

# CSR TODAY

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## THESE PINK CENTRES KEEP WOMEN AND KIDS SAFE

Pink Centres have helped in attaining resilience from safety and hygiene concerns regarding open defecation, UTIs, zero inclusivity for PWDs/transgender persons, women safety and privacy at the public toilet facilities



# CSR TODAY

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# Heatwaves to impact almost every child on earth by 2050



**Rajesh Tiwari**  
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**The world urgently needs to invest in building their resilience – and in adapting all the systems children rely on to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing climate.**

**A**t least half a billion youngsters are already exposed to a high number of heatwaves, placing them on the front lines of climate change, according to UNICEF.

This is something serious and awareness needs to be created around it and address the problem.

“The climate crisis is a child rights crisis – and it is already taking a devastating toll on children’s lives and futures,” warned UNICEF Executive Director, Catherine Russell.

This warning needs to be taken very seriously and comes right from the UN agency.

This year’s wildfires and heatwaves that have swept through India, Europe, and North America were “yet another sobering example of the impact of climate change on children”, she added.

New data from the agency published in its report, *The Coldest Year Of The Rest Of Their Lives*, underscores that young children face greater risks than adults when faced with extreme heat events.

This is because they are less able to regulate their body temperature compared to adults. The more heatwaves children are exposed to, the greater the chance of health problems including chronic respiratory conditions, asthma, and cardiovascular diseases.

“The world urgently needs to invest in building their resilience – and in adapting all the systems children rely on to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing climate,” UNICEF maintained.

This is regardless of whether average global temperatures rise by 1.7 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels if greenhouse gas emissions are low, or

whether they rise by 2.4C, if emissions are high.

Protecting children from the escalating impacts of heatwaves should be a priority for all countries, UNICEF said, in a call for “urgent and dramatic emissions mitigation measures to contain global heating - and protect lives”.

Children in northern regions will face the most dramatic increases in high heat-wave severity, while by 2050, nearly half of all children in Africa and Asia will face sustained exposure to extreme high temperatures over 35C (95F), UN Children’s Fund data showed.

“This will have a devastating impact on children,” said Vanessa Nakate, climate activist and UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador. “The more frequent, longer lasting and more severe heatwaves children are exposed to, the greater the impacts on health, safety, nutrition, education, access to water and future livelihoods.”

Highlighting the devastating impact of drought in the Horn of Africa after four failed rainy seasons, Ms. Nakate insisted that “lives are being lost from preventable causes because the world is acting too slowly on mitigation and not providing enough support for adaptation”.

Children “who are least responsible for climate change are bearing its biggest costs”, she continued, noting that although Africa produces less than four per cent of global emissions, it suffers some “most brutal” impacts of the climate crisis.

“Almost every country is experiencing changing heatwaves,” UNICEF said. “What each government does now will determine the survival of those least responsible for this crisis – our children and young people.”

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# CSR NEWS

## 1500 in Bhopal avail benefit of Digital Transformation Van (DTV) through Indus Towers' CSR initiative and NIIT Foundation partnership

**I**ndus Towers Limited (formerly Bharti Infratel Limited) and NIIT Foundation have impacted the lives of 1500 individuals in rural Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh via the Digital Transformation Van (DTV). Indus, being India's leading provider of passive telecom infrastructure with a strong CSR program, and NIIT Foundation, a not-for-profit education society that aims to positively impact the underprivileged in the country, have come together and empowered the beneficiaries with digital literacy. Certificates were awarded to 280 new individuals who received the digital course.

Launched in 2018, to support the National Digital Literacy Mission, Indus Towers DTV has so far travelled to more than 30 communities/ villages in and around Delhi, Dehradun, Bhopal and Gujarat. It is expected to reach 40,000 beneficiaries in 2023 across these four regions. In Bhopal, it has spread awareness and awarded educational certificates to 1130 in 2022 and reached over 15,000 individuals through its video-based Education program.

The program has imparted digital literacy to individuals in the age range of 12 to 60 years, and who come from diverse backgrounds. The beneficiaries include school going children, women, Self Help Groups, homemakers, entry-level employees working in firms, farmers, and adults who want to develop digital literacy. The total beneficiaries



under Indus Towers DTV program till date is over 93000.

Speaking about the success of the DTV, Shankar Iyer, Regional Director-West & South, Indus Towers said, "Education is no longer restricted to the four corners of a classroom nor is it only for the young. The DTV is an example of how technology can be used to bring the best education to students' doorsteps whatever be their background or age. It also demonstrates that progressive education is a lifelong progress. The DTV's mission is in line with Indus Tower's belief in taking an active role in transforming the lives of communities. This mobile digital classroom is helping realize this by imparting in-demand skills to students of all ages and backgrounds."

Charu Kapoor, COO NIIT Foundation said, "We believe that education alone can solve all the world's problems. By bringing digital

literacy to the interior of the country, we expect to accelerate the process whereby the world becomes a more harmonious and prosperous place. While the pandemic showed that education can move online, many gaps remain. Millions across India do not have access to digital devices to allow for online learning. The DTV helps overcome all these hurdles by bringing connected classrooms to people's doorsteps."

The DTV serves as a mobile digital classroom and IT lab as it is equipped with software, printing equipment, and resources that enable e-learning. Students have learned crucial skills like cybersecurity and mastered Microsoft Office in the 20-seater DTV. In addition to supporting the existing education infrastructure in villages near Bhopal, the DTV is also being used to impart IT and entrepreneurship skills and to spread awareness about common public services.



# Brookfield Properties plants over 3000 trees under the 'Forest of Hope' Initiative



*The campaign was implemented in Bengaluru and Delhi NCR via a strategic partnership with SankalpTaru Foundation*

**B**rookfield Properties, a leading global developer and operator of high-quality real estate assets, planted over 3000 trees under their 'Forest of Hope' initiative in Bengaluru and Delhi-NCR. The initiative witnessed an overwhelming response from the employees and tenants. This initiative was carried out in partnership with SankalpTaru Foundation, one of India's prominent IT-enabled NGOs working pan India on afforestation and reforestation programs, to address climate change, reduce pollution, recharge groundwater, offset carbon footprint and enhance biodiversity.

The drive was executed on September 23 and 30 in Bengaluru

and Delhi NCR respectively. More than 700 trees were planted in the North University region in Bengaluru which was followed by a coaching session for teachers and students to help them tackle environmental challenges. Under this initiative, the focus was on planting rapidly disappearing tree species like Mahogany, Badam, Teak, Honne etc. Likewise, at Tawdu in Haryana – Delhi NCR, the primary objective was to conserve Aravallis and the area's natural environment. More than 2300 Peepal, Shisham, Neem, Gulmohar, Amrud and Amla trees were planted among others. This will result in recharging the natural groundwater propelling a significant carbon offset and biodiversity restoration in one of the world's oldest hills.

These 3000+ trees will provide more than 2700 tonnes of oxygen and sequester approximately 1500 tonnes of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere in their lifetime. Moreover, these native trees will

increase the green footprint across six acres benefiting both the flora and fauna in these regions while enhancing the biodiversity index. Each tree was photographed and geo-tagged with a QR code. The initiative has a unique tracking mechanism, with the aid of which one can locate the tree planted by themselves from anywhere in the world through an app by SankalpTaru

Expressing his views, Alok Aggarwal, MD & CEO, Brookfield Properties said, "With an aim to create a greener future for the planet, we are extremely pleased with our "Forest of Hope" initiative which planted over 3000 trees in India. A simple act such as planting a tree and inspiring others to do the same can make a huge difference in tackling climate change in the long run.

As a socially responsible organization, Brookfield Properties ensures 30% of green cover, integrating biophilia into the design process and plan for native trees,



water bodies and seasonal plants across our assets. Excellence in our Environmental, Social and Governance goals is at the core of our business and this initiative reinforces our commitment to build a better world for people, business and the community. Our partnership with an organization like SankalpTaru for this initiative is a step in that direction.”

Adding to it, Apurva Bhandari, Founder SankalpTaru Foundation

said, “The most critical issue for the present and future generations is the increasing environmental concern. Our foundation has successfully planted 3.5M+ trees since its inception. I believe, through ‘Forest of Hope’ our partnership with Brookfield Properties will change the landscape of our communities in expanding the green territories for the better.”

The ‘Forest of Hope’ is a result of Brookfield Properties’ ‘Trees of

Hope’ campaign, which was rolled out in 2021. The company held an exhibition of ‘Trees of Hope’ across seven marquee campuses in five cities from December 15, 2021 – January 10, 2022, with installations made from recycled wood and discarded flex. Brookfield Properties promised to plant a tree for every photograph that was uploaded on social media with the “Trees of Hope”, sparking a movement that led to the ‘Forest of Hope’ initiative.

## Voltas collaborates with Goonj to spread happiness and give back to the community

*The employees of Voltas Limited come together to celebrate the “Joy of Giving” festival in association with Goonj*

**V**oltas Limited, India’s No.1 AC brand, from the house of Tata has collaborated with Goonj, a leading NGO to bring cheer and happiness this festive season. Voltas is encouraging its employees to participate in the initiative along with friends and family members. Voltas employees and their social circles will come together and share pre-loved/ pre-cared items like clothes, shoes, stationary, books, utensils, etc. to

Goonj who will help distribute these to the urban and rural communities in need. The collection drive will begin from 10th October and will end on 20th October 2022. This drive will be driven from Mumbai that will act as the main collection center for this activity.

Impacting lives positively is deeply rooted in the Company’s philosophy. Over the decades, Voltas has introduced several initiatives to uplift the lives of its employees and the communities it operates in. Goonj aims to alleviate poverty and enhance the dignity of the underprivileged people of the world. Voltas has found a perfect partner in Goonj and through this initiative, Voltas’ goal is to improve the living conditions of marginalised communities around them. Sharing his thoughts on this noble cause,

Narendren Nair, Chief Human Resources Officer, Voltas Ltd, said “We are humbled by this opportunity to serve the community and come together for the greater good. The festive season brings cheer and joy for everyone and we always aim to make a positive difference in the society through such initiatives. With the “Joy of Giving” initiative, we hope to bring a smile on someone’s face and make a small difference.”

Goonj spokesperson Meenakshi Gupta, Co-founder Goonj said, “It’s heartening to see how the employees and Voltas as an organisation, have taken up simple acts of giving to joyfully pay back to the world. We hope this goes on throughout the year, also inspiring others to do more, as a way of living, for a better world.”



Prabha Narasimhan, MD, Colgate-Palmolive India & Mr. Ronak Shah, Chief Executive, Seva Mandir, inaugurate the Anicut in Aadh, Alsigarh



## Colgate India Continues Building Community Resilience In Rural Rajasthan Increases Water For Livelihoods & Women Empowerment Programs

**A**s an extension to Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited's Water for Livelihoods & Women Empowerment program, in partnership with NGO Seva Mandir a water anicut and water conservation literacy program was inaugurated in the tribal area Aadh of Alsigarh village, in Udaipur, Rajasthan.

Inaugurated by seniors from Colgate India and Seva Mandir, this program focuses on offering holistic and sustainable solutions to communities, majorly women.

Based on Colgate's 2025 Sustainability & Social Impact Strategy, while a water anicut restoration initiative helps an entire village, there are several (over hundred) such restorations that will help recharge over 600 wells till 2025. This will also provide over fifty thousand people access to water and about sixty thousand

with financial and digital literacy in the region.

Prabha Narasimhan, Managing Director, Colgate-Palmolive India present at the event said, "Conserving and treating water is a cornerstone of Colgate-Palmolive's 2025 Sustainability & Social Impact Strategy, vital to our overall mission to create a healthy and sustainable future. We're ensuring water stewardship, security and resilience across our value chain, thus protecting ecosystems and supporting water access in our communities. We have been working closely with Seva Mandir, our NGO partner, to improve the social and economic status of women in Rajasthan by ensuring water accessibility and livelihood-based women-empowerment programs. Through this program we are committed to scale the impact of our water program."

Ronak Shah, Chief Executive, Seva Mandir, commented, "The partnership with Colgate Palmolive has been very valuable for Seva Mandir. It has led to important innovative interventions of rejuvenating water structures in remote hilly regions and of enhancing financial digital literacy of women. A new component of Water Conservation Literacy is a new addition, which is of immense need today. Our gratitude to Colgate Palmolive (India) Limited for deep commitment towards water and community empowerment".

In a short period of time the program has positively impacted more than 30,000 villagers specially women through farm based livelihood initiatives and Financial & Digital Literacy. 30 water anicuts have been restored, which has helped recharge 300+ wells and replenished 128 million litres of water.



# Wacoal India Partners with Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA)

With October marked as the month of Breast Cancer Awareness every year, Wacoal India, a premium lingerie brand from Japan, is taking a stand in the fight against breast cancer this year through its notable initiative #WacoalKnowsBreast. As part of this initiative, the brand has partnered with the Cancer Patients Aid Association (CPAA), a non-profit organisation addressing cancer through its distinctive philosophy and framework of 'Total Management of Cancer,' to donate a portion of funds generated from its October sales.

According to statistics, every 4 minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer - the most common cancer occurring among women globally and in India. With breast cancer accounting for 14% of cancers in Indian women annually, nearly 1,80,000 women are diagnosed with it in the country, and around 90,000 women die of the disease each year.

Bearing this in mind, Wacoal's #WacoalKnowsBreast initiative is designed to raise awareness about the importance of early detection, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer. And in line with this thought process, the brand has conceptualised the 3-finger salute/symbol/gesture for the campaign by placing the right hand on the left chest and showing the number 3 with one's fingers. This stands for the 3-finger self-test one can do to check their breast for lumps, also stands for the alphabet 'W' in Wacoal.

Furthermore, as part of this activity, like every year, this year too, Wacoal will donate ₹10 on the purchase of every bra (yielding from its online and offline stores across the country) to support the CPAA.

Talking about the initiative, Pooja Merani, COO-Wacoal India, said, "At Wacoal, we are committed to making a significant difference in every woman's life by undertaking meaningful initiatives. And with awareness about breast cancer crucial for women not only in India but around the globe, we are proud to associate with a notable organisation such as the CPAA to create a considerable impact in this area. I sincerely hope our sustained efforts and support will reach all those women in need and benefit them."

On collaborating with the esteemed brand Wacoal, Neeta More Executive Director-Diagnostic services Cancer Patients Aid Association adds, "While breast cancer is one of the most commonly found cancers in India, it is reassuringly treatable and immensely curable. At CPAA, it is our aim to raise awareness alongside early detection and support for cancer treatment. And we couldn't have been happier to partner with Wacoal for their support for this critical cause and look forward to more such meaningful associations in the future."

## Mukul Madhav Foundation voted "Lokmat Maharashtra of the year 2022" in field of CSR

When silent work gets public recognition, it is a reason to celebrate. Mukul Madhav Foundation, the CSR arm of Finolex Industries, has been honoured with Lokmat Maharashtra of the year 2022 award in the Corporate Social Responsibility category. Decided by a public voting process, with more than 2.5 Million votes being cast, followed by exhaustive deliberations by an eminent jury panel. The Lokmat Maharashtra of The Year, is one of the most coveted awards in the state of Maharashtra. It recognizes outstanding work done by citizens and organisations in Maharashtra, for Maharashtra. Felicitating achievers across the fields of business, social work, science, technology innovation, administration, literature, art, sports, cinema, theatre and Corporate Social Responsibility.

This award is recognition of the work that Mukul Madhav Foundation does at the grassroots level with vulnerable, marginalised communities and individuals, working dedicatedly to give access to the resources they need to flourish, to feel empowered and cherished. This work impacts healthcare, education, social welfare, water and environmental conservation, sanitation, women's empowerment, disaster relief, sports and skill development. Commenting on this award, Prakash Chhabria, Executive Chairman, Finolex Industries Ltd said, "This award is recognition of the amazing partnership we share with our CSR partner Mukul Madhav Foundation. Our vision and intent is matched with their efforts and actions on-ground. As we together strive to make a difference to every section of society in our home state of Maharashtra, and beyond."

