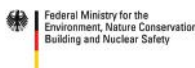
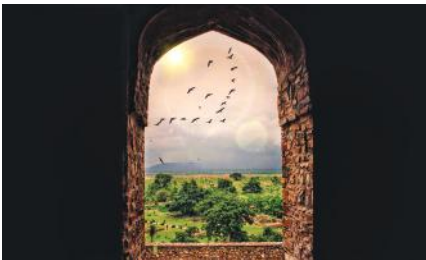


YOUNG VOICES FOR THE PLANET



Foreword



This compilation of blogs is one of the positive results of the Youth Climate Conclave organised for the very first time this year. On 4 October 2019 I launched the project, as my first outreach activity in my capacity of European Union Ambassador to India. Together with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GIZ, TERI, and CEEW, we also launched a photo and blog competition on the crucial issue of climate change, which is a central feature in the EU–India cooperation.

India and the EU recognize climate change as an existential issue, which requires a global and ambitious response by the international community. We are among the major players in the clean energy transition and in addressing the global challenges of mitigation and adaptation.

With the European Green Deal, Europe has put clean energy and climate action at the top of its domestic and external agenda, as we regard tackling climate and environmental-related challenges as this generation's defining task.

The youth is actively contributing to the shaping of the global agenda for addressing these challenges.

It is interesting to learn through this impressive compilation of blogs how young people from all over India look at climate change. As around half of India's population is under 25, the youth can play a powerful role.

Science tells us we need to act now. It is critical to strengthen capacity and awareness to support informed decision-making. The Youth Climate Conclave also included a one-day intensive training on climate change for around 80 Indian youngsters and a day of negotiations on a youth climate declaration, which can also be found in this compilation.

The conclave, photo and blog competition are good examples of close EU–India cooperation, bringing together stakeholders and building people-to-people relations.

When we talk about the future of the planet, the youth is our most important stakeholder!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Ugo Astuto'.

Ugo Astuto

Ambassador of the European Union to India

Message



Dear Readers,

India is globally recognised as a frontrunner in climate action and is among a very few countries on track to overachieve its '2°C compatible' Nationally Determined Contribution target submitted as part of the Paris Agreement. The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), nodal Ministry in India for climate change issues, actively engages all relevant stakeholders on climate change. It is my firm belief that youth engagement in climate action is most critical. Youth is at the forefront from where they can lead and nurture a drive towards sustainability and climate action. In the near future, the youth of today will be the decision-makers of tomorrow. Hence it is essential that youth in India and across the world are aware of the environmental and climate change issues so that they can contribute to addressing these global challenges.

Climate action, whether local, national or global, can be effective only when all sections of the society feel equally committed to transformative action. Such commitment cannot arise in an unequal world, where significant global disparities in income, wealth, knowledge, and capability across and within nations exist. Many developing countries carry a considerable burden of ensuring poverty eradication, health, livelihoods, and employment for all and attainment of reasonable levels of well-being of the whole population. To preserve and conserve natural wealth and transform into a sustainable world, global efforts must embrace equity. Responsibility of those who are better off is to take the lead and assist the rest, while all contribute to keeping their respective capacities and capabilities. Youth everywhere must embrace the idea that a sustainable, climate-resilient world must also be a climate-just world at the global, national and local levels.

Amongst its many responsibilities, MoEFCC considers awareness creation and capacity building on climate change amongst youth as a priority. Indian youth must be made aware of numerous initiatives that India, a developing country, is taking in combating climate change. The MoEFCC has also introduced many programmes like the 'Green Good Deeds' initiative that encourages voluntary action by individuals for preserving and protecting the environment. There is a need to popularise this initiative among youth. At the same time, Indian youth may also be made aware of the complex relationship between development and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

The Ministry always values the critical input of Indian youth, which enables it to sharpen and improve existing initiatives as well as utilising their insights to develop new ones. It is in this context, MoEFCC in partnership with the EU-funded Strategic Partnership for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA) project involving GIZ, CEEW, and TERI, recently organized the "Youth Climate Conclave" which included many activities like photo and

blog competition and a workshop modelled on the Conference of Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Experts from MoEFCC and other key organizations provided information on climate change issues to around 80 young participants coming from across the country. It was followed by a model COP where youth played different roles.

Through this publication, which includes best blogs submitted as part of the blog competition, we would like to present to the readers the diverse views containing innovative ideas on issues related to climate action. Such publications can inspire youth to participatory action and also encourage contributions from other stakeholders. My humble request to each one of you is to facilitate climate action through personal example by the adoption of sustainable and climate-friendly lifestyles and by support to related policies and programs. Also, I urge everyone to contribute to awareness creation and capacity building on climate change issues so that it becomes a mass movement. We must strive to create a world that is a better place than the one we inherited.

I conclude with the message from Upanishad which says:

**“युवा स्यात् साधु युवाऽध्यायकः आशिष्ठो दृढिष्ठो बलिष्ठः ।
तस्येयं पृथिवी सर्वा वित्तस्य पूर्णा स्यात् ।”**

Meaning,

‘Let there be a young man, excellent and lovely in his youth, a great student; let him have fair manners and a most firm heart and great strength of body, and let all this wide earth be full of wealth for his enjoying’.

(Taittiriya Upanishad 2.8)



Dr J R Bhatt

Advisor (Climate Change)
Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
Government of India

Message



India is extremely vulnerable to the cyclonic and hydrological impacts of climate change due to its extensive coastline and tropical conditions. Indian agriculture is highly dependent on monsoon and is directly impacted by climatic changes. Other impacts include changes in occurrence of pests, insects, and diseases. Mountainous regions, with receding glaciers and melting ice caps, are under greater pressure due to changes in temperature. Along the coastal regions, changes in impacts of cyclones are evident. The consequences of climate change are evident across the world, and the time to act is now!!

TERI as an organization is deeply committed to its mission to usher transitions to a cleaner and sustainable future through the conservation and efficient use of energy and other resources, and innovative ways of minimizing and reusing waste. An effective method of influencing decisions and consumer behaviour is to invest in education and outreach, which would empower the youth to significantly contribute to climate action. With about 1.8 billion young people worldwide in the age group of 10–24 years, it is important to have an active engagement with youth in decision-making processes to enable intergenerational collaborations and inclusive partnerships, which collectively seek solutions that benefit our planet and its inhabitants, today and tomorrow.

TERI organized a Youth Climate Conclave as a competitive and educative approach to enhance youth engagement for climate action in which participants presented climate-related blogs and photographs. This monograph puts together the award winning blogs in two age categories: 13–18 years and 19–25 years. I am pleased to share with you this timely compilation of blogs contributed by the Indian youth about the issue of Climate Change.

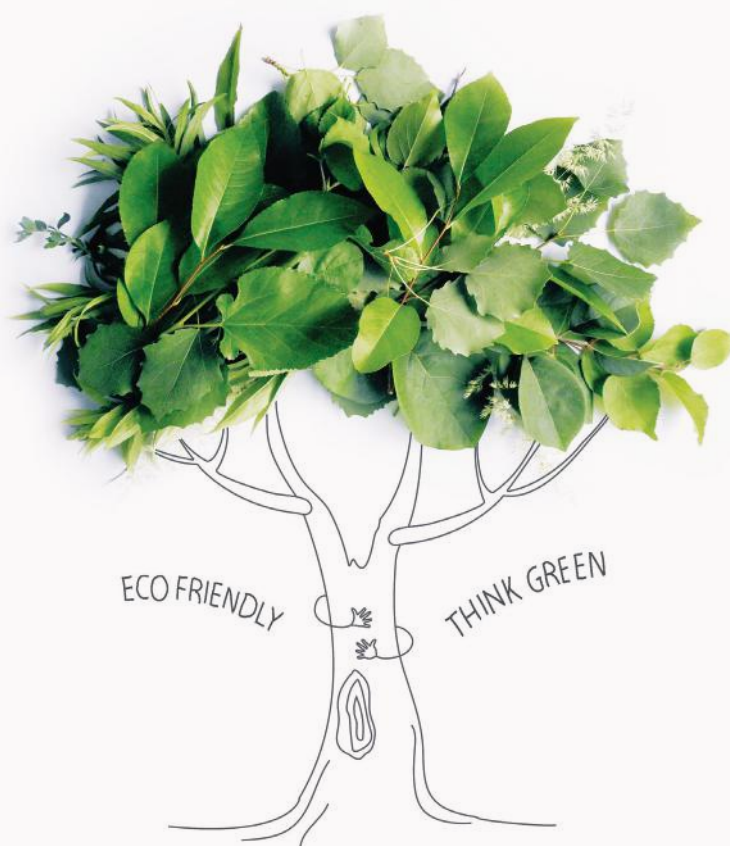
I urge our readers to read and reflect upon the ideas contributed by youth so as to get a pulse of the priority areas of action for our young citizenry.

