



PUNE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE



INDIA'S YOUTH MANIFESTO FOR A CLIMATE-SECURE FUTURE

For Converting Promises to Actions

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1. Preamble

20th century was phenomenal in terms of human development and technological progress which enhanced capacity of human innovation and integration. Earth resources were plentiful and economic growth appeared limitless to support a bright future for continued human development. But human greed for limitless growth and steep rise in wealth for a few, resulted in increasing 'inequity' among societies and nations. It also led to unprecedented exploitation of Earth resources and increasing Green House Gases (GHG) accumulation in the atmosphere, triggering accelerated Global Warming. The present 21st century has become an '**Age of Consequences**' and is already evolving very differently. The elixir of money wealth, power, and luxury for a mere 15% of the global affluent population, has led to a growing existential threat of 'Global Warming and Climate Change' to all life on the planet.

We have failed to preserve and protect the very ecosystems that has sustained mankind for thousands of years. This has catapulted the climate change from being an environmental challenge to the dire existential crisis that it is now. And yet for many, these dangers are invisible despite scientific predictions and clear signs of deterioration of human well-being. News headlines such as '*9 Crore Indians At Risk Of Hunger By 2030 Due To Climate Change*' or '*Heat wave in India leaves millions struggling to cope*' - have become a frequent occurrence and people are beginning to take notice of this. Yet, despite the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, such as unexpected flash flooding, more frequent cyclones and increasing heat waves, we are still not committed to rapid climate action. Some Governments have taken incremental steps to address the issue. Internationally, the farthest-reaching effort was the Paris Agreement and since then, many corporations, have set laudable emissions reduction goals for themselves and many local governments have enacted few effective policies. However, collectively the Climate action is exceptionally inadequate. Every day that passes is one day less that we have to stabilize our increasingly fragile planet.

Many people, especially the youth find this reality very unsettling, wondering why the older generation and Governments are still following this path to destruction even after such convincing scientific evidence available for decades? Students understand the scientific projections and are extremely terrified about the diminished quality of life on their horizon. They demand decisive action now. Youth in India is also anxiously waiting to know when and how promises will materialize into concrete action by the decisions makers at every level.



2. Why Manifesto

Main reason why most climate promises have not culminated into decisive action is that Climate change and environmental exploitation have not been identified as a political and economic issues. They have been looked at merely as environmental issues affecting plants, animals, etc., but not affecting human systems. These misconceptions have proven fatal for humanity as due to such biases, no 'Political Will' for climate action has been generated for many years and big corporations are getting away with their 'profit at all costs' business model.

Everything has been about economic profits from which Governments also gain, on the other hand environmental consciousness is labelled as a damper to economic progress. Today, it is clearly proven that global warming and climate change induced by human activity is threatening the health and livelihoods of millions around the world. In reality, the real problem is that the greed of the present generation is jeopardizing the future of the young generations.

Political will is extremely essential for Climate action and this Youth Manifesto aims to ***'Politimize the urgent issues of Global warming, Climate change and the mindless environmental exploitation'***.

The Manifesto of the Youth of India hopes to inspire the political leadership at every level for converting their environmental promises into action in the form of Renewable energy transition, social transformation through effective Climate legislation, while also changing the existing economic model to what can realistically benefit the next generation.

This the need of the hour. The political discourse of India must move from polarizing issues of winning elections to issues that can unify the interests of all Indian citizens. Winning elections and remaining in power by itself does not add any value to National well-being. Climate action and economic resilience need to become important electoral agenda. Debates/discussions must revolve around it to accelerate action at all governance levels. This is already happening in better-aware societies but in India, we are yet to wake-up despite being one of the most vulnerable country to climate change impacts in immediate near future. The manifesto hopefully will act as a socio-political instrument that can urgently do what the Nation needs.

This manifesto is also hopeful of making common citizens aware as to what actions are necessary to safeguard our collective future, especially the future of the younger generation. As Climate action becomes a top electoral agenda due to its huge impact on Economy, the public opinion around it also will also be directed in a productive direction, affecting what type of leadership people should elect. This Youth Manifesto aims to do exactly this.

