब कर्म में बदलने का समय था।

तेजी से बढ़ती आबादी, कटते हुए जंगल, और रिहायशी विकास के नाम पर उजड़ती प्रकृति को देखकर मन बेचैन हो उठा। मनुष्य ने अपने स्वार्थ के लिए न तो जंगल बचाए, न जल, न जमीन। परिणामस्वरूप आज हम प्रदूषित वायु, दूषित जल और बंजर मिट्टी से जूझ रहे हैं। इसी सोच से प्रेरित होकर वर्ष 2015 में मैंने और मेरे साथियों ने मिलकर एक संस्था की स्थापना की – जिसका नाम रखा "हरी भरी वसुंधरा"।

हमने शुरुआत पेड़ लगाने से की। अब तक संस्था द्वारा 24,000 से अधिक पेड़ लगाए जा चुके हैं, जिनमें से 85% से अधिक आज भी जीवित हैं। हम हर पेड़ को डेढ़ साल तक संभालते हैं जब तक वह मजबूत नहीं हो जाता। पेड़ लगाने से पहले ऐसी जगहों की पहचान की जाती है जहाँ बाउंड्री हो ताकि पशुओं से बचाव हो सके और पानी की भी उचित व्यवस्था हो। इस बार हमने 350 बांस के ट्री गार्ड्स बनवाए और उनमें पीपल, बड़, नीम, बेलपत्र जैसे जीवनदायी वृक्ष लगाए। इस कार्य में लोगों ने दिल खोलकर आर्थिक सहयोग भी दिया।

जब जंगलों का लगातार कटाव जारी रहा, तब हमने शहरी जंगल बनाने का विचार किया। हमने जापानी "मियावाकी तकनीक" से हिसार में 4 अर्बन फॉरेस्ट बनाए, जो आज न सिर्फ पर्यावरण को राहत दे रहे हैं, बल्कि देखने वालों को भी प्रकृति के करीब ला रहे हैं। ये जंगल अब हिसार

की पहचान बन चुके हैं - जैसे आकाशवाणी परिसर, दूरदर्शन केंद्र और सेक्टर 33 का बूस्टिंग स्टेशन।

वातावरण की रक्षा केवल पेड़ लगाने से पूरी नहीं होती। हमने देखा कि सूखे पत्तों और किचन वेस्ट को लोग जला देते हैं, जिससे वायु प्रदूषण होता है। तब हमने निर्णय लिया कि इन्हीं चीज़ों से खाद बनाई जाए। पहले तो गड्ढों में खाद बनाना शुरू किया, फिर राज्यसभा सांसद डॉ. सुभाष चंद्रा जी ने हमें हरियाणा की पहली खाद बनाने की मशीन भेंट की। इस पहल ने नगर निगम का ध्यान आकर्षित किया और आज हम मिलकर हजारों किलो सब्जियों के छिलकों और सूखे पत्तों को उपयोगी खाद में बदलते हैं, जिसे हम लोगों को निशुल्क वितरित करते हैं।

हमारी संस्था ने नहरों की सफाई और मंदिरों की पूजा सामग्री को पुनः उपयोग करने का भी बीड़ा उठाया। हम फूलों से धूप बनाते हैं, गले फूलों से खाद और पुराने कपड़ों से मेट्स। इन्हें हम स्वदेशी मेले में लगाकर निशुल्क वितरित करते हैं, जिससे पर्यावरण संरक्षण के साथ-साथ पुनर्चक्रण की आदत भी समाज में विकसित हो रही है।

पिछले तीन वर्षों से सर्दियों में हम ग्रीनबेल्ट क्षेत्रों को साफ कर वहाँ सीजनल फूलों की क्यारियाँ बनाते हैं। इस बार हमने 52 प्रकार के फूलों के बीज बोए हैं, और उनकी पौध को स्कूलों, अस्पतालों, पार्कों व घरों में लगाया जाएगा - बिल्कुल मुफ्त।

