

Climate Change And Children's Right To Live

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Climate change is the biggest crisis the world is facing today, and children are amongst the most vulnerable ones. Every year, over 5 lakh children die due to environmental changes to which they have zero contribution, but they are to bear the brunt. Children are the future of tomorrow, and they are the ones who will take the human race forward. Climate change is posing a direct threat to their survival, which means that soon the planet earth will be without humans. Unfortunately, the human, the most beautiful creation of nature, has turned out to be the worst creature on this planet. Instead of being the steward of the blue planet, we exploited mother nature to such an extent that now it is turning nasty on us. We are already witnessing extreme climatic events like raging wildfires, disastrous floods, brutal heatwaves and prolonged drought in different parts of the world, resulting in biodiversity loss, the eruption of diseases, crop failure and infestation by insects and pests, etc., which will severely affect the health and well-being of our children. Studies have revealed that children below five years of age bear approximately 90 per cent of climate change-attributed diseases. Not only this, nearly half of the death in children under 5 are attributed to undernourishment, and by 2050, 25 million more children will be malnourished due to climate change.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 is one such commitment of mankind to safeguarding the entire humanity and the dependent biodiversity from the extreme impact of climate change. We are committed to keeping the global temperature well below 2 degrees C and taking action to maintain it to 1.5 degrees C by the end of the century, as per the agreement. Nevertheless, today the earth's temperature has already risen by 1.2 degrees C

as compared to the pre-industrial level (1850 to 1900); at the current rate of increasing global temperature, the earth's temperature will exceed 3.2 degrees C by the end of the century as indicated by several scientific studies, the prime reason being the continuous spewing of a large number of greenhouse gases, mainly CO₂ into the atmosphere. It is alarming that approximately 1.7 million children die annually due to environmental pollution. If we are to avert the severe impact of climate change, all nations must work towards reducing their CO₂ emission by 50 per cent by 2030 and achieve net zero emission by 2050. The developed nations have more responsibility as they significantly contribute to climate change but are doing little in its mitigation and are not committed, which is clear from the recent COP-26 held in Glasgow, the UK, in 2021. Because of their indifferent attitude, we are losing our battle against climate change and failing to keep up our promises of handing over a safe environment to our children, thus pushing them and their future towards uncertainties.

Consequently, numerous would-be parents in developed nations, especially in the UK, have decided not to have biological children as they do not want to bring their would-be children into the dying world; some fear that their would-be children will have to struggle through a climate apocalypse and face the end of the world due to climate change. This indicates that we have significantly failed ourselves as responsible parents. The recent COVID-19 disease is sufficient to prove the greatest failure of mankind in entire human history, and the present generations are sole to be blamed for this.

Children worldwide have lost hope in us and



are alarmed to witness the incapability of the present generation to deal with climate change. They have every right to be alarmed because we are taking away their fundamental right, 'the right to live in a clean environment'. They have every right to question us because they will have to live and grow up in an environment that has been made far more dangerous and uncertain because of the unsustainable action of the present generation. Nevertheless, the matter is being taken seriously by the youths, the future leaders and the change-makers; they are taking into streets to remind us about our promises and have started environmental movements like 'Fridays For Future', which has received global support. It indicates

that our present action on climate change is insufficient, and it is time to double our effort to mitigate the impact of climate change because we are in an emergency now. We have only eight years in hand to avoid the worst impact of climate change, and we are running out of time. If we are concerned about our children and genuinely want to protect them and safeguard their future, it is imperative to address climate change as priority and mitigate its impact.



Answers to the riddle

1. A promise
2. A towel
3. Darkness