Happy Reading!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Ajay Mathur'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Ajay Mathur

Director General, TERI



Project Team

**Council on Energy,
Environment and Water
(CEEW)**

Ms Riddhima Sethi,
Communications
Associate

Ms Shikha Bhasin,
Programme Lead

EU Delegation to India

Mr Edwin Koekkoek,
Counsellor, Energy and
Climate Action

**Ms Marta Samek
Lodovici,** Trainee –
Environment Section

**Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)**

Dr Ashish Chaturvedi,
Director- Climate Change

Mr Jai Kumar Gaurav,
Technical Advisor

Dr Vijeta Rattani,
Technical Advisor

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)

Dr Livleen K Kahlon, Senior Fellow and Associate Director, Environment Education and Awareness

Mr M B Prakash, Senior Secretary, Environment Education and Awareness

Ms Monmi Barua, Associate Fellow, Environment Education and Awareness

Ms Tanvi Sharma, Research Associate, Environment Education and Awareness

Ms Taru Mehta, Fellow and Area Convenor, Environment Education and Awareness

Mr V K Saju, Manager (Coordination), Environment Education and Awareness

Contents

Introduction	6
Blogs	10
a. Role of Youth for Climate Action, by Sathes Kumar, Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana	10
b. Role of Youth for Climate Action- The Diary of an Alien, by Anshika Chauhan, D.A.V. Public School, Gurugram, Haryana	13
c. Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour, by Shravya Narakula, School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh	15
d. Local Actions for Global Impacts, by Sneha Shahi, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, Gujarat	17
e. Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour, by Sidhant Kumar, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi	19
f. Role of Youth for Climate Action- Champions of the Earth, by Shreya Rawat, Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, New Delhi	21
g. Role of Youth for Climate Action, by Riya, D.A.V. Centenary Public School, Tohana, Haryana	23
h. Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour, by Garima Upreti, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	25
i. Role of Youth for Climate Action, by Divyam Mishra, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pragati Vihar, New Delhi	27
j. Role of Youth for Climate Action, by Megha Rai, Delhi Public School, Patna, Bihar	30
k. Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour, by Ryan Pathak, Sanskriti the Gurukul, Guwahati, Assam	32
l. Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour, by Grace Shalom Moses, Anita Methodist Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai, Tamil Nadu	34

Introduction

About Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA)

The global programme 'Strategic Partnerships for the Implementation of the Paris Agreement (SPIPA)' contributes to the European Union (EU)'s climate diplomacy efforts and cooperation between the EU and non-European major economies to promote the implementation of the Paris Agreement. It translates the political commitment for advancing bilateral dialogues and cooperation in the field of climate action into concrete interventions in line with the global ambition level as set by the Paris Agreement.

Globally the SPIPA project is being funded jointly by the European Union's Partnership Instrument and by the German Federal Government's International Climate Initiative. The nodal partner Ministry for SPIPA project is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), Government of India. The project will be implemented by GIZ India in close collaboration with the Delegation of the European Union to India, with funding from the EU Partnership Instrument and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

The project has activities planned across the following five areas – Networking and Capacity Building; Low Carbon Modelling; Adaptation; Mitigation; and Technical Exchange on Monitoring. Youth Climate Conclave was the launch pad event under the networking and capacity building component.

Youth Climate Conclave

Youth can significantly contribute to climate action but they urgently need adequate capacity building and support to make informed decisions that are aligned with achievement of global goals. With about 1.8 billion young people worldwide in the age group of 10–24 years, it is important to have an active engagement with youth in decision-making processes to enable intergenerational collaborations and inclusive partnerships that collectively seek solutions, which benefit our planet and its inhabitants. As per the Census Report (Government of India 2011), youth (15–24 years) in India constitutes one-fifth (19.1%) of India's total population. Youth is indeed a demographic dividend for India, and it is imperative that they play an important role in climate action.

As part of SPIPA, Youth Climate Conclave was organized as a competitive and educative approach to enhance youth engagement for climate action.

Activities as Prelude to Youth Climate Conclave

On October 4, 2019, the programme was launched and two contests – photography and blogging – were announced in the presence of H E Ugo Astuto, Ambassador of the European Union to India, Dr J R Bhatt, Advisor (Climate Change), MoEFCC, Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), and Dr Ashish Chaturvedi, Director-Climate Change, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

During the programme, the aforementioned activities reached out to students at national level in the age bracket of 13–18 years and 19–25 years and garnered approximately 400 entries. Through a rigorous selection procedure, judges from the EU, GIZ, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and TERI selected 12 best entries

each from photography and blogging contests to participate in the Youth Climate Conclave along with other 55 students who were selected through an application process.

The blogs and photographs compiled in this monograph are the 12 best entries submitted by school and college students in each contest.

About the Programme

The EU, GIZ, CEEW, and TERI organized the 'Youth Climate Conclave,' from January 29 to 31 2020 as a side event of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) 2020. During the Conclave, students attended informative sessions on key facts regarding climate change science and impacts, the international negotiation process (UNFCCC, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement), and the main negotiation issues. The programme also included a 1-day simulation of UNFCCC negotiation where students were divided into five negotiation groups. Students discussed possible solutions within the gamut of adaptation and mitigation strategies, with a specific focus on the role of the global youth.

As an outcome of the event, 'Youth Declaration on Climate Action' was presented on January 31, 2020 at the WSDS 2020 along with felicitation of the winners of photography and blogging contests.

Outcomes

- Transpired as a unique Climate Change Education initiative for youth.
- Formulation of a Youth Declaration on Climate Action in a consultative and educative manner.
- Excellent opportunity for youth to be associated with sustainable networks dealing with contemporary environment and climate change issues.
- An innovative training of youth on consensus building and global negotiations on climate change issues (mitigation, adaptation, finance, MRV [measurement, reporting, and verification], reporting and stock taking).

Youth Declaration on Climate Action

We have arisen, we have awakened and we're not stopping till the goal is reached. Today, on the 31st January 2020, we the youth of Planet Earth are united in finding collective and viable solutions to address Climate Change whilst considering that the impacts of this issue is not limited to just our species. We commit ourselves to strengthen global discourse set forth by the Sustainable Development agenda and we call upon Heads of States to acknowledge and act in accordance with priorities that will strengthen Climate Action for an equitable and sustainable growth of all fellow beings of Planet Earth.

In our working groups spread across priorities related to both Adaptation and Mitigation measures, we have concluded the following:

Mitigation Action:

Calls upon the countries of the world to:

- a. Hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degree C above pre industrial levels and pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degree C above pre-industrial levels, recognizing that, this would significantly reduce the risk and impacts of climate change.
- b. Fulfill their pre 2020 commitments under the Kyoto Protocol
- c. Develop a technology framework with focus on technology innovation, development and transfer including but not limited to carbon capture and storage in order to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement

We request countries to take the following measures in line with the principles of Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR – RC):

- a. To prioritize the transition from non-renewable energy sources to renewable energy sources in a phased manner.
- b. To encourage and promote civil society organizations activity and start-ups to implement a ground level network.
- c. To encourage sustainable and green transport system such as electrification and use of public transport and adopt the culture of eco-tourism.
- d. Request the developed nations to stand by their commitments on finance, technology and capacity building and adopt a liberal Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) regime in order to facilitate adoption of Green Technology by developing countries.
- e. Developed countries to fulfill the goal of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year by 2020 and further scale up provision of financial support to developing countries.

We pledge as the global youth to contribute by:

- a. Adopting a sustainable lifestyle to move towards a low carbon economy.
- b. Stressing the need for the mobilization of youth awareness, education, capacity building and outreach.
- c. Promoting innovation, entrepreneurship and R&D as a part of the solution to the problem of climate change.

As regards Adaptation:

Urge countries of the world to help each other to:

- a. Enhance resilience to climate change in vulnerable regions such as coastal regions and sectors such as agriculture.
- b. Establish Disaster and Adaptation Banks for the allocation of finances dedicated to extreme weather events with accountability and transparency with focus on most vulnerable regions.
- c. Decentralize adaptation policies at regional level and create institutions for long term adaptation action plans,
- d. Foster technological partnerships between nations and strengthen meteorological institutions to keep a uniform track of climate events around the globe.

