

Political Leadership and Accountability Initiatives on Climate Change

Some Important Questions to Ask Yourself-

- Have you seen impact of climate change in your constituency?
- Have you done anything about it?
- Has it benefited anyone in your constituency?
- Do you think India should have an adaptation fund?
- Do you think the state disaster management authority in your state is making a difference on disaster reduction and adaptation in your constituency? [if not disaster-prone, the answer can be not relevant but all constituencies face either floods, droughts, landslides, flash floods or cyclones).

Some impact statements:

» *Fewer and more expensive apples in the market*

In Himachal Pradesh, rising temperatures are causing apple yields to fall as farmers are shifting to other crops. Apple orchards are shifting to cooler villages in higher altitudes, new infrastructure has to be developed and apples have to travel longer distances to urban markets.

» *If you are living on the Arabian sea coast and you love to eat sardines*

Surface sea temperatures are rising and making the Arabian Seas inhospitable for sardines, the small, oily highly nutritious fish. This may soon become true for other seas as well. Get ready to change your eating habits: sea fishes may soon become a rarity.

» *Fresh drinking water will become a precious liquid*

As temperatures in high altitudes rise; the quantity of ice formation on the mountains in winters is decreasing threatening our main fresh water supply source. India's satellite imagery and other space pictures show the thinning of Himalayan glaciers over the last decade. Higher temperatures also means ice is melting faster than ever before in larger quantities. As more ice melts, it causes floods.

» *There will be fewer and more expensive ground nuts to munch in winters*

Traditional hubs that produce groundnuts are struggling to cope with climate change. For instance in dry Anantpur, Andhra Pradesh, five days of heavy rains destroyed three-fourths of the groundnut pods just as they were ready to mature. Distribution of rain, more than the quantity of total rain, is critical from crops, most of which are grown by small and marginal farmers in rain fed areas.

» *Will we have to abandon eating rotis? Wheat yields are dwindling due to climate change*

Wheat crop requires low temperatures for a considerable period of time to help its grain formation. Rising temperatures and heat waves are not giving the crop that amount of time so the yields are falling. NAPCC says 1 deg C rise will reduce wheat production by about 4-5 million tonnes.

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What Parliamentarians can do...

Elected representatives have a critical role in ensuring that climate change issues are placed high up on the political agenda. Below is a list of different actions that YOU can take to help combat climate change:

Within Parliament:

- Raise questions, seek information on and bring attention to issues regarding climate change through utilisation of Question Hour, Calling Attention, Urgent Motions, amongst other such procedures.
- Review government budgets and spending on climate change issues, especially adaptation and mitigation measures as state and national levels, and advocate for greater budget allocation to combat the impact of climate change at these levels.
- Take the initiative to join existing parliamentary forums that aim to mainstream climate change issues across Ministries and social development sectors.

As a Representative of Your Constituency:

- Ensure effective, local level dissemination of information on climate change impacts to the people that will be effective. Further make them aware of available adaptation and mitigation options. Work alongside panchayats and Ministers of Legislative Assemblies to ensure extensive dissemination of this information.
- Advocate locally for renewable energy options as a more sustainable and 'cleaner' option that will contribute to reducing climate change impacts in the long term and also offer options of alternative livelihoods, especially to the POOR. Further support efficiency measures in all areas, including transportation, water conservation, renewable technologies and decentralised energy sources.
- Support community resilience building and in particular sustainable agricultural practices.
- change locally- these assessments can inform locally Support local vulnerability assessments that will identify the projected long term impacts of climate implemented mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Ensure NREGA is used for climate adaptation work in consultation with villagers and NGOs.
- Ensure low carbon energy options reach your constituency with livelihood options for poor people.
- Ensure schools do not stop functioning during disasters and primary health centres stock adequate medicine for heat-related and water-related public diseases.
- Ensure agriculture-related line agencies work with villagers and civil society organisations on adaptation options, taking special care to add value to relevant traditional knowledge that exists with people, especially women.
- Ensure adaptation work has the support of additional budgets.
- Ensure forest dwellers, dalits and poor fisherfolk have Rights over productive resources as per the law of the state.

As a Member of a Political Party:

- Educate your peers on the issues of climate change in India and on a global scale.
Lobby to ensure that climate change is high on your party's agenda as it will threaten all aspects of social and economic development in the long term if not addressed.

For further Information contact:

CENTRE FOR LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY
C/o IMPF, 9, Feroze Shah Road, New Delhi - 110001, India
Telefax: +91-11-23070756 • Mobile: +91-9818111915
E-Mail: info@clraindia.org • Web: www.clraindia.org