



Pro-Planet-People

This article is based on [“A new lease of LIFE for climate action”](#) which was published in The Hindu on 20/10/2022. It talks about the role of India’s LiFE initiative to tackle the challenges related to climate change and environment.

For Prelims: India’s LiFE initiative, Climate change, 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), Ethanol blending, Aravali Hills, Circular Economy, Pro-planet people.

For Mains: India’s Achievements in Conserving the Environment, Challenges Related to the Environment in India, Recent Government Initiatives to Tackle Environmental Degradation.

India’s LiFE initiative has become a **mass movement towards an environmentally conscious lifestyle**. [Covid-19](#) has proved that despite mankind’s scientific and technological advancements, **we continue to be at the mercy of the natural world**.

Today, the threat posed by **unmitigated climate change** is more dangerous than ever before. **A throwaway society, driven by wasteful consumerism**, is equally culpable for the deepening crisis.

According to Swiss Re, the global economy could lose up to **18% of GDP by 2050** if no climate action is taken. This is a clarion call for transition towards **sustainable and eco-friendly practices**.

What is LiFE Initiative?

- The idea of **LiFE was introduced by India during the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)** in Glasgow in 2021.
- This idea **promotes an environmentally conscious lifestyle** that focuses on ‘**mindful and deliberate utilization**’ instead of ‘**mindless and wasteful consumption**’.

What are India’s Achievements in Conserving the Environment?

- **Installed Electric Capacity: India’s commitment to reach 40% of installed electric capacity** from non-fossil fuel-based sources has been achieved, 9 years ahead of schedule.
- **Ethanol Blending Target: The target of 10% ethanol blending in petrol has been achieved 5 months ahead** of the November 2022 target.
 - This is a major accomplishment given that blending was hardly 1.5% in 2013-14 and 5% in 2019-20.
- **Renewable Energy Target:** According to [REN21's Renewables 2022 Global Status Report \(GSR 2022\)](#), India was ranked **third in wind power, fourth in solar power and third in renewable power installed capacity in 2021**.

What are the Challenges Related to the Environment in India?

- **Degrading Forest, Degrading Livelihood:** [Poverty](#) and environmental degradation have a **nexus between them**. The vast majority of our people are directly **dependent on the natural resources of the country for their basic needs of food, fuel, shelter and fodder**.
 - [Environment degradation](#) has adversely affected the poor who depend upon the **resources of their immediate surroundings**. Thus, the challenge of poverty and the challenge of environmental degradation are two facts of the same challenge.
- **Submerging Healthy Environment: Forests serve catchments for the rivers.** With increasing **demand for water, plans to harness the mighty river through large [irrigation projects](#) were made**. Certainly, **these can submerge forests, displace local people, damage flora and fauna**.
 - Also, forests in India have been shrinking for several centuries owing to pressures of agriculture and other uses. **Vast areas that were once green, stand today as [wastelands](#)**.
- **Unregulated Mining:** The massive need for **construction materials has led to the disappearance of many hills** due to quarrying and other mining activities. Example: [Aravali Hills, Rajasthan](#).
 - Also, despite advances in renewable energy, **India is still largely dependent on [thermal power plants](#) to meet its increasing energy demand**, resulting in a rise in coal mining rates.
- **Improper Solid-Waste Management:** Among the most pressing environmental issues in India is also waste. Around **277 million tonnes of [municipal solid waste \(MSW\)](#) is produced every year**.
 - Currently, **only about 5% of the total collected waste is recycled, 18% is composted**, and the remaining is dumped at landfill sites.

What are the Recent Government Initiatives to Tackle Environmental Degradation?

- [Swachh Bharat Mission](#)
- [GOBARdhan Scheme](#)
- [Give It Up Campaign](#)
- [Catch the Rain Campaign](#)

What Should be the Way Forward?

- **Towards Responsible Consumption:** There is a need to consider the **social, environmental and economic impacts of consumption**, buying greener products; consuming better – wasting less and having a more sustainable consumption.
 - Also, there is a need to **initiate transition towards a [circular economy](#) from today's 'take-make-use-dispose' economy**.
- **Sustainable Mobility:** There is a need to **rethink and restore confidence in public transport**, including the **procurement of more buses, the adoption of [e-buses](#)**, bus corridors and bus rapid transit systems with digitization of public transport.
 - The development of several **electric freight corridors** to promote electrification is also crucial to reaping the benefits of electric vehicles.
- **Pro-Planet-People:** India's **rich traditional wisdom and climate-friendly practices** make us best placed to **assume a leadership role in driving a behavior change on climate action**.
 - The world needs to know about India's LiFE initiative across the globe that **aims to unite the people as [pro-planet people](#)**, uniting them all in their thoughts and functions on the basic principles of '**Lifestyle of the planet, for the planet and by the planet**',
- **Environmental Awareness:** **School curriculums** should make environmental awareness a priority, while **ULBs and panchayats can act as ambassadors to percolate it down to the grassroots**.

- **Promoting Eco-Design:** There is a need to keep **environmental impact assessment at all stages of the product development process**, striving for products which make the **lowest possible environmental impact** throughout the product life cycle.
 - Use of **plant-based biodegradable utensils** (sal tree leaves) and **tea in clay pots (kulhad)**.
 - **Furoshiki, a Japanese traditional wrapping cloth, is eco-friendly and used for wrapping gifts**, carrying goods or as decoration.
 - The reusable Furoshiki can be an **example of a sustainable alternative to traditional plastic wrapping paper**.

Drishhti Mains Question

Transition from today's 'take-make-use-dispose' economy to a circular economy is essential for environmental sustainability. Explain with reference to India's LiFE initiative.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. The 'Common Carbon Metric', supported by UNEP, has been developed for: (2021)

- (a) assessing the carbon footprint of building operations around the world
- (b) enabling commercial fanning entities around the world to enter carbon emission trading
- (c) enabling governments to assess the overall carbon footprint caused by their countries
- (d) assessing the overall carbon foot-print caused by the use of fossil fuels by the world in a unit time

Ans: (a)


Mains

Q. What are the impediments in disposing of the huge quantities of discarded solid wastes which are continuously being generated? How do we safely remove the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? (2018)



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