In case of extreme weather events, countries should support each other by

- a. Cooperation in setting up early warning systems to ensure preparedness and prevent damage to life due to climatic disasters.
- b. Providing rehabilitation and aid to people displaced due to climate change
- c. Establishing an international disaster response team.

We:

- a. Pledge to volunteer for rehabilitation and development initiatives and civil society organizations in areas adapting to climate change, as well as places receiving people displaced by impacts of climate change,
- b. Pledge to gain and share comprehensive knowledge about causes, repercussions and potential solutions in the face of adversity in order to build comprehensive mechanisms for disaster management,
- c. Call upon all Parties to prioritize the allocation of disaster management funds

We, the collective voice of global youth, today on 31 January 2020, speak from the platform of World Sustainable Development Summit 2020, being organised at New Delhi, India, as one for the wellbeing of all.

We stand firm in our resolve towards addressing the Climate Change crisis and believe that global collective action problems like climate change are beyond the power of any single entity to tackle. We stress upon partnerships and networks to resonate in all parts of the world to create and facilitate lasting change. We will continue to work together and undertake sustainable actions that can benefit entire humanity; we will continue to work towards peace and prosperity of all life forms on our planet Earth.

**“What we do to the nature,
Determines what the nature does to us
And that determines what we do to ourselves”**



The greenery around us showcases the beautiful gift of God to mankind. This needs to be preserved, both in our hearts and on the Earth.

- Kunj Rathod, Krishna Public School, Raipur

Role of Youth for Climate Action

By Sathes Kumar, Ashoka University, Sonapat, Haryana

The impending conundrum of climate change is the most significant challenge of the 21st century. Though the issue of climate change as a complex problem has been acknowledged by the global leaders much later than necessary, the world has witnessed rise of the leaders from a wide arena of politics, activists, bureaucrats, students, and citizens across the continents, but none have made an impact more than Greta Thunberg, who is at the vanguard of climate action. Perhaps, it is not surprising to find a teenager leading the world in climate action as the prospects of a safe and sustainable future of the youth across the globe increasingly appear bleak. As youth across the globe follow the footsteps of the icon Greta Thunberg, demand for climate action from developed (historically responsible) and developing nations has peaked. Various nations have laid out plans, however inadequate, for climate action through their Intended Nationally Determined Contributions in the landmark COP 21, with India playing a key role in climate action (Vikaspedia 2015).

In a nation with world's largest youth population, Indian youth can lead global climate action. The low-hanging fruit for the Indian youth is the transition to a sustainable lifestyle based on India's values and traditions of conservation and moderation. Though India's average per capita carbon and resource footprint is well below the world's average, it is to be noted that the resource and carbon footprint of an affluent urban citizen is comparable to that of those in many developed and high-industrialized countries. Due to increased standard of living and cultural shifts, need for resources in various forms to attain and match the western lifestyle has already risen tremendously. While we can identify several forces including globalization, consumerism, and capitalism for this phenomenon, it is to be noted that our own value system is also on the retreat. 'Perhaps, this cannot be further emphasized by extreme contrast in lifestyle expectation between the present youth generation and the previous generation, which is starkest in India'. While we cannot belittle the aspirations for a more comfortable and easeful lifestyle, we must align them with our value system of conservation. Clothing has metamorphosed from an entity for dignity to an entity that determines one's self-image and reflects social status. This has given rise to 'fast fashion', which has led to massive production and consumption – resulting in a spiralling cycle of high emissions, resource consumption, and wastage. The youth across the globe have recognized this and pushed for movements supporting sustainable fashion and rejecting demanding eco-conscious actions by fast fashion chains (Helmore 2019). The 16-year-old Aditya Dubey approaching National Green Tribunal for reducing packaging waste by E-commerce giants stands out as a stellar example (The Hindu 2019). Thus, Indian youth must rediscover the culture of 'repair and reuse' for an easeful way of living and chalk out a simple and smart lifestyle for the global youth.

While this traditional value system primarily originates from our villages, rural regions must be sustained to nurture our value system. 'While there is impetus on cities for growth, youth must commit themselves for upliftment of rural India. With agriculture still employing and feeding millions, it must withstand grave threats of droughts, cyclones, erratic and intense rainfall, delayed onset, withdrawal and failure of monsoons, and pest attacks, thanks to climate change. Farmers, lacking literacy, information and technology should pass on the burden to the shoulders of youth. Armed with a typical Indian entrepreneurial spirit and next-generation technologies, youth can convert agriculture into a profitable occupation to make it as glamorous as a consulting profession. Though this attempt is not directly linked to climate change mitigation, it is an excellent way to adapt agriculture to vagaries of climate – to safeguard India's future food security in a lucrative and eco-friendly fashion – capable only by the youth.

Briefing on entrepreneurship, India has witnessed a humungous rise in fintech and network capital start-ups. What we need is a gamut of innovative start-ups on agriculture, sustainable transport, environment, and forestry to strengthen mitigation and adaptation measures that can reinforce India's commitment of creating a carbon sink capacity of 2.5–3 billion tonnes of CO₂ equivalent. We need more innovations like nose filters for air pollution (as designed by a start-ups of IIT Delhi students) to solve complex issues we face by venturing into novel areas including green chemistry, green computing, climate finance, eco-tourism, and blockchain technology.

While youth have set successful precedents in a few aspects of agriculture and entrepreneurship, they must also navigate through the uncharted territory of politics. The world needs committed, focused, and energetic politicians, from zonal to national levels to initiate a top-down approach on integrating climate action into every possible narrative. While top-down measures gain significance to initiate swift climate action, dialogue and discussion at the grassroots level will be essential. As of yet, climate and environmental literacy is inadequate with surveys showing 93% of Delhiites are still unaware of Air Quality Index (Koshy 2019). Youth can carry forward the discussion in educational institutions, public debates, and in social media where they can educate and break myths regarding climate change and environmental degradation.

In the presence of determined and well laid out government policies to act on climate change, youth must be torch bearers of climate action through their excellence in agriculture, entrepreneurship, and politics. Truly, the future lies in the hands of youth. Perhaps, the Nobel Peace Prize for a youth leader for climate action is not far.

For further reading

Edward Helmore. 2019. Can fashion keep its cool... and help save the planet? *The Guardian*, August 31, 2019. Details available at <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2019/aug/31/can-fashion-keep-its-cool-and-help-save-the-planet>, last accessed on February 11, 2020

The Hindu. 2019. 16-year-old boy wants Amazon, Flipkart to cut plastic use. *The Hindu*, October 22, 2019. Details available at <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/16-year-old-boy-wants-amazon-flipkart-to-cut-plastic-use/article29769622.ece>, last accessed on February 11, 2020

Jacob Koshy. 2019. 93% of Delhiites do not understand what air quality index means, shows survey. *The Hindu*, January 10, 2019. Details available at <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/93-of-delhiites-do-not-understand-what-air-quality-index-means-shows-survey/article25954289.ece>, last accessed on February 11, 2020

India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions. Details available at <https://vikaspedia.in/energy/environment/climate-change/india2019s-intended-nationally-determined-contribution>, last accessed on February 20, 2020



The world is changing. Economies are changing. Why can't we change? Take action to combat Climate Change, because it is in our hands.

- Arpita Nayak, ITM Business School, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai

Role of Youth for Climate Action- The Diary of an Alien

By Anshika Chauhan, D.A.V. Public School, Gurugram, Haryana

Sunday

October 28, 2019

10:37 p.m. (I.S.T.- Earth)

World Day for Audiovisual Heritage (UN)

Gowardhan Puja Day (North India)

Dear diary, today was the 48th day of my stay at Earth. Earth is a spiffing planet with an out-of-this-world beauty. My stay here till now has been marvellous. The reason I came here was a sudden strafe of VOCs on my planet, the evil volatile organic compounds. My whole family suffered with a deplorable disease and then a heinous death due to coming in contact with these VOC molecules. Me and a few of the other surviving species of my kind, 34 in all, were immediately sent to Earth for the production of healthier generations, so that we can come up with a strong and immediate solution to the problem on our planet.

Mostly during the day I stay hidden due to my contrasting body features. But I travel the whole planet at nights under a cloak.

