



Seminar Report

World Environment Day 2023

**BEAT
PLASTIC
POLLUTION**



WORLD
ENVIRONMENT
DAY

UN
environment
programme



Republic of
Côte d'Ivoire

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra
(A Unit of Indian Youth Trust)

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About the campaign

"World Environment Day, observed annually on June 5th, holds tremendous significance as it serves as a global platform for promoting environmental awareness and fostering action to safeguard our planet. This meaningful occasion was first established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 and has since witnessed the participation of 150 nations worldwide, engaging in diverse activities to commemorate this day and underline the importance of environmental preservation.

Vishwa Yuvak Kendra (VYK) has been working towards raising awareness about environmental issues and protecting the planet through various joint awareness programmes at both institutional and community levels with the active support of corporations, academia, and NGOs. Their tireless efforts aim to educate individuals and communities about pressing environmental issues while emphasizing the urgent need for collective action to protect the environment.

In line with their commitment to the global conservation and protection of the environment, VYK took the initiative to organize a seminar on World Environment Day 2023. The seminar focused on the theme of 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution,' serving as a reminder to people that their actions regarding plastic pollution hold immense significance. To facilitate this impactful event, VYK chose to host the seminar at their esteemed campus located in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

The seminar proved to be highly successful, drawing active participation from approximately 150 individuals representing civil society organizations and educational institutions. Through thought-provoking discussions and informative sessions, the seminar effectively conveyed the urgent need to engage various stakeholders in collective efforts to address and mitigate environmental issues. By emphasizing the importance of collaboration and encouraging a sense of responsibility, the event successfully highlighted the significance of everyone's contribution to tackling environmental challenges.

World Environment Day serves as a powerful reminder of our shared responsibility to protect and preserve our planet. The efforts of organizations like VYK, through events like the seminar on plastic pollution, play a vital role in raising awareness, fostering cooperation, and inspiring action among individuals and communities. As we collectively strive towards a sustainable future, the significance of engaging diverse stakeholders and implementing effective solutions becomes increasingly evident.



Participants attending the event

Proceedings

The event commenced with the inaugural session. Chief Guest, Prof. Moni Madaswamy, Prof. Emeritus and Chairman, CAIRS; Guest of Honour, Mr. Arbind Mukerji, Executive Director, Connecting Dreams Foundation; keynote speaker, Dr. Livleen K Kahlon, Associate Director, Environment Education and Awareness, TERI; and the VYK team lit the lamp to officially inaugurate the event. Mr. Ranvir Singh, Officer, Sustainability & Development, VYK, welcomed all the dignitaries and gave a brief background on the significance of the day and VYK's efforts in educating and encouraging people to take action to protect the planet and create a sustainable tomorrow by organising various seminars and awareness programmes.



Lighting of the lamp in the inaugural session of the event



Dr. Livleen K. Kahlon

Keynote Speaker

Dr. Livleen K. Kahlon, Associate Director, Environment Education and Awareness, TERI, the keynote speaker, set the context of the event by acknowledging the impending evil of the sixth mass extinction as indicated by the present warning signs, signs of changing climate and its impact on life on earth. She stressed on the importance of empowering youth with opportunities of learning, literacy and life skills as they would be instrumental in deciding the future of our world. She highlighted the need to change from an egocentric approach to an eco-centric approach to leadership to safeguard our planet, and stressed on the significance of forging pathways to cooperation amongst various stakeholders to address climate change. She wound up by speaking about TERI's initiative of education for sustainable development like Green Olympiad which engaged students across the country through various programmes on sustainable development.



Mr. Arbind Mukerji

Guest of Honour

The Guest of Honour, Mr. Arbind Mukerji, Executive Director, Connecting Dreams Foundation, spoke on the plastic pollution issue as a current global problem, from its causes to solutions to combat the menace. He mentioned NABARD's various initiatives towards sustainability that were implemented under his leadership as NABARD's former DGM. He concluded his speech by iterating that everyone was concerned with maintaining a healthy environment and ecological balances and the support of various stakeholders like the general public, the media, environmental organisations, businesses, and the government was essential in order to raise public awareness of environmental issues.



