

Section B

1. Leadership is not a position but a responsibility.
2. The greatest threat of our planet is the belief that someone else will save it.
3. India's focus should be on Ease of Living rather than Ease of Doing Business.
4. Imagination is more important than intelligence.

"THE GREATEST THREAT TO OUR PLANET IS THE BELIEF THAT SOMEONE ELSE WILL SAVE IT"

One fine morning, Mr. Mehta was enjoying his breakfast with the news on. News anchor was discussing how India is hosting the 'World Environment Day' by United Nations Environment Programme this year. The Theme is - Beating Plastic Pollution.

Mr. Mehta was delighted to hear this news. He told his wife about the efforts of UNEP & also appreciated the steps taken by our country. Later,

that day, Mr. Mehta went to market & bought vegetable & fruits in various polybags. Due to the scorching heat, he also bought a coconut & threw it away with the straw after drinking.

Here, though Mr. Mehta is an aware citizen but he is not putting those awareness points into action. He is relying on the nation & UN to save the planet. But does such belief serve any purpose?

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

Our existence, literally. According to a recent Living Planet Report, we exhaust the yearly carrying capacity of earth by August 2 or 3.

This means that it would take almost "two Earths" to fulfill human demands. Our habits & practices at each level is causing harm to our planet.

Individually, we are drifting towards consumerism & materialism. Everyone is striving for more than what one can consume. Cosmetics, Exotic items, leather wearables, fur etc are the new normal. We don't see the violence which went behind its production & just enjoy the fruits.

As a society, we are drifting away from values that cherished nature and was grateful for its fruits. In the run for becoming more prosperous, instances like 'Belandur Lake' of Bengaluru is becoming increasingly common.

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As a nation too, we are running away from the responsibility of our actions. The Act of US leaving Paris Climate Agreement is condemnable. In the name of development, we are also destroying nature indiscriminately. We are suffering from ironic situations → wastage of food & food security; malnutrition & obesity.

Globally, despite many talks of a peaceful & sustainable world, horrors like Hiroshima & Nagasaki continuously reminds us of the impending third world war possibility. Rather than reducing consumption, we are overrelying on scientific advancement possibility to avert climate change.

Not just few people, but almost everyone is waiting for others to take the lead, solve problems, & do something miraculous - so that our cherished planet could be saved.

BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE

This impending threat could be averted with everyone's efforts - however big or small.

At individual level, we can ~~start~~ with 3R \rightarrow Reduce, Reuse, Recycle to contribute towards saving the environment. Participation in events like 'Earth-Hour' where one switches off electricity for an hour could lead to a multiplicative effect.

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One can follow rules, take our jute or cloth bag to market for shopping instead of using polybags like Mr. Mehta.

As a family, we can have different dustbins for segregating wastes. This will also instill such values in the children. One can practice vertical gardening, roof gardening to get organic produce. Here one can use waste compost as a fertilizer as well.

As a society, awareness about various programmes could be the first step. This would make more 'environmentally responsible citizens'. Civil society initiatives like use of solar lamps

under SOULs programme, using biodegradable appliances like Mitti Cool etc. would be step in the right direction. Such efforts would also complement governmental efforts.

Governmental Effects are crucial in bringing about uniform & widespread reformation. In different aspects such as Mitigation, Adaptation & Funding, many steps are needed.

legislations like Environment Protection Act, Various Pollution Acts, Rules & Regulations like Plastic Mangement, e-waste management etc. & above all Constitutional directive & duty to save environment should be the guiding light.

Using it, Efforts to achieve the target of 33% forest cover in the country would ensure achievement of INDCs (Nationally determined contributions). This would also help India in getting better international status & easier technology access.

In the quest to use renewable energy, International Solar Alliance (ISA) by India reiterates that we are not waiting for someone else to save the planet. Use of renewables would solve both energy security & environmental problem, if pursued properly, in the future.

Saving the ecosystem using traditional methods could be a positive step. Taking help of tribals in Joint Forest Management, Sacred Groves protection

would ensure dense forests are safe. Improving Under Sea ^{water} Agriculture practice of Kerala (included under Globally Important Agriculture Heritage) in modern times could be called an action with foresight.

Learning from International best practices could save us from 're-inventing the wheel'. Collaboration with countries like Netherlands for waste management, Israel for water efficiency etc would open many possibilities of better resource utilization.

Globally, being part of successful protocols & conventions like Montreal Protocol, Vienna Convention, Kyoto Protocol has shown us that averting the threat is possible.

Not just through technology transfer & technology groupings, one can learn from noble acts. Recently, Senegal fans repeated the feat done by Japanese fans in the FIFA WC 2018. They cleaned the plastic & other waste segregating them for easier disposal after the match was over. Everyone, an individual, society, national & global grouping can learn from it.

Learning from present as well as past can help us enter a better future. Ancient Indian practices at every step ensured that environment is in harmony with human existence & vice versa. Whenever resources were exploited, enough time was given to it to regenerate & rejuvenate e.g. Shifting cultivation in earlier times.

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Nobody then relied ^{only} on the king to do all the environment-friendly work & one was deep under the material pleasures. Similarly, it is time that we learn and start taking action to save the planet. There are many ways to do it but one has to start somewhere.

If not for the ancestors who left this beautiful mother earth to us, we should do it for our next generations from whom we have borrowed it. In line with the ethos of humanity, environmentalism, progress, we should strive for sustainable development. Aiming to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in time in Mission mode could be the way forward.

Unlike Mr. Mehta we should shed the belief that someone else would save the planet. We must be guided by the words of Gautama The Buddha - 'Atma deepo Bharah' (Be your own light). While ⁱⁿ our efforts to live a comfortable life, we must remember a very important thought given by Gandhiji & should swear to act as the trustee to the great resource provided by Mother Earth.

"The world has enough for everyone's needs but not for anyone's greed"

Live & Let Live :)