I strongly agree that our planet was very much advanced than the Earth. However, we did not have any celebrations. Hence, our planet was a lot boring than the Earth. Today, while traversing, I came across the country India. To my disbelief, this beautiful country was covered in a blanket of dark clouds of photochemical smog. This smog contains VOCs, so I reflexively inoculated myself. No one could see me under the inoculation, so I decided to find out the reason for the dire state of affairs of this graceful country.

I discovered that I was unlucky for not being able to attend the Diwali celebrations of north India. The Diwali day was yesterday, and this Indian festival is also known as the festival of lights. Such an exigent loss. I was so disappointed at myself until I perceived the malign reality behind the celebrations of this festival. I understood from certain sources that a lot of Indians burst crackers on this day. These crackers are made of spiteful chemicals that release oxides of nitrogen and sulphur in the atmosphere on burning. They also release VOCs, which further lead to photochemical smog. This process of bursting crackers has been continuing for the past 70 years or more. Maybe it was because of the immunity of Earth and its atmosphere that Indians are still alive and thriving even after inhaling poisonous particles.

Today, when I decided to go out in open again after 8:00 p.m., I heard and saw people bursting crackers. These were mainly children between the age group of 8–19 years. I was revulsive on seeing the happiness on their faces as the crackers released colossal coveys of pollutants in the air. The anger and anxiousness was oozing, defiantly, out of me, and I wanted to scold those kids so bad, that even their next 1000 generations do not even think about touching crackers. To my astonishment, I saw a troop of teenagers, marching towards the kids who were bursting crackers, with sticks in their hands. They were wearing traditional attires and had stern looks on their faces. A lean girl, who looked like the leader of the troop, scolded the cracker troop and tossed the crackers out of their pockets with one blow from her stick. The others collected the crackers and put them in a green bag on which 'EQUAL TO ENERGY' was written in big red letters. It did not make any sense to me. Why were these kids being so rude and strict with the kids who were happily destroying their planet? Were they some sort of fanatic environment saviors? Well, it turned out that they were, indeed, fanatic saviours of their environment... And I liked their seriousness. I deduced this after seeing a further array of events in which these environment saviours were scolding the parents of the cracker troop for giving their children money to buy those harmful crackers instead of buying them a tree as the Diwali gift. Moreover, parents are, indeed, the sculptors that make or break their kids. These parents were spoiling their kids and the well-made environmental saviour kids made them decipher that reality.

From today's event I concluded that the environment saviours were taking the crackers away to areas responsible for production of energy through such waste. India urgently needs such brave and responsible youth who can bluntly take such actions in favour of their environment and climate. I realized that the most important role of youth for climate action is to stand up against the wrongdoings. Figuring out where it all is going wrong and untangling the root cause of the problem will solve the whole problem itself.

I will try to employ the same strategy to overcome the problem on my planet. I wish such courageous kids a good luck. A cosy goodnight to myself too.



Concrete jungle is encroaching upon natural areas. It is time that we take action to protect our environment.

- Vibhav Vikrant Tungare Institute for Technology and Management, Khargar, Navi Mumbai

Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour

By Shravya Narakula, School of Planning and Architecture, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

'Climate change is the most fundamental threat to the existence of species. The consequences are worse and unimaginable; it has the potential to make our planet unliveable. The solutions we desperately seek require all of us to make real changes in the way we live, operate our businesses, and govern our communities. Now to get there, we must act. We must finally discontinue the inefficient technologies and harmful business models (DiCaprio 2016).

Under the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, set by the United Nations, a key part is to develop an integrated approach to sustainable transport. In India, many prefer travelling in private vehicles, because that is the most efficient and convenient way. Now, we all are aware that cars run on fuel, damage the environment by contaminating the air. The problem with that is fuel is a finite resource, which means that we only have limited amount on Earth, and according to many researchers we have already used up over half of the supply we have got and if we keep using it the way we are using now, then we only have 34 years left (Angueria 2013). So, we need to be a lot more careful with how we use our resources. Our future will hold a much greater prosperity and justice when we are free from the grip of the fossil fuels. One way to do this would be to use fuel-efficient cars. But this also creates a problem. If we use more fuel-efficient cars we might encourage ourselves to drive longer distances. In the long run, we are going to end up using the same amount of fuel just because we can afford it. Hence, the best alternative would be not to just advice

our city authorities and planners to build sustainable communities but to adopt certain sustainable living practices ourselves.

In India, we do have some good initiatives towards sustainability. We do see these advances but the difference between places that are sustainable or not is the mentality among us. People in India feel like they need to own a car or a two-wheeler to move around and also show their status in the society. On contrary, in a lot of places across Europe, people do not feel they need car unless they leave the city. Whenever they need to travel within the city, they walk because it is the most convenient way to get around.

When planners look to see where the city's budget should be spend, they choose whatever has the biggest necessity for improvement. If there are many cars on the road, they will invest in widening the streets. But creating more road space will only invite more vehicles. To change our cities and make them more sustainable we should be willing to change ourselves. We must show that we want to live in sustainable communities by practicing such a lifestyle – like taking bus to go to work every day even though if it is a little inconvenient. In the long run, it is going to be better because planners will notice that the bus ridership is increasing. This will provoke them to spend money on improving the public bus service rather than widening the streets or building flyovers.

Despite the efforts being put in, India could gain inspiration from other countries that are making strides in the sustainability space. In Madrid, Spain, people prefer walking to move from one place to another. And Madrid is pretty big, having a population of over 3 million. In a city that big in India, you would see traffic jams everywhere. But in Madrid, there are not many cars. The reason partly being the density but also because of the way the city is planned. City network and access to various places make this possible, in other words, places here are built for people and not just to accommodate vehicles.

In 2017, the UN forecasted that India's population will touch 1.5 billion in 2030, surpassing that of China, to become the most populated country in the world (United Nations 2017). This means that the existing 1.3 billion people in India have an important role to play as they have to accommodate an additional 200 million people within our geographical boundaries while addressing the existing challenges of poverty and tackling climate change. With the rate at which consumption of resources and creation of goods and services are and will be constantly increasing, there has developed an urgent need for sustainable lifestyle practices.

For further reading

Leonardo DiCaprio's speech at the Mayors Summit in Paris for Climate Action. August, 2016. Details available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lEdRbi0llmA&feature=youtu.be>, last accessed on February 14, 2020
 Ricky Angueria. 2013. Sustainable transportation in cities. TEDx Talk. Details available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o793_X9c3b4, last accessed on February 14, 2020
 United Nations. 2017. The World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision



This photograph taken from an old monument in Bhangarh (Rajasthan) represents the glory of a sunrise, and also captures a view of a small forest and birds.

- Khanak Lashkari, Subodh Public School, Jaipur

Local Actions for Global Impacts

By Sneha Shahi, Maharaja Sayajirao University, Baroda, Gujarat

Climate Change!! As soon as we hear these words burning forests, flooded streets, dying animals, and many more destructive things happening to nature come to mind. Was this 'the change that we wanted'? Our past world leaders have worked day and night to make this world a better place. Today we understand that climate change is real. It makes me so happy to tell you that each one of us who decides to step towards positive actions is a leader for change. Each act of good towards the nature acts as a ripple effect for more positive impacts. The impacts we have caused for our monetary benefits and economic good have come at social and environmental costs. The law of mass balance states that there can be no choices of zero physical waste, well then why not we take steps that will have these outputs that are more reliable solutions rather than the drivers of pollution. Zero pollution activities do not exist, but carbon neutral countries do. Economy will bring about prosperity, but our happiness index indicates otherwise. The strategies that small cities and countries are implementing for integrated natural ecosystem protection and development are showing positive results. Local actions of Bhutan are a beacon of hope to mankind for being carbon negative and still prosper. I started working on phytoremediation of heavy metal-polluted soils in my Bachelors, and integrated the concept of backyard carbon sequestration to this to ensure healthier soil ecosystem and better local air quality. This project focuses on how a city resident can have a global impact. Each person can try to have a backyard sequestering for the carbon they emit in day-to-day life. We might not become carbon negative immediately but at least we will not be emitting more into the air. The idea is simple to have trees in the backyard or your locality to help with your carbon credits as an individual. I have 11 trees in my backyard and they are all different species and my vehicle is electric, we do not have harsh winters and thus no need of hot water, and I have a solar rooftop. Imagine if every person has these types of carbon-cutting solutions in their daily life. I am not suggesting each person to give up on their needs, but they can surely reduce the local carbon footprint.