मिट्टी की रक्षा के लिए हमने बर्तन बैंक की शुरुआत की। चार साल पहले शुरू हुआ यह प्रयास आज हिसार में चार स्थानों पर पहुंच चुका है। हमारे स्टील के बर्तनों का उपयोग लोग शादी, भंडारे, कीर्तन जैसे कार्यक्रमों में कर रहे हैं, जिससे सिंगल यूज़ प्लास्टिक पर निर्भरता कम हुई है और हमारी मिट्टी और स्वास्थ्य को राहत मिली है।

आज हमारी संस्था में लगभग 70 सदस्य हैं, जिनमें से 15 लोग रोजाना पूरी निष्ठा से काम करते हैं। हमारी कोशिश है कि समाज के हर वर्ग को इस अभियान से जोड़ा जाए। हम मानते हैं – हरियाली सिर्फ प्रकृति की नहीं, भविष्य की भी जरूरत है।

आइए, आप भी जुड़ें इस हरियाली अभियान से!

- एक पौधा लगाएं, सूखे पत्तों से खाद बनाएं।
- बर्तन बैंक का उपयोग करें।
- नदियों और नहरों को स्वच्छ रखें।
- मंदिर कचरे का पुनः उपयोग करें।
- बच्चों को पर्यावरण शिक्षा दें।

"हम सब मिलकर बदल सकते हैं पर्यावरण की तस्वीर"

पेड़: जीवन का आधार और सतत भविष्य की कुंजी

लेखक: श्री.एन डी शर्मा देवशाली

मनुष्य और प्रकृति का संबंध बहुत गहरा और पुरातन है। इस संबंध में पेड़ एक ऐसी कड़ी हैं जो न केवल पर्यावरण को संतुलित रखते हैं, बल्कि सामाजिक, मानसिक, आर्थिक और शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य को भी बेहतर बनाते हैं। शहरीकरण, औद्योगीकरण और जलवायु संकट के इस दौर में पेड़ों का महत्व और भी अधिक बढ़ गया है। आइए समझते हैं कि पेड़ क्यों हमारे समाज के लिए अमूल्य धरोहर हैं और क्यों हमें आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए अधिकाधिक पेड़ लगाने और उनकी देखभाल करने की आवश्यकता है।

1. शहरी पर्यावरण का सुधारक: पेड़ों का संरक्षण

तेजी से फैलते शहरी विस्तार ने हरियाली को सीमित कर दिया है। ऐसे में पेड़ शहरी जीवन की गुणवत्ता को सुधारने में अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।

तापमान नियंत्रण: पेड़ वायुमंडलीय तापमान को संतुलित करने का कार्य करते हैं। वे शहरी हीट आइलैंड प्रभाव को कम करते हैं, जो बड़े शहरों में गर्मी को और अधिक बढ़ा देता है।

वायु शुद्धिकरण: पेड़ हवा में मौजूद हानिकारक गैसों, धूल कणों और विषैले तत्वों को अवशोषित करते हैं तथा प्राणवायु (ऑक्सीजन) प्रदान करते हैं।

जल शुद्धि व संरक्षण: पेड़ों की जड़ें मिट्टी की जल धारण क्षमता बढ़ाती हैं और वर्षा के जल को अवशोषित कर भूजल स्तर को बनाए रखती हैं।

मिट्टी का संरक्षण: पेड़ों की जड़ें मिट्टी को जकड़कर भूक्षरण को रोकती हैं और भूमि को उपजाऊ बनाए रखती हैं।

2. जलवायु परिवर्तन के विरुद्ध एक सशक्त हथियार

वर्तमान समय में जलवायु परिवर्तन मानवता के समक्ष सबसे बड़ी चुनौतियों में से एक है। पेड़ इस संकट से लड़ने में हमारी सबसे बड़ी प्राकृतिक संपत्ति हैं।

कार्बन डाइऑक्साइड का अवशोषण: पेड़ वातावरण से CO_2 को ग्रहण कर उसे लकड़ी के रूप में संचित करते हैं। यह प्रक्रिया कार्बन पृथक्करण कहलाती है।