Ritu Chhabria, Managing Trustee, Mukul Madhav Foundation, added, "We hope this award brings more attention to the individuals and communities we work with. When they are uplifted; when they experience hope and happiness with dignity - that then is our greatest award. A big thank you to our stakeholders and volunteers for their continued participation and support in this journey."

# Awareness is the key factor that can help effectively address mental health related challenges: experts during a virtual briefing conducted by SOS Children's Villages India



**I**dentification of mental health issues among children that can be treated with medical interventions often get delayed due to lack of awareness, said experts during a virtual briefing conducted by SOS Children's Villages India ahead of World Mental Health Day.

The WHO estimates that the burden of mental health problems in India is 2443 disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) per 10,000 population while as per the National Health Survey 2016, 6-7% of the population suffers from mental disorders. In order to help children, achieve their full potential, ensuring, sustaining and enhancing mental wellbeing is vital. Dr. Nimesh G. Desai, President and Mentor of Manovikas E-Gyanshala; Former Director of the Institute of Human Behaviour and Allied Sciences (IHBAS); Former Faculty Member, National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore and AIIMS;

Sumanta Kar, Secretary General, SOS Children's Villages India, and Reena Chhatriya, SOS Mother, took part in the discussion.

While addressing the gravity of mental health issues in India, Dr. Desai, said: "It is not only vital to sensitise children, caregivers, and family members about mental health, but it is also important to sensitise peers about the gravity of this subject and how they could possibly support someone struggling with the issue, in various ways. Support of family and peers is vital." Talking about the early identification of symptoms, Dr. Desai added, "Withdrawal, anger issues, drastic change in eating or sleeping habits and such require attention, addressal and support. Direct expression or indirect evidence of negative thoughts, pessimism and hopelessness must be seen as a red alert. A decade ago, our supposition that children don't have suicidal tendencies has been proven wrong.

Unfortunately, children do suffer from depression, either because of their genetic make-up or because of circumstances, trauma et cetera. Adolescence is a sensitive age, where children go through extreme emotional turmoil, besides physical and mental changes. The general resilience of human beings is more at a young age, and so as a population sub-group they fare well, despite apparent and significant distress; this helps in getting through with minimal to moderate support, while some young people may need specialised professional attention."

Kar commented, "At SOS Children's Villages India, we take mental wellbeing very seriously. Initiatives to enhance this vital aspect of health are taken, on a consistent basis, for Mothers, caregivers, children and co-workers. The pandemic was an extremely challenging phase, for which EmoAid, among others, was introduced. Besides this, for children programmes like the resilience building programme, the new child entry programme and the positive youth development programme are some examples. Health of the caregiver or Mother is paramount, as they carry such an important responsibility on their shoulder. Programmes such as Emotional Literacy and SEL have been actively introduced. The crux of the matter remains that having a solid support system is absolutely essential. This includes a family, siblings and friends. All our Basket of Care Solutions focus on securing this by preventing child abandonment or / and extending family like care to parentless or abandoned children.



Spending quality time with children and a caring family environment is critical for the mental well-being of children. Encouraging Participation of children in all decision making at early age and developing social skills are important. While caregivers focus on the wellbeing of the children, they should also find time for themselves.”

Chhatriya said, “I have been associated with SOS Children’s Villages India for over 8 years and

have brought-up 10 children so far. Children hail from different backgrounds and have different histories, so each child has to be approached differently. For this, multi-dimensional support is availed from a wide variety of experts. I remember the pandemic, when the situation was especially tough, as we were all confined; anxiety and stress levels because of uncertainty and fear were high. We tried to tide over these times by cooking exquisite meals

with the help of recipes available on the internet, meditation, yoga, dance, creative indoor games, and other group activities. Besides, it is important to observe, be aware and keep communication channels open.”

It was further concluded in the session that increased interest in mental health issues has been credited the acceptance of the same in society. With people becoming aware, help is sought early enough for interventions to work out well.

## Milaan Foundation partners with Sony Music Entertainment India to empower adolescent girls In India

**M**ilaan Foundation announced new funding from Sony Music Entertainment India aimed at uplifting and empowering adolescent girls across the state of Uttar Pradesh in India, which has the largest population of adolescent girls in the country.

Through this new funding, Milaan Foundation plans to scale its flagship Girl Icon Program, a leadership development program that invests in empowering girls at the grass-roots level, delivering comprehensive life-skills-based education and instigating collective social action. In the first phase, Milaan will train 2,000 leaders across three states to work with 40,000 young women, with a goal of reaching a total target of working with 100,000 girls by 2025. With the support of funding from Sony Music Entertainment India, Milaan Foundation will further promote continued secondary education, prevent child marriages and gender-based violence, and support the health and wellbeing of adolescent girls from

marginalized communities across India. “Every girl deserves a life of dignity, opportunity and access to education,” said Dharendra Pratap Singh, Chief Executive Officer of Milaan Foundation. “We envision an inclusive and equal world, where every girl is educated, healthy and safe to explore her full potential. Thanks to funding from Sony Music Group’s Global Social Justice Fund, we can fast-track the education and empowerment of adolescent girls, cultivating our next generation of female leaders. We are delighted to work hand in hand with Sony Music Entertainment India to further our mission to impart young women with the knowledge, skills, and the social environment needed to pursue their aspirations”.

“We are pleased to partner with Milaan Foundation who are doing fantastic work to empower and inspire young women across the country,” said Rajat Kakar, Managing Director, Sony Music Entertainment, India. “As a global music company, Sony Music Entertainment is

committed to actively supporting communities across where we operate. Empowering people is key to what we do, and we hope to do the same in partnership with Milaan Foundation.” Established in 2007, Milaan Foundation is a social impact organization with the purpose to empower girls to stand up for themselves by advancing their skills, rights and opportunities and unlocking their voice, choice, and power. The funding from SMG will be used to invest in technology, deliver life skills and leadership education, offer mentorship, and promote community participation to advance gender equality.

Milaan Foundation is the latest recipient announced in Asia from Sony Music Group’s Global Social Justice Fund. Launched in 2020, the Fund supports social justice and anti-racist initiatives around the world. Two years on, the Fund has supported nearly 400 community partners globally and expanded to cover areas such as civic engagement, environmental justice, criminal justice reform, and education.

# 37 million additional jobs could be created in India by 2050 through net-zero planning and investments

Delaying progress on sustainability-related commitments could have serious social, economic and environmental implications for India. The key issue for a rapidly developing economy like India is to balance structural demand for resources with meeting UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Net-zero planning and investment will not only mitigate losses, but could generate as many as 37 million additional jobs, amounting to almost 5% of the workforce, by 2050, finds Swiss Re Institute report, "Shaping a sustainable future for India: How insurers can help".

Paul Murray, CEO Reinsurance Asia at Swiss Re, said: "The reinsurance industry plays an important role in India's sustainability journey as risk carriers, institutional investors and risk consultants – but the industry cannot drive sustainable growth alone. A collective effort is required with strong support from both the public and private sectors if we are to accelerate India's focus on sustainability."

India is vulnerable to weather risks and its adaptive capacity for climate change is low when measured against the Swiss Re Institute's Climate Economics Index, which ranks India 45th (out of 48 markets), with only the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia trailing behind. If no mitigating action is taken, loss to GDP could be as high as 6.4% by 2030.

"As much as 40% of India's GDP is dependent on biodiversity and ecosystem services and yet, our analysis

**If no climate mitigating action is taken, loss to GDP could be as high as 6.4% by 2030**

**Digital technologies can help make insurance more affordable and accessible across key areas of sustainability such as agriculture and health**

**A whole-of-society approach is needed to drive sustainability in India, finds Swiss Re Institute report**

reveals 28% of the land in India has a 'very low' capacity to support economic activity," said John Zhu, Chief Economist Asia at Swiss Re. "This means India remains vulnerable to ecological disturbances. Resilience in agriculture, health risk mitigation, and sustainability pathways in energy, manufacturing and transportation can help."

**Impact on health, productivity, and lives**

Poor progress on sustainability-related commitments will not only impact material infrastructures, but also the health and lives of people. Air pollution alone could result in up to 1.64 million annual premature deaths. Biodiversity loss and

increasing temperatures could result in higher mortality rates, as well as impact food production and nutrition rates. Decarbonisation, on the other hand, could result in a significant health dividend, such as reducing the incidence of asthma by half.

The report finds numerous sustainability pathways for mitigating health risks and suggests how insurers can help. Improving insurance affordability and accessibility across key areas of sustainability can also be supported by harnessing digital technology.

**A whole-of-society approach is needed for the green transition**

Public policy is crucial for designing, executing, and scaling sustainability-based programmes, but the private sector must also contribute through innovation and investment.

"India must adopt a whole-of-society approach to sustainability that addresses climate, infrastructure and health combined," said Hadi Riachi, CEO Swiss Re India Branch. "With India committing to net zero by 2070, the future will also call for sustainable infrastructure and industrial development to make our cities and businesses more climate resilient, productive, and attractive to investors. Sustainable infrastructure will also be fundamental to securing equitable access to economic development opportunities, supporting economic growth and social resilience by enabling access to vital services, trade hubs and job markets."



# Adhata Trust celebrates World Elders' Day with first non-virtual event since COVID-19

**A**dhata Trust, a Mumbai-based NGO focused on the psychosocial welfare of senior citizens based in Mumbai, celebrated World Elders' Day with its first non-virtual event since the COVID-19 pandemic on the 10th anniversary of its founding.

The celebration, the theme of which was 'Zindagi Gulzar Hai', took place over two hours. Members of over 14 centers took to the stage and put on a variety of enthralling performances, while senior old members also had their moment in the limelight when they were brought onto the stage. There was also a garden of flowers that was set up to mark the 10th anniversary of the Trust, where each flower represented each center. Adhata Trust also released a book - 'Portraits of Adhata 2012-2022' - presented by Dr. Gita Piramal to mark the occasion.



Adhata Trust promotes the cause of Positive Aging, and this event featured its senior citizens celebrating old age. It was all the more memorable as it was the Trust's first physical event since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Adhata Trust Founder Arun Nanda

said, "The last two years have been especially difficult for the elderly, a time marked by fear, worry and anxiety. Despite the odds we at the Adhata Trust continued undaunted to engage with our elderly members over the virtual medium. But I must say it gives me great joy to see everyone back in person. At the Adhata Trust, we believe old age is something that should be celebrated and cherished. This year's theme, 'Zindagi Gulzar Hai' captured the sentiment perfectly."

The Adhata Trust currently has over 500 senior citizen members across 12 community centres in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Thane. Each year, the Trust celebrates World Elders' Day to raise awareness about the growing population of the elderly in India, and their challenges and special needs. Through its various activities and initiatives, Adhata Trust aims to improve the lives of older people, thereby helping them regain their self-reliance and confidence. Adhata strives to build a nurturing and supportive environment for senior citizens by organizing fun events where family and friends of members can also join to cheer them on.

The International Day of Older Persons is observed across the globe on October 1st each year. This year theme by UN is "Resilience of Older Persons in a Changing World. This presents an opportunity to bring together governments, civil society, international agencies, professionals, academia, the media, and the private sector for ten years of concerted, catalytic and collaborative action to improve the lives of older people.

## 'Faces of Climate Resilience': Docu-series brings to the forefront communities facing the impacts of climate change

**T**he India Climate Collaborative (ICC), along with the IMC Young Leaders' Forum, the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), hosted the screening of the documentary series 'Faces of Climate Resilience' yesterday that brings to the forefront communities who are already bearing the impact of climate change – and developing their own local adaptations to climate risks at the Walchand Hirachand Hall, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Mumbai.

The screening was followed by an interaction with a climate champion, as well as a dialogue on how we can build climate resilience into businesses and societies, and integrate nature into our development narrative.

Mr. Anant Singhania, President, IMC Chamber of Commerce and Industry delivered the opening remarks. Other dignitaries present at the event included environmental activist and writer Mr. Bittu Sahgal, Editor at Sanctuary Asia, and President of Bombay Natural History Society, as well as sustainability experts Tejashree Joshi, Head of Environment & Sustainability at Godrej & Boyce., and Rajat Gupta, Senior Partner at McKinsey & Co.

Faces of Climate Resilience captures stories from five Indian states, including the lived experiences of a women's collective in Odisha replanting trees along a cyclone-prone coast, a Mahila Mangal Dal in Uttarakhand working with local forest officials to combat forest fires, and a youth group in suburban Mumbai sensitising slum dwellers about climate change, among others. The audience also had a chance to interact with the Climate Champion, Mr. Amit of Yuva India, who is one of the faces of climate resilience in the documentary series.

# Rushil's world-class, automated, make in India MDF plant to boost climate protection in the region

**R**ushil Décor, a global leader in smarter living solutions, transforming contemporary residential and commercial spaces expanded its global operations with the setting up a first-of-a-kind, world-class, state-of-the-art, agroforestry-based, sustainable, environment-friendly future boards (medium density fiber-board or MDF) making plant in Achutapuram, Andhra Pradesh.

Driven by smart manufacturing, and fully-automated robotic production, the technologically advanced

the range of value-added solutions and strengthening its commitment to sustainability of the business and the planet.

Krupesh G Thakkar, CMD, Rushil Décor Ltd, India, says "Rushil Décor's automated, intelligent, integrated, and innovative plant represents a drive to steward resources well and contribute to a better future for the local communities, the nation, and the planet. Strategically located to deliver faster deliveries to global markets, RDL's world-class, make-in-India

fiberboards. With the help of this plant RDL has the potential to generate a revenue of Rs. 1000 crore top line in MDF segment on full capacity utilization.

According to industry insights, growing consumer awareness and a wide range of application is driving increased adoption and consumption of MDF in India, as the industry is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15%-20% from an estimated Rs. 3,000 crore in 2021 to Rs. 6,000 crore by 2026.

India is a significant player of MDF, being used as a leading interior infrastructure materials. Discerning consumers and modern offices who look for responsible products that reduces carbon footprint, rapid urbanization, rebound in realty and rising nuclear families will boost MDF growth. Driving this growth will be Indian work from home (WFH) furniture market which is expected to be US\$ 3.49 billion by FY2026. About 60% of the consumption of MDF is for commercial use, though the residential segment is gaining momentum. Compared to 70 % market share in developed nations, MDF has just 30% market share in India reflecting high potential for MDF.

MDF is an engineered product made of wood fibres bonded under high pressure using thermosetting resins and wax, forming beautiful panels by applying high temperature and pressure, for strength. Many MDF qualities make it an ideal replacement for wood, plywood and particle boards.

**Automated, intelligent, integrated, and innovative plant represents a strong commitment to steward resources well and contribute to a better future for the local communities, the nation, and the planet**

plant is strategically located close to raw material sourcing agroforestry-plantations, creating sustainable livelihood, reducing the transportation impact, and lower emissions.

The investment in the fully-integrated plant is significant and amounts to over Rs.500 crores. The investment illustrates Rushil Décor's long-term vision to boost indigenous production capacity and operational efficiency, expanding

plant will further boost the nation's existing capacity to produce MDF, reduce costly imports, and save the country's foreign exchange reserves – shaping a better planet."

This automated plant with an annual full capacity of about 2,40,000 CBM is amongst the largest, most sophisticated, safest and smartest manufacturing plants in the world entailing substantial investment in the industry of engineered



## Tata Institute of Social Science and Government of Maharashtra sign MoU to boost employment and vocational training to 15,000 students



**T**he School of Vocational Education (SVE), Tata Institute of Social Science signed an MoU with Samagra Shiksha, Government of Maharashtra under the Maharashtra Young Leaders Aspiration Development Program (MYLAP) in Mumbai, to provide employment and vocational training to 15,000 students of Class 12 in Maharashtra.

The MoU is aimed at meeting the objective listed under National Education Policy 2020 to take vocational education to 50% of schools, by 2025.

TISS-SVE has partnerships with 3750 industries located across India that represent various skills sectors and impart practical training to the students. Besides this, about 200 plus Service providers and approximately 500 faculty and Domain Experts are constituting and helping in strengthening the entire ecosystem of the School of Vocational Education.

