

Climate Literacy Conclave for South Asia

April 15 & 16, 2021, 11:00 to 13:00 hrs IST (GMT + 5:30)

INTRODUCTION

Education is an essential element of the global response to climate change. It helps people understand and address the impact of global warming, increases “climate literacy” among young people, encourages changes in their attitudes and behaviour, and helps them adapt to climate change related trends.

To honour the anniversary of Earth Day and lay emphasis on the importance of climate education, Mobius Foundation, The Climate Reality Project India and Earth Day Network organized 2 days Climate Literacy Conclave for South Asia with policymakers and Youth Voices, held on April 15th and 16th 2021.

The event was attended and watched by 500+ participants nationally and internationally.

Day 1 (15th April 2021)

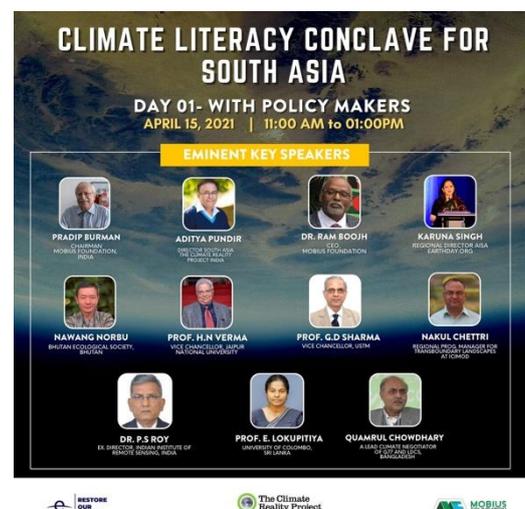
Climate Literacy Conclave for South Asia with Policy makers

This webinar can watched here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOb3sX4_VOE

Climate-related decisions are being carried out by almost every state and local government leaders and agencies, businesses and individual citizens. Policy makers must contend with the availability and quality of information, the efficacy of proposed solutions, the unanticipated consequences resulting from decisions, the challenge of implementing chosen actions, and must consider how to sustain the action over time and respond to new information.

We invited experts from South Asian countries to share their perception of Climate Education and Literacy.



Welcome and Introduction by Dr. Ram Boojh, CEO, Mobius Foundation



Dr. Ram Boojh mentioned that 51 year back Earth Day movement started and called as environmental revolution which was started by American Senator Gaylord Nelson. He started teaching environmentalism and some 20 million people from universities and communities from U. S. were galvanized to action. Lot of environmental activities and legislations followed this day and creation of environment protection agencies in U.S. started and was followed globally. He said this conclave will be follow up to the American president Joe Biden's climate summit scheduled on Earth day i.e. 22nd April 2021.

“The main issue is Climate education and awareness and very few countries have included this in climate goals the task of climate literacy. The climate education should become part of UNFCCC in next round of commitment and without that action is not possible.”

Opening Remarks by Mr. Aditya Pundir, Director South Asia, The Climate Reality Project India



Mr Pundir reminded about the recent glacier burst and disaster in Chamoli district in Uttarakhand on 7th Feb 2021. The challenge of climate change is intensifying everywhere and we can see the first phase of pandemic how it is mixing with climate change. By 2050, every country wants to be carbon neutral but by 2030 we have to meet certain targets. Currently the situation is worst and emissions are increasing by 1 percent every year and by 2030 if nothing changes it will be 58 billion tons, while desired limit to reach 1.5 degree is 25 billion tons.

“The solution will lie in three Key words – Innovation, Technology and Change in behaviour and has to work in unison. Universities, college, schools become extremely crucial for giving innovation and technology in the future and young people have to take charge. Changing of behaviour towards our resources has to be built in education and connect with the climate change. Climate Literacy teaches people how to reduce the vulnerability and how to make inclusive resilience for everyone present.”

Message by Mr. Pradip Burman, Chairman, Mobius Foundation, India



“Education is key to the global integrated framework of sustainable development goals. Education is at the heart of our efforts both to adapt to change and to transform the world within which we live. It is recognized as having one of the highest long-term returns on investment of all development goals. There is a need to rethink and broaden the notion of lifelong education. It should enable people to develop awareness of themselves and their environment.”

