

## Improving Democratic Climate...

by Narendra Modi

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Friends,

This is a bridge, rather than a blog, A bridge that connects us through thoughts, through feelings. A bridge that also leads me to actions. While global warming creates negative effects, heart warming creates positive effects. Heart warming does not require any global summit, this bridge would suffice.

Winter is a season to attain good health, whether of self or of democracy. The health of democracy is based on 'vote of all the people'. The bond of rights & duties between the people and government would strengthen if all the people vote in elections, the axis of democracy. The democracy would become more soulful, more complete. Our goal should be to achieve 100 percent voting. Pale voting indicates pale democracy. Such a situation would imbalance the democratic climate.

But the responsibility to avert such a situation is ours. Hence, the Govt. of Gujarat has passed a bill in the Assembly, providing for compulsory voting in the elections of local self government institutions. This is a revolutionary step in the history of independent India. According to this, the citizens will have to compulsorily vote in the elections of village panchayats, taluka and district panchayats and municipal bodies. If the voter does not wish to vote for any of the candidates, he can do negative voting. Non-voters would be issued a notice from the State Election Commission.

Gujarat has taken a lead in improving the health of Indian democracy. This would make our democracy 'voter oriented' and 'citizen oriented'. Also, it would put an end to futile discussions of drawing room politics. I clearly believe that compulsory voting will become a major motivational force for the youth of the nation. Higher the voting, more the accountability of the government. Ultimately, this would serve as an overall public interest.

Moreover, the bill also provides for 50 percent reservation for women candidates in the elections of local bodies. This step would leverage the process of women's equality and women's empowerment.

It would be my pleasure to read your thoughts and comments on this initiative of improving democratic climate. Like rights & duties, thoughts & actions are also two sides of the same coin.

Let's take a break here, albeit, to think and to act.

Yours,