ग्लोबल वार्मिंग में कमी: पेड़ तापमान को नियंत्रित कर चरम मौसमी घटनाओं (अतिवृष्टि, सूखा, बर्फबारी, तूफान) की तीव्रता को कम करते हैं।

जलवायु स्थिरता: सतत रूप से पेड़ों की वृद्धि पृथ्वी के जलवायु तंत्र को संतुलित करने में मदद करती है।

3. शहरी जैव विविधता की रक्षक

शहरीकरण के चलते अनेक स्थानीय प्रजातियाँ और वन्य जीव विलुप्ति के कगार पर हैं। पेड़ उनके लिए आश्रय और आहार दोनों प्रदान करते हैं।

वन्यजीवों का आवास: पक्षी, तितलियाँ, गिलहरियाँ और अनेक छोटे जीव पेड़ों में रहते हैं और यहीं प्रजनन भी करते हैं।

प्राकृतिक गलियारे: सड़कों और पार्कों के किनारे लगाए गए पेड़ 'हरित गलियारे' (Green Corridors) बनाते हैं जिससे जीव-जंतु एक क्षेत्र से दूसरे में सुरक्षित रूप से जा सकते हैं।

पारिस्थितिकी संतुलन: फूल, फल, पत्तियाँ और छाल जैव विविधता बनाए रखने में सहायक होते हैं।

4. सामाजिक सौहार्द और सामुदायिक सशक्तिकरण

पेड़ केवल पर्यावरण का नहीं, समाज का भी सशक्त आधार हैं। वे समाज को एकजुट करते हैं।

समुदायिक स्थल का निर्माण: हरे-भरे पार्क लोगों को एकत्र करते हैं, जहाँ बच्चे, वृद्ध, युवा सभी शारीरिक और मानसिक गतिविधियों में शामिल होते हैं।

सामाजिक मेलजोल में वृद्धि: पेड़ों से घिरे स्थान बातचीत, मनोरंजन और सांस्कृतिक आयोजनों के लिए उपयुक्त होते हैं।

शहरी जीवन में मानसिक शांति: हरे वातावरण में रहने वाले लोगों में तनाव, अकेलापन और अवसाद की दर कम होती है।

5. शारीरिक और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य का संवर्धन

प्रकृति से जुड़ाव मानव जीवन के लिए औषधि के समान है। यह तथ्य आधुनिक चिकित्सा शोधों से भी प्रमाणित हुआ है।

शारीरिक व्यायाम को बढ़ावा: पेड़ों से ढकी सड़कों और ट्रैकों पर लोग अधिक पैदल चलते हैं, दौड़ते हैं या साइकिल चलाते हैं।

मानसिक स्वास्थ्य लाभ: हरे-भरे दृश्यों से अवसाद, तनाव और चिड़चिड़ापन कम होता है। ए डी एच डी और बच्चों में मानसिक संतुलन बेहतर होता है।

चिकित्सकीय प्रभाव: अस्पतालों में पेड़ और हरियाली रोगियों के शीघ्र स्वस्थ होने में सहायक सिद्ध होते हैं। थेरैप्यूटिक गार्डन (चिकित्सीय उद्यान) बुज़ुर्गों और मानसिक रोगियों के लिए वरदान हैं।

6. आर्थिक दृष्टिकोण से लाभदायक

पेड़ों का प्रभाव हमारी अर्थव्यवस्था पर भी सकारात्मक होता है – प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष दोनों रूपों में।

व्यापारिक लाभ: पेड़ों से घिरे बाजार और दुकानें अधिक ग्राहकों को आकर्षित करती हैं और व्यापार में वृद्धि होती है।

संपत्ति मूल्य में वृद्धि: हरे-भरे क्षेत्रों की रिहायशी संपत्तियों की कीमत अधिक होती है।

ऊर्जा बचत: पेड़ ठंडी छाया प्रदान करते हैं जिससे एयर कंडीशनर की जरूरत घटती है और ऊर्जा की बचत होती है।