Climate change is the most pressing problem being faced by humanity today, therefore creating awareness about climate change particularly about the ways and means to mitigate and adapt to its consequences is so important I hope that this Climate Literacy Conclave will raise awareness about the climate change issues and help people understand and address the impact, of global warming. It will also encourage changes in people's attitudes and behaviour. I commend the organization of this webinar and hope it will go long way in raising the required knowledge and awareness for meaningful climate action."

Address on 'Role of Educational Institutions in Sustainable implementation of climate change Policies' by Prof. G. D. Sharma, Vice Chancellor, University of Science & Technology, Meghalaya, India



The role of education for sustainable development Goals and to combat the effect of climate change is very important. The policies in international forum like Article 12 of Paris agreement the outcome document of COP 21 stresses public awareness and participation can help to great extent in bringing climate education forward. Supreme court in India has made compulsory the undergraduate level course on the environment. ***Youth and educational institutions can make significant contribution and bringing low speed of climate change. Youth can take the government policies and schemes and bring awareness amongst people. Prof. Sharma has taken initiative in his university using electric vehicles, bicycle and solar fans. According to him Climate change study should be made compulsory in the education system and the knowledge should be shared with South Asian countries through exchange of students through seminars and workshops. Sharing of research and joint projects to also be supported by international agencies. Local cultures of South Asian countries which are helpful in reducing emissions to be supported and promoted. South Asia can become a torch bearer in bringing the universities knowledge together, youth together for sharing the knowledge and bringing exchanges.***

Special address on Earth Observation for Climate awareness by Dr. Partha Sarathi Roy, Ex. Director, Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, India



Today space touches every sphere of life and has become inevitable technology for people who are involved in sustainable development. He talked about how Earth observation system contributed in policy making and saved the earth planet. In 1985 when it was reported during the Antarctic survey that ozone layer is depleting and this particular observation was validated by Nimbus Satellite. Since then 46 nations signed the Montreal protocol and pledged to phase out substances known to cause ozone depletion. Today we see the repair of the ozone layer and satellite remote sensing provides the scientific reason for this

particular phenomenon.

The technology has become much advanced and people are using sensor's system placed in land, ocean and field surveys and combine this information with the satellite observation and able to model system much more efficiently. Hence space is the way to prepare a blue print of planet earth and google earth has made this technology available to younger generation. There is a plenty of scope to disseminate this knowledge in school children and strengthening the capacity to those people who are policy makers and involved in this particular effort saving the planet earth.

Special address on Climate Literacy: South Asian Perspective by Quamrul Chowdhury, A Lead Climate Negotiator of G77 and LDCs Bangladesh



He talked about how best we can resolve this climate emergency like covid 19 pandemic, can we overcome this as South Asia being the hot spot facing climate disasters. We have ancient universities in South Asia from centuries but we are missing quality empirical studies and research in this region. With the help of governmental efforts, we have to rescue the 1/4th of population here and need to escalate the education system.

For the implementation we have to educate our youth, raise the awareness to make them innovative and adaptive. Government to invest in the field of education, research work, mass awareness and for resource constraints we have to have regional cooperation and should cooperate each other. 1.5 billion people of this region needs courage, capacity building, education institutes to raise the literacy of climate change, technology innovation is the urgent need of the hour and will make this conclave a success.

Special address on Climate Literacy by Dr. Nawang Norbu, Executive Director, Bhutan Ecological Society, Bhutan



Climate change is directly linked to everyday life of the mountain communities and it touches economic possibilities and the structures which connect us to our past. The question is who is responsible the way we are as of today and solutions are also hindered due to different consumption capacities, its mostly the marginalised who tends to lose the most and the South Asian countries fall in this category. The challenge today to face climate issues is bringing everyone up to the speed and making people understand that it is urgent and we need to act now.