Under the Integrated Power Development Scheme, our government is emphasizing so much on the use of renewable energy sources for generation of electricity. Every resident if implies this will be ultimately adding to the renewable electricity grid, which will account for our carbon credits for energy generation. We would have more certified emission units for our other manufacturing processes and lesser wastage of power.

For rural areas we have the SAUBHAGYA rural electrification scheme wherein maximum energy generated in the grid of the region is generated via hydro or solar power. In addition to this, each resident of India can avail the benefits of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and gets an opportunity to be a part of this massive change in our waste management system by segregating the waste at homes, which is the actual source of generation.

I started working as a Plastic Tide Turners Leader for the Vadodara campaign. The challenge was a collaboration of UNEP, WWF-India, and Centre for Environment and Education, India. The campaign began in July and ended in November and in these five months I led a group of 200 young plastic warriors who brought about a change in lives of so many residents of Baroda. We did door-to-door campaigning to persuade the residents to refuse single-use plastics, and hundreds of people signed the pledge and many places were actually changed after this activity. The support from Vadodara Municipal Corporation was also a highlight of our campaign and we plan to work more in this direction. Under the Green India Mission I am planning to pursue PhD in forestry, wherein the benefits of fast growing trees like eucalyptus can be used for capturing carbon emissions and then harvested to attain ecosystem products and goods. The harvested timber can be certified and manufactured as eco-labelled products and this will help not only in reducing carbon in the atmosphere but also generate income and opportunities.

Promotion of green technology on local levels will add up to the countries' green development and clean development mechanism (CDM) production methodologies. The CDM is mostly applied in already industrialized states of India and promotion and investment in projects in less developed states would mean increased opportunities in those states as well as better technology and advancement on greener production. I am currently working on my masters on increasing adaptability of agricultural farms towards climate change. Smart agriculture systems are being promoted and incentivized and I understand that the pillars of sustainability also include human welfare, so having food security is an integral part for being resilient towards the shocking changes that we see every day in our weather patterns.

Vishwamitri River that flows through Vadodara is much polluted and the Bhukhi Stream connected to it is so polluted that now it is termed as Bhukhi Nallah. Our department is working on the stream restoration of this site. We are under the guidance of Dr Bablu Prasad, IIT Bombay. Vadodara Municipal Corporation has been contacted for funds and support under the Sujalam Sufalam Yojana for better water quality of our rivers and streams. The local actions I have been taking are the proofs that we all are leaders of change, we all have the capacity to work for the environment so that we survive this climate emergency and stop being a ticking bomb for our own destruction. The impact that we students of M.S. University Baroda are causing is hitting the papers on a weekly basis. I am proud to say that I support the schemes of the Government of India, but then again it makes me sad that the people complaining about these problems are the actual problem.

I firmly believe that consumerism drives pollution and if we start making well-informed choices then we do have a chance for a better future. Local actions by the youth are an essential stepping stone towards a resilient ecosystem where we will understand the importance of co-existing with all the resources as organisms. Our responsibility as young leaders is to live sustainable lives and create positive impacts to combat Climate Change!!



According to SDG 6 our water resource should be available for every citizen.
- Harshita Sharma, TERI School of Advanced Studies, Delhi

Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour

By Sidhant Kumar, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi

This blog involves the lives of two 12-year-old kids living in Delhi in two types of areas – urban and rural.

Starting with January, the urban boy demands a heater from his parents to combat with the cold and uses every possible way to cover himself (ear muffs, patagonia jacket) while the rural one accepts a torn sheet of plastic and burns wood and paper for heat. The urban boy on the way to school in a bus looks at the rural boy and, in an article, (he was responsible to write weekly articles under extracurricular activities for other students) on Global Warming mentioned that the use of wood and paper for getting warm leads to enhancement of global warming. He was appreciated by his teachers for the article.

Then comes the exam month 'March'. The urban boy gets the subject guides online, new stationary, separate register for each subject for notes and a branded Casio watch to be used during the exams. Moving on to the rural boy, he is using the very last register for making notes, which was of recycled paper, being cheap and using charcoal on a wall to perform Math calculations. This time after watching the rural boy the urban boy wrote an article on the topic 'Public Places Nuisance' that no one is authorized to disfigure the condition of walls for writing.

Then next month were their birthdays. The urban boy celebrated in a grand fashion, organizing a party at a restaurant and invited his friends with a state-of-the-art invitation card. His parents ordered so much that after the party, even the hotel staff had their share, so much food was left that they could have organized another party. The rural boy distributed the annual chocolate bar he got on his birthday to his family members and enjoyed the day observing traffic on the road. Next the urban boy observed the rural one in a commotion trying to fill his bucket from a tank and getting pushed aside. This time the topic was 'How is Water Wasted' and our urban boy (that day had a bubble bath) wrote about the incident that how all the people were wasting water while collecting it.

Then in June, summer vacations started and the urban boy tried every way to make every day as enjoyable as the previous day. He went to a hill station with family and had a gala time, which was observant on his INSTA. The whole family improved their carbon footprint by using every possible transportation system on the whole trip and barely walking a kilometre. Meanwhile the rural boy went to Qutub Minar. He also had a great time with his friends and enjoyed a trip in Delhi Metro. This time the topic of the article was 'Ways to Reduce Carbon Footprint' and the urban boy cheated and as solution wrote to use public transport as much possible and to walk if destination is nearby (when he commute to school often in a luxurious car).

Monsoon was no different and when it was raining the rural boy was busy using buckets to remove water from his house and playing with frogs. The urban boy all prepared wearing a raincoat to get into the vehicle to get to school and carrying an umbrella too for over protection. This time he wrote on the topic 'Inefficient Work of Municipality on Building Water Discharge System'.

Festivals were here and one could say that the urban boy's house had more light outside than inside. His father searched every shop for crackers (not green ones – assuming they would emit less noise along with less gases = quiet Diwali) and made his son burst each one of them. Carbon footprint was on the peak for the family due to so many relatives. The rural boy celebrated by taking a walk around every lighted house and watching the patterns that were made through his own imagination. Next topic was 'The Harmful Effects of Air Pollution' and this time our urban boy mentioned burning of 'parali' (he had heard this catchy word) and the harmful effects that were due to the other state's farmers and that same day was celebrated as the Unity Day (October 31).

And lastly came the leisure time when everyone feels restless. The urban boy booked movie tickets and picked his friends from their homes and enjoyed a much hyped movie so that he could flaunt it afterwards that he watched it on the very first day and posted pictures on his multiple social media platforms. The rural boy this time went to observe the nature. He went to a quiet lake and observed various migratory birds and the different trees (and all the plastic), in the end attaining mental peace from observing the nature. The topic for article this time was 'Best Enjoyable Activity You Have Done in Recent Time' (urban boy – movie review).

That is how ended the whole year for both the kids of same age and belonging to same country but employing different ways to interact with the mother EARTH.

2020 Resolutions

Urban boy – To curb carbon footprint, become class prefect and celebrate Friday as holiday in lieu of climate change.

Rural boy – To increase interaction with the nature and try to become friends with the urban boy and try to instil his habits.



In a world where technological innovations are enabling action to combat Climate Change, we often forget that a small step taken by us is also impactful. Smaller steps will lead to bigger results.

- Asees Sandhu, Mayo College Girls, Ajmer

Role of Youth for Climate Action- Champions of the Earth

By Shreya Rawat, Maitreyi College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

On a pleasant morning of August 20, 2018, there sits a little girl of 15 on the pavement near the Swedish Parliament. Back towards the wall, legs crossed, eyes glimmering, determined to get her message through the oblivious folks walking by. She has fliers ready, with list of facts about global warming. A wooden board sitting right next to her, reads:

‘Skolstrejk för Klimatet’.

Today, this little girl stands and speaks at the United Nations Climate Action Summit, condemning world leaders for failing to not adequately address climate change.

‘How Dare You?’

As a miasmic environment threatens to envelop, and ultimately, suffocate the world, people like Greta Thunberg and environmentalists have taken the podium to enlighten the sleeping folks, about the wrath of nature that is about to unfold on us.

This gave inception to the worldwide strike called 'Friday's for Future.'

Friday's for Future is a dynamic global student movement pushing for immediate action on climate change through active campaigning and advocacy. It has attracted millions of activists who insist that voices be heard on what many see as the defining issue of their generation. Now every month, students around the world take to the streets to demand political action.

Friday's for Future movement has electrified the global conversation about climate change at a time when the window of opportunity to avoid the worst effects of rising temperatures is closing. Global emissions are reaching at the record levels and show no sign of peaking. Sea levels are rising, coral reefs are dying, and extreme weather events are becoming more common and more destructive around the world.

