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issues



Global warming has been one of the most spoken about issues in the recent times. We have heard about it, read about it, argued about it, refused it, ignored it and finally, accepted it. As stake holders of the earth, what has been our contribution and more importantly, what's our responsibility towards mitigating it?

THE GLOBAL CATASTROPHE

To put it simply, global warming is the increase in the temperature of the earth caused by the trapping of sun's heat in the earth's atmosphere by green house gases like CO2. Increase in CO2 levels in the atmosphere causes more heat to be trapped leading to a rise in the earth's surface temperature. This rise in temperature has multiple undesirable effects on the planet and its inhabitants. Studies and measurements of CO2 levels in the atmosphere indicate that as the CO2 levels rise, the temperature of the earth goes up.

It is estimated that the speed and extent of environmental degradation to come in the next 10 years will be far higher compared to what has happened over the last 50 years.

CHANGE TOWARDS CATAclySM

Global warming cannot be tied down to any singular activity. Increased emissions into air and water, indiscriminate deforestation and exploitation of natural energy resources for purposes of oil and gas have turned the tables against our own progress and well-being. Studies point out that, climate change in the last 150 years has been different from the climate change that happened about 1000 years ago. In case of the latter, the rise in the earth's surface temperature has been caused by the likes of volcanic activity. However, in the case of the former, it has purely been due to human activity. Also, the impact of natural phenomena is no comparison to the current situation we have created.

RED ALERT: THE WARNING SIGNS

Global warming has as many skeptics as there are believers. Let's take a look at observations from around the world:

- The Himalayan glaciers which serve over 40% of world's population through seven of Asia's important rivers are shrinking at a rate never recorded earlier. So are the Arctic sea ice and the ice sheets of Greenland.
- Climate change/warming in the arctic has been observed to have been happening twice as fast than anywhere else. The heating has led to the spiking of methane emissions as the ice thaws in the tundras.
- The increase has been monitored to be about 31% from 2003-07. Melting glaciers lead to increase in sea levels which will submerge small islands & coastal areas.
- Rise in temperature also leads to increased precipitation leading to flooding like the one witnessed in Mumbai in July, 2005 (37 inches of rain in 24 hours).
- Global warming also triggers increased storm activity in the oceans, extensive drought, hunger and starvation deaths and an increase of vector-borne diseases.

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SOLUTION TO SUSTENANCE

Truth is that we have been, are and continue to be in a position to change the climate of the earth. What we need to understand is that we, every single one of us, are an active contributor to the rising levels of CO2 in the atmosphere on an everyday basis. Here's how you can do your bit for the environment:

- Make sure to use resources sensibly – cut down on extravagance (the lights, computer and air-conditioner need not stay turned on if you are leaving the room for the next 30 minutes!).
- Reducing and reverse the damage we are creating around us: to plant a tree wherever we can.
- Refuse, reduce and reuse plastics.
- Don't pollute rivers or support deforestation and hunting of wild animals.
- Be eco-friendly in your purchases and keep your homes and surroundings litter-free. Encourage others to follow your example towards our environment.

Let's not forget for a moment that the earth is the only planet that can sustain life. And it is trying to communicate with us. It's time to sit up, listen and take note. It's time to act. All that remains is to make that choice.

INDUSTRY VOTE



Mr. Japa Ghosh
Head of Marketing
Mahindra Home stays

Global warming is something which will affect across all levels. As a whole, there has been an increased level of awareness for the long term benefit of the industry itself. The preservation of local environment has to be taken care of to ensure long term sustenance. All stake holders including corporations and transport providers are being responsible towards areas which they earn their livelihood from.

In the next 25-50 years, if temperatures continue to rise, the increase in the sea level means that we would lose the beaches. Such drastic repercussions would definitely affect the tourism industry as beaches are the most revenue generating tourism spots. If we don't take steps to reduce global warming, the beaches will get washed away and this can have very a negative impact.

Tourists across the World should choose eco-friendly options while they travel. It's time that we, as consumers, reward corporations which are taking the responsibility towards the environment. Be a responsible tourist – buy locally produced handicrafts as gifts, stay in local hotels or home stays as your money directly benefits the local economy and if you are a frequent flier, participate in the carbon offset program offered by the airlines.



Mr. Srinith De Silva
General Manager,
Hotel Heritage, Madurai

Our 17 acre property is dotted with trees like banyan and tamarind to keep the greenery preserved. The garbage disposal system includes a sorting area where trash is differentiated and recycled. We strongly advocate water conservation and follow rainwater harvesting stringently. Moreover, the hotel has energy saving features which ensure that the power is knocked off in the rooms once the occupant leaves. It's high time we thought about sustainable growth for each other and start being more responsible towards the environment.



I really believe that trees are a source of life. If I find some space down the road, I would make it a point to plant a sapling. Moreover, I really support ventures which ban smoking in public areas. Conserving water, electricity and going natural are small ways to be eco-friendly. Stop using plastic bags – they are not biodegradable. Go in for chic cotton bags, especially while grocery shopping. According to me, each of us can play a very small part which will make a lot of difference.

Upasana Asrani, Studio SAKS