

DID YOU KNOW

National Missions to combat Climate Change

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‘Climate’ is the average weather condition at a place over the years, whereas, ‘climate change’ is recognised by a drastic shift in those conditions. Climate change has caused a rise in the Earth’s temperature, leading to global warming and melting of glaciers, apart from causing many other related challenges — both at the local and global levels.

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) drafted an international environment treaty — to which India, too, is a signatory — to combat dangerous human interferences with the climate system. India has shown a constructive and forward looking strategy in this area.

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

The National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC), launched on 30 June 2008, is one such initiative taken by the Government of India to

look into the adverse effects of climate change. The action plan focuses on promoting an understanding of climate change, adaptation and mitigation, energy efficiency and natural resource conservation.

Sub-missions under the National Action Plan

There are eight Missions, which are the core of the NAPCC. They are discussed as follows.

National Solar Mission

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission (JNNSM), popularly known as the National Solar Mission, is an initiative of the Government of India launched in the year 2010. The Mission aims to place India on the world map as a global leader in solar energy production by harnessing the abundant solar energy naturally available in the country. The government has developed various policies to generate mass awareness about manufacturing solar utility

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products — both commercial and domestic. The Mission aims to make the public aware that solar energy is an alternative to fuels like charcoal, kerosene, etc. It is also used to generate electricity. These days, it is commonly observed that many buildings have solar panels installed on the rooftops.

National Mission on Enhanced Energy Efficiency

Launched by the Government of India under the NAPCC, the Mission aims to promote the market of energy efficiency by fostering innovative policies and effective market instruments. The enhanced energy efficiency measures are aimed at facilitating energy intensive industries to reduce their energy footprint.

Green India Mission

The Mission, launched in February 2014, aims at conserving, restoring and increasing India's forest cover to combat the ill effects of the persisting climate change. With this initiative, the Government of India aims to increase forest cover on 5 million hectares and improve forest cover on additional 5 hectares. Therefore, the Mission not only aims to increase the forest area but also enhance the quality of the existing ones. Moreover, it takes cognizance of biodiversity and water resources, and tries to provide increased options to households, whose livelihoods, primarily, thrive on forests.

The Mission envisages a holistic view of greening that extends beyond planting of trees, such as preservation

of mangroves, wetlands and critical habitats. It also aims to involve organisations at the grass-roots level and local communities in planning, decision making and implementation of its programmes.

National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem

The Himalayas assume great significance to the people of India — socially, culturally, spiritually and economically. About 51 million people practise agriculture in the Himalayan lands. The Himalayas are a major source of freshwater for perennial rivers like the Indus, Ganga and Brahmaputra. But the Himalayan ecosystem has become increasingly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem was launched in June 2010 to address these issues holistically. The primary objective of the Mission is to develop a sustainable national capacity to continuously assess the health status of the Himalayan ecosystem, including glaciers, and create a data base of the same.

National Mission on Sustainable Habitat

The Mission, launched by the Government of India in June 2010, aims to integrate energy efficiency as a component of urban planning and renewal. Capacity building is an important component of this Mission. The prominent areas it focuses on are as follows.

- To work on the energy conservation building code in order to optimise the energy demands of new and large commercial buildings
- To recycle material and urban waste management, which includes research and development programmes for producing power out of waste
- To redesign urban planning by provision of pedestrian pathways; and bringing in a modal shift to public transport to establish fuel efficiency standards and reduce the amount of fuel consumed per passenger

National Water Mission

Launched in 2009, the Mission aims at achieving integrated water resource management to conserve water, minimise wastage and ensure more equitable distribution of the resource (both across and within States). One of the prominent features of the Mission is to promote traditional water conservation systems along with expeditious multipurpose water projects.

National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture

It is imperative to progressively adapt agriculture to suit the projected climate change. The Mission recommends that the Indian agricultural research systems must be oriented to monitor and evaluate climate change and suggest changes in agricultural practices

accordingly. It, thus, aims to devise strategies to help Indian agriculture become more resilient to climate change and improve productivity in rain-fed areas by observing dry agricultural land management. The Mission also identifies and develops new varieties of crops, using traditional and modern agricultural techniques.

National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change

The consequences of climate change on social systems would vary in different regions due to several factors. Therefore, it is pertinent to adapt strategies and technology as per geographical and social contexts. Further, there are many uncertainties in disaggregating the effects of global warming in different climatic regions. In order to identify the challenges posed therein, the government launched the National Strategic Knowledge Mission for Climate Change. The Mission focuses on identifying knowledge gaps and creating feedback for the Indian National Network for Climate Change Assessment, a stock taking exercise conducted every two years as part of the national obligations under the UNFCCC.

CONCLUSION

These Missions, thus, aim at creating public awareness on the threats posed by climate change. They also point out the steps being taken by various government agencies at the grass-roots level to combat the ill effects of climate change. These may be introduced in

the teaching-learning process at the primary stage itself so that students are able to relate to the climate change problems, plaguing their surroundings and the country at large. Teachers may pick up various examples from local surroundings, making it relatable for the students, which may further inspire them to protect and conserve the existing resources and ecosystem, and combat the adverse effects of climate change in the long run.

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