बुनियादी ढाँचे पर कम दबाव: तूफानी जल को रोककर पेड़ नगर पालिका की जल निकासी प्रणाली पर दबाव को कम करते हैं।

पेड़ केवल हरियाली नहीं, जीवन की नींव हैं। वे हमें स्वच्छ वायु, स्वच्छ जल, शांत वातावरण, स्वस्थ शरीर, सशक्त समाज और संतुलित जलवायु प्रदान करते हैं। आधुनिक जीवन की गति में पेड़ लगाने और संरक्षित करने का कार्य एक नैतिक, सामाजिक और पर्यावरणीय ज़िम्मेदारी बन चुका है।

हमें चाहिए कि हम "एक व्यक्ति – एक पेड़" जैसे संकल्प लें और आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए धरती को रहने योग्य बनाए रखें।

Reconnecting with Nature — A sacred gift and a spiritual responsibility

Writer: Dr. Pardeep Kumar

In the fast-paced rhythm of modern life — surrounded by screens, deadlines and endless distractions — we often forget one of the most profound and constant blessings that exist around and within us: nature. Quiet, generous and ever-nurturing, it asks for nothing yet gives us everything — air to breathe, water to drink, peace to feel. And as we grow distant from it, we don't just lose our connection to the earth — we lose connection with ourselves.

Throughout history, across every religion and spiritual tradition, nature has been more than creation — it has been the Creator's expression. Guru Nanak Dev Ji beautifully said: *"Pavan Guru, Pani Pita, Mata Dharat Mahat"* (air is the teacher, water the father, earth the mother). In the deep silence of the Himalayas, saints from all faiths — Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Sufi, Sikh and Christian — have heard the voice of the Divine. Nature has always been the sacred bridge between humanity and the eternal.

Among all natural wonders, the Himalayas stand as living shrines of silence and serenity. These mountains are more than majestic landscapes — they are temples of stillness, where inner noise begins to fade and the mind slowly returns to its natural state of balance. In their presence, healing unfolds — not through medicine, but through presence, purity and pranic energy. The untouched air, ancient forests, flowing rivers and pristine snow purify not only the body but also the cluttered, fatigued mind.

From the golden rays of the rising sun that awaken clarity, to the morning breeze that nurtures our lungs and calms our thoughts. Nature offers meditation without ritual. One need not chant or sit cross-legged to feel divine. Standing beneath a tree, listening to birdsong, walking barefoot on moist earth — these are sacred acts that awaken the soul. In those moments, we don't just observe nature — we become part of it.

Every sacred text urges humanity to live in harmony with nature:

- The Bhagavad Gita calls it *Prakriti* — the source of all action and rest.
- The Bible speaks of being faithful stewards of the Earth.
- The Quran warns against causing corruption on the land.
- Buddha found enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree.
- Mahavir taught compassion not just toward humans, but toward all living beings.

These teachings are not coincidences — they reflect a universal truth: that nature is our first and final teacher.

Yet today, we stand at the edge of a deep ecological and spiritual crisis. Forests are vanishing, rivers are choking, air is thick with toxins and our soil is slowly dying. But beyond this physical degradation lies a greater loss — the erosion of our inner equilibrium, our sense of reverence, our soul's sanctuary. This is not just an environmental emergency — it is a spiritual disconnection.

It is time to awaken — not only to act, but to reconnect. Let us return to the sacredness of trees, rivers, animals and mountains. Let us not treat nature as a resource to be consumed but as a family to be protected.

Let us walk the path of restoration:

- Promote green infrastructure that respects natural balance.
- Plant and protect trees—they are silent saints of the Earth.
- Embrace sustainable living—a life of balance, not excess.
- Practice mindful waste management.
- Inspire eco-consciousness in our children, communities and leaders.

The time for prayers alone has passed. Now is the time for conscious action.

As nature continues to give — freely, abundantly, unconditionally — we, too, must begin to give back. Let our actions become our prayers. Let every tree planted be a spiritual offering. Let every sustainable habit be a step toward sacred living.