Changes in our lives due to Climate change is now inevitable, the question is ***'Would we let it happen to us by default or do we make it happen by design?'***



3. The Problem: Promises not Getting Converted into Actions

Despite understanding the perils of Climate Inaction and knowing the increasing social costs of inaction, Politicians/Administrators have not initiated any significant climate action. Token activities such as tree plantation drives and electrifying transport (while still charging batteries using fossil fuels) have negatively influenced the political scene and are misleading the common citizens.

Such token activities have high optic value, but are of little use to the desired outcome. At a bigger level, it is worth asking how does the highly polluting and currently dying fossil fuel industry still manage to hold such a huge market power when on the other hand more prudent industries such Solar and wind do not get the support they need? It is impossible for the loss-making fossil fuel industry to stay in power without political connections. This treacherous behavior of politicians globally has compromised the future of youth and has aggravated the problem further.

Political parties are also concerned more with the issues that appease their vote banks specifically. They often use emotive issues to divert attention from real issues. Some politicians do care about the youth and environment, but they lack support from other political departments. There is also a lack of will and ingenuity in the administrative department, which seems to be concerned just about the day to day civic issues, disregarding the harmful means which they use to get results. All such Political, Industrial and Administrative inaction is the real '**Bottleneck for Climate Action**'.

The youth are unknowingly entering into a hostile world for which they were never even responsible for. The possibility of inheriting a future with stable life is reducing day by day. So, **The youth no more demands Promises, they demand Decisive Climate ACTION urgently.** This Manifesto aims to equip people with a list of demands which are immediately actionable and necessary. Through this manifesto, we aim to reach government offices and industry leaders demanding action, not more promises. Needless to state, youth all over are eager to take leadership roles and do whatever it takes to combat climate change and growing threat to life and economy.



4. Functions of the Manifesto

Having established the importance and need of this manifesto, it is important to state the functions of this manifesto. This will help one further understand the objectives for which this manifesto must be used.

A. For converting Promises to Action: There has been a general consensus on the fact that climate action is important. There have been promises made globally as well. The problem is that these promises made by the politicians have not led to any decisive actions. The manifesto aims to activate Climate action on all frontiers

B. For Sound Decision-making by using the demands indicated in the Manifesto as a framework for planning the future course of action, in the interest of the future of youth

C. For finding synergy between environment and economy through the demands of the manifesto which present an opportunity to achieve synergistic economic development which is also environmentally caring.

D. For providing a direction towards a Net Carbon Neutral world, the manifesto demands if implemented will provide the foundation to achieve larger objective carbon neutrality

E. For creating a new world model which is much more inclusive, equitable, progressive and peaceful than the current world model that we live by

5. What are Youth Priorities

After understanding the needs, ambitions, anxieties and risks that the Youth go through today, we have created a framework, which puts forth the priorities of the youth and principles which can help us shape our new carbon neutral world.

The first component in this framework is creating 'a Livable Earth'. **A Livable Earth, means a world which caters to the basic needs of all life forms, like clean air, clean water, abundant habitat.** We cannot provide it to all the other life forms because they already deserve it. But what we can do is we can ensure that we no longer take it back from them.

The second component is that we need 'an Inclusive world', a world which is **politically, socially and economically inclusive**, and also understands and accepts that the development pathways of different communities will be different.

The third component is being future proof or creating 'a future proof world'. It means building resilience to unforeseen environmental disasters. Being future proof will actually provide stability to our lives and businesses. This will need sustainable long-term policies.

The last component of our framework is being '**Ecologically mindful**' or creating an ecologically mindful world, a world where ecological integrity is valued. This is what will help us synergize economy and environment.



Youth Priorities

A World which can cater to the needs of all life forms, not just the elites

L - Livable

A World which cares for and enriches all communities and aims at holistic pattern of development

I - Inclusive

World which builds resilience to future disruptions and adapts by investing in prudent technology

F - Future-proof

World where ecological integrity and environmental ethics are invariably considered while planning

E - Ecologically-minded



The **LIFE** Framework provides a set of principles which if implemented create development models which prioritize Wellbeing over just Economics

This framework presents before you what the youth prioritize today. The youth today prioritize 'LIFE' over just economic aspirations or financial growth.



