

Environmental Conservation Practices Using Guru Jambhoji's Principles

***Dr. Kamal Kishor Saini**

An environment is generally defined as the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant survives or operates. Over the past century, there has been a tremendous increase in the human population. This means increased demand for food, water, housing, electricity, roads, cars and many other commodities. These demands are putting a lot of strain on our natural resources and are also causing air, water, and soil pollution. What is needed now is to control the degradation and depletion of precious natural resources and pollution without stopping the development process.

Our environment is constantly changing, and as our environment changes, we need to be more and more aware of the environmental problems contributing to these changes. People need to be much more careful with how they live their lives in connection with the types of environmental problems our world is facing because of the tremendous increase in natural disasters, warming and cooling seasons, and different types of weather patterns. Environmental problems are the negative effects that human activities have on the environment. These include pollution, overpopulation, waste disposal, climate change, global warming, the greenhouse effect, Deforestation, etc.

At a time when environmental issues are a global concern, Shri Guru Jambheshwar Maharaj, the founder of the Bishnoi community, issued a warning about this issue roughly 550 years ago. Shri Guru Jambheshwar Bhagwan, popularly known as Jambho ji (born in the isolated Rajasthani town of Pipasar in 1451), who is a simple peasant, saint, and seer knew the importance of bio-diversity preservation and ill-effects of environmental pollution, deforestation, wildlife preservation and ecological balance, etc. The teachings of Guru Ji were very clear, rational, useful, and efficient. His writings are timeless and are intended for the common person. He was one of the finest ecologists and environmentalists of the 15th and 16th centuries, who composed the shabad to lay the foundation for a sacred system for the environmental preservation.

If we look more into the background of environmental protection. The Bishnoi community, which Jambho Ji founded in 1485 AD, is renowned for its environmentally conscious and nature-loving practises. The Bishnoi people have taken care of their environment since the 15th century and are knowledgeable about sustainable development. They were the pioneers of the environmental revolution.

Teachings of guru Jambho ji regarding environment conservation

Jambho ji stipulated 29 principles to be followed by the sect. Bish means twenty and noi means nine. Thus, the 29 commandments are the centre of Bishnoism. Eight of these 29 commandments call for the preservation of biodiversity and the promotion of responsible animal husbandry. The seven commandments offer guidelines for appropriate social behaviour. The Ten Commandments include instructions for basic health and personal hygiene. The remaining four commandments offer instructions for regularly worshipping God.

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His lessons were presented in a poetic style called Shabadwani. Only 120 shabads, or poetry poems, from his 51-year sermonising tour of India, are currently available. It is asserted that these 120 shabads are a wealth of knowledge and are everything one needs to comprehend and follow his path.

Principles outlined by Jambho Ji for Environmental Conservation

1. The belief that all living things have the right to survive and share all resources underscores Jamboji's core philosophy 'Jeev daya palni' (sympathy for all living things). Since all living things are creations of God, they are entitled to an existence of their own. The most important natural resource conservation principle is "Runkh lilo nhi ghave" (don't cut down green trees). Green trees, in his opinion, shouldn't be cut down because they contribute to ecological harmony. The lifeblood of humans and other animals is oxygen, which trees release after absorbing carbon dioxide.
2. In his guidelines, he placed a strong emphasis on hygiene and purity. He talked about the value of clean water for health and to use filtered water and milk to make it bacteria-free. He also instructed people to shake fire sticks when using firewood since it contains numerous microorganisms.
3. He said that the best way to protect biodiversity and promote responsible animal care is to outlaw the killing of any animals.
4. He also prohibits the use of blue colour to prevent overuse of indigo (made from cutting down green bushes in large quantities) and that blue absorbs the sun's harmful rays and encourages wrong behaviour.
5. He also advocated to plant shrubs in their fields to both prevent soil erosion and provide the animals with much-needed food during times of famine .
6. He advocated using renewable resources whenever possible to suit daily needs.
7. He supports rainwater harvesting, even at the most basic levels, such as storing rainwater for household uses in pitchers left outside in the rain.
8. At funerals, instead of burning the bodies bury them in the ground. By doing this, we can greatly lower the carbon footprint because cremation not only uses a lot of firewood from trees, but also produces a lot of carbon dioxide and other harmful chemicals, increasing the carbon footprint.

Examples of the Bishnoi sect's significant environmental protection contributions

One of the early campaigns for environmental protection is the well-known Amrita Devi Chipko movement. 363 Bishnois gave their lives in this movement to defend the Khejri trees in the Rajasthani village of Khejarli. In the 1730s, when building his new palace, King Abhay Singh of Jodhpur allegedly gave orders to his soldiers to clear the trees in the village of Khejarli for wood. A woman by the name of Amrita Devi protested the soldiers by grabbing onto trees and fighting for their survival. Asu, Ratni, and Bhagu, three of her daughters, supported their mother. A chopped head is cheaper than a chopped tree" (Sar santey rookh rahe to bhi sasto jaan), Amrita Devi's final words, became the Bishnois' catchphrase to motivate them for all time. Others in the community also held up the trees and wrapped her arms around their trunks. The soldiers ignored the people's pleas and continued to cut down trees. A messenger was sent to report this, but by the time the Maharaja's orders to stop the atrocity reached them, they had already slaughtered everybody in their path. Later, the Maharaja issued Bishnois a royal edict on a copper plaque declaring it unlawful to cut down green trees and go

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hunting within the Bishnoi village's territorial jurisdiction. Additionally, anyone who disregarded them would face severe punishment and legal action from the state. Additionally, the royal family was forbidden from hunting in or close to Bishnoi villages under the proclamation. The Amrita Devi Bishnoi Wildlife Protection Award, the first of which was posthumously given to a Bishnoi youth killed by poachers in 2001, honours her legacy today.

The Bishnoi community, which occasionally goes to great measures for their cause, is frequently referred to as the defender of the environment and wildlife in western Rajasthan. One of the more well-known incidents that made them famous was when the community brought Bollywood actor Salman Khan to court in 1998 for reportedly killing two blackbucks during a movie shoot near Jodhpur in 1998. This Black Buck shooting case was strengthened by Poonamchand Bishnoi, a local from the Bishnoi community who claimed Bollywood actor Salman Khan and his co-stars were on a hunting session in Bhagoda ki Dhani in Kankani village, near Jodhpur. The community followed the case with dogged conviction for 20 years, until, in 2018, Khan was sentenced by a local court.

Conclusion

The great visionary Jambho ji saw the effects of human activity destroying nature for economic progress. He recognised the importance of environmental preservation and incorporated his principles into religious laws so that people may readily internalise them. He travelled extensively to aid and educate others, as well as perform numerous acts of kindness. He was a genuine and visionary guru, a proponent of social reform, a brilliant environmentalist, and a big believer in love and harmony between not just humans and other living things but also between nature. Today, in this alarming climate change situation, Jambhoji's teachings are proving relevant. We must follow these simple, practical principles in our lives to protect the environment.

***Department of Political Science
Govt. Sanskrit College
Chauth ka Barwara
Sawai Madhopur (Raj.)**

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