## Muvi's CRS Arm - Muvi Foundation Wins 2022 Tech Cares Award From TrustRadius

*Muvi is being recognized for its Corporate Social Responsibility Program - Muvi Foundation with a 2022 Tech Cares Award from TrustRadius*

**T**rustRadius, the most trusted research and review platform, has recognized Muvi's CSR initiative - Muvi Foundation with the 2022 Tech Cares Award. This third-annual award celebrates companies that have gone above and beyond to provide impactful corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs for their employees and surrounding communities.

Muvi Foundation was established on the three key pillars of Uplifting Society, Empowering Communities, and Inspiring Generations. Where each Pillar encapsulates the company and its founder's ethos on giving back to society.

The foundation has undertaken several notable projects over the last 1 year including

- Organized a Blood Donation Camp along with the Bhubaneswar-Cuttack Police Commissionerate and Red Cross Society Blood Bank at SCB Medical, Cuttack, at Muvi's India Development Center premises situated in Bhubaneswar, on the Eastern coast of the Indian Subcontinent.
- Installation of the complete solar panel set up in an old age home situated in urban neighborhood of the city
- Established Food Distribution at Camps set up for refugees and migrating workers during COVID-19 India Lockdown
- Muvi Foundation has also made active donations to India's Prime Minister Relief Fund including a contributory donation of INR 1 Lac during the corona epidemic to help the nation in its fight against COVID.



## Himalaya brings back “Ek Nayi Muskaan” - a flagship initiative aimed at spreading awareness on cleft lip and palate in children

**H**imalaya Wellness Company, one of India's leading wellness brands, has announced the launch of its 7th edition of “Ek Nayi Muskaan” in Bengaluru.

Muskaan is the flagship social impact initiative that aims to create awareness on the condition of cleft lips and palates in children. This initiative has been co-created and implemented in partnership with Smile Train, the world largest cleft-focused NGO dedicated to spreading awareness on cleft deformities and supporting this facial birth difference and supporting 100% free cleft surgeries and comprehensive cleft care for the underprivileged. To commemorate the launch this year, Himalaya, organized an event to address the societal stigma that children face due to cleft and bring about a change in society to recognize that children with clefts can

live full and healthy lives. The event saw many engaging activities such as gaming zones, art workshops, and interactive installations for children. They also got an opportunity to engage and interact with various Instagram influencers such as Neha Chatlani, Namrata Kumari, Swati Gandhi, Diksha, and Palak Bhandari at the event.

The event saw speakers who shared their success stories with children, helping them get inspired from some incredible narratives on cleft.

Through this initiative, Himalaya Wellness Company and Smile Train India are working to spread awareness about the birth condition that affects one in 700 births in India, but still faces a shocking lack of awareness among much of the population. This initiative also seeks to support families by providing free

cleft treatment for children in need across the country.

Himalaya Wellness Company has persisted on its aim to bring happiness to children across India in tandem with its mission to spread “Wellness in every Home and Happiness in every Heart.” Himalaya, along with Smile Train, has been on the mission to spread the joy of smiles since the start of this initiative in 2016. Together, they have enabled nearly 1,100 cleft repair surgeries so far and helped in bringing smiles to the faces of these children who deserve a healthy and happy smile.

“Muskaan is an initiative that is very close to our hearts. Through the years, we have seen hundreds of children get their chance at a healthier and happier life because of the cleft repair surgeries. Our hope and objective, therefore, is to

continue to see many such happy faces in the future. As a company, we have always believed in Happiness through Wellness to be the core of our operation and function. This initiative by Himalaya Lip Care helps us take the mission on-ground and create that impact we want to see in the world. With Muskaan, we intend to partner in the journey of these brave children towards achieving their dreams and living a happy and healthy life.” said Sushil Goswami, General Manager - Consumer Products Division, Himalaya Wellness Company.

Last year, due to the pandemic, the Muskaan event was conducted on an online platform and was still able to transform the lives of more than 130 children in need of a cleft repair surgery. This year intends to be no exception. On the purchase of every premium lip balm, Himalaya Wellness Company will donate a dedicated amount towards the initiative. Emphasizing the initiative, Anjali Katoch, Senior Director Communication and Development, Smile Train India, explained, “Children with untreated clefts face difficulties in eating,

breathing, hearing, and speaking, with increased susceptibility to ENT infections. This can greatly affect their mental health and social lives as well. A cleft surgery is life transforming; however, hundreds of thousands of children in India still await treatment due to poverty and lack of awareness. Through Muskaan and our partnership with Himalaya Wellness Company, we continue to aim to increase awareness about clefts and make free cleft surgeries and comprehensive cleft care easily accessible to more and more children across India.”

## Blue Dart wins the Social Impact Award at the ACEF Asian Leaders Awards for its GoHelp initiative

Upholding the commitment towards corporate social responsibility, Blue Dart South Asia's premier express air and integrated transportation & distribution company and a part of the Deutsche Post DHL (DPDHL) Group has been recognized for their efforts towards the GoHelp initiative. The company has won the Social Impact Award at the 11th edition of the ACEF Asian Leaders Awards, 2022 held in Mumbai in the category of Best Public Health/Safety Initiative.

Blue Dart's commitment towards the betterment of the environment and communities has been unwavering since its inception in 1983. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility, Blue Dart runs various programs for the upliftment of vulnerable, underprivileged, and marginalized sections of the society. All programs are classified under the 3 pillars of Living Responsibility – GoTeach, GoGreen and GoHelp.

On receiving the award, Ketan Kulkarni, Chief Commercial Officer, Blue Dart states, “We are truly humbled and proud to be recognized by ACEF, an accolade that recognizes tremendous team effort to address key societal

issues under our Go Help initiative. As an industry leader, we have been consistently reporting on our corporate responsibility performance each year, expanding the scope further to include a higher number of beneficiaries that can be impacted comprising students and young adults from poor financial backgrounds, the hearing impaired, disenfranchised women, senior citizens etc. Blue Dart has partnered with several non-profit organizations in various capacities to run programs that are aligned under GoTeach, GoGreen and GoHelp initiatives. We ensure to continue helping those in need by coming up with new associations and partnerships that will help in impacting the lives of many people.”

Under our Go Help initiatives, Blue Dart associated with St. Jude India Childcare Centres, an NGO working towards filling the vital need of care giving, nutrition and providing shelter



**Ketan Kulkarni,**  
Chief Commercial Officer,  
Blue Dart

to children suffering from cancer. Our partnership includes the funding of 12 units of their child-care centre at Guwahati, Assam.

The centre provides a clean, safe, hygienic place to stay, nutritional support, transportation to hospital for treatment, as well as recreation, education, and counseling to underprivileged children under treatment for cancer.

Through this initiative Blue Dart has helped over 3800 cancer affected children and their parents

since inception till date. In a recent tie-up with Vision Foundation of India, Blue Dart has aided in successfully completing considerable number of cataract surgeries for the marginalised under the Rashtriya Netra Yagna Project in Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Punjab, Gujarat, Bihar and Maharashtra. Blue Dart also works with HelpAge India and has helped perform over 6500+ cataract surgeries for the elderly till date.



# Agritech startup KisanServ Giving Back to Farm' initiative turning wet waste of metros to free organic compost for farmers

**W**ith increasing food consumption, urbanisation, growth in large housing societies and lack of dumping ground, wet waste processing has emerged as a major challenge in urban India. Lack of innovative ideas and technology-based solutions have further acted as roadblocks to transform waste to wealth and benefit the farmers. Realising this, leading and responsible agritech startup Kisanserv under its 'Giving Back to Farm' initiative is joining hands with large housing societies to help them process wet waste and turn them into free organic compost for farmers. Kisanserv through its social initiative organized farmers meet in Manchar district of Maharashtra, distributed organic compost to around 200 farmers which was processed and donated by housing societies in Pune.

Keeping sustainability, innovation and technology at its core, the company is trying to find a balance between urban and rural India by transforming waste to wealth to benefit all stakeholders. According to it, the initiative brings multiple benefits such as transforming waste to compost in large residential societies, benefiting farmers with organic compost, enriching soil quality and protecting the environment.

"The wet waste coming out of large housing societies in metros is a burden for urban India. Also, it is tough for societies and municipal corporations to single handedly process it and make it useful. Similarly, farmers too are in need of organic waste at low or free of cost to enrich soil health and eco-friendly farming. This initiative finds a perfect link



Centre: Sharma Niranjan (Ceo & Co founder), Right of Niranjansharma: Arun Kumar (COO & Co-founder), Durga Shirali, Sushma Tiwari, Mitashi Sinha, Priya Rai, Seema Sharma, Durgesh, Gopal, Pramod, Niketan, Anil. Left of Niranjan Sharma: Pravin Tiwari, Jagan and Ramkrishna.



CEO Niranjan Sharma and CTO Praveen Tiwari Distributing Organic compost to farmers of Manchar (Maharashtra) in presence of Kisan-serv team.

between the challenges of urban and rural India with a common solution to benefit all. This is a great social service and we feel happy to serve the farmers," said Niranjan Sharma, CEO & Co-Founder.

Kisanserv has joined hands with 3rd parties and large housing societies like Park Royale Housing Society in Pune to help them process wet waste into organic compost. This initiative also helps residential societies to comply with municipal

corporations who have made it mandatory to process wet garbage in their society itself by installing a composting machine. Recently, the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC) has said that it would not lift wet waste from as many as 700 residential societies that generate more than 100 kg waste. Instead, the civic body has asked the societies to segregate wet and dry waste and convert wet waste into compost within their premises. The initiative helps such societies process the waste and municipal corporations who are struggling to dump yards for wet garbage by reducing waste.

Kisanserv is currently in Maharashtra having 14 collection centers in rural India. The company is buying fruits and vegetables from farmers directly and serving to its customers in urban India. It uses its reverse logistics to bring back compost from urban India to rural India and distribute the same to farmers free of cost.

## ACT collaborates with Vidyakul and Josh Skills to enable low-income students learn at home & help underserved youth improve their employability

**A**CT, a non-profit venture philanthropy platform, is collaborating with Vidyakul to make academic learning more accessible & effective for state board students as well as with Josh Skills to enable affordable access to their spoken English course for low-income youth to improve their employability.

With these collaborations, ACT For Education will provide catalytic grant funding to accelerate their impact - helping both Vidyakul & Josh Skills to personalise their educational content & improve their users' learning journey.

Says Aakanksha Gulati, Director - ACT For Education, "ACT For Education aims to enable the bottom three quartiles of India's population to learn at home by harnessing the power of affordable, accessible and high-quality edtech interventions. Both Vidyakul and Josh Skills are led by mission-driven founders who bring deep passion for India 3 through their lived experiences. Shobhit grew up in Kullu & Tarun studied in a Hindi medium school in Ambala, so they instinctively understand that strong, personalised learning interventions can create a meaningful shift in life trajectories. As ACT, we're excited to be their

growth engine partners!" Vidyakul runs an affordable mobile app that offers both live & recorded classes for state board students in grades 9 to 12. Currently operating in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh & Gujarat, they employ local teachers to create vernacular educational content for all subjects with contextual examples to help students learn better.

Tarun Saini, Founder - Vidyakul, says, "70% of 250 Mn students in Bharat are enrolled in state boards and there is a huge demand-supply gap for after-school learning. While the online tutoring space has expanded since the pandemic, most edtech solutions cater primarily to students in tier 1 cities in terms of the medium of instruction as well as affordability. With our collaboration with ACT For Education, we hope to make our solution more holistic by adding doubt solving mechanisms & generating clear evidence of learning outcomes through both in app data and researcher led studies."

Building spoken English capabilities is a common requisite for employment and critical for India to improve its labour participation and reap demographic dividend. Josh Skills aims to unlock the potential of Bharat's under-served youth

by building their spoken English skills through a peer-to-peer learning mechanism on the app which allows them to practise English with each other

Shobhit Banga, Co-founder - Josh Skills, says, "Our collaboration with ACT For Education brings us the catalytic partnership required to meet Bharat's skilling aspirations. With 80% of the world using English as a medium of instruction and communication, the hesitation to speak in English restricts youth in Tier 2 and Tier 3 India from gaining access to decent employment opportunities. Through our spoken English course, our students learn to overcome this hesitation by practising with each other over a phone call. We look forward to working with the ACT team to help Bharat's youth upskill, develop their confidence and truly unlock their potential."

Says Mekin Maheshwari, Advisor - ACT For Education, "Josh & Vidyakul deeply understand and serve rural & aspirational India. They both have highly innovative models for enabling learning! At ACT, we are excited to support them & learn from their journeys of amplifying impact by building technology & measuring impact."

# CSR TODAY

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# CSR INDIA UNITED

## Nirmala Sitharaman Inaugurates Ananda Karuna Vidhyalayam a multidisciplinary centre

Children with special needs find it difficult to be included in the mainstream education system. It is important for them to get the extra care and attention during their education to train them for a better future.

Project Ananda Karuna Vidyalayam, will provide kids with special needs a safe space to overcome the challenges posed by their learning disability, with the goal of integrating them into the mainstream education system. The teachers for these children have completed a certificate course in special education from Annamalai University. V – Excel, a leading



### *A collaborative effort of Anandam Trust and Data Patterns*

**M**inister for Finance and Corporate Affairs, Government Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the AAnanda Karuna Vidhyalayam, a multidisciplinary centre for children with special needs in Ambattur, Chennai.

Data Patterns (India) Limited, a vertically integrated Defence and

Aerospace electronics solutions provider whose main line of business is indigenously developed defence products, came forward towards contributing to the project for providing specialized coaching for Children with special needs.

Data Patterns continues to realize that CSR is not just compliance, but a strategic business initiative to achieve & extends its comprehensive and professional support to children with special needs to help them develop their latent talent by contributing Rs. 20 Lakhs

coaching centre for such students is providing the necessary help.

Commenting on the initiative Srinivasagopalan Rangarajan, Chairman & Managing Director, Data Patterns (India) Limited said, “In Today’s busy world where chaos is louder than words, it gives us immense pleasure to be able to make a difference in the world of children with special needs. This move aimed at a holistic development of these children, rather than just their academic prowess, will go a long way in teaching them life skills.”



# Universal Sompo General Insurance adopts a Village to develop it

**U**niversal Sompo General Insurance Company Ltd has adopted the Tung village, in the Maval sub-district of Maharashtra. Universal Sompo committed to pledging Rs 50 lakhs in developmental activities in the village. The village developmental project was launched on 2 September 2022 at a public function in the village attended by Universal Sompo officials. This was followed by sharing details of the project with the village chief and the entire community and simultaneously introducing the physician who would supervise health-care-related activities. The main problems, according to Universal Sompo, that are prevalent in the village are as follows:

- Lack of suitable skills among women, resulting in little scope for women to earn. This is further exacerbated by the lack of knowledge among women on financial planning and digital literacy.
- Small scale farms prevent the employment of modern and efficient farming methods. Farmers have limited access to water for agricultural activities, restricting the farmer's income. Additionally, the village, which majorly cultivates rice, lacks a paddy thresher machine.
- No access to primary health care facilities or private clinics within the village or in surrounding villages.
- Use of Chulah for cooking purposes by poor members of the community, which has been flagged as a health hazard.
- Fluctuating electricity supply, resulting to darkness in the village and threat to life from snake, and scorpion bites.



**Universal Sompo to allocate INR 50 Lac in developmental activities in a village in Maharashtra.**

**Promoting healthcare; educating women and children; conserving the environment are the key objectives that the village development project addresses.**

The project primarily aims to educate the women in the village on digital literacy and farm animal (veterinary) treatment. To boost enterprise, women from the village will be trained to utilise digital platforms like Google Pay, and YouTube, along with various social media platforms for developing businesses. The project also aims to equip 60% of the households in the village with solar lights, helping 200 families with reduced electricity bills. Smokeless chulas (stoves) and led tube lights are being distributed to poor families in the village to promote the conservation of the environment in the

village. Additionally, the project aims to increase the groundwater level in the village, with artificial recharges to conserve water.

