

## Flash Report

# Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Lifestyles in India: Driving effective behaviour change for better and simple living



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 **teri school of advanced studies**

## Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Lifestyles in **INDIA**: Driving effective behavior change for better and simple living

Wednesday, 10 November 2021 | 2:00 – 5:00 PM  
TERI School of Advanced Studies, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi

*\*On-site meeting with social distancing under the government guidelines + Live streaming*

**Date:** Wednesday 10 November 2021 | 14:00 -17:00 (India Time)

**Venue:** TERI School of Advanced Studies, New Delhi and online

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## List of Acronyms:

<b>CEEW</b>	Council on Energy, Environment and Water
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease
<b>EU</b>	The European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>SCP</b>	Sustainable Consumption and Production
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SWITCH-Asia RPAC</b>	SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Component
<b>TERI SAS</b>	The Energy Resources Institute School of Advanced Studies
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>WICCI</b>	Women's Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry

## Background:

Youth are considered as the torchbearers for a Sustainable future. India has the world's largest youth population, and they have the potential to transform the production and consumption of goods and services by making conscious and informed choices in their daily lifestyles, shifting to more sustainable buying patterns, limiting waste, and leading technological innovation to foster a resource-efficient economy and equitable society. In this context a Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Lifestyles was organised on November 10<sup>th</sup> as an on-site event with Live Streaming.

As part of the pre-event engagement activities with youth, a short survey questionnaire was released, and a Live Twitter chat was organized on October 29<sup>th</sup>. Youth responses reflected that matters of overconsumption, unsustainable lifestyles, unabated urbanization, and thoughtless urban planning were perceived as core instigators for resource depletion, biodiversity loss and species endangerment. Sustainable Food habits and buying less emerged as the immediate green goals that youth would adopt. The identified issues and opportunities were further deliberated and discussed in detail with youth during the on-site National Youth Dialogue on Sustainable Lifestyles.

## Objectives of the event

The event aims at enhancing awareness and alteration of actions among the largest demography in India on sustainable consumption and lifestyles, understanding barriers in adoption and identifying drivers of change.

The focus of the dialogue was to investigate and evaluate the behaviours, challenges, and barriers along with proposing effective solutions for the same. The specific objectives were to understand:

1. Youth perception of lifestyle choices
  - Understand youth perception of sustainable lifestyles and how they relate this to their daily actions.
  - What influences their decision making?
  - Driving forces of youth consumption and especially the influence of media and globalization in shaping their aspirations and values
2. Recognition of the relation between lifestyle/consumption pattern and environment/human rights/social issues
3. Barriers in adoption
4. Drivers of change



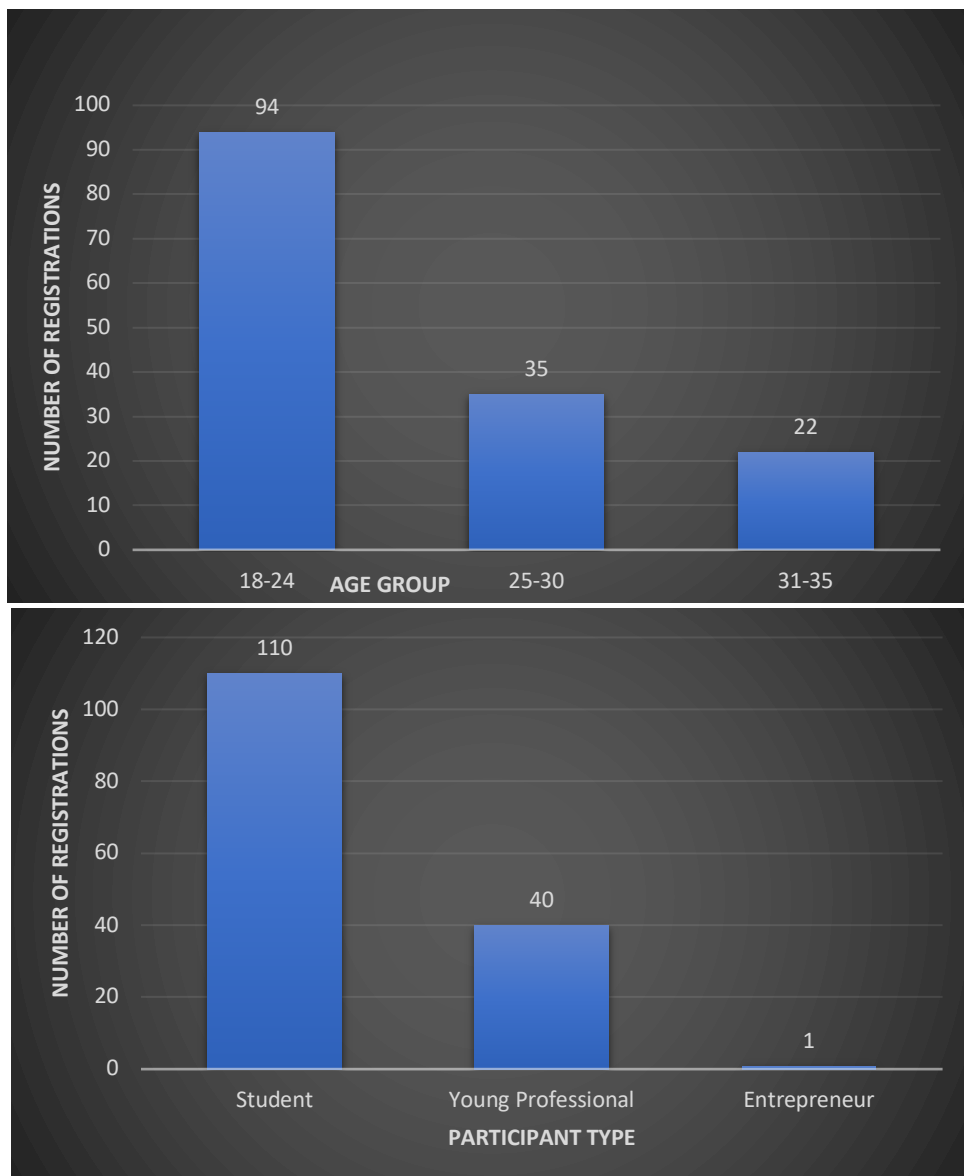
### Logistical information about the event