Climate change is now the most critical global challenge of our times. Recent events have emphatically demonstrated our growing vulnerability to climate change.

The theme of International Youth Day, 2008, was, 'Youth and Climate change: Time for Action'. In his address, Ban Ki-Moon, the then Secretary General of the United Nations said young people who are adept at spreading new habits and technologies are well placed to contribute to the fight against climate change. Mr Ban stressed, "they (youth) are adaptable and can quickly make low carbon lifestyles and career choices a part of their daily lives. Youth should therefore be given a chance to take an active part in the decision-making of local, national, and global levels. They can actively support initiatives that will lead to passage of far reaching legislation." A more defined role should be given to the youth to prevent the impact of climate change.

In a new feat, famous YouTuber, Mr Beast (Jimmy Donaldson), recently launched a viral campaign to plant 20 million trees in honour of reaching 20 million subscribers on the video-sharing platform. The initial debut of the #TeamTrees campaign gathered the support of more than 600 influencers, who flooded social media and YouTube with videos and posts to raise awareness about the tree planting effort. The campaign has been highly successful with many CEO's donating for the cause.

Lauren Howland, a 23-year-old indigenous woman from the Jicarilla Apache Nation, is not waiting quietly for adults to figure it all out. Lauren is a co-founder of International Indigenous Youth Council (IIYC), which received the Robert F Kennedy Human Rights Award in 2018 for its continued work on environmental issues.

A voice for young indigenous people worldwide, Howland says, "Young people are more connected and in tune with each other and this planet than any other point in humanity's existence. We realise we are fighting to save humanity from the literal extinction, and we need the policy makers of this planet to collectively realise this also. It is here, climate change. We need climate policies enacted and enforced across the globe now that include the solutions we are already implementing in our own local communities."

The crisis we all are facing together is an opening to bring young people into the conversation. Creating the future we all want requires older and younger generations to work together for the change we need.

The growth of these interventions needs to accelerate at a much faster rate. Young people know this, perhaps because it is the only future worth fighting for. Along with world's poor, women, and indigenous people, younger generations will disproportionately experience the worst effects of climate change if nothing is done; or too little is accomplished too late.

Acting now is essential for everyone and everything on this planet.

'Everybody is welcome. Everybody is needed.'



The world is progressing and growing every minute. This photograph signifies the reuse of non-biodegradable materials like plastics for a good cause. The image symbolizes a ray of hope for the biosphere.

- Vidushi Bhardwaj, Amity International School, M-Block, Saket, New Delhi

Role of Youth for Climate Action

By Riya, D.A.V. Centenary Public School, Tohana, Haryana

The planet's climate has constantly been changing over geological time. The global average temperature today is about 15°C, though geological evidence suggests it had been much higher and lower in past. Which create some problems.

However, the current period of warming is occurring more rapidly than many past experiences. Scientists are concerned that natural fluctuations in the climate are being overtaken by rapid, human-induced warming that has serious implications for the stability of planets' climate.

In my opinion, this is a very serious issue. Youth is in every sector of society, which gives us an opportunity to bring the topics to all corners.

Youth is connected:- The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) estimates that the young people worldwide are nearly two times more networked than the global population as a whole. Social media can be an important tool in empowering youth and giving momentum to a cause and letting decision-makers

know that what is going on is unacceptable. Bringing that activism to environmental causes and making it appellative to everyone is a major step in spreading actions and solutions against climate change.

Youth is innovative:- Young people tend to be the most idealistic and innovative group of all. We have all heard stories about young people taking the forefront in solving complex problems. Young people have more ideas than older people. Transformative thinking that is the way to go when it comes to climatic action and youth can deliver that.

Due to all these things youth are more strong and capable to solve the problems of the world.

Now, the question arises, what should we do for climate action?

Share the numbers, spread the science. The speech about climatic change and environmental impacts has to reach all corners of the society. Bring those topics to your conversation with friends, family, co-workers, partners, etc. If you see somebody polluting the environment inform them that this contributes to climate change and can cause a lot of destruction. Climate change has brought about possibly permanent alterations to Earth's geological, biological, and ecological systems. These changes have led to the emergence of large-scale environmental hazards to human health such as extreme weather, ozone depletion, increased danger of wild land fires, loss of biodiversity, stresses to food-producing systems, and global spread of infectious diseases. In addition, climate changes are estimated to cause 150,000 deaths annually. On this very serious matter all should do efforts but the youth should do much effort for tackling this problem because –

Youth is everywhere:- Accounting for half of the world's population, youth is deeply rooted inside any system. Local or global, from the labour force to high-risk investment markets, youth is everywhere. Young women and men are trying to build their lives and a better future for themselves and their kind. More than ever, that goal passes through finding solutions to tackling climate change. Stop him/her and explain them why they should not do this. We can also join some NGOs, youth programmes to save environment and to aware people. These little efforts can solve such a big issue. If all people would come together climate action is not a big issue.

Climate change is real and happening. The solutions would not come only from conference rooms full with scientists, big corporations, and government officials. Everyone has a role to play in the fight against climate change. Youth is idealistic, innovative, connected, and present everywhere.

We need to be the solution!



To address the issue of Climate Change the world community needs to talk and work together.

- Akshat Shrivastava, TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi

Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour

By Garima Upreti, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

‘Air is polluted so is the water, resources are depleting so are the fuels.’

We have polluted our world to such an extent that even a new life in this world comes with an environmental debt of his/her parents. Climate crisis is no more a debatable topic, every person in this world is being affected and we have to admit it. Enough of talking and talking, enough of protesting and shouting! It is high time that we should take an initiative on our own, start from our own home, our community, and it all begins with ourselves first. Instead of getting involved in the vicious circle of polity and administration let us present an example in front of people, let us be an example for people to do something instead of demanding something. I started it when I realized the risk, risk getting near and near day by day.

Sustainable lifestyle is the current solution and the very first and mandatory step which everyone should take immediately. It includes everything, each activity of our day-to-day life, the way we brush, take bath, dress, the clothes we wear, the food we eat, transport system we use, from things we buy to the things we do in our whole day and night, everything should be sustainable. Zero waste week challenge, Plastic-free

week challenge, Kiss the coconut, No stitch September, etc., are such wonderful movements initiated by the people to practice a lifestyle that would cause least harm to the environment. This not only makes us a responsible consumer but also reduces our ecological footprint. It also makes us more conscious regarding the things we use; we become more alert on how to use a thing so that it can last long. In today's world where things are a click away, it will be little challenging to go and find a shop for buying in bulk to avoid plastic, but it is the only option we have and it is the need of the hour. Because if you think of ordering a bamboo comb and a brush online, getting it delivered from far miles (fuel consumption and release of pollutants), removing its plastic cover (packaging, and then clicking a selfie and putting it with #ecofriendly #saveearth caption, then sorry buddy, you will release more carbon than you sequester by avoiding plastic comb or brush.

Sustainable lifestyle empowers you to do new experiments, get out of your comfort zone, and work with a more holistic approach. It allows one to explore terms like food miles, water footprint, virtual water, etc. It also makes your life much simpler and easy, whether it is about choosing clothes to wear every day or letting go of unnecessary new things. As our consumption pattern improves, we find that this world is more beautiful if lived simply. In India we have the principle of Aparigraha, which means that we should take only as much we require; so sustainability is in our genes, it is just we are not used to it. We have to remove this materialistic glass and see the world through our naked eye.

When I started living the idea of 'sustainable lifestyle', I came to know about the term water footprint, and I was shocked! I was astonished to know that my one pair of jeans takes around thousands of litres of water! Just one pair of jeans! My 1 kg of rice takes around 3000 litres of water! I can see myself surrounded with so much water while sitting in a room with things that are non-recyclable or non-reusable. From that moment onwards I had decided to contribute to no more extra water footprint. I reused a pair of my old jeans, made a bag out of it and now I use it for my college purpose. I searched for a shop got my new bamboo brush and a comb (old ones were broken so instead of getting new plastic one), made my body scrub, I made my paper body pen, have selected only two pairs of clothes per month for college and two pairs for elsewhere, a steel bottle and a steel tiffin, which are always there in my bag, so in case if I want to eat something outside I can ask the shopkeeper to give food directly into my steel 'dabba'. I have also reused my plastic bottles because the main idea behind all this is to reduce waste production especially single-use plastic.