Prof. Moni Madaswamy

Chief Guest

Chief Guest, Prof. Moni Madaswamy, Prof. Emeritus and Chairman, CAIRS, spoke about the significant steps for climate action that he had taken in his former capacity as National Informatics Centre's (NIC) Director General by integrating technology in agri-entrepreneurship, smart irrigation systems, and more. He stressed the need to invest in intent to bring about environmental sustainability and the significance of ideating to come up with innovative and plausible solutions to address the changing climate scenario. He talked about indigenous people being intelligent and having made agriculture sustainable through their agricultural practises which needed to be replicated across the agriculture sector. He expressed his wish to see every NGO adopt a village where the majority of India's population resided. This would be instrumental in curbing the issue of migration and achieve the environmental sustainability that we wanted to showcase to the world, Prof. Madaswamy said.

The event was also the launching pad of a nationwide campaign on 'World Environment Day 2023' from June 5 to July 5, 2023, where VYK, in order to observe World Environment Day and also to join hands in the global effort to take climate action, was organising various developmental activities at the grassroot level in collaboration with 29 NGO partners in 14 states. The nationwide campaign would include seminars, workshops, conferences, rallies, and massive tree plantation drives with the active involvement of corporations, non-government organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), educational institutions, PRIs, etc.



Event launch of a nationwide campaign on 'World Environment Day 2023'



Ms. Shweta Dalmia

Founder & CEO,
Climapreneur,
addressing participants
in the first technical
session of the event

The technical session was facilitated by Ms. Shweta Dalmia, Founder & CEO, Climapreneur, and Mr. Suraj Pandey, Assistant Vice President, Corporate Office, NABARD Consultancy Services who addressed the participants on various aspects of the theme.

Ms. Shweta provided the participants with an understanding of climate change by addressing the various factors affecting the environment and their plausible solutions. She talked about thoughtful thinking while coming up with climate change solutions and developing them into something useful for people that could be scaled up. She also suggested reflecting on those solutions from an empathy point of view, breaking down problems to see which ecosystem has to work on them, redefining problems to come up with alternate solutions if the existing ones failed, and demanding policy change by asking the right questions. She stressed that the climate economy was an opportunity for all and soon going to be a big and growing space like the internet economy. She also shared stories of individuals who understood their responsibilities towards environmental conservation and came up with creative solutions that were environment friendly.



Mr. Suraj Pandey

Assistant Vice President,
Corporate Office,
NABARD Consultancy
Services, addressing
participants in
the second technical
session of the event

Mr. Suraj briefed the participants on the role of various stakeholders in saving the environment through the collective efforts of everyone. He specified the 17th SDG on revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development as climate change, being a global phenomenon, required multi-stakeholdership with a strong commitment to global partnership and cooperation to ensure the availability of financial and human resources to address climate change. He said that climate change could only be tackled with profound behaviour change, which would help people make conscious choices. Efficient resource management and local solutions like tree plantation drives, beach clean-ups, etc. had the capability to capture the world's attention, he said. The technical session concluded with a question-and-answer round where the participants' doubts were cleared and they got further clarity.



Mr. Manjunath K, Programme Officer, VYK, gave the closing remarks and thanked the distinguished dignitaries for their time and sharing valuable insights and all the participants for their active participation and showing great enthusiasm in learning about getting involved in the climate change battle and leading actions to create a better tomorrow.



Event group picture after valedictory session

Conclusion

World Environment Day serves as a global reminder that it is our collective responsibility to protect the environment and ensure a sustainable future.

Plastic today has become an indispensable part of our daily lives, especially due to its wide accessibility, durability, and low cost. However, while considering the economic aspects of plastic usage, we should not ignore the stress it places on the environment, and the potential threat it poses to our sustainability. While a plastic ban is a step forward, we need to view the problem holistically to address the larger issue. There is a need to come up with more sustainable plastic use alternatives; gradual behaviour modification in our daily lives and encouraging others to do the same; while at the same time expanding stakeholder collaboration can help reduce pollution, preserve our natural resources and protect our environment.

The importance of adopting sustainable practices in our daily lives, such as reducing waste, conserving energy, recycling and promoting eco-friendly alternatives can never be overstated. Innovative solutions and technologies can contribute to a greener and more sustainable world but we should be wise in adopting technologies that have a sustainable footprint.

It is evident that the choices we make today will shape the future of our planet for generations to come. The journey towards a sustainable future requires a collective effort – it is not merely the government's responsibility – it requires concerted efforts of individuals, CSOs, corporates, and the wholehearted involvement of the community, particularly the youth who are the torchbearers of tomorrow.

We must recognise that time is running out and urgent action is needed to combat environmental challenges such as plastic pollution, global warming, and habitat destruction. Let us all pledge to work towards a healthier and greener planet and join hands to protect the environment.