6. Why the youth priorities need to be addressed?

Progress of Youth is equivalent to the Progress of humanity:

Youth are the drivers of human progress, they too deserve an equitable Earth, one which the earlier generations enjoyed abundant opportunities, which enabled them to progress to the grand levels we see today. The progress of youth is indistinguishable from the progress of human society, likewise, securing the future of youth is intertwined with securing the environment. Therefore addressing the priorities of youth and environment must become the mandate of all governments today and in future.

Youth demands change. If we do not change, we perish: The young generation cannot abide by the same development model, they need better policies which look beyond the short term profit and address the long term wellbeing of this Planet. This demands the **implementation of 'Sustainable Policies'** immediately. Policies which work on synergizing environmental and economic demands, need policy reforms which priorities **'maximum benefit to humanity' over 'maximum return to individuals'**

India's position: Such a change in mindset is especially important for India. India needs to safeguard the future of its rich demographic dividend, if urgent climate action is not taken, then the whole foundation of progress for the youth will become instable. The youth will suffer economically and socially owing to this instability.

Safeguarding against societal conflicts and inequities: Fulfilling the priorities of environment and youth together goes a long way as it sets the right direction for progress. An approach devoid of environment and youth has led us to the highest levels of resource depletion in human history as short term growth of individual is seen as the driver of human progress. Unfortunately, GDP being the most prominently used measure of human progress is also a result of such an approach. The growing inequity also raises the threat of societal fractures, causing a hindrance to national security. It is clear that this pattern of progress must change, but it cannot change without decisive political resolve and comprehensive & coordinated actions. The Youth have a 'larger than life' purpose to come together and work for a better future. Governments today need to recognise and priorities their demands.



7. Our Climate Reality: Do we act or do we stay ignorant?

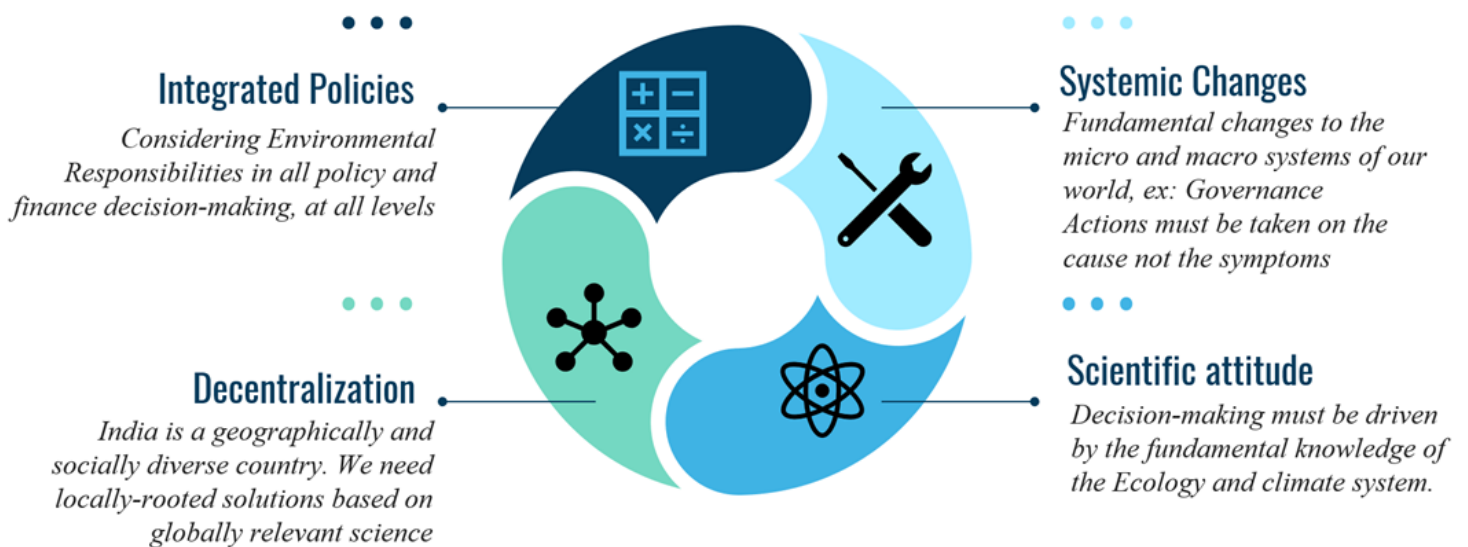
Many people even today think that youth demands and youth movements for abating climate change is a overreaction. For such sceptics, the table below provides a basis for 'Urgent climate action'. The table portrays two scenarios/projections till the middle of this century, one where climate action is taken at a slow pace such as the current business as usual pace and the second where the demands of this Manifesto are accepted and ACTION is executed.