During my studies I read somewhere, "We are the first generation that can eradicate poverty and we are the last generation who can fight climate change." I believe in this, because if you understand the food miles and the water footprint of food items I am sure you will rethink before dumping anything anywhere. And yes we are the last generation to fight climate change, if we can understand the sustainable lifestyle and start practicing it, I am sure we will combat climate change. If we fail, I have doubts, but who will be there to tell the story of our failure? Hence I believe that 'the choices we make today will affect our common future tomorrow'. Therefore, along with Reduce, Recycle, and Refuse we should also add Rethink!

For further reading

Alternatives to plastic things. Details available at <https://youtu.be/3VHQ5bicbHA>, last accessed on February 14, 2020

Paper body pen. Details available at <https://youtu.be/BvvKTMaawjA>, last accessed on February 14, 2020



Let us make our planet Earth a loveable and liveable place again.

- Vansh Bajaj, Gyan Bharati School, Saket, New Delhi

Role of Youth for Climate Action

By Divyam Mishra, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pragati Vihar, New Delhi

What role can youth play in protecting our planet?

The relationship between youth, climate crisis, and preserving life on land and under water exists at various levels. While education is needed to educate people about the damaging impacts of human actions against ecosystems, at the same time ecosystem unbalance and climate change-related emergencies are one of the critical barriers for people to enjoy their right to education. Indeed, climate change-related emergencies leave millions of youth learners out of school. Disasters like landslides, wildfires, droughts, floods, cyclones, or typhoons cause famines, death, force people to move or destroy school facilities and universities, and communities might take years to recover from such events.

We should specifically mention the role of education in promoting sustainability. 'Ensure that all youths acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality,

promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship, and appreciation of cultural diversity and culture's contribution to sustainable development'.

1. Creating knowledge

Youth plays a vital role in combating climate change and is the key to make everybody understand how the human-made climate crisis is affecting the planet. Our knowledge of the climate crisis is based on science, research, and data that scientists across the world rigorously dissect and analyse. They are the basis of the policy recommendations made in the IPCC report. Researchers and academics have been doing research to understand the causes, consequences, and magnitude of the climate crisis and global warming-related emergencies. Scientists have unveiled the important roles of both oceans and forests that they play in regulating the climate, along with revealing the immediate impacts the climate crisis is having on these fragile ecosystems.

2. Understanding ecosystems to build more resilient societies

Studying our ecosystems, their systematic nature and their connections to human and non-human life is important to care, preserve, restore, and reverse the damages human development has done on Earth. Education, or ecological literacy, is pivotal to our understanding of how the actions of all individuals are negatively impacting the balance on Earth, in particular, the natural forests, the cycle of water, and the preservation of wildlife. Constant transformative learning to truly understand the fundamentals of natural life is needed as diversity increases resilience. Local and indigenous knowledge has contributed to ecosystem functioning, disaster early warning systems, and climate change adaptation and resilience. Traditional knowledge in areas such as agriculture, food production, and conservation has played an important role in environmental sustainability for centuries. Numerous examples of indigenous communities' traditional land management practices, particularly those led by women, are becoming recognized globally as excellent approaches for conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecosystem processes.

3. Raising awareness

Today's youths are the citizens and consumers of tomorrow. Their behaviours and decisions will inevitably affect the environment. Youth and even children are also important agents of social change in society, because apart from adopting responsible environmental behaviours themselves, they also have the potential to bring about change by influencing the environmental knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours of peers, family, and of the wider community. Educating youth and adults on issues related to the climate crisis and pollution of water and land will encourage individuals and communities to change their attitudes towards the environment. Initiatives to prevent and mitigate the impact of climate change through education may allow youth and adults to get better understanding of the impact of global warming on their possibilities to enjoy their fundamental human rights.

4. Finding solutions

Even if strong commitments for action are taken this week and the rise of global temperature is kept below 1.5°C, this rise will have serious impact worldwide. As the climate crisis is unfolding, education, skills, and innovative ideas based on sound science are needed to find the solutions and mitigate the damages. As UNESCO (2016) suggests, education can advance our knowledge and skills to prevent and adapt to climate change-related emergencies. And youth has the power to use the ideas to create innovations, which are more productive and which can make it easy for us to tackle the problems related to the climate.

Engineers, activists, and youth make constant progress in improving devices to produce cleaner energy, devise ingenious process to clean up plastic waste in oceans, and design practical mechanisms to allow wildlife and human to live peacefully together. At the same time, universities are at the forefront of research

to develop more recyclable material, improve efficiency of human-made tools, and increase the reuse of precious resources. Education can amplify these initiatives and reverse the toxic trends towards more extractive and non-sustainable consumption models.

5. Holding leaders accountable

Finally, educated citizens and youth are more equipped to hold their leaders accountable and to put pressure on their governments to take decisive actions against the climate crisis. This was demonstrated by the millions of people who walked out of their schools and workplaces on September 20, 2019 to demand urgent action on climate change and the end of fossil fuels.

For further reading

Youth need to occupy the future on climate change. Details available at <https://www.downtoearth.org.in>, last accessed on February 25, 2020

The role that children and youth play in climate change mitigation. Details available at <https://www.grow-trees.com>, last accessed on February 25, 2020



People struggle during extreme weather conditions. Walking through flood water, this woman is toiling to get fodder for her livestock.

- Kaushik Dutta, Netaji Subhas Open University, Howrah

Role of Youth for Climate Action

By Megha Rai, Delhi Public School, Patna, Bihar

Knock! Knock! Knock Knock... Hey how come you all are here! You are here for the seminars, projects, articles, and debates, but not to enter our lives and that too my home and more precisely to affect me. Yes, there were floods, water full of garbage, and plastic waste right in front of me and pointing towards their creator – Global Warming and Environmental Pollution – two of whom were smiling so weirdly at me. I got scared, felt choked, my eyes opened, and my dream ends... I was numb for a few minutes, then I thought is this the 'end of the dream' or 'beginning of the reality'. We have to protect water, sky, trees, and wildlife, as have been given for free by our mother nature. There is a Native American proverb 'We don't inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children'. So as children we have the responsibility to protect our nature and resources from the people who are killing it. Margaret Mead said, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world, indeed it is the only thing that ever has." In my childhood I never thought that this 13 letters big word 'GLOBAL WARMING', which we use to write in bold and decorate with colours and sketch pens to make it look beautiful and attractive, would

become a reality. Climate change is real and happening. The solutions cannot come only from conference rooms full of scientists, big corporations, and government officials. Everyone has a role to play in the fight against climate change. Youth is idealistic, innovative, connected, and everywhere. We need to be the solution. We, the young students, are the ones who can make a change. Expecting everything from the government and officials will not give any result, something is badly required at the ground level, and only the young generation can make it possible as following the international saying 'Children are the future then youth is the present. Take pen and paper, find your voice and change the world'. Youth groups can be formed at small levels and why not begin with the smallest-level apartments, street level, mohalla level, etc. Weekly meetings should be conducted and the problems regarding waste disposal, sanitation of their streets or society should be taken into consideration. Regular audits and surveys should be done and people of their locality should be made aware of the problems and harsh effects of climate change. These very small groups working at the local levels will rejuvenate the system and help the corporations and the government to understand the need of a serious action to be taken and will act as a precursor to a big change for climate protection.

Without elected officials who believe in climate change and are willing to take action to fight it, we are not going to see improvement at the local, regional, or national level. Use your voice. Vote for the people and the policies that will move the needle. And if you are too young to vote, find out how you can help the candidates in other ways, whether that is stuffing envelopes or going door to door to talk to people about the issues.

It is widely known that climate change will hit the poorest the hardest; however, not only will climate change deepen inequalities within a generation, it will also exacerbate the inequalities between different future generations. Most importantly, the youth of today is from the generation that is most likely to experience the global shifts that climate change will bring about in the coming decades. We all know that the effects of climate change are more than worse. If we want to live a happy and most importantly 'healthy' life we have to do something.

I still remember a few months back there was a seminar in our school on environmental changes and the experts said that in next 10–15 years country like Maldives would just get wiped off from the world map as it would sink due to increasing water levels and it just shook me so badly that I asked myself that will I ever be able to visit my dream destination? And similarly so many places like this would sink underwater. It is not far that the movie 2012 would come true, not now but some day for sure if we do not take necessary steps. Present inaction on climate change will leave the burden of coping with its deleterious impacts on the youth and future generations. But, we the youth will not settle for this grim fate.