Commenting on the project, Sharad Mathur, Managing Director & CEO, Universal Sompo General Insurance shared, "The village development activities have been designed after a thorough Gap Analysis, in accordance with the company's ESG policies and objectives, and strives to enhance the livelihoods of women and farmers by empowering Women Self Help organisations, establishing family and community-based businesses, introducing new agricultural practices, adopting environment-friendly technologies, and institutionalising sustainability".

To improve farming efficiency, the community-based enterprise has been provided with a paddy thresher machine that would be beneficial for 80% of the farmers in the village. Farmers would also be trained in improved agricultural practices. Additionally, clusters of Mango and Papaya plants are being planted, which would assure farmers additional income after 3-4 years.

# HMD Global & Shikhar Dhawan Foundation join hands to promote e-learning among under-privileged students



*Nokia Mobile Phones & Tablets worth 35 Lakhs were distributed in its first set of drive by Shikhar Dhawan Foundation and HMD Global at the event held in Village Nangli Umarpur, Gurugram on 19th September*

**H**MD Global, the home of Nokia phones has partnered with Shikhar Dhawan Foundation to distribute smart devices to under-privileged students of Delhi NCR region with an aim to promote/support e-learning in India for these kids having affordability and accessibility issue. The first drive of device distribution on 19th September 2022 was organized at NeeV - A Learning Centre, Village Nangli Umarpur, Golf Course Extension, Gurugram under the attendance of Shikhar Dhawan (Cricketer and Founder, Shikhar Dhawan Foundation) and Sanmeet Singh Kochhar (Vice President-INDIA and MENA, HMD Global) along with key leadership of both the organisations. This CSR initiative is a part of HMD Global's & Shikhar

Dhawan Foundation's collective endeavor to promote e-learning for all the under-privileged students in India where they are not able to afford such devices due to price constraints. HMD Global & Shikhar Dhawan Foundation will be continuously working together to bridge this demand & supply gap in the months to come so as to promote e-learning. The vision for Shikhar Dhawan Foundation is to sow the seeds of prosperity and happiness across the globe through collaborative efforts to serve the community. The smart devices were handed over jointly by Mr. Shikhar Dhawan and Mr. Sanmeet Singh Kochhar. Smart devices including tablets and smartphones have become crucial in today's academic scenario. This has been a strain for

students from under-privileged backgrounds having limited to no access to such smart mobile devices due to affordability. In order to support the young guns of India, HMD Global and Shikhar Dhawan Foundation seeks to bridge this digital divide through this initiative and further promote e-learning for all students.

Speaking for the cause, Shikhar Dhawan says, "Without access to proper smartphone mobiles devices & internet, school going under privileged students are the ones who are suffering the most. With this problem in mind, our team has been working towards the same to address the issue & I congratulate my team for taking this initiative up which is very close to my heart." At the occasion, Sanmeet Singh Kochhar, Vice President-India & MENA, HMD Global said, "This initiative is in tune to HMD Global's commitment to ensuring everyone has access to affordable and long-lasting technology. We are delighted to be partnering with Shikhar Dhawan foundation,

who share our values and ideals of creating deep and sustainable impact in people's lives. We feel blessed to be able to support the journey of these bright young minds by equipping them with the right tools to further their education. As a part of HMD Global's ongoing campaign, Smarter Banega India, we intend to empower people with the right technology. We will continue to undertake such social initiatives that align with the HMD Global vision and values".

Amitesh Shah, Group CEO of DA-ONE

(an initiative of Shikhar Dhawan) said, "Access to technology is crucial to lifelong learning independent of geographies. With this initiative, we plan to empower students to bring forth phenomenal contributions to the community. Our partnership for this drive will help us reach out to the underprivileged school children and hand them over the power to change the future with the resource bank in their hands.

Dr. Kanika Dewan, Director of Impact and Strategy at the Shikhar

Dhawan Foundation, said, "We are very happy to partner for this drive to provide better accessibility of e-learning in India. Technology has been phenomenal in furthering the reach and quality of education. And yet, basic smart devices are still a luxury for a large part of the country. By equipping these young promising minds with the right technology, we are making a major investment for the future. We will continue to work towards ensuring that every student has access to quality education."

## Making Smart Education Available to Every Child in India Through LucyMax

Taking stock of the rising demand in children's education and the smart-education segment, LucyMax has launched a 4 step phonics learning function for the Indian market. Recently, LucyMax in collaboration with Future Intelligence Books & Korea Trade Investment Promotion Agency distributed 4-step Phonics to underprivileged & unskilled kids at Sri Vivekananda Vidya Vikas Kendra Orphanage- Hyderabad and ZPHS, Saheb Nagar, Hyderabad.

Child education in India is highly competitive and smart-education is the need of the hour. LucyMax is a Korean Brand that works on introducing Books for Kids. It has been in the international market for many years and focused on young children's research-based education. LucyMax works on improving basic literacy skills for children through the 4-Step Phonics program.

The Korean education brand has been working on introducing books for kids in a creative way. They have enjoyed a wide presence in various countries, with years of extensive



research, focused on developing the education function for young children. Future Intelligence Publishing house is supporting its launch into the Indian market.

Speaking at the book-distribution event, Sang Kyu Kim, CEO, LucyMax said, "It has been heartwarming to interact with the underprivileged yet highly intelligent children. India is a huge market for child education and we are keen to explore the possibilities that the vibrant

country offers. We want to make high-quality education available to each and every kid in India, as it is their basic right".

Adding on to his comment, Vikram from Future Intelligence Books said, "Each and every kid deserves the best in education and we, at Future Intelligence Books, were motivated by the vision that Kim shared for the Indian market. We wish to make a greater impact in the child education segment in India".



# UNDP partners with Arya.ag and Friends of Women's World Banking to improve incomes of 10,000 households

*United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is implementing Project Excel in Jamnagar and Dwaraka Devbhumi districts of Gujarat to improve the incomes of 10,000 households through enterprise promotion, agri-value chain interventions, skilling, employment and social protection.*

UNDP has selected Arya.ag and Friends of Women's World Banking, India (FWWB India) as partners for implementing enterprise promotion and value chain interventions in agriculture and allied activities. The partnership aims to create a cadre of community resource persons for mentoring and supporting entrepreneurs and

post-harvest process and develop the agriculture value chain of the producer group.

Arya.ag will provide its platform for the farmer collectives and FPOs to showcase their produce on its marketplace. Farmers will benefit from the economies of scale and synergies provided by the company's vast, integrated ecosystem of

enhancing farmers' incomes. Arya.ag's dedicated agritech initiatives solve traceability and transparency issues and give quality assurance for seamless commodity commerce.

FWWB India will focus on the development of entrepreneurship among villagers. It will support youth and women's economic empowerment through setting up demand-driven micro and nano enterprises. This partnership is to create a conducive business environment with end-to-end solutions consisting of training and technical support, capital and market linkages, and skill enhancement support, empowering women and ensuring a sustainable income at the individual and collective level.

The overall aim of this project is to develop the potential of the rural and semi-urban communities and provide them with the opportunities to enhance their livelihoods in sectors like agriculture, dairy, poultry, handloom, goat rearing and handicraft, etc. The project will also help build their managerial capabilities and provide stronger market linkages.

Arya.ag and FWWB India will work extensively to strengthen agri value chain and build an entrepreneurship ecosystem. They will enable deeper engagements with knowledge partners that positively impact the livelihoods of millions of small farmers and women from the under-served communities of Dwarka Devbhumi and increase their income.



promoting individual and group enterprises by December 2023. The blueprint of Project Excel includes building a team of sourcing managers to implement value chain interventions and establish market and credit linkages through collectivization. As part of this partnership, Arya.ag will build on farmers' collectives to effectively manage the

services, including quality inputs, commercial support, farm advisory and management tools, affordable credit, and capacity building. Through collectivization, they will help farmers in the villages establish market and credit linkages. FPOs, who have farmers as the shareholders, would leverage economies of scale, reducing production costs and

# Infosys Collaborates with The Economist Educational Foundation to expand sustainability education for younger people

Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, and The Economist Educational Foundation (TEEF), an independent charity set up by staff from The Economist Group, today announced a collaboration to expand the social impact of The Sustainability Project by enabling younger generations to discuss and make their voices heard on sustainability. The Sustainability Project is an Economist Impact content and community platform, enabled by Infosys as Digital Innovation Partner, designed to accelerate sustainability solutions and drive world-changing impact.

With only 2% of UK young people having the critical literary skills to tell if a news story is real or fake, it's essential that they're building these skills to form an accurate view of the modern world. Building on its involvement with the Sustainability Project, Infosys' partnership with TEEF will empower young people with critical thinking, communication skills and knowledge for today's world.

As part of this engagement, TEEF will develop a series of six world-class teaching resources for 9 to 15-year-olds on sustainability themes to inspire discussions about sustainability issues and instill an acute understanding of significant global challenges. Furthering its commitment to education and progress for all, Infosys will provide

volunteers to support TEEF in creating these educational materials that enable teachers to deliver interactive sessions and facilitate healthy discussions for students, internationally.

The students' opinions and ideas on the topics will be curated by TEEF and published on The Sustainability Project website, forming a new "Youth Voices" content series from TEEF. By being published on The Sustainability Project, the students will have the opportunity to be

pressing sustainability themes and give schoolchildren an influential global audience for their views. By pooling our strengths, this creative partnership will equip children to understand and have their say about sustainability issues that profoundly affect their lives, communities, and futures."

Mohit Joshi, President, Infosys, said, "At Infosys, our focus is to serve the preservation of the world's sustainability agenda driven by data-fueled insights, immersive experienc-

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exposed to thought-leaders, international experts, academics, and sustainability pioneers.

Emily Evans, CEO and Founder, The Economist Educational Foundation said, "We are thrilled to be working with Infosys to empower children with the knowledge and skills to thrive in our changing world. We're hugely grateful for Infosys' support and expertise, which will enable us to create a new series of teaching resources on

es, and informed decision-making, all through leveraging the power of digital technologies. As a partner, we are delighted to support The Economist Educational Foundation in its endeavor of empowering the next generation with essential future-ready skills and knowledge to be active citizens. This engagement further demonstrates our commitment to playing a leadership role in driving inclusive and sustainable growth, including the way we do business."



# THESE PINK CENTRES KEEP WOMEN AND KIDS SAFE

Pink Centres have helped in attaining resilience from safety and hygiene concerns regarding open defecation, UTIs, zero inclusivity for PWDs/transgender persons, women safety and privacy at the public toilet facilities





uch before CSR was legislated in the Companies Act in 2013, PVR Ltd was already fulfilling its corporate social responsibility commitments through a philanthropic approach. PVR's mission is centered on serving the community, and this value is at the core of everything it does from where it operates for more than 25 years. PVR is the first film exhibitor in India to adopt Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a comprehensive program. Through its CSR arm, PVR NEST over the last 16 years has made a vital contribution to various sustainable community development programs such as

CineArt Steer to Safety program, CineGreen, Aanchal Care and Protection Centres, Child Friendly Railway Stations, Paalan and Pink Centres through the immensely successful Public Private Partnership model. Their flagship project 'Pink Centres' has been able to create a clear differentiation in the management of public spaces for societal good and have been instrumental in keeping women and children from disadvantaged sections of society safe.

### THE BIRTH OF PINK CENTERS

In a study published by ActionAid in 2017, the public toilets in Delhi were in a dire condition with 35% of the toilets surveyed being absent of women section and 45% of them lacking any lock-mechanism to ensure basic privacy of the users.

In 2017, PVR NEST was invited by National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) to conceptualize a hygiene facility which will help in attaining resilience from safety and hygiene concerns regarding open defecation, UTIs, zero inclusivity for PWDs/transgender people, women safety and privacy at the toilet facilities.

Many challenges were identified through baseline survey and site visits of women sanitation facilities. The audit conducted for the existing government managed sites revealed

some startling facts. They were not women centric i.e., they were designed and managed by men paying disregard to women's perspective and needs. The facilities had direct opening to public spaces and men and women sections were exposed to each other compromising privacy. Due to their poor maintenance and dilapidated infrastructure, they rendered useless for Elderly, Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) and Transpersons etc. They were inadequate lighting and had no seating space for the attendants. There was complete absence of 'Beyond Toilet Facilities'.

This led to formation of one of our most revered accomplishments which is Pink Centre (formerly known as Pink Centres). In 2018, the first Pink Toilet was launched in Vikaspuri by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and South Delhi Municipal

Corporation (SDMC) on the International Day of the Girl Child. The pink colour is easily identifiable for women and hence the name Pink Toilets and their uniforms of lady attendants have been chosen.

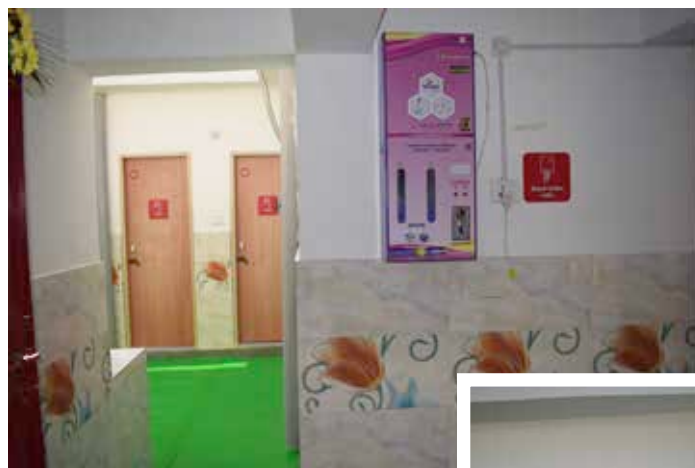
The facilities included separate toilet facility only for women, adolescent girls, children, Indian and Western toilet facilities, Disable friendly; availability of ramps, low height toilets and basins for children, basin with running water and hand-washing facility, easy signage, bright and vibrant with proper lighting, sanitary napkin Vending Machines for women (napkins available for marginal cost), instruction for care of toilet and usage of napkins displayed, helpline numbers and feedback mechanism, private area for child care inside toilet campus, seating areas outside for attendant and availability of toilet location in the app.

Within three years, the program has extended in its framework and acquired depth of understanding and diversified its range of services to now run as Safe Centres for Women and Girls. Within three years, the program has extended in its framework and acquired depth of understanding and diversified its range of services to now run as Safe Centres for Women and Girls.

## PINK CENTERS BRING CHANGE

Women and children are some of the most vulnerable members of societies in India and across the world. Health, safety and well-being are pivotal facets which get compromised due to lack of accessibility to toilets and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). Women and girls experience and fear various types of sexual violence in public sanitation facilities and reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement. It reduces their ability to participate in school, work and in public life. It limits their access to essential services, and enjoyment of cultural and recreational opportunities. It also negatively impacts their health and well-being. The lack of awareness of MHM, taboos and inaccessibility to toilets have compounded the problem with women and girls taking refuge in open defecation, becoming more susceptible to Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) and eventually Cervical Cancer.

Pink Centres have helped in attaining resilience from safety and hygiene concerns regarding open defecation, UTIs, zero inclusivity for PWDs/transgender persons, women safety and privacy at the public toilet facilities. They have accounted for behavioral shifts among the users which resulted in their higher consciousness towards sanitation and increase in the usage of sanitary pads. These centres further paved the way for over 100 WASH Champions to lead a dignity-rich, sustain-



← Sanitary Napkin Vending Machine



↑ Incinerators for Sanitary Napking Disposal



↑ Bathing Rooms

**In 2018, the first Pink Toilet was launched in Vikaspuri by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) and South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on the International Day of the Girl Child. The pink colour is easily identifiable for women and hence the name Pink Toilets and their uniforms of lady attendants have been chosen.**

able living through employment opportunity and the skilling workshops have empowered them to get better opportunities in future.