World in 2050 by current Business As Usual scenario	World in 2050 under Climate Action Scenario
A world marked by frequent: Floods, Droughts, Fires, Storms, Community Conflicts, Poverty, Hunger	A world with a much stable environment-adequacy of the resources, balanced biodiversity with climate impacts within tolerable limits.
Many people would suffer from mental stress due to the Grief of loss-basic necessities, quality of life & the anxiety of future, loss of productivity and thus, loss of human capital	A sustainable lifestyle as a medium of reducing the burden on the planet and leading a healthier life along with increased productivity
Achieving economic aspirations would become difficult due to resource crunch	Synergy between the Natural Environment & Economy has led to equitable progress and opportunities.
Sea level rise; making our coastal cities disappear	A sustainable well-flourished blue economy providing livelihoods to millions living on the coasts
Desertification & Droughts making millions of people Climate refugees.	Protected, rejuvenated and self-sustaining ecosystems are lifelines and source of livelihood for the people.
Unpredictability of Climate change would make planning for progress nearly impossible	Sustainably planned cities and towns with ecological principles imbibed within them.



8. Foundations that we need to establish

The current political and administrative systems or mechanisms than we operate with, were not created to handle the challenges that we are facing today due to climate change. They lack the modernity and innovation that we require today. Modern problems will require modern solutions, these solutions are mentioned in the form of demands in this manifesto but to actually execute these demands at a national level, our civic systems need to transform early. Our approach and priorities must also shift with it. These fundamental changes are referred to here as 'Foundations'. The four foundations that we need to establish before we implement the demands are mentioned below:



9. Demands of the Youth

1) The future is Renewable Energy

Government must increase the investment in Renewable Energy and especially immediate deployment of SOLAR (rooftop and microgrids). In the last decade itself, India's Renewable energy composition has grown from just 2% to 40% today. Now the government must aim for **75% Clean energy generation by 2030** (not stopping at 50%) which is extremely doable and will eliminate the emissions caused due to energy generation. The transition must be decentralized and all levels of government must carry the mandate of energy transition .



2) Fossil fuel-free India

The addiction to fossil fuels must end immediately. Government must decommission existing fossil fuel based powerplants, End all subsidies to the Fossil fuel industry, Disinvest in all types of fossil fuels and initiate rapid shift to renewables and **low-carbon alternative fuels like Bio-CNG**. All this must be done before 2050, owing to the multiple benefits of using Clean energy Urgently develop **zero-carbon transport infrastructure**, with policies including bans (such as on petrol and diesel cars), taxes (such as progressive frequent flyer taxes), **renewable energy charging for EVs** and positive incentives (support for electric vehicles) for consumers directly

3) Ecosystem restoration & protection of our trees, soil, rivers and oceans

Uphold the Integrity of our Ecology by including **'Restoration of Nature'** in all our climate targets. We need to use the power of nature to store carbon by restoring and protecting ecosystems on land and at sea. This is necessary alongside rapid decarbonization **Set aside 50% land area for biodiversity** in all states and impose strict penalties against commercial construction and other exploitative activities. Combat illegal and unsustainable fishing, including new measures to ensure full transparency across fisheries supply chains

4) Empower youth and green businesses

Youth are the drivers of Human progress. Economic progress must be directed in a way that it results in wellbeing of youth, not their doom. Therefore, the government must Drive an economy-wide transition for a shift in investments to low-carbon innovation & technologies for Carbon capture, energy generation, waste management, construction. The aim must be the **'Complete Decarbonization of Businesses'**.

