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1:38 pm



For thousands of years, human beings have lived under the misguided belief that they are the supreme creation of nature and have the right to treat other creations the way they like.

Environmental degradation, climate change, rising sea levels, loss of biodiversity, lifestyle disease, increased frequencies of extreme climatic events, and the evolution of new deadlier diseases with the potential to wipe out the entire humanity are some of the consequences of this attitude towards nature.

However, in the past few decades, there has been a slight change in the viewpoint of humans towards nature.

Governments across the world, non-government organizations, and people on individual levels are working towards improving the relationship between humans and nature.

The evolution of cities has been one of the most important events in human civilization. Cities are characterised by higher standards of living, better opportunities for business & employment, and fast-paced life.

On the flip side, cities are also characterised by life far from nature, physical and mental stress to the residents, and environmental degradation. More than 34% of India's population is currently living in urban areas.

Considering the fact that India is on the verge of overtaking China as the world's most populated country, this percentage represents a gigantic number.

By 2030, 40% of India's population will be living in urban areas. A report by the World Bank suggests that around 70% of the total global pollution comes from cities. The situation in India is no different. It even might be worse.

Therefore, if environmental degradation has to be stopped, cities need to be targeted on a priority basis. Besides other things, urban infrastructure can play a significant role in bringing life closer to nature and helping in arresting ecological damage.

Contrary to the popular belief, urban infrastructure does not need a paradigm shift to bring life closer to nature. Subtle adjustments in urban planning through updation in master plan can make a huge difference.

Increasing green cover over the cities: One of the most obvious yet often ignored aspects of urban

planning is keeping the provision for green infrastructure. Besides being overpopulated most Indian cities have dangerously low levels of per capita green cover. In cities like Mumbai and Chennai, the per

capita green cover is 0.46m² and 0.12m² respectively. Besides having planned green spaces like parks and gardens, urban planners should keep provisions for unplanned green areas where nature can thrive on

its own without human intervention. Green infrastructure not only absorbs CO₂ and provides a localized cooling effect, but it also provides a habitat for biodiversity.

Government may even consider enacting laws to ensure that public and private buildings must have a minimum amount of indoor and rooftop greenery.

Citizens must be encouraged to plant more trees inside their homes as well. Greens along footpath / divider of major roads should not be for the sake of only showing green (plantation of shrubs) but it should be real green (tree plantation).

Water conservation: Water conservation can not only reduce the need for potable water in the cities but also can help replenish the underground water levels.

For water conservation, cities must build blue infrastructure to store stormwater and prevent its run off. Instead of building huge wastewater treatment plants, urban planners should build smaller plants in different parts of the cities.

This will prevent the overload of wastewater in one plant and provide more time and opportunity for the water to get naturally cleaner by sedimentation (DEWAST). Besides helping the cities reuse their water, these wastewater treatment plants also prevent polluted water from going to the water bodies.

Reduce waste: The world of consumerism thrives on the idea of use and throwing. This idea might be a good one for business profit, but it is extremely dangerous for the environment. Urban planning should keep the provision of waste collection and segregation infrastructure at various locations in the cities.

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Waste-to-energy plants can help cities manage their waste in a sustainable manner. At household and industry level segregation of wet and dry waste is highly effective measure of dealing with waste. In

multiple metro and non-metro cities, we are already using the implementation of such measures. For sustainable city livings this is absolutely must thing which citizens should realize and make a habitual practice.

The technological interventions starting from household level to community level to treatment level is must.

Increase dependence on alternate fuels: Although most of the 20th-century progress can be attributed to fossil fuel-powered machines, these fuels have been the single most important reason for increased CO₂ and other GHG levels in the atmosphere.

Reduced dependency on fossil fuels can help arrest environmental degradation. This can be done by increasing dependency on alternative fuels.

Solar and wind power plants situated outside city limits have been providing energy from alternate sources for several decades now. It is now time to integrate these energy sources into the city infrastructure.

Solar rooftop power plants can be a good starting point. Other places where urban planners can install solar PV panels could be urban wastelands, drain covers, street lights, bus shelters, etc.

With the recent pandemic, humans have seen the wrath of nature. Humans and all their technology are no match to the power of nature. Therefore, we have no choice but to live in harmony with nature.

In the above paragraphs, we have discussed some of the many ways we can improve our relationship with nature. There are many other ways to do so. Urban as a discipline can lead the fight against climate and help people lead an urban life close to the nature.