## MOVING BEYOND TOILETS

After a humble beginning being an operation and maintenance partner of Pink Toilets, through the support of MCD, Plan India and similar like-minded institutional partners, PVR

NEST was able to redefine a 'Public Toilet' (Pink Toilets) to a 'Beyond-Toilet facility' (Pink Centre) providing essential amenities like grooming space, resting/reading space, bathing facility, and menstrual hygiene products.

Sanitation workers are one of India's most disadvantaged groups, with unfavorable perceptions attributed to them, resulting in a lack

of respect from the general public. Pink Centres gave a new identity to the sanitation attendants to a 'WASH Champion' to see themselves in a new light commanding respect from the community for their contribution. PVR NEST thus was able to create a new model on how public sanitation in our country could lead to the overall development of the community around it.

"The answer to how CSR can contribute to advancing gender equality is rather simple, 'by creating inclusive and equitable urban spaces.' "What makes urban spaces crucial in advancing gender equality is their ability to create sustainable jobs, which in turn leads to socio-economic growth in women", says Deepa Menon, Founder Head, PVR NEST. Safe Centers are being oriented and

developed as hubs of empowerment, communication and awareness. Apart from providing safe sanitation services to women and children, these facilities are also unique since they are designed and led by women. A dedicated team of WASH Champs manage the operations and provide services for these facilities. Women attendants have been hired through a customized selection process and identified through a community-based hiring model. Once onboard, they further undertake an enriched training to become WASH Champs.

Periodic capacity building workshops on leadership qualities, self-

defense, financial literacy, digital literacy, menstrual hygiene, DIY plumbing and operations by industry experts from various disciplines empowers them and enables their holistic growth and development.

#### Key Features

- Sanitary Vending Machine
- Breast Feeding Areas
- Diaper Changing Space
- Trained WASH Champions
- Free of Cost Services (7am-7pm)

#### KEEPING WOMEN SAFE IN SOCIETY

PVR NEST in association with Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) built the concept of Pink Centres which are free-to-use, women-exclusive sanitation facilities operated by well-trained women sanitation workers known as WASH Champions. These centres are considered as 'Beyond-Toilet facilities' because they offer essential amenities such as grooming space, resting/reading space, breast feeding area, changing rooms, bathing facility (limited locations), vending machines with subsidized menstrual hygiene products, 24X7 water-electricity connection and well-lit premises. Currently, there are 20 Pink Centres spread across three zones in Delhi covering mainstream and suburban areas. Each centre is managed by two WASH Champions who maintain these facilities to offer a clean ambience to the users.

Pink Centres have become the most preferred safe urban space where the women and children felt included and valued. More than 5 Lakh users have visited these centres in 2021 and there has been a consistent rise of 10%-14% in each month. This clearly displays increasing consciousness of people towards sanitation which led to reduction of ODF at multiple locations near centres.



“

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**-DEEPA MENON**  
Founder Head, PVR NEST



As of July 2022, the centres served as safe spaces for 300 Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and 400 Trans persons embracing diversity and inclusivity in public toilets. Safe Centres programme have addressed the pertinent issues of safety, health and hygiene and pushed the landscape of women-friendly public sanitation forward.

## COVID TESTS RESILIENCE

2020 has been a year of uncertainty due to the widespread breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic. With the declaration of nationwide lockdowns, cinema complexes shut down all across the country which was an unprecedented situation in the corporate history of PVR Cinemas. PVR NEST was adversely impacted too, due to the resultant resource crunch. The COVID-19 containment measures also meant restrictions on mobility and gatherings, bringing to halt the on-going CSR programmes.

Even after these setbacks, PVR NEST remained vigilant and continued its journey towards providing safety and protection to its beneficiaries and making a social impact to improve the lives of vulnerable sections of the society. Building upon its time-tested, multi-partner approach, PVR NEST collaborated with Plan India, Second Act, Tvishi Services and Centre for Youth, to enable this path-breaking initiative and provide 'beyond toilet facilities', a phrase coined by its satisfied users.

Through the pandemic, Safe Centres have remained fully operational, even during the second wave of COVID-19 when most public facilities closed down. Due to the exemplary service they provided, Safe Centres have been recognized as a model COVID-19 compliant centre. Equipped with all the COVID-19 mitigation measures and appliances, Safe Centres ensured the availability and application of thermal scanners and hand sanitizers. The WASH at-



← Toilet cum Bathing Room for Differently Abled



↑ Community Living Conditions\_ Jawahar Camp, Kirti Nagar



↑ Community Living Conditions\_ Jawahar Camp, Kirti Nagar

**Women and children are some of the most vulnerable members of societies in India and across the world. Health, safety and well-being are pivotal facets which get compromised due to lack of accessibility to toilets and Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM). Women and girls experience and fear various types of sexual violence in public sanitation facilities and reduces women's and girls' freedom of movement. It reduces their ability to participate in school, work and in public life.**

tendants also advocated the practicing of COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour like wearing masks properly and also encouraged eligible users to vaccinate themselves for safety of self and others. It is indeed noteworthy to note that these centres experienced a footfall of over 5 lac users in FY 2021-22.

## DATA HELPING TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS

Data is one of the most valuable assets an organization can have and potentially has a tremendous impact on its long-term success. Good data is the foundation for every operations. It allows organizations to establish baselines, find benchmarks and

set performance goals. In January 2022, encouraged by the increasing numbers and growing popularity of the centres, comprehensive formats capturing user data collection were implemented across all the centres with special training and guidance imparted to the WASH Champions for gathering information such as age bifurcation, services used, type of toilet used. All this would help initiating necessary interventions in the program making it comprehensive and specific to the user. The Pink Centres are truly transiting towards the vision of 'beyond toilets' centres and the September 2022 data on users supported that vision. 49% of people used the centres for Resting and 41% for grooming. The demographic profiling revealed that 42% of users were middle aged (30-59), 36% youth (17-29), 16% children (1-17 years) and 6% senior citizens (60+).

The Pink Toilets program's success can be validated in terms of the steady increase in the number of users and the usefulness of the services offered by these safe sanitation spaces. With an objective of getting further insights and details into the current situation, potential improvements and the way forward for the Pink Toilets Program, an Impact Assessment has been planned which will be conducted to measure the program's relevance in contributing to the progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Swachh Bharat Mission. Specific contribution towards women empowerment, improvement in economic, social and cultural aspect of the users and the WASH Champs etc., will be measured and assessed. Additionally, the Social Return on Investment (SROI) impact on health, quality of life, adoption of improved hygiene practices on the users, WASH Champs and their family members would also be assessed. PVR NEST is reaching out to various organizations and universities to conduct these assessments.

The impact of these centres has empowered us to expand our vision of building safe urban spaces to a wider demographic of people through Garima Grih. As a successor to Pink Centres under our Safe Centres programme, Garima Grih is a one-of-its-kind unique concept of multi-utility safe sanitation complex which will offer quality sanitation services to the users and will also become a hub of pride and opportunities for the socially disadvantaged communities in which these centres will be constructed.

### THE INCEPTION OF GARIMA GRIH

A government provided infrastructure was provided to PVR NEST by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. This site was used by the members of 3 camps – Jawahar Camp, Harijan Camp and Chuna Bhatti Camp at Kirti Nagar. Since this site served the sanitary and hygiene needs of 10,000+ households, this gave us an excellent opportunity to remodel the government procured infrastructure to build Garima Grih, a multi-utility hub.

A preliminary survey conducted by PVR NEST and Centre for Youth (C4Y) at Jawahar Camp, the site of the upcoming Garima Grih revealed these findings. The densely populated locality comprises 7000 jhuggis, small single room structures housing 18,000-20,000 people. Unhealthy living conditions are attributed to lack of access to proper sanitation, water supply, safe drinking water, unregulated trash dumping, congested paths and rainwater drainage. There are only two public toilets which are filthy with no toiletries and open defecation could be the norm. Garima Grih, the multi-utility safe community centre will come as a big relief to the women in the community. With toilets maintained by fully trained WASH Champions, bathing area, changing rooms, handwashing areas, menstrual hygiene products, the women

and children can look forward a dignified way of living through safe, sanitation and hygiene spaces.

### A PUBLIC HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE PAR EXCELLENCE

Garima Grih is completely accessible through ramps and is inclusive (friendly for Persons with Disabilities friendly, senior citizen and children). Women can get access to Menstrual Hygiene products through a Sanitary Napkin Vending Machine and can dispose them in a most sustainable way through incinerators. Besides toilets, there are changing rooms, bathing and handwashing areas. It has a Common Services Centre 'Jan Suvidha Kendra' offering digital services for public completely run by women.

The 'Women Empowerment Centre' will be used for skill development of women teaching them essential skills for earning their livelihood. Additionally there is a covered open space for women to take rest after a hard day's work which adds up as an area to run capacity building workshops for increasing or developing skills and competencies of the neighborhood community. Towards meeting the skill development objective, 200 unique stakeholders will be provided computer skills, 100 reading and writing skills with over 2000 women expected to be skilled in the next 3 years. 'Garima Grih' will enlist the support of multidisciplinary organizations such as Water Aid India, Deakin University, Lady Irwin College, NIFT, Read India and PVR Pictures to realize its objectives.

One of the most complex challenges our country is facing today is the pace of urbanization. The urban population is growing with migration to cities adding to the pressure on cities. Policies to manage urban growth need to focus on the needs of the vulnerable groups for housing, education, health care, livelihood and safe environment. High density

of population instills fears of catching communicable diseases living in slums that are unregulated and have congested conditions characterized by foul air and no sunlight. Delhi is projected to continue growing and to become the most populous city in the world around 2028. The city's significant population lives in slums among substandard conditions aggravated by dirty water, clogged and open drains, narrow lanes, cramped houses, heaps of garbage devoid of basic necessities like proper sanitation and water supply.

## WHAT WILL GARIMA GRIH CHANGE

Garima Grih will play a contributory role in 'Urbanism'. It will bring about a basic change in the health and sanitation habits of the inhabitants of the diverse underprivileged population group. By using organized sanitation facilities of community toilets, it will bring about a behavioral change on the community, how they interact with the environment positively being a part of a liveable sustainable community. Garima Grih has been built keeping in mind the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) and meets 9 of the 17 SDG Goals. It will mitigate risks of open defecation and unsafe menstrual hygiene management practices.

However more than the immediate needs of sanitation, Garima Grih will bring women into mainstream through capacity building and income generation opportunities of the women of the community will help them earn incremental income, upgrade their economic and social status along with a sense of recognition contributing to the process of empowerment.

Garima Grih in its avatar is accelerating the efforts of the government of India to achieve its objectives to ensure the wellbeing of its citizens. It is completely aligned to the government's Smart Cities Mission, Swachh Bharat Mission and The Atal



← Garima Grih



↑ Garima Grih



↑ Women Empowerment Centre, Garima Grih

**PVR NEST in association with Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and National Commission of Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) built the concept of Pink Centres which are free-to-use, women- exclusive sanitation facilities operated by well-trained women sanitation workers known as WASH Champions. These centres are considered as 'Beyond-Toilet facilities' because they offer essential amenities such as grooming space, resting/ reading space, breast feeding area, changing rooms, bathing facility (limited locations), vending machines with subsidized menstrual hygiene products, 24X7 water- electricity connection and well-lit premises.**

Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation 2.0 (AMRUT 2.0).

Being the first of its kind in the country, Garima Grih as a sustainable model multi-utility centre will pave the way how public infrastructure spaces can be effectively utilized through the public-private

partnership model for replication by other states in the country. Through this winning approach to community development, it will provide economic opportunity, empower individuals and groups with the skills they need to effect change within their communities. 🟩



# Tata Power transforming green mobility landscape

**T**ata Power, India's largest EV charging solutions provider has achieved a rare landmark of setting up 450+ EZ Charging points across 350 + national highways in the country. Tata Power EZ Charging Points are now present across major national highways including the longest highway (NH 44 which connects J&K to Tamil Nadu), the busiest highway (NH 19 connecting Delhi, UP, Bihar, West Bengal, and Jharkhand) and other highways connecting major states across south, north, east and west India (NH 65, NH 48, NH 16 etc.). This is in line with the company's nationwide plan of setting up charging points from north to south, connecting Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from east to west, from Guwahati to Dwarka and Bikaner.

The widespread installation of Tata Power EZ Charging Points is making intrastate and interstate (via national highways) travel easy for EV owners. These 450+ EV charging points on the highways are installed at diverse locations like hotels, commercial complexes, car dealerships, etc., across more than 25+ states and 5 union territories to provide ease of charging to reduce range anxiety and ensure seamless green and sustainable mobility.

For effective operational management of pan India charging points, Tata Power has also set up a state-of-the-art Network Operations Centre (NOC). The NOC provides the backbone for robust charging support. The centre has a real-time communication link with all the on-board chargers and is integrated with the digital platform that supports EV charging services of Tata



**Launches state-of-the-art Network Control Centre for real-time monitoring and maintenance of its pan-India EV charging points**

**Tata Power EZ Charge charging points are now present across 25+ states and 5 UTs i.e., approx. 60% of the national highways**

**Tata Power EZ Charge Mobile app is powering the e-mobility transition with more than 1 lakh downloads**

**Company to offer 15% discount at all its select public charging points on Sept. 9, World EV Day**

Power. It plays a key role in the proactive identification of issues, and quick resolution in case of any technical snag through maintenance teams. This centre is responsible for providing back-end system support, quick resolution of issues, and ensuring proactive charging infrastructure maintenance planning.

Speaking about this milestone, Dr Praveer Sinha, CEO&MD, Tata Power, said "We are committed to promoting sustainable mobility in the country and are happy to set up more than 450 + EV charging points across our national highways. This marks our presence on

60% of the existing highways. We believe that India's true EV transition will happen once we provide EV Charging solutions in not only cities and towns, but also across the major highways connecting states pan-India."

Tata Power EZ Charge Mobile app is also supporting the e-mobility transition with more than 1 lakh downloads on the Google Play Store, it has a variety of features which provide a seamless EV charging experience to EV users.

In urban areas too, Tata Power has been installing public/semi-public EV charging points at key residential complexes, malls, and petrol pumps to enable wider adoption among urban audiences. Recently, Tata Power has gone one step ahead and installed more than 150 charging points powered by clean energy sources in Mumbai.

Tata Power's aggressive deployment of EV chargers is a result of its commitment towards sustainable mobility. The company's EV charging initiatives are in line with the Government of India's National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP), which aims to develop electric vehicle charging infrastructure using the latest technological platform along with easy access to electric vehicles for charging points.

Tata Power will continue to make sustainable mobility attainable in India and plans to have more than 6500 + charging points by FY 23. Tata Power presently has a strong network of 21000+ home chargers (for private usage) and 240+ electric bus charging points, as well as more than 2400 public and semi-public chargers across 300 cities, towns and national highways. 🌱

# Amazon announces its first utility-scale renewable energy projects in India

Three solar farms in Rajasthan and 23 new solar rooftop projects

**A**mazon has announced its first utility-scale renewable energy projects in India – three solar farms located in the state of Rajasthan. These include a 210 MW project to be developed by India-based developer ReNew Power, a 100MW project to be developed by local developer Amp Energy India, and a 110MW project to be developed by Brookfield Renewable. Combined, these solar farms have the capacity to generate 1,076,000 megawatt hours (MWh) of renewable energy per year, enough to power over 360,000 average-sized households in New Delhi annually.

Amazon's solar projects in Rajasthan will help to increase the availability and affordability of renewable energy in India, by enabling new capacity beyond what is available on the grid today.

**The three solar farms in India will have a combined 420 megawatts (MW) of clean energy capacity**

**Amazon also announces 71 new renewable energy projects globally, including firsts in Brazil and Poland, bringing an additional 2.7 gigawatts (GW) of clean energy capacity**

Additionally, Amazon announced 23 new solar rooftop projects on its fulfillment centers across 14 cities in India, which have the capacity to generate an additional 4.09 MW of renewable energy. This brings the total number of solar rooftop projects in India to 41 with 19.7 MW of renewable energy capacity, which will contribute to powering Amazon's fulfillment network in India.