Therefore, climate Literacy must not only cover the youth, bureaucrats, researchers but everybody to bring on board as everyone is affected. The constitution of Bhutan says that people of the country should be mindful stewards and champions of environment and extended champion of climate. Bhutan has been ramping up climate literacy initiatives with leadership provided by world government supported by civil society, academia and multilateral agencies. They have integrated Climate change curriculum within high school and college of Bhutan and probably have youngsters who will come out and can deal with by providing solutions. We need to discuss about climate justice and who is responsible for this and responsibility of nations need to be talked about. Climate Literacy has to play a dominant role and we need to be mindful that how best you do it. On positive note he added that education is the only bank we can rely on to help, build and sustain a world which is climate resilient.

Special session on Climate change, Himalayan biodiversity and adaptation – the option for Nature Based Solutions by Dr.Nakul Chettri, Regional Programme Manager for Transboundary Landscapes at ICIMOD



Dr Chettri discussed about Himalayan biodiversity, drivers of change and Adaptation options due to climate change The important aspect is 250 million people living this particular region and 1.5 billion are dependent on this region which is 1/3rd of the global population. Himalayan region is supporting different services to one of the highest populated regions of gangetic plain and other basins. ***Climate change is not only the driver at global level, land use cover change, air pollution and invasive species is also a concern and bringing issues related to conservation and sustaining ecosystem services. Even 1.5 degrees change as agreed during Paris agreement is too hot for Himalayan region and warming at higher rate Therefore, Environmental security, Socio – cultural preservation and economic viability are adaptation options need to be taken.***

ICIMOD is an intergovernmental organization, on the basis of science and policy perspective they try to advocate in terms of policy embedding at the national level. Transboundary landscape is one of the programme interventions where they are addressing western Himalayas to central Himalayas in that region. They have done scientific assessment and reviewed all the aspects to seek regional cooperation and compiled the report Called HKH call to action for sustaining mountain environment and improve livelihood.

Special session on What climate change-related aspects are important in promoting climate literacy by Prof Erandathie Lokupitiya, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka



Climate change is the biggest issue of the environment and this century, impacts and vulnerability have been increasing locally and globally. The question is how can you approach in promoting climate literacy in communicating climate change. The last 7 years ranked as the top warmest years and 2016 being the warmest year since 1880. It has occurred due to the activities such as deforestation, burning fossil fuel since Industrial Revolution and

carbon dioxide rise has increased the global temperature rise. ***In the era of SDGs, promoting climate literacy should target minimizing climate change and its impacts, while changing human behaviour/ attitudes. Creating awareness on climate change, human responsibility, action needed for mitigation and adaptation are the key factors. And Climate action should be at local, regional and global level; policy interventions; R&D, technology transfer and innovations; and involvement of multi stakeholders.***

Special address on Climate Literacy by Prof. H. N. Verma, Vice Chancellor, Jaipur National University, India



He emphasised that climate change is the most complex issue that involves the other issues and we have been facing this since couple of decades.

We have to think about future generations because what we are leaving today will affect our upcoming generations. In 2013 the Delhi level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere surpassed 400 ppb for the first time which was alarming and climate change is a great threat to future. ***The major issue is how to reduce the emissions in the environment and stabilizing the level of heat trapping green house gases in the atmosphere. We all have to collectively make a joint effort and has to minimize the impacts.***



Concluding Remarks & Vote of Thanks by Ms. Karuna Singh, Regional Director Asia, EARTHDAY.ORG

The session was concluded with a vote of thanks from Ms. Karuna Singh, Regional Director Asia, EARTHDAY.ORG. ***She mentioned that her organization is pushing climate literacy at COP 26 to raise voices so that climate literacy becomes compulsory subject in most countries because it is time to restore our earth by redirecting human thought. This can only be built if there is***

educated decision made and it needs basis of education and you are inspired to take the leadership so that you take actions for environment.

Day 2 (16th April 2021) – Climate Literacy Conclave for South Asia with My Future My Voice Youth

We strongly believes in the power of youth to take the Climate Change movement forward. The second day had Youth from countries like India, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, Maldives and Bhutan focussed on the importance of Climate Literacy and influence the world that change starts from them.