There need to be high standards of sustainability for all upcoming industries such as Industry 4.0, Web 3.0, etc. as well. Work on **creating 3 million new jobs** in the rejuvenated renewable energy sector, by establishing skill training centers for capacity building of skilled technicians.



5) Shift to Natural Farming and Sustainable Fishing

India is an agrarian economy, current agricultural practices are compromising the food safety of Youth as the productivity of land is decreasing. The government must create an ecologically sustainable farming system which is 'Climate smart'; one that focuses on supporting family farms and re-localizing food production, thereby creating thriving rural communities. Take special efforts to facilitate Youth involved in Agro-industry to become 'Sustainable Agro-Entrepreneurs'

6) Introduce a Carbon Tax for discouraging Fossil Fuel use:

Implement a carbon tax at source to penalize exploitative businesses which are the major contributors to global warming. Regulate prices of fossil fuel-derived products to reflect the social cost of carbon-intensive products and services. Revenue from such carbon pricing policies can be suitably redirected as investments to finance clean energy transition.

7) Change in Governance, Policies & Political Will

Increase Youth political representatives: Responsible Political parties must **nominate representatives under age 35 to Rajya Sabha as far as possible.**

Prioritising Climate action agenda in political party manifestos

Future generations need to be taken into decision-making actively as their future must be manifested according to their will and not someone else's interests. This must be done by Empowering the Social governance systems such as '*Moholla Committees and Ward Sabha*', organizing proactive public discussions and ensuring transparency in decision making process.

The government must create a **Multi-sector framework** for clean energy transition in industries, agriculture, buildings, infrastructure and transportation.

Central government must Mandate and states must agree upon biodiversity protection as a responsibility of state governments and issue proactive directives to states for awareness about global warming



8) Urgent amendments to Environment Protection Act and strict compliance

The Environment Protection Act 1986 is clearly outdated and needs serious amendments for adding 'climate change' as a major environmental issue in it. Government should mandate compliance and introduce strict punishments for non-compliance.

'Access to Healthy Environment' should be a RIGHT, especially for the youth and marginalized population.

9) Climate Justice must be recognised as a RIGHT

Poor communities, tribes and rural citizens are suffering from a problem which they did not even create. To safeguard their livelihoods, climate justice must be considered at the heart of climate policy. Government must establish new legal frameworks for the protection of climate refugees and communities affected due to climate change impacts.

To provide timely justice (remedy), the number of courts dealing in environmental cases must increase.

Legislation must draft a stricter procedural framework for justice delivery.

Recognise the role of Indigenous communities in land stewardship and uphold their rights, including regarding land tenure even if they are unable to voice their concerns.

Developed countries should provide 50 billion USD for developing adaptation measures and compensation.

10) Transparency in Environmental Data

To solve the problem of Green house gases accumulation, we must first start measuring them. Government must establish facilities for Monitoring of GHG emissions sources of all cities by Carbon accounting, carbon auditing measure which will require mandatory carbon disclosure from any large company operating in their country.

This data must be published openly to ensure transparency, by a detailed bi-yearly report consisting of data of emissions from all sectors. If there is no improvement in the quality of environment, responsible authorities should be held accountable and dealt with appropriately.



Critical Responsibilities of Businesses, Communities and Individuals for Converting Promises to Action

The above demands reflect how mammoth scope is there for climate action from the government. But, the government alone cannot solve the issues of the youth. To realise the priorities of the youth, industries, civil society, NGOs and other important actors also need to co-ordinate their efforts. The building up GHGs to such a level was for the progress of humanity, billions of people today enjoy the material benefits. Therefore, it is everyone's responsibility to make amends and reduce the rate of GHG emissions. Collective efforts to push the governments and implement independent action can make a big difference.