"We are bringing new wind and solar projects online to power our offices, fulfillment centers, data centers, and stores, which collectively serve millions of customers globally, and we are on a path to reach 100% renewable energy across our entire business by 2025" said Adam Selipsky, CEO of Amazon Web Services. "Around the world, countries are looking to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy, and continued investments like ours can help accelerate their journey as we all work together to mitigate the impacts of climate change."

"We are pleased to see how policy reforms by the government over the last several years are enabling use of renewable energy by the Industry thus providing means to achieve their sustainability goals," commented Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Joint Secretary for the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). "Corporate off-takers of renewable power, such as Amazon, are an increasingly important source of investment for renewable energy projects across India. These investments in large-scale projects like the ones announced today are adding significant volumes of new

renewable power to the grid, to the benefit of all Indian consumers. We have been working with industry to creatively unlock more such private sector investments in renewable energy projects. We hope that the policy reforms that we have enacted in India to enable this will serve as a model globally for countries seeking to bring corporate renewable energy investments to accelerate their transition to a greener energy future.”

Amazon’s project with ReNew Power is a 210 MW solar farm in Rajasthan — considered to be one of the largest solar corporate power purchase agreement (PPA) by a technology company in India — and the largest single business-to-business (B2B) project that ReNew Power is developing in India. “As we support India’s historic clean energy transition, our work with global leaders such as Amazon is critical in decarbonizing the corporate sector and the broader economy. Leading organizations like Amazon set an example for other companies globally to adopt clean energy sources and, accelerate the energy transition, a pre-requisite to meet our net-zero goals,” said Sumant Sinha, Founder, Chairman and CEO, ReNew.”

“We are pleased to partner with Amazon on this landmark project. It highlights Amp Energy India’s unique abilities to offer solutions for corporates to reach 100% renewable energy. We are proud to partner with a global brand like Amazon on their renewable energy push. This project also supports the government’s Digital India mission of transforming India into a digitally empowered society powered by renewable energy.” said by Mr. Pinaki Bhattacharyya MD & CEO Amp Energy India.

Amazon has executed more than 500 MW of renewable energy PPAs with Brookfield globally, and now 110 MW in India. Speaking about this partnership, Nawal Saini, Managing Director, Renewable Power

and Transition, Brookfield said, “We are pleased to work with Amazon on their journey towards becoming 100% renewable energy powered. The new Bikaner solar park development is being undertaken as a part of the Brookfield Global Transition Fund, our inaugural impact fund focusing on investments that accelerate the global transition to a net-zero carbon economy. We look forward to partnering with governments and corporates to accelerate their sustainability and decarbonization goals.”


“At Amazon, we have worked hard to collaborate with and engage government and industry stakeholders on corporate power purchase agreements for renewable energy in India,” said Abhinav Singh,

scale corporate renewable energy procurement options in the country, bringing associated green jobs and investments to more parts of India.”

Amazon also announced that it is expanding its renewable energy portfolio globally, with an additional 2.7 gigawatts (GW) of clean energy capacity across 71 new renewable energy projects. This includes the company’s first renewable energy project in South America – a solar farm in Brazil – and its first solar farm in Poland. Once fully operational, Amazon’s global renewable energy portfolio will generate 50,000 gigawatt hours (GWh) of clean energy, which is the equivalent amount of electricity needed to power 4.6 million U.S. homes each year.

**As the largest corporate purchaser of renewable energy globally, Amazon now has a total of 379 renewable energy projects across 21 countries, including 154 wind and solar farms and 225 rooftop solar projects, representing 18.5 GW of renewable energy capacity.**

Director – Customer Fulfilment, Supply Chain and Global Specialty Fulfilment, Amazon India. “Besides these PPAs, our efforts include providing training for developers and other buyers on how to structure these agreements for mutual benefit, facilitating government dialogues with industry groups to highlight the importance of corporate buyers, and working with local energy providers who want to reach new customers. Amazon is committed to helping

As the largest corporate purchaser of renewable energy globally, Amazon now has a total of 379 renewable energy projects across 21 countries, including 154 wind and solar farms and 225 rooftop solar projects, representing 18.5 GW of renewable energy capacity. In the Asia-Pacific region, the company now has a total of 57 renewable energy projects. By the end of 2021, the company had reached 85% renewable energy across its business. 





Farmland borders an industrial area  
in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa.

*Image: World Bank Photo Collection, CC  
BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*

# Global turbulence may herald 'giant leap' to a greener era, says top scientist

Energy and inflation crises could lead to  
a climate-friendly, fairer future, says environmental  
guru **Johan Rockström**.

**A**s rocketing energy and food prices fuel inflation and social discontent in many countries, the world may have entered a period of “big turbulence” that could force a green transition in the global economy, said a leading environmental scientist.

Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), said in an interview this week that the old model of powering growth with fossil fuels has run aground, with Russian supplies squeezed by the Ukraine war.

Insufficient clean energy capacity has been added to replace coal, oil and gas, leaving some major economies such as Germany facing the prospect of winter electricity outages, he added.

“We have underinvested in all the new renewable energy systems for decades and now we’re paying the price really badly,” said Rockström, co-author of a new book that urges what it calls a “Giant Leap” towards a greener and fairer society.

The Swedish academic - who developed the concept of “planetary boundaries” that must be respected to ensure a “safe operating space for humanity” - warned that today’s tough times may last for a decade but emphasised that the painful transition would lead to a future with cheaper, cleaner energy.

“We will have a solar-powered world economy which will give us per kilowatt-hour even more energy per US dollar,” he said.

“It will be more stable, more (equally) distributed and more democratic because it won’t be in the hands of a few autocrats, it will be in the hands of every nation or every household even.” To achieve this, leaders must take difficult decisions now to end investment in exploiting and using fossil fuels and to set a global price on planet-heating carbon, said Rockström. “I would argue that we may have entered that

**“**  
**What we’re seeing right now in 2022 - with the inflation and the geopolitics in the world and the distrust we’re having - is that we’re rather moving backwards than forwards.**

**JOHAN ROCKSTRÖM**  
Director, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research

(transition) phase because we are starting to hit the wall on food, on energy and many other finite natural resources,” he added.

### ‘Survival guide’

The new book, “Earth for All: A Survival Guide for Humanity”, presents five solutions - ranging from reforming the global financial system and tackling wealth inequality to achieving gender equity and net-zero emissions by mid-century.

The book presents the results of a two-year analysis which finds that the investment needed to make the proposed “Giant Leap” is 2-4 per cent of global gross domestic product per year - less than annual subsidies to fossil fuel industries.

“This is easily affordable, and it will create millions of jobs,” said fellow author Sandrine Dixon-Declève, co-president of The Club of Rome, a nonprofit policy group. “What is missing is coalitions of politicians willing to make it happen.”

The analysis modelled a second vision of the future, dubbed “Too Little, Too Late”, in which the world continues its neoliberal economic policies, leading to warming of 2.5C that stokes risks to climate and nature, more extreme inequalities and rising social tensions within and between nations.

However, today’s global developments make even this scenario seem optimistic, Rockström warned.

“What we’re seeing right now in 2022 - with the inflation and the geopolitics in the world and the distrust we’re having - is that we’re rather moving backwards than forwards,” he said.

A survey accompanying the analysis, on attitudes to transformation, found that in G20 countries, about three-quarters of people support a change in economic systems to look beyond a focus on profit and encompass health and the planet.

Yet Rockström said that the hardships faced by many families in a world racked by the pandemic, war and inflation may lead to a short-term decline in public mobilisation for climate action.

“The first reaction of the turbulence in the world economy is that people start looking inwards,” he said, adding that young protesters would likely return to the streets at some point.

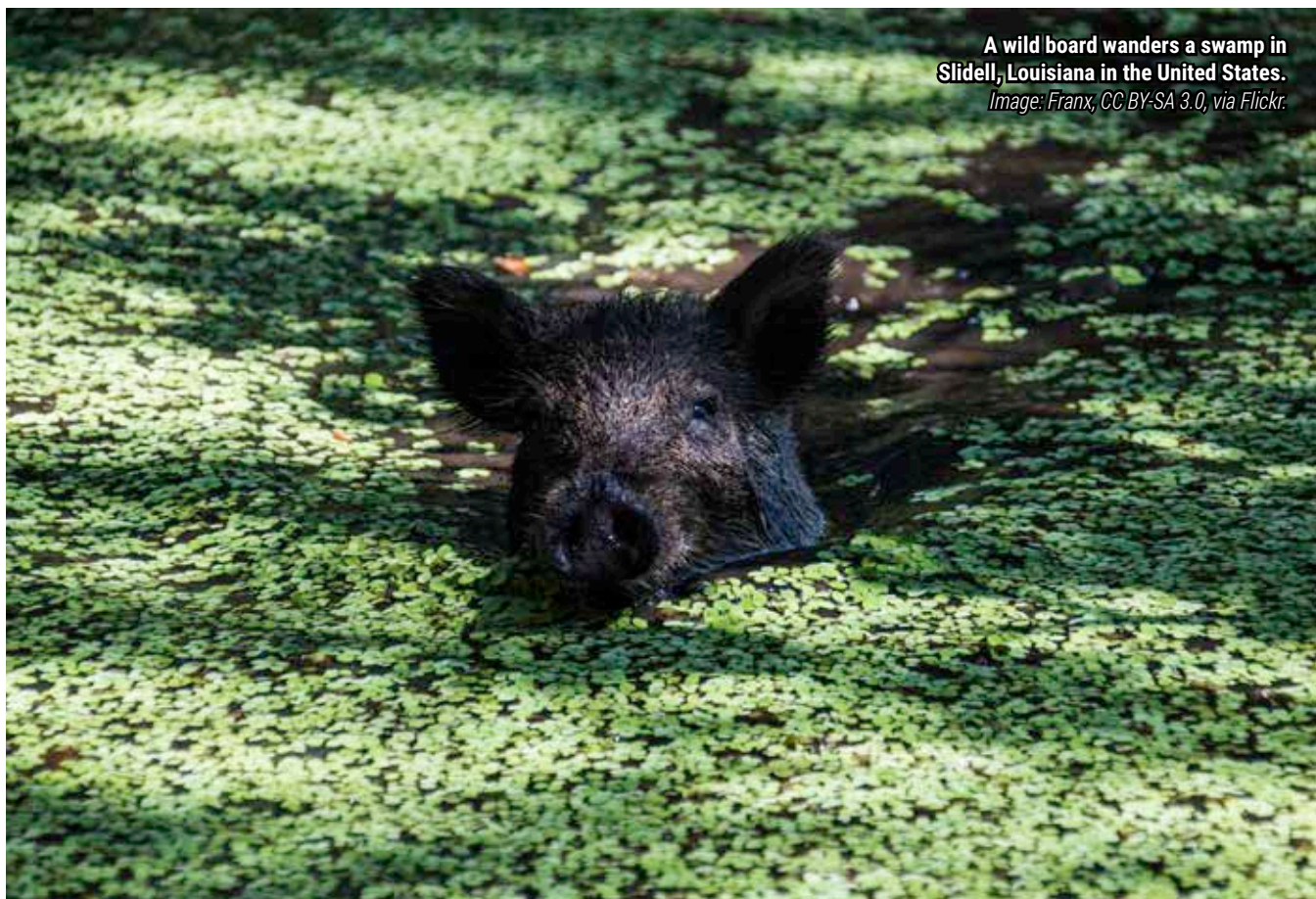
Ultimately, making the envisioned “Giant Leap” will be a messy process - but there is far more evidence today that decarbonising business and circular use of scarce resources make economic sense, Rockström argued, citing rapid expansion of solar power in Texas and electric vehicles in the auto industry.

“It’s not so much about saving the planet,” he said. “It’s really about more competitive, more strategic and more economically sensible ways of operating. 🌱

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*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/global-turbulence-may-herald-giant-leap-to-a-greener-era-says-top-scientist/>)*





A wild boar wanders a swamp in Slidell, Louisiana in the United States.  
*Image: Franx, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.*

# Biodiversity crisis threatens billions relying on wild species for food

A recently released summary of an assessment from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reveals that people rely on 50,000 wild species of plants, animals, algae and fungi, writes **John Cannon**, [Mongabay.com](https://www.mongabay.com)

**S**ome 50,000 wild species provide for many of the world's people, according to a recent report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). But today, those critical services are threatened by the global biodiversity crisis, the authors found in their review of more than 6,200 sources.

"The sustainable use of wild species matters for all people and in all communities," Anne Larigaud-



erie, an ecologist and the IPBES executive secretary, said during a press conference launching a report summary for policymakers on July 8. “Billions of people around the world rely on wild species for their food, for their energy, for their medicine, and many other purposes, including the very important cultural aspects as well.”

The aim of the report, scheduled for full publication later in 2022, is to move the use of wild species toward sustainability — that is, exploitation that will not endanger the future of these algae, animals, fungi and plants. Representatives from the nearly 140 member states of the IPBES, which is often described as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, for biodiversity, approved the report in early July.

Global wildlife trade secretariat CITES and other international groups focused on species conservation had requested this assessment as a tool for leaders and policymakers. It will also likely contribute to the new global biodiversity framework, slated for adoption at the UN biodiversity conference from Dec. 5-17 in Montreal, Elizabeth Maruma Mrema, who heads the Convention on Biological Diversity, said in a statement.

“In our world faced with biodiversity decline, including as a result of the overexploitation of wild species, we need to better understand the ways forward for sustainable use,” Mrema said.

This latest assessment took four years to produce and follows the IPBES’s 2019 report concluding the threat of extinction looms over 1 million living species, as soon as the middle of the 21st century for some.

The harvest of wild species beyond sustainable levels is second overall only to habitat destruction in terms of the amount of biodiversity loss caused, according to the authors’ research. It’s the top cause

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There is no single magic recipe in order to ensure sustainable use of wild species. We have really shown that the solution should be locally based and context-specific.

JEAN-MARC FROMENTIN  
Marine Ecologist, French Research  
Institute for Exploitation  
of the Sea

for marine species. People rely on 10,000 wild species for food alone, with many more that meet a broader swath of our needs. Around a third of us, or 2.4 billion people, require fuelwood to cook, and a fifth of all humans depend on wild species for sustenance, income or both.

Wild species are essential in both industrialised and less-industrialised economies. Most wood and products come from wild species, a trend unlikely to change soon.

Still, rural communities could face the most significant risks, Jean-Marc Fromentin, a marine ecologist at the French Research Institute for Exploitation of the Sea (IFREMER) and one of the co-chairs of the assessment, said in a statement. With few other options, they may be forced to continue to harvest species already facing pressures from unsustainable takes, he said.

In addition to providing alternatives for survival and livelihoods, the assessment calls for involving these communities in managing and monitoring wild species. Marla R. Emery, a scientific adviser with the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research and a co-chair of the assessment, said the continued scientific study would be critical to reducing unsustainable use, but that

other sources of information should also be included.

“There’s already a deep and important source of knowledge that we can use and draw on to do this,” Emery said during the press conference, “and this is Indigenous and local knowledge.”


The assessment notes that Indigenous peoples hunt, fish and gather wild species from land they manage, covering 38 million square kilometres (14.7 million square miles) — nearly four times the size of China — across 87 countries.

Emery also said collaboration with scientists must be done “with free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous peoples who are participating in those collaborations about how their information is used.”

Recognition of the knowledge held in communities and Indigenous groups is critical to supporting the sustainable use of species. Several other “key elements” focus on allowing these groups to take part in decisions about species management, as well as calling for an equitable sharing of both the costs and benefits of the resulting actions.

The report also mentions the need for monitoring wild species and how they’re used. The authors call for policies, from internationally recognised targets to granular local plans, to work in step with each other.