Full Day 2 webinar on youth voices from South Asia can be watched here:



CLIMATE LITERACY CONCLAVE FOR SOUTH ASIA
DAY 02- WITH MY FUTURE MY VOICE YOUTH
 APRIL 16, 2021 | 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM

KEY SPEAKERS

ADITYA PUNDIR DIRECTOR SOUTH ASIA THE CLIMATE REALITY PROJECT INDIA	NEELA MAJUMDAR LEAD CLIMATE EDUCATION EARTHDAY.ORG INDIA	NISHU KAUL DIRECTOR, EARTH DAY SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA	AJAY MITTAL DIRECTOR CC, EARTH DAY SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST ASIA
DR. RAM BOOJH CEO, MOBIUS FOUNDATION	KARUNA SINGH REGIONAL DIRECTOR ASIA EARTHDAY.ORG	DR. HIFZA KHAN FOUNDER AND CHAIRPERSON, SAYA MURSEVA QAZIABAD, PAKISTAN	ZUHAIR A KOWSHIK REGIONAL FACILITATOR ASIA & PACIFIC, PPMPO, BANGLADESH
MADHISH PARIKH GLOBAL SHAPER WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM, INDIA	BINDU BHANDARI CLIMATE AMBASSADOR CLIMATE INTERACTIVE, NEPAL	UDARI MOHOTI FOUNDER, UMO DESIGNS, SRI LANKA	A. AIMA MUSTHafa ARTIST AND CO-FOUNDER, MACEE, MALDIVES

Logos at the bottom: RESTORE OUR EARTH, The Climate Reality Project INDIA, MOBIUS FOUNDATION

Welcome and Introduction by Mr. Aditya Pundir, South Asia Director, The Climate Reality Project, India



The climate challenge is on our doorstep and we have to come out of it as early as possible before we are crushed. The young people have to take charge and lead all of us in being innovative, technical and behavioural change and move forward with minimum footsteps. We had speakers who shared their views from youth perspective because after all the planet belongs to them and talk about intergeneration equity.

Opening Remarks by Ms. Neela Majumdar Lead Climate Education, EARTHDAY.ORG -India

In her opening remarks she mentioned that the Climate and environmental literacy is the core pillars for the earth day 2021 “restore our earth” theme and we can’t expect to solve the problem until we learn about it. Climate literate person would not only understand the essential principal of earth climate system but also know how to assess scientifically information credible for the climate and therefore communicate about this in a meaningful way, make informed and responsible decision that affects the climate.

Through global climate literacy we hope to inspire reverence for the planet that moves them to act for the environment. With respect to the natural world we can establish a shared commitment from our youth to act on behalf of the planet and build a sustainable environment.

Presenting My Future My Voice by Ms. Nishu Kaul Director, Earth Day, South and South East Asia

She introduced the campaign #MyFutureMyVoice and it is about the role that youth plays as responsible and environment friendly citizens. Climate educated and literate public is likely to be the better place to make sustainable consumerism decision and make educated choices that are good for our planet. One of the main intentions of Earth Day Network is to bring youth voices together and we believe that youth has very important role as architect of sustainability. With this in mind, the campaign was launched last year on earth day in several countries and youth working there are incredible example of young mind to take environmental stewardship.

Madish Parikh, Global Shaper Ahmedabad

However as a society we must ensure that climate literacy is not dependent on the distribution of income because people who are being affected by the first wave of climate change are the ones who are least contributor to climate change, therefore society and group of youth, we must use climate literacy a tool to address climate change adaptation and mitigation. There are organisation who are working towards it but for reaching a mass is still a far-fetched idea in developing countries.. Climate literacy should place environment at the centre as a focal point and humans at the periphery. Understanding of climate science should be no longer limited just to environmentalist, ngo's etc. It should be non-negotiable learning for every individual irrespective of the gender age income cultural colour and we are standing in a very unfortunate point in of our lives then despite of this very evident warning signs we have to convince an explain people to come together in fighting against climate change.