In the stillness of nature, we rediscover our inner voice. In the purity of its presence, we find true peace. In its beauty, we are reminded — we are not above nature; we are a part of it.

Voices from the Hills: A Wake-Up Call from Himachal

Author: -Dolly, Concerned Student

I come from the serene yet unpredictable mountains of Himachal Pradesh. For the longest time, words like *climate change*, *pollution*, *floods*, and *environment* were just textbook terms — memorized for exams and forgotten soon after. Like many, I believed these "big" issues existed far away from my peaceful little world.

That illusion shattered the night a massive flash flood struck my hometown — the first I had ever seen, and perhaps the first even my grandmother's generation had experienced. Even now, when I think back to that terrifying night, I feel a shiver run down my spine.

Life in the mountains has never been easy. We learn to adapt to nature, not challenge it. In our village, homes are stacked on steep slopes — one above, one below — forming a tight-knit cascade of lives. But that night, after nearly 12 hours of unrelenting rain, everything changed. A thunderous roar jolted us awake. In moments, the village was scarred by destruction — homes gone, cattle lost, savings washed away like they were never there.

No one slept for nights. Fear lingered in every breath — *Will we make it through the next rain? Will the mountain hold?*

As weeks passed, the fear dulled but never disappeared. And every monsoon since has been a quiet reminder of how fragile everything is. Watching rivers rise and hills crumble made me ask: **Are we truly paying attention to what's happening around us?**

In a world overwhelmed by breaking news and climate alerts, are we really seeing the *unseen*? Or are we just reacting when tragedy knocks on our own door?

It doesn't matter who we are — our religion, status, or language — climate change touches all lives. But are we preparing the next generation for that reality? Are we simply taking children on hill vacations for selfies and fun, or are we teaching them what it means to respect nature?

Have we shown our youth that loving the planet is not about big speeches, but about everyday choices — carrying a cloth bag, avoiding fast fashion, questioning waste, conserving water? Even something as simple as choosing less over more can have ripple effects. And yet, how

often do we ask our leaders about clean air, water safety, or proper drainage systems during elections?

It's time we realized: even the smallest of choices — at home, in our wardrobes, in how we eat or consume — are tied to bigger outcomes. Yes, the climate crisis is massive. But just like tiny seeds grow into tall trees, our small actions can shape a better future.

I'm not an expert. I'm just a girl from the hills, learning to pause, observe, and ask questions. And I hope this piece inspires you to ask your own.

A Wake-Up Call: Let's Heal the Air We Breathe

Author: Mr. Ashok Arora,

Inventor of "Vayu Mitra" – India's Air Purifier for Public Spaces

We are living through one of the most defining moments in human history — a moment where our own creations, once meant to build a better world, are now choking the very air we breathe. The sky above us, once a symbol of purity and life, now hangs heavy with pollutants we cannot see but are forced to inhale every single day.

The question that should haunt us all is: How did we let it come to this?

Unchecked industrial growth, rising vehicular traffic, and blind urban expansion have placed our ecosystem under siege. While these developments have undoubtedly contributed to economic progress, they have also extracted a heavy price — paid not just by the environment, but by the common man. Every breath we take today carries microscopic threats: asthma in children, respiratory illnesses in the elderly, and invisible toxins that weaken even the healthiest among us.

This is not just about pollution anymore. It is about survival.

As the air quality in our cities plummets year after year, what we need is not just awareness but immediate, scalable action. This is where "Vayu Mitra" steps in — a Made in India innovation with a purpose. Designed as a low-cost, easy-to-install, outdoor air purifier, Vayu Mitra is meant for the spaces where pollution hits hardest — high-traffic roads, industrial belts, and crowded public areas. Unlike traditional purifiers limited to homes and offices, Vayu Mitra works at the street level — where the problem truly begins.

But let us be clear: no invention can succeed alone. Technology needs a movement. We need mass plantation campaigns, public pressure for emission control, eco-conscious policymaking, and most importantly, a shift in public attitude. It's time to ask: Are we truly serious about protecting Mother **Earth? Or are we waiting until the damage becomes irreversible?**

If we continue on this path of ignorance, the cost will not just be measured in smog-filled skies or rising temperatures — it will be paid in human lives, in collapsed ecosystems, in diseases that become the new normal.