We youngsters always go after happening and trending things around us. So there should not be any doubt that we the young and happening custodians of future are going to protect our planet. As Leonardo DiCaprio says, "Climate change is real. It is happening right now. It is the most urgent threat facing our entire species and we need to work collectively together."

While the adults sit at climate change meeting, the youth take action!

For further reading

www.conservation.org, last accessed on February 14, 2020

www.downtoearth.org.in, last accessed on February 14, 2020

www.agricanto.org, last accessed on February 14, 2020

www.ecowatch.com, last accessed on February 14, 2020

www.iamecowarrior.com, last accessed on February 14, 2020



All living creatures, big and small, are affected by Climate Change. They all deserve the same world that we live in. We are adversely affecting their lives because our activities are accelerating Climate Change.

- Jonas Givi, Chinmaya Vidyalaya Vaduthala, Kochi

Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour

By Ryan Pathak, Sanskriti the Gurukul, Guwahati, Assam

Paula was cleaning the lawn when she noticed the water man with his white truck. She smiled a little. The water truck was always a grateful sight. She waited outside the front door humming the tune of one of her favourite songs. Water was always a problem and they were now down to their last reserves. After he was done, he approached her with a weak pitiful smile, the best he could give. She returned it with a beaming one. "I filled the water but your emergency reserves are empty" the water man said slowly. Clara knew water was expensive and money was hard to get. "When will you be back?" she enquired. "Next week, same day" he said in exchange. Clara nodded as the man took his leave. Clara's sister, Paula strolled in and enquired whether she should go for her bath. Clara told her to wait for the mother to come back from the market. They had to survive 7 days on this water. Clara's smile had faded into obscurity.

This hypothetical scenario might seem as the start of a science fiction movie. But in truth, this situation, which we have dreamt, is the harsh reality on which the life in Chile is built. This might cause you to wonder, what

is the cause of such a condition where the people of the nation do not have water or the resources to get it? And why is the government unable to help them? The main reason for Chile's water problem is avocado.

To understand the problem, we need to go back. Back to the healthy food craze days in the United States when everyone was obsessed about being healthy. It was at that time when the Californian-grown avocado was in limelight as a super food. It was in every meal appetizers, mains, and even desserts, but that was not enough for its fans. Its craze only grew wider and wider. As the USA slowly opened its doors to countries like Chile in South America, to which the crop belonged, to fulfil its exotic needs as the countries found a new demand in their homes. People drove headfirst into this mine hoping to hit the gold. Chile already had a booming avocado business but this pushed them to overdrive. Avocado groves were everywhere. Even the government dropped down from its throne to assist these owners in their likely profitable plan.

One of the main things with avocado trees is that they need water in gallons and gallons, especially in their fruiting season or else their fruit comes out squishy and unviable for market. Earlier there was a balance between resources. Avocado was grown but it was limited, sustainable. But now as the demand is much more and people rushed to grow these money-making trees, the water demand was pushed so high that there was not enough water to support the trees. Then, the government did the only thing it could to support the farmers, the nail in the coffin. They cut off major water supply from the colonies and transferred it to the businesses. Now, Chile lies in a pitiable limbo where the government has to give more value to the plants instead of its people. Chile now has almost no water to give to its people. If it does not do so then its revenue from the trees will be cut and the economy will die taking the nation with it. The crop literally runs their nation.

This is often called the 'butterfly effect', where a small change in a variable can lead to a major event. For example, if a butterfly flaps its wings in Chicago and a tornado occurs in Tokyo. Similarly, a small decision taken now can have major consequences in the foreseeable future whether good or bad. A simple lifestyle choice adapted by a few of us could define the world of tomorrow and brighten future, or the single lifestyle choice like the one taken by the USA could doom a nation.

Sustainable living describes a lifestyle that attempts to reduce an individual's or a society's use of the natural resources and the personal resources including the carbon footprint. It is the way of living that might be the easiest way for us with which we can contribute to protect this planet that has given us so much for so little in return.

Sustainable living is not a complicated matter, which needs hours and hours to be understood. It is a matter that we can think, understand, and implement by ourselves. It is dependent on our conscience and a feeling of responsibility instead. They are the engine that drives a sustainable lifestyle. With small simple things like taking bike to school, limiting our use on resources like electronics and by practicing minimalism, etc., things we know beforehand to be good for the environment, we can do our bit by adopting a sustainable lifestyle. The only thing we need now is the spirit and the will to adopt it.

The choice of a sustainable lifestyle is in front of us, we only need the will and courage to grab it and take a stand for our planet.



We live on a planet which is a home to a variety of living organisms. Nature provides us all with resources irrespective of our age. This photograph shows the hand of an aged and a young person doing their bit towards protecting the environment.

- Riya Dhananjay Patil

Sustainable Lifestyles: A Need of the Hour

By Grace Shalom Moses, Anita Methodist Matriculation Higher Secondary School, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

A lot of real things have happened lately, but this, is just unimaginable. I thought I have always had everything I need! Fame, wealth, riches... everything! Until that one cathartic moment of my life that had hit me hard. I am Micheal, and this is my story. For every wasted resource, someone somewhere pays for it! It took me almost 40 years to realize this.

I have heard of many people talking about saving natural resources, conserving the resources for future generations, people campaigning, going on rallies, taking so much effort towards it. Well, I have no need of saving natural resources, as I do not have a future generation! I am all alone, I have no wife, no kids, none. It is me, myself, and I. So I live the way I wish to live.

A new day, a fresh start, a fresh morning, and here I am on my bed, with the air conditioner (AC) switched on, fans spinning, living a luxurious life. I know it is not good to use too much of the natural resources, but, I still do because it is my money, I pay for it, and who cares anyway. I am all set for office, I get in the car, and suddenly realized that there is water leakage in my bathroom shower, oh no... I forget to turn the tap off. And yeah, I did not turn off the AC as usual, but it is time for office. Oh well! I will just leave now, I will come back and fix things. On my way to office there is heavy traffic. For a minute I think about turning the engine off while waiting at a long signal so that my diesel would be saved, but... never mind, let it be wasted. Half a way, I see a huge poster on the roadside with a message 'STOP WASTING'. Reached office, it is just so hard to work for a whole day! And finally I am done. Back home! Done with the dinner and all set to sleep. 'Goodnight', I say to myself and off to bed. Have you ever experienced a nightmare so horrible that you almost try to wake up intentionally to save yourself? Here is one of the frantic ones you will ever hear about.

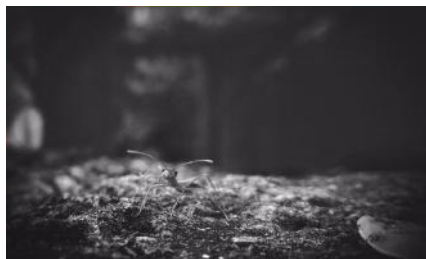
I am wide asleep while a flash of something huge, like a huge poster strikes my mind. 'STOP WASTING' it says! I remember that is the poster I saw on my way to office. That poster was chasing me in my dreams. I woke up suddenly and got cold feet. Had a glass of water, thought would help me, and then I went to sleep. Creepy thoughts in my mind, memories of me wasting water, electricity, food, and other natural resources, kept pricking me. I again had a strange dream, felt like I was taken to 2030 in a time machine... Those sad scenes of poor little babies dying due to water scarcity, people suffering with no electricity, dying from heat, sunburns due to lack of trees and rain. Oh! Also, people shifting to other planets to save their lives. Just so grievous, it was! All these made me feel the need for sustainable lifestyle. That night made a drastic change in my life. I realized that it is not at all right to live a luxurious life at the cost of other people's life. That night, I determined to put in all my efforts to use natural resources wisely.

'If we save now, we will leave a better place for our future generations'.

I practice a sustainable lifestyle. Yes, it was hard to suddenly give away my luxurious lifestyle and replace with sustainable living. But, as days keep passing, I make sure that as a good citizen I maintain a sustainable lifestyle. And also, urged my friends, colleagues, and other citizens to live accordingly by showing them the importance of living a sustainable life.

As a citizen, it is my responsibility to live a sustainable lifestyle and not wasting the resources.

'The greatest threat to our planet is the belief that someone else will save it'.



For more information contact:

Environment Education and Awareness Area | The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)
 Darbari Seth Block, IHC Complex, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003 (India)
 TEL: +91-11 2468 2100, 4150 4900, 24682111 | E-mail: eea@teri.res.in | Web: www.teriin.org