

perspectives

A Quarterly Viewletter

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Environment for Equity: Inclusive Climate Action for India@2047

GUEST VIEW

India stands today at a pivotal point in its development journey, poised to harness its status as one of the world's fastest-growing economies while addressing the needs of its climate-vulnerable population. Balancing robust economic growth with ecological sustainability is no longer just an aspiration — it is an imperative. Our collective commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2070 embodies both national ambition and global responsibility. As we envision India@2047, marking a century of independence, our development model must not only be green but also inclusive, ensuring that climate resilience extends to every corner of the country and every section of society.

India's commitment to a climate-resilient future, underscored by Minister Bhupender Yadav's recent announcement of the country's first comprehensive National Action Plan on climate resilience, marks a significant policy shift. This integrated framework is expected to align environmental, developmental, and social priorities across ministries, offering clear direction for collaboration between public and private sectors.

The role of Indian industry is crucial, not only as a driving force of economic activity but also as a catalyst of inclusive, sustainable transformation. While operational sustainability and ESG integration have become standard practices, the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in delivering

climate solutions at the grassroots level stands out as a powerful tool. CSR allows companies to go beyond compliance and enables them to align with broader national goals by investing in sustainable and equitable development, particularly in underserved regions vulnerable to climate impact. Through focused initiatives, businesses advance water security, agricultural transformation, clean energy access, and biodiversity, all while empowering the communities impacted by environmental changes. It is in these meaningful partnerships between the private sector, national goals, and local needs that true progress unfolds.

Our collective commitment to achieving net zero emissions by 2070 embodies both national ambition and global responsibility.

Over the last few years, CSR initiatives across the private sector have increasingly aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, especially those focusing on clean water and sanitation, clean energy, climate action, and responsible consumption. By leveraging this global framework, the Indian industry finds a practical path to integrate sustainability and inclusion.



B. Thiagarajan
Chairman, CII National Committee
on CSR and Managing Director,
Blue Star Limited

Water security, for instance, is one of the most pressing challenges in India's climate landscape. Erratic monsoons, falling groundwater levels, and regional droughts threaten both livelihoods and ecosystems. CSR programmes can make tangible contributions by supporting watershed management, rainwater harvesting, revival of traditional water bodies, and community-led water budgeting.

Agriculture itself is another critical focus area. Post-harvest losses in India remain alarmingly high, particularly in perishable commodities. As a company committed to sustainable cooling solutions, we at Blue Star recognise the potential of cold chain infrastructure to reduce food waste and lower emissions.

CSR investments in decentralised, solar-powered cold storage, coupled with farmer training on climate-resilient practices and diversified cropping, can significantly improve farm output and long-term sustainability.

Preserving India's agricultural biodiversity is equally important. The overdependence on a narrow range of crops, often driven by market forces and input subsidies, has undermined both nutrition and ecological resilience. CSR efforts can help reverse this trend by supporting the cultivation of indigenous, drought-resistant crops, encouraging organic and regenerative practices, and creating community seed banks. These initiatives not only preserve traditional knowledge systems but also empower smallholder and women farmers to lead climate-positive transitions.

As we look towards a Viksit Bharat by 2047, the journey ahead is clear - one built on the strong pillars of environmental protection, social inclusion, and economic opportunity.

True climate resilience requires addressing equity. The communities most impacted, such as rural women, tribal populations, landless labourers and the urban poor, often lack access to vital resources and platforms to adapt to environmental changes. Inclusive CSR programmes must centre these voices, ensuring that community members are not only recipients but co-creators of climate solutions. Training youth in green technologies, investing in climate literacy, and creating green job opportunities in rural areas are critical for long-term impact.

As a company operating at the intersection of technology and infrastructure, we recognise that climate responsibility must extend beyond compliance and be reflected in

collaborative, community-focused initiatives. In alignment with this approach, Blue Star has partnered with the CII Foundation to support a water conservation initiative involving the rejuvenation of an agricultural pond, aimed at enhancing rainwater storage and groundwater recharge to support farming communities.

As we look towards a Viksit Bharat by 2047, the journey ahead is clear — one built on the strong pillars of environmental protection, social

inclusion, and economic opportunity. CSR is more than just a responsibility; it is the bridge where industry's resources meet the hopes of communities, where innovation is matched with empathy, and where progress becomes a shared story. Together, walking this path with purpose and resolve, we can ensure that every voice is heard and no one is left behind in building India's sustainable future.

Views expressed are personal.

MY VIEW

A Commitment For Change



Sunil Misra
CEO
CII Foundation

“India’s development journey to 2047 — our centenary of independence — must be rooted in both environmental stewardship and social equity. Climate change is a harsh reality that we see every day — it is impacting livelihoods, health, and food security, with long-term consequences which are alarming. What is even more alarming is how disproportionately it is affecting our most vulnerable communities — they bear the brunt of climate change. Inclusive climate action is not just ethical — it is essential for sustainable growth.

Industry has a critical role to play. To combat the ill-effects of climate change, it needs to accelerate green innovation, decarbonising operations, and invest in climate-resilient infrastructure. Equally important is ensuring that this transition creates opportunities for all — especially women, youth, and rural populations. We must move beyond mitigation to adaptation, ensuring communities are equipped to face climate risks.