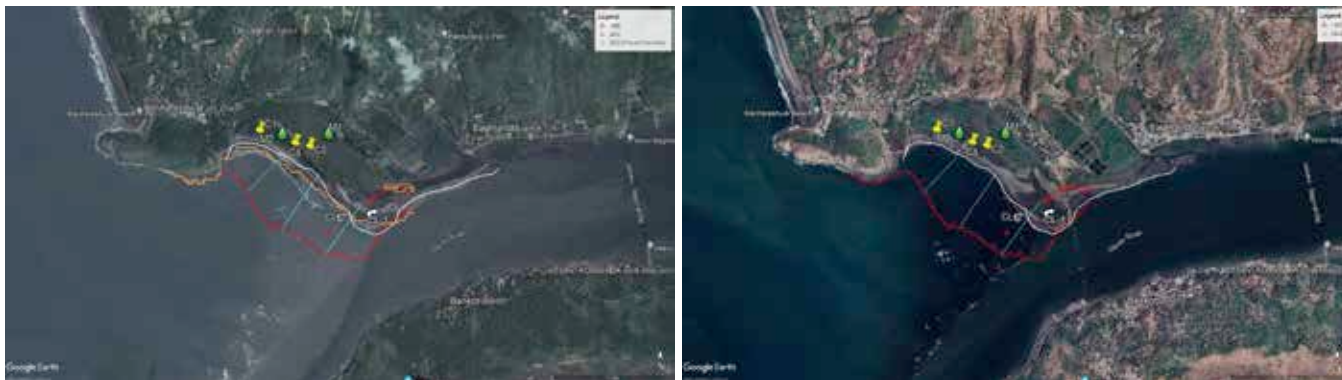
The researchers also point out that each situation presents its own challenges, which should be taken into account.

“There is no single magic recipe in order ... to ensure sustainable use of wild species,” Fromentin said. “We have really shown that the solution should be [locally] based and context-specific.” 

*This story was published with permission from Mongabay.com.*

(SOURCE: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/biodiversity-crisis-threatens-billions-relying-on-wild-species-for-food/>)

# Seashore spanning 55-hectares in coastal Maharashtra submerged



**R**esearchers using satellite images have identified the submergence of an 55 hectare area - nearly ten times the size of Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium - which has an area of 5.4 ha -- near Devghar in Raigad district of coastal Konkan belt of Maharashtra.

It clearly indicates a worrying sign - that of coastal inundation and extreme shoreline erosion.

The Srushti Conservation Foundation (SCF), a non-profit organisation based in Pune, conducted the study close to the mouth of Bankot Creek, which has a 1.5-km-long beach area.

Preliminary data show that between 1990 and 2022, there was a total loss of around 55 ha of coastal ecosystems, including mangrove, creeklets, mudflats, and sandy coasts, and that almost 300 metres of shore area was eroded.

In order to produce a thorough report to assist policymakers on the subject of coastal inundation and land degradation, SCF is continuing its overall study on coastal inundation by developing satellite

datasets all along the Maharashtra coastline. Last year, SCF released its assessment of the shrinking width of creeks and waterways along the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and succession of mangroves over 60 sq.km of agricultural land along Karanja Creek. The latest study was prompted by information shared by Devghar residents on how this beach had been steadily eroding since the 1990s. The researchers ran a preliminary analysis to determine the degree of erosion since the 1990s and assembled Landsat (satellite) datasets using the Google Earth Engine to look into the claim.

"It was observed that the satellite-derived shoreline (unsupervised classification-based waterbody boundary) had now shifted 300-500 meters towards land. Apart from this it was clear that mangrove and Casuarina plantation was also not able to withstand the loss of sediment and eventually they got uprooted," said Dr Deepak Apte, Managing Director, SCF.

At present, the Casuarina plantation (Coastal She-oak or Sura in

Marathi) extends along the north-south belt on Devghar Beach. However, the beach-side plantation was found to be getting destroyed due to continuous loss of sediment resulting in the erosion of the shore and also change in sediment profile from a clay-silty dominated seascape to coarse sand dominated seascape, the analysis read.

The satellite images further showed that mangroves were distributed unevenly in this patch. In the central part of this patch, dead mangroves were observed on a large scale. In the peripheral areas of this patch, mangroves were dominated by the bushy and sparsely distributed *Avicennia marina* (gray mangrove). The inner areas were dominated by *Rhizophora mucronata* (Asiatic mangrove). In exceptional cases, *Aegiceras corniculatum* (black mangrove) could be observed along with *Acanthus ilicifolius* (Sea Holly).

In 2020, the landfall of Cyclone Nisarga close to the coast of Devghar, saw the death of trees, shrubs, and (approximately 5 ha) of mangrove species like *Avicennia*



marina. “Some of these patches are now recovering but large tracts of mangrove are already on the verge of death, most probably due to a shift in sediment structure from muddy to sandy nature,” said Apte.

The shoreline is changing steadily in several parts of the state and there is a need for a systematic assessment of the same, the study suggested. For example, in many areas, mangroves are expanding in agriculture lands due to saltwater ingress while in many areas, loss of sediment causing large scale erosion.

“Climate change related sea-level rise will further worsen the situation. The Government should commission a study to seek solutions to deal with the changing seascape. We are currently doing ad hoc interventions which will only worsen the situation,” Apte said, adding that for example, promotion of kharland bunds which essentially kills mangroves is a favorite but ill-conceived remedy as a universal solution. “It will not only erode our natural barrier, it will facilitate erosion in the long run.”

SCF’s studies on impact of Cyclone Nisarga on mangrove and non-mangrove areas points to the value of Mangrove during storm surges and cyclones. “Unregulated construction of seawalls is another case where the problem of erosion is shifted from one place to another. These may be solutions as a short-term remedy at extremely eroding shores,

#### PRELIMINARY SOLUTIONS SUGGESTED BY THE STUDY

- Climate change facilitated increase in the sea level and coastal inundation will put coastal assets, investments and communities at risk over next few decades. Thus, the State should focus on developing Shore Management Policy. Use of cutting-edge science will be vital in developing such a policy.
- Launch community-based climate resilience, adaptation and awareness programme.
- Scientific management across creek areas to maintain optimal depth and water level
- Reviewing the Kharland Bund Policy as construction of bunds to prevent salt water ingress will only shift the problem from one place to another and it is facilitating large scale mangrove mortality.
- Review efficacy of sea walls and its impact on shore erosion in nearby areas

but it cannot and should not be the only solution,” said Apte.

Recently, National Institute of Ocean Technology did extensive analysis of shore erosion suggesting 25.5% of Maharashtra shoreline is eroded (From 1990-2018). Sediment movement depends on several factors and thus issues of erosion require holistic understanding before making any engineering interventions, the study suggested.

#### Threats to the study site

The area of Devghar beach is in close proximity to the Bankot creek, which has been witnessing sand mining. Though the impact of sand mining is unclear at this point of time on the erosion at Devghar region, unregulated sand mining is facilitating erosion in several areas along the Maharashtra coastline. For example, various stretches between Alibaug and Mandwa have witnessed illegal sand mining eroding beaches completely.

“While on one side sea level is increasing and on the other side, sand mining on beaches is flattening natural shore gradient facilitating coastal inundation. In case of sand mining in the creeks, these are getting deeper and deeper facilitating erosion and large-scale salt-water inundation in nearby areas as it increases its water carrying capacity during high tides and storm surges. Though deepening of creeks is necessary and essential in many cases to facilitate storm water drainage especially in the rainy season, it is very site specific and needs to be done in a very careful manner,” said Apte.

In case of Devghar area, increase of erosion coincides well with the construction of bridge and related activities, the study found. A detailed analysis with higher resolution satellite imagery is expected to throw further light along with local people’s perception. 📍



# HUMAN RIGHTS HOLD THE KEY TO PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY

As governments seek an agreement on a global plan to halt the rapid loss of the world's biodiversity, the rights of Indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers and other agroecological communities are being sidelined, writes **Sofia Monsalve** and **Georgina Catacora-Vargas**



Deforestation in the Cerrado region of Brazil. Image: Marizilda Cruppe / Greenpeace

In October 2021, two tractors with a large chain stretched between them cleared more than 2,000 hectares of forest in the Brazilian Cerrado, one of the world's most biodiverse areas. Tragically, such scenes have become all too familiar in the region.

In 2021 alone, 8,531 square kilometers (3,294 square miles) of the Cerrado's forests, grasslands and other native vegetation were destroyed – the highest rate since 2015. And in recent decades, 40 to 55 per cent of the Cerrado biome has been converted to croplands,

pastures and tree plantations, with much of the deforestation making way for large industrial soy monocultures and cattle production. Agribusinesses have dispossessed thousands of communities in land grabs and destroyed the surrounding environment.

The Cerrado is a tragic and alarming example of how quickly the world's biological diversity is being lost. The region is estimated to be home to 12,000 plant species – 35 per cent of which grow nowhere else in the world – as well as around 25 million people, including Indigenous

peoples, smallholder farmers and other communities where traditional livelihoods depend on biodiversity. All are in urgent need of protection.

For the past few years, governments have been negotiating a new Global Biodiversity Framework under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. But very little progress was made at the most recent round of talks in June, and though there is global consensus on the urgent need to act, the current debate is based on two dangerously mistaken premises.

The first is the assumption that human societies and ecosystems exist separately from one another, implying that the best way to conserve biodiversity is to carve out protected areas that exclude all human activity. Hence, most of the focus today is on the “30 x 30” campaign to establish formal protections for 30 per cent of all land and marine areas by 2030.

But this “fortress conservation” approach has already been tried, and it was shown to lead to systematic violations of local communities’ rights. By deploying such strategies, governments risk sidelining precisely the people who live closest to the ecosystems that we are trying to protect, and who play a critical role in sustainably managing those resources to preserve their own livelihoods.

The second flawed premise guiding today’s negotiations is that protecting biodiversity must be turned into a business. Instead of ensuring that industrial and financial activities are regulated to avoid harming people and the planet, the current proposals focus on trying to transform the biodiversity crisis into another opportunity to boost corporate profits.

In “green” business and financial circles, the current buzz is about “nature-based solutions,” a term used to describe interventions ranging from reforestation to carbon markets. The concept has a nice ring to it, and it has been endorsed by the UN Environment Assembly. But it is dangerously ill-defined.

Those who use the term seldom refer to human rights and tend to focus instead on offsetting schemes, such as carbon markets, which tie the protection of biodiversity in one place to its ongoing destruction elsewhere. Rather than a remedy, “nature-based solutions” are becoming part of the problem, serving as a licence for business-as-usual, or even encouraging more

land grabs in areas traditionally managed by Indigenous peoples and local communities.

Governments need to look beyond “30 x 30” and “nature-based solutions” to put human rights at the center of the Global Biodiversity Framework. Doing so acknowledges that human societies and natural ecosystems are inextricably connected, and that biodiversity protection requires a shift to more sustainable social and economic models. The goal should be to achieve human and ecosystems’ well-being, not shareholder value.

A human-rights lens sharpens the focus on those people and communities who are most affected by today’s destructive practices. It shows that we need to address the drivers of biodiversity loss – extractive and industrial activities – rather than entrusting protection of the world’s ecosystems to corporations and financial markets. Governments are required to hold these entities accountable for the damage they cause to the environment and human communities, and to protect the rights of Indigenous peoples, smallholder farmers, and others who have long helped protect the world’s precious ecosystems.


Our food systems are a prime example of why we need a different approach. The crops and animal breeds that feed humanity co-evolved with human farming communities over the course of millennia. But with the expansion of industrial farming models since the twentieth century, we have radically broken from this tradition, destroying 75 per cent of biological diversity in our food and agriculture. Most food systems today are based on deforestation, land degradation, use of pesticides, pollution, high energy consumption, genetic homogeneity, and socioeconomic inequity.

We cannot solve the biodiversity crisis without transforming these dysfunctional food systems. In their

place, we can embrace agroecology, which has been shown to be a powerful and effective approach to food production, distribution, and consumption. Agroecology fosters biodiversity by stimulating synergies within ecosystems to boost resilience and productivity. Instead of degrading the land, agroecology revitalises soils and contributes to their restoration and conservation.

This approach – oriented toward generating integral well-being – has always been taken by indigenous peoples, peasants, and other smallholder food producers. Traditional, collective knowledge of sustainable farming (much of it held by women), together with locally adapted and self-reliant innovations, is central to these groups’ management systems. Protecting this knowledge and supporting agroecology is essential to the shift toward a more sustainable, healthy, and just manner of producing, distributing, and consuming food.

A good example is Cuba, where peasants and urban farmers have boosted food production and resilience while dramatically reducing the use of agrochemicals. One key factor in their success has been the strengthening of peasant networks to facilitate knowledge sharing.

This year’s biodiversity negotiations are a crucial opportunity for world leaders to agree on a plan to protect both nature and people. But a new framework will succeed only to the extent that it guarantees the rights of Indigenous peoples, peasants, and other smallholder food producers, while putting the worlds’ food systems on a path toward agroecology. 

*Sofia Monsalve is Secretary-General of FIAN International. Georgina Catacora-Vargas is President of the Latin American Scientific Society of Agroecology.*

*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/human-rights-hold-the-key-to-protecting-biodiversity/>)*

# Solar power helps Indian women make light work of cotton spinning

After the national Mission Solar Charkha project, one Indian state is training female cotton spinners to use solar-powered wheels.

**A**s a traditional cotton spinner working from home in her village in northern India, Anita Devi was long resigned to having sore hands, meagre income and a constant struggle to make ends meet.

But her life changed in 2019 when the mother of two received a solar-powered spinning wheel, or charkha, as part of a drive by the state of Uttar Pradesh to boost rural women's work opportunities and incomes in an environmentally-friendly manner.

The solar charkhas - which feature 12 spindles, double the number on Anita's old wheel - are equipped with a motor and battery pack, and provided along with a 400 watt solar panel.

Anita, 34, produces up to 1.5 kg of cotton yarn daily using her solar charkha, up from 400 grams she spun with a traditional wheel, which has led to a more than four-fold increase in her monthly earnings - now at least 10,000 rupees (\$126) on average.

"With the additional income we can afford better nutrition, health care and even tuition for my children," Anita told the Thomson



A weaver at the Shankhala Handloom cluster, Tripura, India. Image: Varun Chatterji, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

Reuters Foundation at her home in Phoolpur village in Moradabad district.

Anita is one of about 4,000 women across villages in Uttar Pradesh - India's most populous state and one of the poorest - who have been trained to use and provided with the solar charkhas in recent years under the state government initiative.

As India seeks to use less planet-heating coal to generate electricity and raise its renewables capacity to 500 gigawatts (GW) by 2030, up from about 115 GW now, Uttar Pradesh is looking to solar energy to power businesses, homes and communities, with a growing focus on those that are not connected to the grid.

Since 2018, solar charkhas worth 50,000 rupees have been distributed

to about 1,000 women annually in Uttar Pradesh for free by the state's Khadi and Village Industries Board (UPKVIB).

Many women work at home, while others do so at production hubs in their villages which are run by local non-profits.

Millions of people across India - mainly women from marginalised communities - do home-based textile work, but tend to go under the radar and miss out on minimum wage and benefits.

Navneet Sehgal, additional chief secretary at UPKVIB, said persuading rural and "patriarchal" households to allow women to attend solar charkha training had proved a challenge initially - but emphasised that the project was



thriving after a slow start. “It is so satisfying to see their numbers grow – on how they are working with confidence, enjoying more self-esteem and a bigger say in running their households,” he added.

### Solar chains

The project in Uttar Pradesh followed a separate nationwide 2018 scheme, ‘Mission Solar Charkha’, with the aim of providing the wheels to create jobs for up to 100,000 people - from spinners to stitchers - in 50 areas or ‘clusters’ across India.

In Uttar Pradesh’s independent programme, the solar charkhas are distributed via several grassroots non-profits.

One of them, Avad Yuva Kalyan Gramudyog Sansthan, also pays the women for the yarn they provide and has it woven into khadi - a traditional handspun fabric - by other female workers in its network before the items are finished off and then sold on.

“There is more awareness among these women today – be it either on ... collective saving, helping each other during crisis, or sharing a line or two on the importance of solar energy in their lives,” said its founder Anil Kumar Singh.

UPKVIB said it gives financial aid to such organisations to ensure production is sustainable, and also helps them to showcase and sell their products at events across the country.