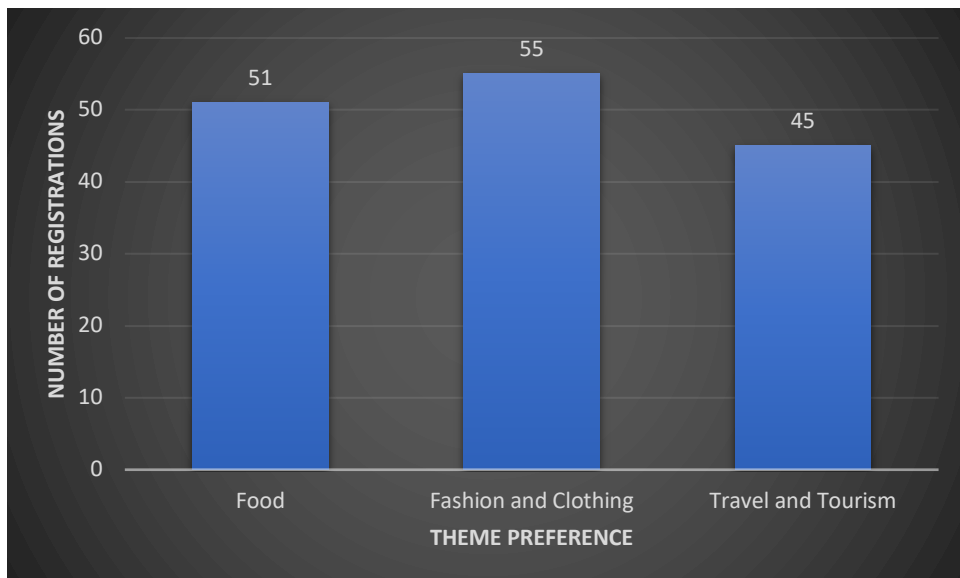
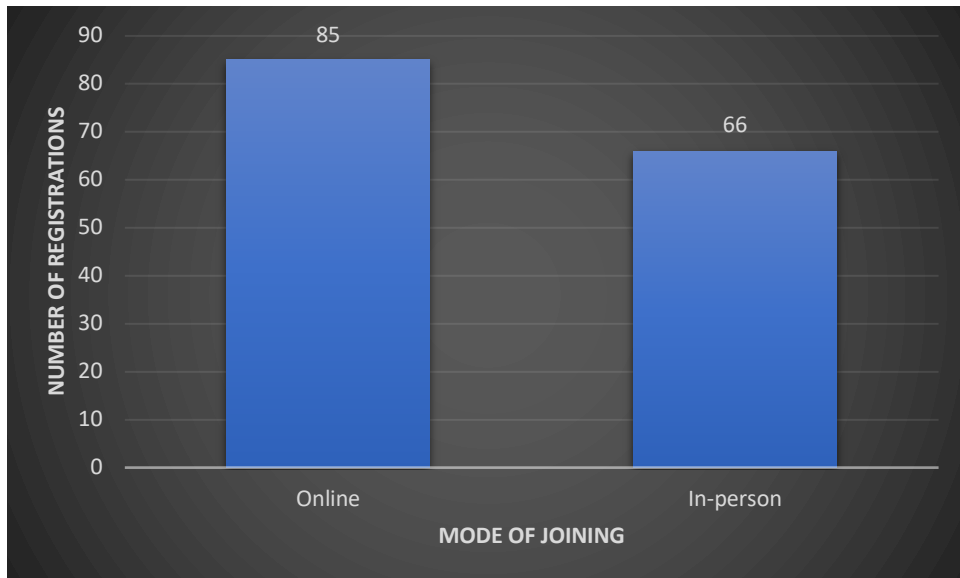
The event was organized by the SWITCH-Asia RPAC in partnership with TERI School of Advanced Studies (SAS) at the TERI SAS campus, New Delhi. The event was also livestreamed on TERI SAS' Facebook [page](#) and [Youtube](#).