The need for inventions like Vayu Mitra will become dominant and urgent — not as a convenience, but as a necessity for human existence — if we do not change our course.

The responsibility does not lie with governments alone. Each of us is a stakeholder in this crisis. Choose to take that bus instead of your car. Choose to support eco-friendly products. Speak up for clean-air policies. Educate your children not just about development, but about coexistence.

As a nation that prides itself on innovation and resilience, let's lead the way — not just with inventions, but with intention. Let us embrace development that is not at the cost of our forests, rivers, and skies — but in harmony with them. This is not just a warning.

It is an appeal.

- To act.
- To care.
- To breathe — freely, safely, and together.

National Student Paryavaran Competition 2025 (NSPC)

"HARIT – The Way Of Life"

Supported by:

Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

&

Ministry of Education, Govt. of India

पर्यावरण संरक्षण

सत्यमेव जयते
Ministry of Education
Government of India

प्रकृतिः रक्षति रक्षितः
Nature Protects if She is Protected

PLANTING TREES

STEPS

- Choose a suitable tree species
- Select a proper location
- Prepare the soil
- Plant the sapling
- Water immediately
- Mulch the base
- Support the plant
- Monitor growth

TOOLS

Spade Watering can

PRECAUTIONS

- Wear gloves and closed shoes
- Avoid root damage

SEGREGATING WASTE

STEPS

- Understand waste categories
- Set up separate bins
- Sort recyclables
- Dispose of hazardous waste
- Keep compostables separate
- Ensure proper disposal

TOOLS

Recycling Compost General

PRECAUTIONS

- Wear gloves and mask • Avoid mixing waste
- Handle sharp objects carefully • Follow local regulations

CONSERVING WATER

STEPS

- Fix leaks promptly
- Take shorter showers
- Turn off the tap when not in use
- Use water-efficient fixtures
- Water plants wisely
- Run full loads in appliances

TOOLS

PRECAUTIONS

- Avoid over-tightening fittings
- Be careful on wet surfaces
- Store water safely

Registration Fee

Upload a selfie while engaging in one of the following activities – planting a tree, conserving water, or segregating waste.

Holistic Actions for Revival of Indigenous Traditions (HARIT).

2. To foster understanding among young individuals and the general public regarding the intricate complexities of the imminent threats posed by unchecked climate destruction.

3. To acquire knowledge on the job skills, competency & attitude to confront the environmental challenges & their mitigation.

Link for Registration

https://ecomitram.app/nspc/school- registration

Link for Quiz Competition

https://ecomitram.app/nspc/student-registration

Link for Result

https://ecomitram.app/nspc/results

1st Group
A. From Class 1st to Class 5th

2nd Group
B. From Class 6th to Class 8th

3rd Group
C. From Class 9th to Class 12th

4th Group
D. From UG PG & Research Scholar

5th Group
E. Other Participants

Registration of Schools, College & University

- From 1st July-2025 to 21st Aug-2025

Quiz Competition(For all Class Groups)