In the section below, we cover few actionable solutions for that the stakeholders can start implementing immediately as part of their responsibility towards mitigating climate change. The actionable mentioned are classified sequentially with the most impactful action first. The actionable have been ranked after close consideration of various factors such as carbon footprint mitigation estimates, scalability, impact on other sectors and most importantly the Indian context. Even though comprehensive, the lists are not exhaustive and at many occurrences the climate actions are to be executed in a step-wise manner. Looking at the larger picture, all the actionable are important and must be executed to safeguard the future of the Youth.

10. Responsibility as Voters and Individuals

Citizens including youth, need to actively pursue their Political representatives and press for local immediate Climate Actions. Value of your VOTE is priceless, therefore Youth must vote responsibly for candidates who understand and have the will to work to fulfil the 'Youth priorities and the demands of this Manifesto'.

Change in lifestyles must start by consciously assessing your footprint on the environment and then gradually reducing it by actions such as reducing energy demand, switching to solar electricity, using public transport whenever possible, reducing consumerism and most importantly by spreading environmental awareness by popularizing this manifesto.



a) Most impactful climate action for Individual

- Contribute in climate action by participating and popularizing instruments such as this Manifesto among your social circles
- Generate your own energy through renewable sources, such as rooftop solar
- Demand climate action from your political representatives by activism and voting
- Use zero/low carbon emitting transportation like EVs, bicycles and public transport
- Manage waste by refusing (when possible), recycling, reusing and upcycling
- Raise your Eco-Conscientiousness and take responsibility for your carbon footprint by becoming a conscious consumer
- Eat locally sourced, organic and plant-based food
- Educate your peers on climate change and spread awareness
- Start organic urban farming/gardening

Responsibility of Businesses: Responsibility of Eliminating the flow of GHGs stays majorly with businesses. The modern businesses must proactively transition to being 'Zero-carbon' by reducing their impact on the environment. Youth need to be given opportunities to enter the Green markets and implement Climate friendly innovations. The industry needs to pump in money for Climate action.

b) Most impactful climate action for Businesses and Industry

- Switch to Renewable Energy, Waste-to-Energy plants for energy for operations
- Reduce transport/ travel/commute of business trips and employee commute by also promoting Work from Home and collective travel using electric buses with Renewable Energy generated charging only
- Invest in low-carbon innovations, designs and technologies
- Start carbon-neutral practices at the workplace and encourage employees to adapt the same
- Seek accreditation from organizations such as Green Co.
- Offset emissions to cover for unavoidable emissions

Responsibility of Civil society (community groups, educational institutes and NGOs):

Communities will have to take up climate action along with the government, industry and individuals, to ensure a fair chance to good-life for the 'generation next'. The communities would benefit by establishing an organized framework for their climate action. The actions taken up by the community will differ from that of government as local communities will have to take a project-wise approach and not target-wise approach like the government. At the core of all Community climate action is 'Peoples participation' at a large scale. Thus, connecting with all levels of the society will be essential for community leaders.



c) Most impactful climate action from Civil societies/Communities

- Organize and institutionalize community groups to demand climate action, the groups can customize this manifesto according to their need and present it as a mandate to their political representatives
- Transitioning to renewable energy such as Smart Roof-top solar or micro grids and 'Waste-to Energy' projects in your locality
- Educate community members in the subjects of bio diversity, environment and climate change to spread awareness and sensitisation
- Holding political leaders accountable for any inaction towards climate change
- Planning and implementation of their own Waste management and Sewage treatment plants.
- Professional communities to find solutions in their own field. Ex: Medical/Hospital community finding solutions to make the medical sector carbon neutral
- Start auditing and accounting of all the natural resources in your area
- Incorporate living nature such as native plants in your public spaces
- Providing local and organic farmers to trade their produce inside your community





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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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to create a world class think tank,

...

to provide a forum for liberal intellectuals

...

to promote an environment for free and fair public debates

...

to provide a platform to promote arts and culture




**"The Greatest Threat to Our
Planet is the Belief that
Someone Else will Save it"**

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