### Review on Participants:

151 person registered for the event while the youth dialogue was attended by over 70 participants with 58% females and 42% male representation.

Figures below presents the distribution of participants who registered prior to the event by stakeholders.





## Summary of key messages:

The sub-regional dialogue brought together stakeholders from government, private sector, academia and civil society to share insights on sustainable food, fashion and mobility diets for all and the key role of youth in achieving and driving the change towards sustainable lifestyles.

### Introduction

**Dr. Fawzia Tarannum**  
**TERI SAS**

Dr. Fawzia welcomed the participants and highlighted that changes in consumer behavior and consumption patterns are expected to increase the food water and

energy demand by approximately 35%, 40% and 50% respectively, by 2030. She noted that the youth have the potential to transform the production and consumption of goods and services by making conscious choices and informed decision in their daily lifestyles, shifting to more sustainable buying patterns, limiting waste and leading technological revolution to foster a resource efficient economy and equitable society.

## Welcome remarks

### **Prof. Eklabya Sharma** **Vice Chancellor, TERI SAS**

Prof. Sharma remarked that sustainable lifestyles are linked to individuals, communities and institutions. He also stated that the youth should think local food, traditions, cultures, which has been sustainable for so long. With globalization driving the change it is important to analyse how these systems are actually trading and how we can bring sustainable systems back with good quality product and bring economic development of the local people using the traditions, cultures, the food, and the costumes that we can make. He noted that the youth, the new generations should become very active in terms of the climate crisis.

## Opening remarks: Why promote sustainable lifestyles among youth?

### **Mr. Edwin Koekkoek** **Counsellor, Energy and Climate Action - European Union Delegation in India**

Mr. Koekkoek noted that COP26 stressed the need for a more sustainable lifestyle and it is clear that youth is the obvious major stakeholder in the fight against climate change. The findings of the recent climate reports from all over the world are not promising. He emphasized upon the need to have a change in the economic paradigm to fight against climate change and have a sustainable approach to use all the resources. He stated that, “we can achieve our goals if we take sustainable steps and can reduce our emissions by 55% by the end of 2030. The countries are already planning and ready to invest in technology and green assets, and also on green energy and transitions. We are still far to reach the Paris objectives.” The switch Asia program is also crucial which drives the importance of the youths getting involved in sustainable lifestyle, sustainable consumption as well as sustainable production. He further shared about climate partnerships citing the example of the youth climate conclave which EU organized together with TERI, and CEEW and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in India. He concluded by sharing about the upcoming climate conclave and the photo competition being arranged by TERI.

## Plenary Talk – Healthy People, Healthy Planet – Eating Sustainably

### **Dr. Chef Manjit Singh Gill**

#### **President of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations & Corporate Chef ITC Hotels**

Mr. Gill, a top chef, draws inspiration from tradition, biodiversity, and country kitchens, and urges cooks to be the driving force behind a decent food revolution. He considers food as a manifestation of God and as not just a commodity.

He spoke about food as an important part of our lives and bodies. ‘You are what you eat’ - If we ponder upon this idea then we are going to gain a closer understanding of our eating practices, where our food comes from, as well as how it is prepared. Often times, we neglect the details related to the preparation of our food. Mr. Gill highlighted the importance of this preparation and utilization of a single food ingredient in creation of as much food variety as possible. This can also help tackle the issue of food wastage.

### **Ms. Sarika Panda Bhatt**

#### **Associate Direction Nagarro, Co-Founder, Raahgiri Foundation and Bicycle Mayor Gurugram**

The talk began with the speaker invoking the bleak current state of affairs in terms of rising levels of pollution, climate change, the deteriorating impacts of rapid urbanization on cities and civil the impacts trickling down to smaller and protected areas. This is where Ms. Bhatt invoked the power of youth as leaders of behavioural change and most importantly, took the audience through Raahgiri Foundations’ aspirations and successes in its 8-year journey. With Indian cities constantly making headlines as the most polluted cities in the world, navigating transport and mobility to find long-term solutions is becoming increasingly important.