The CII Foundation is committed to building partnerships that demonstrate scalable, inclusive models — from climate-smart agriculture to clean energy, from women-led solutions to grassroots leadership. A just, inclusive, and climate-resilient India@2047 is possible — if we act together, now. ”



Sustainable Development Goal 13

Take Urgent Action to Combat Climate Change and its Impacts

Human-induced climate change reached alarming new levels in 2024, with some impacts already irreversible for centuries. Global temperatures broke records and temporarily exceeded the 1.5°C threshold, highlighting the urgent need to curb greenhouse gas emissions. Extreme weather events – including tropical cyclones, floods and droughts – led to the highest number of new displacements in 16 years, worsening food crises and bringing massive economic losses and social instability. Nonetheless, with bold action, limiting long-term global warming to 1.5°C is still possible. Every fraction of a degree matters in reducing risks, lowering costs and preventing catastrophic and irreversible damage to people and the planet. At the twenty-ninth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, States set a new collective quantified goal on climate finance and completed guidance to fully operationalize article 6 of the Paris

Agreement on carbon markets, along with making additional commitments on mitigation, adaptation and the operationalization of the Fund for Responding to Loss and Damage.

Goal 13 Targets

Target 13.1: Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

Target 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

Target 13.3: Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

Target 13.A: Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly \$100 billion annually

by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

Target 13.B: Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

*Acknowledging that the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change.

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Sustainable Development Goal 17

Strengthen the Means of Implementation and Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Global progress on Goal 17 has shown both advancement and persistent challenges over the past decade. While financial flows to developing countries have increased, driven by both official and private finance, record-high debt servicing costs in 2023 strain low- and middle-income economies. This is compounded by a \$4 trillion annual investment gap for Goal achievement in

developing countries. Access to information and communications technology has grown steadily, although digital divides remain stark, in particular in lower-income regions. While data systems and national statistical capacities have improved, many countries still struggle to secure the necessary funding to fully track and implement the Goals, slowing progress in key areas.

Strengthened support and renewed global cooperation are critical to bridge these divides and accelerate Goal progress. Through initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goal stimulus, the Joint Sustainable Development Goals Fund, the Technology Facilitation Mechanism and the global indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals

and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations is helping to build partnerships to close financing gaps, expand access to science, innovation and data, and support developing countries – alongside international financial institutions – in unlocking capital and investment for implementing the Goals and accelerating inclusive progress on the 2030 Agenda.

Goal 17 Targets

Target 17.1: Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

Target 17.2: Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries

Target 17.3: Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

Target 17.4: Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress

Target 17.5: Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries

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Learning from the Forest: Basmati Gagrai's Journey of Justice, Education, and Environmental Belonging

In the thickly forested tribal regions of Jharkhand, where education is still a distant dream for many tribal children, Basmati Gagrai is leading a transformation. Her life, shaped by deprivation, trauma, and resilience, has become a testament to how education rooted in nature and community can transform futures—not just for individuals, but for entire ecosystems.

Born in 1991 into the Ho community in Manjhari block of Chaibasa, Basmati's early years were shadowed by discrimination and scarcity. Her father, a government clerk and the family's sole provider, taught her the values of service and sacrifice. Though her home was filled with conflict and her grandmother often ridiculed her for her appearance, the surrounding village gave her a sense of belonging. The forest was her sanctuary. As a child, she found joy in its rivers, trees, and open skies—a freedom absent from her home life.

But joy was often fleeting. Burdened with responsibilities from the age of seven, and later surviving a traumatic

assault as a teenager, Basmati experienced firsthand how lack of education rendered women and girls vulnerable. Supported by her father, she courageously filed a police complaint—a rare act in her community. When justice did not come, she realised that education was the only path to empowerment.

With that resolve, Basmati returned to her village and started a school under a tarpaulin roof, teaching three children. Over time, that number grew to 250 students. Her school, rooted in the values of equity, inclusivity, and environmental harmony, now stands as a symbol of hope in West Singhbhum. Basmati did not just open a school; she sparked a cultural shift. Families that once questioned the value of education now walk miles to enroll their children in her classes.

What makes Basmati's approach unique is how deeply it is interwoven with the rhythms of the forest. Her curriculum goes beyond academics, combining storytelling, archery, forest rights, and

nature walks. Built with local materials and rooted in its natural surroundings, the school offers a learning experience where children study under trees, absorb traditional knowledge, and engage in activities that build ecological awareness, social understanding and a strong sense of community responsibility.



The school also runs monthly parent-teacher meetings that often turn into forums for discussing local environmental issues. Her work has inspired high-net-worth individuals to contribute, enabling the creation of classrooms, kitchens, and residential spaces for the most vulnerable.

Recognising the need for awareness about the community's rights, she initiated "Forest Day," a program that educates school children and their parents about the importance of living in harmony with nature and conserving the environment. She has worked across 15 panchayats, reaching over 42,000 individuals with messages of environmental stewardship, health, and education.

For Basmati, climate action isn't an abstract idea—it's a lived reality. Basmati often says that education is not just about books, but about awareness, dignity, and the power to stand up for oneself.

Recognising the need for awareness about the community's rights, she initiated "Forest Day," a program that educates school children and their parents about the importance of living in harmony with nature and conserving the environment.

By embedding climate literacy and forest rights into the fabric of early education, she is preparing a generation of children who understand the land they live on and are equipped to protect it.

Her dream is to open more such schools across forest regions, ensuring that no child is left behind because of where they are born or what language they speak. Her story reminds us that the path to a sustainable and inclusive India@2047 begins with listening to voices like hers—grounded, grassroots, and growing from the soil of struggle.



To know more about CII Foundation's initiatives write to
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