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ENVIRONMENT

Give that you may live

May 15, 2023, 4:29 PM IST / Dr Pramod Chaudhari in Voices, Environment, TOI

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Dr Pramod Chaudhari
 Dr Pramod Chaudhari,
 Founder & Chairman of
 Praj Industries.

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture...

- *Kahlil Gibran*

If only humankind were to learn from the earth which it robs remorselessly, that to give in fact is to live... The earth continues to give, never judging the receiver, while the receiver continues to grab greedily, not knowing that it will one day destroy them. On the occasion of Earth Day on 22nd April, let us ponder the need to go back to a lifestyle that is harmonious and nature-friendly.

Let us start with some interesting and equally disturbing facts.

Every year about 500 billion plastic bags are used the world over, and each bag is

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BLOGS BY DR CHAUDHARI

- 1 Only one E

TOP VOICES

- Cheta**
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used for an average duration of barely 15 minutes!

Every individual wastes about 2.5 litres of water everyday while bathing, washing and following personal hygiene.

If we keep the car engine running at traffic signals, every 30 minutes of idle running consumes 1 litre of fuel.

These stark observations of the present day lifestyle only expose how short-sighted we, as a civilization have become. On this backdrop we must appreciate that our nation has embarked upon 'Mission LiFE', a drive to turn around the hazardous impact of global climate change. The above facts are mentioned in the information booklet published by the Niti Aayog, to underline the need for such an initiative. These figures would definitely go on to change the scepticism one might foster as to how far individual efforts towards conserving nature might go! Look at a few more statistics.

At the present rate of consumption, the production of plastic bags would treble by the year 2050 and this would produce carbon dioxide equivalent to that emitted by 615 coal consuming thermal power plants.

If we continue wasting water as indicated by present figures, by the year 2030, the world would be left with water enough to fulfil only 60% of the total requirement.

1 A bad day for Supreme Court & Delhi up to the party the governors &

2 Kohinoor at some amount

3 Transforming technology healthcare

We are celebrating the World Earth Day on 22nd April. This day is celebrated to spread awareness about the importance of conserving natural resources so that they might help our future generations live well.

Unfortunately, the common citizens tend to think that nature conservation is a complex challenge and is the sole responsibility of the government. This cannot be farther from the truth and it becomes a limiting factor in the efforts made towards the cause. Mission LiFE aims at involving the common citizens in this movement so as to make the challenge easier to address.

The theme of the World Earth Day this year is – Invest in our Earth. It is an appeal of sorts made to every citizen. After all, each one of us knows and experiences the impacts of climate change in everyday life and as such this appeal should be enough to motivate anybody to do their bit. On the other hand, the government would continue to play a pivotal role in enabling processes relevant to the cause. An important aspect of this is going for an all round, 3600 economic model instead of a uni-directional one.

In nature, nothing is waste. Everything produced in nature, dies, decomposes or disintegrates into the earth and becomes the life giving energy to other products of nature. Waste, in the real sense is that which has no use after its functional life,

and ironically only human made substances carry that quality, or limitation as we might call it. If we, as the human race continue consumption of resources at the current rate, by 2030, our requirement for food would have increased by 30%, that for water by 40% and that for energy by 50% as stated in the report published by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The need of the hour is to curtail consumption and build a circular economy that not only uses natural resources but takes care to conserve, reuse and replenish them too.

UNDP recommends the three pronged approach of Reuse, Recycle and Restrain Consumption towards this. This approach is easily actionable even at individual level. For instance, used cooking oil may be used to make soaps and candles. Used metal, paper and glass can be processed and recycled into other useful products. Judicious consumption of food and medicines can help prevent wastage during manufacture as well as because of excess amounts that cannot be consumed. All this can ultimately save precious natural resources and also prevent the harm caused by manufacturing processes and auxiliary functions that follow, such as transportation, storage and packaging.

The only real remedy to this situation is to take hard action to mitigate 'waste' and to reuse, recycle and regenerate products. A

circular economy model induces society and governance to examine whether or not a seemingly eco-friendly solution is actually so, in its entirety. For example, merely producing recyclable paper would not free a paper manufacturing unit of its responsibility as an eco-friendly business, unless the printing ink used on the paper is compliant to recycling. If we turn to electric vehicles with the idea that we are now not contributing to pollution, we would only be half right because the electricity that recharges the battery is most likely still produced from fossil fuels!

The responsibility comes from two quarters. One is to reconstruct the economy that encourages mindful utilisation as against unrestrained consumption. This would correct the demand side of the economy. On the other hand, the necessary and unavoidable part of consumption needs to be addressed by identifying truly eco-friendly means of production and supply.

Bio-economy is the obvious platform on which a circular economy may stand. Bio-economy focuses on the production stage while the circular economy holds the later stages in the supply chain. While the former advocates sustainability of resources, the latter upholds the principle of mindful utilisation. Bio-economy has the capability of balancing the social, economic and environmental aspects of development and can be an effective tool to accomplish the objectives of a circular

economy. In a country like India, the concept of bio-economy even holds the power to orient the entire economy around agriculture.

The technology to produce industrial goods, chemicals and myriad products of day to day consumption from organic raw material has been explored, and is at a fairly advanced stage of development in India. Agricultural waste and by-products have been tested and proven to be useful in manufacturing certain products. Needless to say, India's march towards bio-economy is in congruence with the objectives of 'Mission LiFE'.

The Indian government has already been contemplating to minimize the use of petroleum products in various sectors of the economy. A bio-technology policy to bring environmental remedy, economic growth and employment generation together is also being formulated. After the triumphant performance in the global pharma sector, India is geared up to demonstrate some exemplary work in the field of bio-technology based manufacturing. The food industry, cattle feed and veterinary products, as well as dyes and chemicals sector would see a prominent use of bio-technology in the coming years.

India aims to achieve the target of Net-Zero by the end of 2070. A specially designed 5-point program focuses on the use of alternative energy sources. Our

advances in bio-technology shall help us cover further ground towards this. The 75th year of independent India shall see momentous decisions in the area of bio-economy and bio-technology.

Undoubtedly, it would be every patriotic Indian's dream that the centennial year of independence would see India as a truly developed nation.

However, only those dreams that are seen by a waking eye come true. It is time India led the way for the world in sustainable development.

It is time we not just took the bounties from Mother Earth, but also inculcated her ability to give and to nurture.

The lines from renowned poet Kahlil Gibran were never more true, for a civilization on the brink of its own destruction.

You often say, "I would give, but only to the deserving."

The trees in your orchard say not so, nor the flocks in your pasture...

They give that they may live, for to withhold is to perish.

- *Kahlil Gibran*

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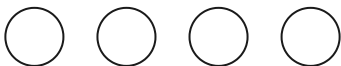


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