Zuhair A Kowshik, Regional Facilitator, Asia and Pacific, UNEP MGCY, Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, there is no subject on environmental education, but it is a part of elementary science in primary and secondary level. Bangladesh government has started including environment education in different subjects like science. **But environment education needs to be more action oriented. Students can be taught communicating climate change challenges using different ICT tools, culture, etc. and should be part of all degree programs in universities. We are training youth on green entrepreneurship.**

Udari Mohotti, Founder, Umo Designs, Sri Lanka

I strongly believe is that climate literacy is an interdisciplinary subject as it will require lifelong learning. Because it's a subject which is not only relevant just to environment, science or one stream, it affects every part of society, it affects everybody and therefore I

think everybody is responsible for climate change. ***In order to address climate literacy it is compulsory to have a systems thinking approach.*** It has been identified that 40% of carbon emissions is the responsibility of the built-in environment, and holistic design approach is needed in the field of design. Through my sustainable designs, I focus on younger people who will be the future so to give them inspiration as well as give them give them motivation and how we can incorporate sustainable practices, green design practices towards interior design. I believe that the green design concept can be utilised as a forward thinking approach.

Bindu Bhandari, Climate Ambassador of Climate Interactive, Nepal

The Climate system is highly complex, a coupled non-linear chaotic system as stated in the IPCC Assessment Report. ***But I found an effective way to inform and educate people on the topic by employing interactive climate tools.*** As a visionary architect, Buckminster Fuller said, "If you want to teach people a new way of thinking, don't bother trying to teach them. Instead, give them a tool, the use of which will lead to new ways of thinking". ***Education lays a universal foundation for informed decision-making. But climate education in many parts of the world, including South Asia, is still rudimentary. To strengthen climate education, having a few mandatory chapters in the curriculum won't suffice. Thus, I would like to ask the governments and world leaders to incorporate systems thinking in climate education.***

AIMA MUSTHAFI, ARTIST AND CO-FOUNDER, MALDIVES AUTHENTIC CRAFTS COOPERATIVE SOCIETY, MALDIVES

' If we don't take a united and collected effort to heal the planet, future generation will be living from one disaster to another, and that's unacceptable.... ***Investing in making climate education accessible to all is one of the most important tools to equip future generation with the knowledge and tools to build resilience towards the impact of climate change, and to promote and work towards behavioural changes for sustainable future.*** Climate education can also ignite discussions and interest on the topic so that it remains an important issue in the public discourse..... ***currently climate change is included in the national curriculum in Maldives. As these steps are taken locally I believe that there is more to be done globally*** in order to address the issue to start governments around the world divest from fossil fuels protect and conserve and work with the goal to protect the planet.

Nawid SOOfizada, Global shaper at kabul hub

We are experiencing natural disasters such as droughts, floods and landslide in different provinces of our country. Education, particularly climate education is essential in responding to climate change impacts it helps people understand and address impact of global warming and increases the climate literacy among young people, also encourages to change your behaviour and attitude towards climate change and helped them to adapt to climate change related impacts.... ***In Afghanistan, the National Environmental Protection Agency and agencies like UNEP and UNDP has a specific plans and policies for raising public awareness***

and capacity building in climate change issues... but the numbers is very few and they are not self-sufficient for this kind of disasters.. overall we need more entities and to work in the field of climate change and to enhance climate literacy in our country..”

Thinley Choden, Social Entrepreneur, Climate Reality Leader, and Founding Curator of Global Shapers Thimphu Hub

To me Climate crisis is essentially a crisis of values, injustice and lack of proper, inconsistent action on many levels. I strongly believe climate education and literacy plays an immense and critical role in a sustainable future and healthy planet. A recent study by Brookings Institute says that if only 16% of high school students in high and middle income countries were to receive climate change education, we could see a nearly 19 gigaton reduction of carbon dioxide by 2050. By establishing a personal connection to climate solutions as well as personal agency and empowerment, it can have consequential impact on students daily behaviour, decision making that reduces their lifetime carbon footprint.