- From 1st July-2025 to 21st Aug-2025

Result Announcement

- 30th Aug-2025

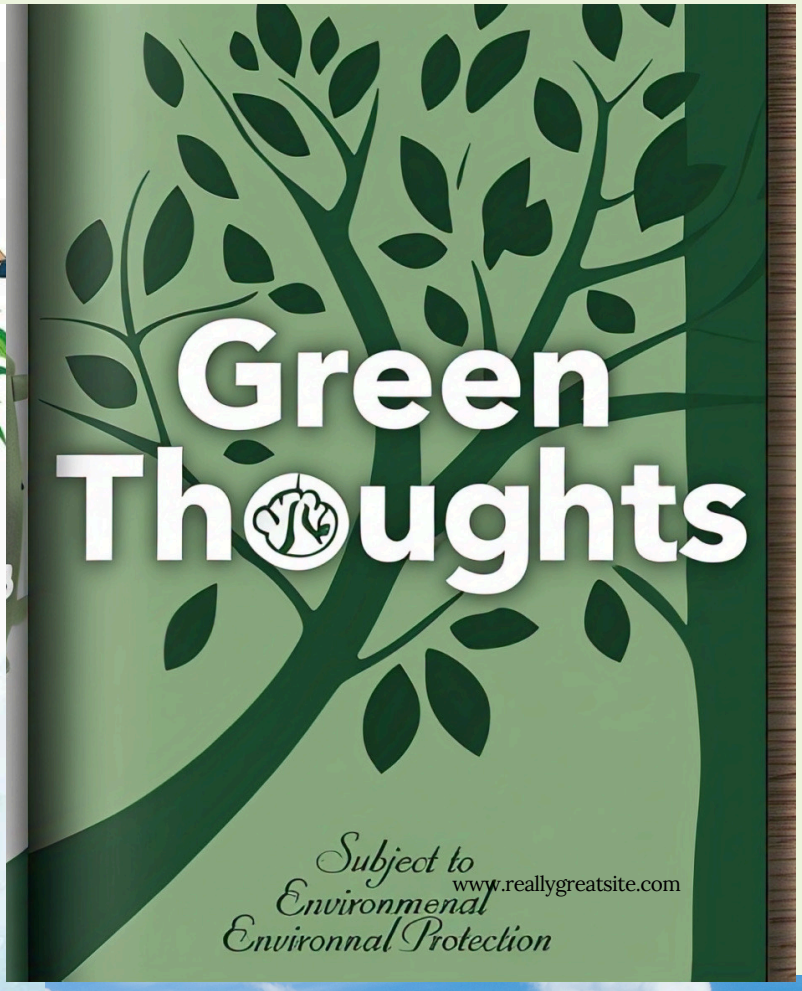
हरित संकल्प

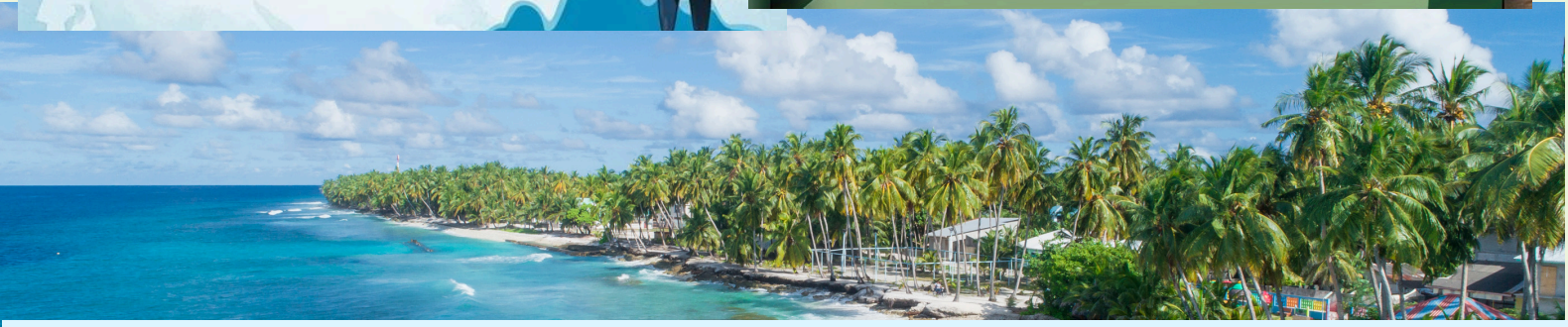
द्विभाषी पत्रिका

“अवसर की प्रतीक्षा में मत बैठो ।
आज का अवसर ही सर्वोत्तम है ।”

हर छोटा बदलाव बड़ी कामयाबी का हिस्सा होता है

संपादक: डॉ. सुमन मोर, डॉ. प्रदीप कुमार





Download Eco Mitram app for : NSPC 2025