

## **On The Role of Children and Their Educators in Building a Sustainable Future**

As Teachers' Day is just around the corner, it is an apt time to explore the value of education and the important role teachers play in our society. Teachers have the high-pressure, and extremely taxing job of equipping the next generation with the knowledge and tools to progress and sculpt our world. Last Teachers' Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a speech within which he stated, *"Education should become a force for the nation's character building."* His words perfectly highlight the importance and gravitas of education, and by extension, teachers. They mean that teachers are not just responsible for ensuring children have the skills to survive, go to university, and get a job, but also to become individuals who have the personalities to shape the world for the better.

Sustainability is currently an issue of high contention, with the planet seemingly on the brink of calamity, weather patterns becoming increasingly unpredictable, and natural disasters constantly at our doorstep. Interestingly, when contemplating our responsibility to the coming generations, with sustainability in mind, we often consider that role from a perspective of resource-depletion only. Furthermore, there is a general lack of regard for the impact children have on resource consumption today. In the speech mentioned above, PM Modi also brought to light the immense contribution children have to our communities. *"Children can contribute to nation-building through cleanliness, saving electricity and water."* He is absolutely right; children have a vast impact on

India's resources, especially since India has a youthful population, with the high ratio of children under fifteen to adults of 44:100 (World Bank, 2014). Children have a huge bearing on the way resources are handled, with over 364 million children in India (Census Commissioner, 2001) their individual decisions to use resources sparingly, or to waste them, can collectively have sizeable impact on the resources in the country as a whole. Thus, it is extremely important to consider children's contribution to the country.

Once we realise the impact children have on the country, their education becomes far more important – not just so that they are capable of managing the future, but also so that they understand the current state of affairs and, as a whole, make wise choices regarding resource consumption, the role of teachers suddenly becomes a crucial one in securing the promise of the future. Today's adults are vital in preparing the adults of tomorrow. This does not only apply to the resources we need to save so that they have, for example, enough trees to make paper, but also to how we teach future generations. It is impossible for them to make sensible decisions without knowledge of their context, and the issues they are up against.

Since teachers' jobs are so critical to honing the talents and minds of the coming generation, not just for the well-being of our youth, but also the outcome of the future, it is imperative that teachers are granted proper respect and admiration by society. Sustainable development and education are so tightly bound together, that it is foolish for us to discredit teachers, in any way,

purely because their impact is not necessarily tangible today. Theirs is an investment that will have an impact on society so profound, that it will transcend generations, and will even help decide the fate of humanity.

In light of this, let us not forget to show our gratitude and appreciation to all educators this Teachers' Day.

#### Works Cited

<http://www.narendramodi.in/pms-interaction-with-students-on-teachers-day>

<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.DPND.YG>

[http://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_And\\_You/age\\_structure\\_and\\_marital\\_status.aspx](http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_And_You/age_structure_and_marital_status.aspx)