The Bhutanese bureaucracy, CSO and the education system does an excellent job in environment conservation and education. My message for the world leaders and decision makers is this enough is said and heard, we need you to walk the talk, we do not want patronizing, we want materialising of your words and commitments into action, big and small because we have to save humanity the planet will survive regardless.”

Concluding Remarks by Dr. Ram Boojh, CEO Mobius Foundation



Youth sessions and movements led by them provided very good ideas and examples on climate literacy or environment education as a whole like integration into curriculum. Many countries are struggling how to bring forth whether they should be separate subject approach or it should be in fusion approach or integration approach. He mentioned the example of the launch of world environment school where we will give it a

separate subject treatment because integration or infusion is alright but there has to be stress or emphasis because environment or climate is faced in everyday life and it is a lifelong process. So at environment school we are trying to inculcate environmental and climate literacy right from the very beginning at the early childhood to of course at the later lifelong learning. ***I invite all of you to continue to collaborate and also create a model in the formal education system particularly. We should create models under national education policy of India and other countries as the policies have very nice thinking but how to translate policies into action and in particularly classroom situation is the real challenge.***

Highlights from the messages received from experts:

We asked more experts, students and educators to share their perspectives on climate education.

Students of Maa Anandmaye Memorial School, Uttarakhand India

“We have experienced the impact of climate change personally.. for example recently in February 2021 part of Nandadevi glacier broke leading to flood in my state, this caused loss of property and life.. main cause of this was global warming, it is our home and family who is in danger.... We must take action to protect... Our school actively educates us on the various sustainable goals.. We frequently organise UN champ camps from schools for the neighbouring areas as our moral duty.. “

Sandal Kumar, Principal, TIMH School, Chennai India

“Our institution right from the inception we have been giving importance to green practices... Imbibing the qualities at the self-level to understand the need and importance of cultural exchange to combat the climate crisis or climate change.... participate voluntarily in all activities that support the initiatives with the state on less carbon emission, energy conservation, recycling of waste, rainwater harvesting, solid waste management, no plastics and many such practices very simple example....”

Nita Ganguly, Educator and Author

“Now the focus of discussion has moved from climate change to climate crisis that's worrying.. Time is the essence of here and there is no place for mundane hypocritical actions specially for today's young mind who are so well informed. It's pointless to ask students to participate in the process like poster making competition... Education should rise above bookish knowledge that goes beyond earning degrees and livelihood. **It should connect people's life to the natural world, the laws that governs it, help young mind to understand and address the consequences of climate change and organised to tackle and develop creative, flexible, adaptable, well informed and innovative sustainable well-being with moral value, positive thinking, attitude of helping and giving back to nature.... Make it simple, reasonable, apply practical solutions and it should relate to the masses who in turn can empower others to be more aware of what is at stake and what correct measures need to be adopted for a sustainable lifestyle. Climate education should inculcate self-discipline, self-directed, a self-governed and a self-motivated tool that brings equal responsible behavioural changes in both attitude and actions which eventually becomes a way of life and for this to happen, power needs to be transparent, learn from the mistakes, be open to change, think out of the box and practice before preaching.. “**

Madhu Bhatnagar, Consultant Heading Environment Consciousness Program at The Shri Ram Schools and EDUCARE schools

It is imperative for Climate Education to be incorporated in school curriculum of urban and rural schools, private and government all over the world, keeping in focus the global and local issues. This will help young people understand the impact of global warming and increase Climate Literacy. Understanding a situation can encourage people to change their attitude and behavior, make informed choices and adapt to this global emergency. People will need to change their attitudes, and believe in the maximum...“Less is more”. Climate Education should be made mandatory in all schools and colleges.

Tenzin Jamyang, Educator and Climate Reality Leader, HP

World leaders and decision makers should create avenues for teachers and youth in schools and universities by providing grants and other supporting tools for projects and research works. These could be implemented through public-private partnerships. Along with it a concrete environmental educational curriculum in schools and universities should be developed. They should also promote the concept of Green School Campus and University to instill the concept of interdependency in our youth. We can only get our acts together in this fight when we understand and appreciate interdependency.