Local clothing companies such as Greenwear Fashion are also playing a role by training and employing hundreds of women to use not only solar-powered charkas but also looms and sewing machines, as well as by buying ‘solar yarn’ in bulk.

“It is not about making money alone, but our business should also come with a sustainable price tag of keeping the environment clean,” said Abhishek Pathak, founder of the social enterprise, which hails its entirely solar-focused value chain.

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**Off-grid solar applications can fit well into area-specific needs and penetrate any nook and corner of remote terrains.**

**SHYAM DHAR DUBEY**  
Senior Project Officer, Uttar Pradesh  
New and Renewable Energy  
Development Agency

Rabia Khatoun, a weaver hired by the company during a COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 and provided with a solar-powered loom at a production centre it runs in Sarthara village, said she had doubled her productivity - and income - due to the equipment.

“Greenwear employed me during that crisis period, trained me on the use of solar loom and enabled me to sustain myself and my family,” added Khatoun, who said she was now earning between 10,000 and 12,000 rupees a month.

### Off-grid impetus

It is not just cotton spinners and weavers who are benefitting from solar energy in Uttar Pradesh.

Owners of small businesses, including oil and rice mills and an eatery, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation they had got a boost from solar power after using government-backed start-up bank loans, facilitated by UPKVIB, to fund their enterprises.

In Purey Udai village in Gonda district, Sangita Devi’s restaurant

runs off 5-kilowatt capacity solar panels, which power the lighting, five fans, a refrigerator and a submersible pump that draws underground water.

“My electricity bills are reduced to less than half, and with no more diesel costs, I could not have asked for more,” she said, explaining how her profits had since more than doubled. The Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) said it had installed about 700 megawatts (MW) of solar off-grid capacity. Its total solar capacity state-wide is 2,200 MW.

Such off-grid installations include light for 60,000 homes in a dozen villages where grid power is hard to access, 300,000 street lights, and 20,000 irrigation pump sets for farmers.

“Off-grid solar applications can fit well into area-specific needs and penetrate any nook and corner of remote terrains,” said Shyam Dhar Dubey, senior project officer at UPNEDA.

However, Dubey said the high cost of maintaining solar panel systems could be a barrier to their long-term sustainability.

Nonetheless, in the case of the solar charkhas initiative, he hailed their impact on local women in a short space of time.

“Little did I realise that these could thus transform the lives of our rural women, making them self-reliant and environment-friendly,” he added. 🌱

*This story was published with permission from Thomson Reuters Foundation, the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women’s rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit <http://news.trust.org/climate>.*

*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/solar-power-helps-indian-women-make-light-work-of-cotton-spinning/>)*



**Lake Teli, Chad. The indigenous people in Chad, such as the Mbororo, play an important role in protecting the environment and preserving biodiversity.**

*Image: David Stanley/Ounianga Lakes, CC BY 2.0 via Flickr.*

# THE BEST WAY TO PRESERVE NATURE IS ALSO THE FAIREST

Global science bodies have long confirmed indigenous peoples' unique contributions to conservation. But with these communities being relentlessly displaced from their ancestral homes, financial support and secure land rights have become crucial to their ongoing stewardship of the world's biodiversity, writes **Hindou Ibrahim**

**T**his is a critical year for the natural environment. Negotiations by world leaders in Montreal this December will determine the fate of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, a far-reaching agreement that will set the world's environmental agenda for the next decade. The future of perhaps a million plant and animal species hangs in the balance, as do the lives and livelihoods of billions of human beings.

Biodiversity is not about simply counting trees, birds, fish, or insects. These certainly matter, but so, too, does the broader balance of the ecosystems on which they, we, and many other species rely. Moreover, “we” must include indigenous peoples, who have a particularly important role to play in environmental talks.

I am one of them. My people, the Mbororo of Chad, are like many other groups that have ancient ties to ancestral lands around the world. We are proven stewards of much of the world's precious yet dwindling natural inheritance. Deforestation on our lands is much lower than elsewhere. Vegetation is thicker, wildlife is more abundant, food chains are sturdier. Where we live, nature's vitality has not yet been extinguished. As much as one-third of the world's tropical forests, peatlands, and mangroves – carbon-dense ecosystems that account for 80 per cent of global biodiversity – are found on indigenous lands.

This is no accident. For indigenous peoples, land is everything. It is the source of our food, shelter, and medicine, and the wellspring of our culture and history. Over countless generations, we have learned to live well on our land. We know how to protect it, how to restore it, and how to serve as its engineers and nurturers, not its destroyers.

Science has long confirmed indigenous peoples' unique contributions to Earth's well-being. In

2019, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stressed that indigenous knowledge is critical to managing global warming and its effects. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services reached the same conclusion with respect to preserving biodiversity. In a follow-up report this year, IPBES further emphasised the importance of indigenous people's contributions to global conservation.

The world's growing recognition of indigenous knowledge was also reflected at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow last year, when several countries and private donors pledged \$1.7 billion to support indigenous peoples and local communities' conservation and climate-advocacy efforts. It was an unprecedented commitment to a far-flung but increasingly united population. But while we welcome world leaders' growing recognition of indigenous knowledge and practices, fulfilling our stewardship role requires more than approbation. To continue serving as the natural world's most effective guardians, we need the right to own – and thus to remain on and continue to manage – our ancestral lands.

With indigenous peoples being relentlessly displaced – often violently – from territory that we have always called home, land-tenure reform and secure land rights have become absolutely crucial. Otherwise, outsider settlement, agricultural expansion, industrial extraction, desertification, and disease will continue to sever our historic bonds to the lands we live on.

Governments must commit to managing land more sustainably. The 30x30 plan to protect 30 per cent of the world's land and sea by the end of this decade is a good idea, provided that it is pursued in close partnership with indigenous peoples and local communities. That means ensuring full inclusion, recognition

of our land rights, and our free, prior, and informed consent. We need to be fully represented at the table when new agreements are struck, and when projects to protect and restore ecosystems are being designed.

To carry out this vital mission, we also need access to funding. The Community Land Rights and Conservation Finance Initiative, which focuses squarely on the intersection of land-tenure rights and community-led conservation, is a good start. CLARIFI fills a key gap by channeling funds directly to indigenous and community-led initiatives. It aims to raise \$10 billion by 2030, and to expand legally recognised indigenous territories by 400 million hectares. This is crucial to curbing deforestation, climate change, and biodiversity loss. The goal is to increase these communities' legal land ownership to at least 50 per cent of all tropical forests.

If the world commits to investing in indigenous peoples, we can then take it from there. With sufficient funding on the ground – not just on paper and in speeches – we can do more than anyone else to protect nature and preserve the world's biodiversity.

Even though finalising the Global Biodiversity Framework is crucial to prevent wholesale ecosystem collapse, the process has run into delays, disagreements, and reluctance by key parties. World leaders must rise to the occasion and secure an agreement that fully recognises indigenous peoples' and local communities' rights and unique contributions. 

*Hindou Ibrahim, President of the Association for Indigenous Women and Peoples of Chad, is a member of the United Nations Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues and the Indigenous Peoples of Africa Coordinating Committee.*

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(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/the-best-way-to-preserve-nature-is-also-the-fairest/>)



# Meeting Asia's rising demand for disability devices

A man in a wheelchair along Tomas Morato Avenue in Manila, Philippines.

Image: Edward Allen Lim, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Flickr.

Demand for technologies to assist disabled people is rising in Asia Pacific countries as affordability and availability of the right devices emerge as major issues.

**L**imited access to assistive technologies such as eyeglasses, hearing aids, mobility and communication devices, and a lack of trained workers remain significant challenges in meeting the needs of people with disabilities and the elderly in the Asia Pacific region.

According to a 2022 UN report, access to assistive technologies in some low-and middle-income countries is as low as three per cent. Assistive technology is an umbrella term for devices and related services that help users live with greater independence by improving their functioning in daily activities.

Globally, the market for assistive technologies for the disabled and elderly is expected to reach US\$60.84

billion by 2028, says a recent study. It is expected to rise fastest in the Asia Pacific region because of the large population base and rising awareness about better healthcare.

"The demand for rehabilitation services and assistive technologies is growing for a whole range of reasons," says Wesley Pryor, principal advisor at the University of Melbourne's Nossal Institute for Global Health, in Australia. "It includes the changing profile of diseases away from communicable to non-communicable diseases; and due to the diminishing likelihood that, as people age, their children and grandchildren will be available to take care of them."

Availability and affordability are major barriers to access.

"Governments in developing countries face this dilemma of providing more people with poor quality devices versus few people with high-quality devices," says Abner Manlapaz, president of the Life Haven Center for Independent Living and senior associate at the Center for Inclusive Policy, in Valenzuela City, Philippines.

## Getting the right support

Manlapaz says that if a person does not get the right support, it becomes a waste of resources. Good quality devices last longer. A cheap wheelchair, for example, will only last six months to a year whereas a good quality wheelchair can last up to ten years, he says.

Imported assistive products are often not suitable for the user. "The Pacific Island countries are often being used as dumping grounds for secondhand or unwanted products by developed countries," says Setareki Macanawai, Pacific Disability Forum's chief

executive officer. “Providers need to talk to persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in island countries and factor in user needs, affordability and the infrastructure — for example, unsealed roads”.

A 2018 report by ATscale, the Global Partnership for Assistive Technology, showed the unequivocal benefits in health, social inclusion and economic returns of investing in assistive technology.

Governments and civil societies in the region are adopting measures, such as producing devices locally, to expand access to assistive technologies.

“The government [in Lao People’s Democratic Republic] is encouraging devices, such as axillary and elbow crutches, standing frames and cerebral palsy walkers, to be made locally so they are more affordable and sustainable,” says Metta Thippawong, Cooperative Orthotic Prosthetic Enterprise Programme Manager for Lao. She is herself a wheelchair user owing to lower limbs paralysis from polio.

Nearby Cambodia has three local wheelchair producers making standard wheelchairs, and a local orthopaedic component factory, started by the International Committee of the Red Cross two decades ago and now run by the Persons with Disabilities Foundation, a government institute.

“All the devices are custom made by trained and internationally qualified technicians from the National Institute of Social Affairs’ Department of Prosthetics and Orthotics, which is also providing training to students from 26 Asia Pacific and African countries,” says Sisary Kheng, department director and Cambodia country director of Exceed Worldwide.

“Cambodians now have access to free as well as top of the range titanium prosthesis for which components are sourced from world-class companies. Because of cheaper

“

**In developing countries of the Asia Pacific, it is incredibly challenging to ensure assistive technology users have access to both products and the professional services to fit the product.**

**NATASHA LAYTON**  
Senior Research Fellow,  
Monash University

labour, it costs approximately US\$250 for a transtibial prosthesis (below the knee artificial limb) or US\$350 for a transfemoral prosthesis (an artificial limb that replaces any amputated limb above the knee),” says Kheng.

In Thailand, about 2.1 million people (3.17 per cent of the total population) registered with a disability are entitled to 76 assistive technology products listed in the Universal Coverage Scheme for healthcare launched in 2002, says Sawang Srisom, a member of the sub-committee of disability affairs at the Senate of Thailand.

### **Demand for wheelchairs, prosthetics**

“The items can either be borrowed or bought, but most people can keep the items for use as long as they wish,” Srisom tells SciDev.Net, referring to access to assisted technologies in Thailand. “There is a huge demand for wheelchairs and prosthetics, but the supply is not enough, so there can be long waiting periods. In some rural and remote areas, a person may never get one.”

Growing up with polio in rural north-eastern Thailand, Srisom recalls getting a tricycle used by people with disabilities only when he transitioned to secondary school. But at school, his classroom was on the second floor so he had to crawl upstairs. It became so difficult and humiliating that he had to quit regular school, he says.

Shafiq ur Rehman had a similar experience growing up in Pakistan, which motivated him to co-found Milestone (Society for Special Persons) with his other friends with a disability. “In the late 1970s, there was no concept of mobility devices in Pakistan. Doctors pushed my family to ‘repair’ my legs paralysed by polio. I was forced to walk with the aid of braces and crutches. It was so painful that I would just crawl.”

Rehman received his first wheelchair at the age of 24 while on a scholarship to Japan for a disability leadership training programme. “The light-weight manual wheelchair was the turning point in my life,” he says.

Only five per cent of individuals in need in low-and-middle-income countries have a wheelchair compared to 90 per cent of those in high-income countries, according to the ATscale report.

“We began with importing used manual wheelchairs from Japan and customising them to be fit-for-purpose for the local user; and then electric wheelchairs with support from the Japan Council on Independent Living Centers,” Rehman tells SciDev.Net. “Currently, we are manufacturing 5,000 wheelchairs a month that cost US\$100. We are also making medical beds, walkers and canes. The majority of people working in our manufacturing units are people with a disability.”

The ATscale report highlighted that the supply of the four most needed products — wheelchairs, prostheses, hearing aids and eye-glasses — is not keeping up with the

increasing demand. “Stimulating supply through subsidies by shaping markets and reducing the cost of assistive products to individuals are promising strategies,” says Pryor.

“The challenge is to optimise access to products that are already available and eliminating inequities in distribution due to structural, geographical and financial barriers, and exploitative market practices,” Pryor adds.

Attention is now shifting from mobility devices to a whole gamut of technologies that can support people to live independently. But in developing countries, many people with a disability do not have access to the internet or a smartphone. This places additional challenges on people with visual and hearing impairment as they have difficulties in using app-based accessibility tools, say disability advocates.

Countries in the region are striving to include assistive technology as part of universal health-care. Says Pryor, “In health policy, assistive technology falls under the domain of procurement rather than a mainstream agenda item. For many countries, there’s often a single procurement approach for medicines and medical products. They’ll audit and tender for a national supply of saline drips, for example, but rarely for basic assistive products.”

In many countries, disability and assistive devices may fall under the remit of different ministries and that may create confusion for the user. Thailand, for example, has three ministries that provide assistive devices to people with disabilities — Public Health (mobility devices), Digital Economy and Society (tablets and mobile phones), and Education (Braille slates).

### Lack of trained workforce

The other major barrier in access to assistive technology is workforce shortages — over 75 per cent of low-

income countries have no prosthetic and orthotics training programmes.

“In the Philippines, access to the disability benefits programme is very limited because of gaps, such as in trained assistive technology workforce. This is being addressed by offering a government-funded free technical skills training programme in colleges,” says Manlapaz, who has been advocating for disability rights, inclusion and access to assistive devices.

“The occupational therapist training, for example, has been geared towards strengthening, correcting and maximising physical functioning as against supporting with assistive products,” says Manlapaz, who acquired Guillain-Barré Syndrome at the age of 16. He recalls being pushed to use a brace rather than a wheelchair, despite severe weakness of the lower


extremities, which badly impacted his spine and shoulders.

One of the recommendations of the UN Report on Assistive Technology is to enlarge, diversify and improve workforce capacity.

“In developing countries of the Asia Pacific, it is incredibly challenging to ensure [assistive technology] users have access to both products and the professional services to fit the product. These services ‘wrap around’ the product. They include evaluation, product trials, user training and customisation — essential to ensure the products fit users and their environments,” says Natasha Layton, occupational therapist, policy adviser and senior research fellow at Monash University in Melbourne.

Workforce training for assistive products is fragmented and differs from country to country. “There is rarely an ‘assistive technologist’ as such,” says Pryor. “To deliver access across the whole spectrum of functional issues — memory loss, vision and hearing impairment, to mobility and incontinence, it’s not a single workforce or market. And that’s a really complex system challenge, which needs a whole mix of interventions.

Countries need to accelerate access to affordable and appropriate assistive technology to meet their 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. There are legally binding instruments like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and, at the regional level, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

“There are opportunities, now the governments need to walk the talk,” Macanawai tells SciDev.Net. 

*This article was originally published on SciDev.Net. Read the original article.*

*(Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/news/meeting-asias-rising-demand-for-disability-devices/>)*

**Countries need to accelerate access to affordable and appropriate assistive technology to meet their 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. There are legally binding instruments like the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and, at the regional level, the Pacific Framework for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.**



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