She also stressed on how the large reliance on transport such as personal vehicles can be a misconception as the statistics reveal that only 2% of the population use them. Thus, the role of shared mobility and making cities pedestrian friendly is the true need of the hour. The value of walking or even cycling as modes of commute must be re-embraced and encouraged through building adequate infrastructure to support the safety of citizens. Not only this will aid general well-being levels in cities but will also drastically drive down global emissions caused due to an increasingly internalized reliance on unsustainable vehicles.

**Ms. Payal Jain**  
**Founder Trustee, Prem Jain Memorial Trust**

Ms. Jain highlighted that sustainability filters into every single aspect of our lives and it has to be a choice that we make as far as living is concerned. She highlighted that post the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a huge change towards sustainability, especially in the fashion industry. She shared that the average person buys 60% more clothes than in the last decade and a growing number of people wear clothes only few times before the garment ends up as trash in the landfill. She emphasized the role of the youth in driving the change towards circularity. She stated that Indians have a very rich heritage of textiles, fabrics, vegetable dyes, hand block prints, natural fabrics such as cotton, silk and wool. Organic and natural fabrics are the way for sustainable living. The vast heritage of textiles, weavers, artisans, embroidery clusters and crafts across the country are vanishing. She highlighted that it is essential to go back to the Indian roots, to the Indian textile heritage which is so vast and gives inspiration to designers globally instead of partaking in fast fashion. It is important to be mindful of buying patterns for the future of the children and the planet. She reiterated the need to return to Indian values of being frugal, reuse and recycling. She also discussed about circularity in fashion which has 7 Rs: rethink, reduce, reuse, prepare, refurbish, recover and recycle. She emphasized the need for the design philosophy to be sustainable in order to create products which have a much larger lifespan, use safe or renewable materials and which can be reinvented. She concluded by reminding the audience that fast fashion is not free and someone somewhere is paying for it.

**Parallel Sessions:**

**Dialogue guide - Youth perception of lifestyle choices**

- Understand youth perception of sustainable lifestyles and how they relate this to their daily actions.
- What influences their decision making?
- The driving forces of youth consumption and especially the influence of media and globalization in shaping their aspirations and values
- Recognition of the relation between lifestyle/consumption pattern and environment/human rights/social issues  
Barriers in adoption Drivers of change

**Food & Dietary**

**Moderator: Ms. Sharmila Sinha, Founder Luchee, a sustainable food initiative**

The discussion mainly revolved around the eating habits of youth and why they eat what they eat. Some of the factors identified, that impact the type of cereals preferred by youth were affordability and accessibility. A preference toward junk food due to availability and affordability was identified. Additionally, to a positive surprise, a certain level of awareness and preference among the youth for vegan food was observed.

Aspects such less water and environment footprint of the vegetarian/vegan food, health related advantages, easy availability at home, as well as its contribution to animal welfare were shared by the participants. Overall, the participants were observed to be somewhat conscious about their eating habits and were open to more switching to more available and affordable healthier food options and were willing to make the necessary changes in their consumption choices in food.

## **Fashion and Clothing**

**Moderator: Mr. Shaurya Patel, Assistant Manager, CSR, Tata Communications**

Mr. Patel summarized the discussion on fashion and clothing and noted the apparent and complex inter linkages between fashion and the SDGs, whether social inequality, hunger, health, or life on land and water. Fashion has a complex value chain and thus it is important to practice system thinking. He noted that the group seemed informed and would ideally choose handloom or certified clothes with durability and multifunctionality being key factors. COVID-19 was mentioned as a factor for increased online shopping. Social media with its rapidly changing trends was noted to play a key role in promoting fast fashion choices. The discussion brought out that in sustainable fashion there is a lack of variety, non-inclusivity and lack of affordability and accessibility. Human rights and fair wages were also noted to be important factors to be addressed and social media should be used a tool to promote NGOs and companies who produce environmentally and socially responsible fashion. The group also noted that companies should provide consumers more information about the product such as the source, its value chain, environmental footprint associated labour, to make informed, responsible choices. Participants were asked whether they agreed that if young people make different choices, producer would change with due pressure. Majority felt that it could bring about a change. Finally, there is a need to question what we think is right, research the terminology being used in contemporary practices, what it points towards and understand the larger need for cooperation across different industry players, across different actors in the policy sphere, across people and find convergence on one goal. There is not much time and we need to take actions NOW.

## **Travel and Tourism**

**Moderator: Ms. Jayati Talapatra, President, Delhi Sustainable Business Council, WICCI**

Ms. Talapatra summarized the discussion on travel and tourism and noted that the discussion was very lopsided, because all the participants followed sustainable tourism practices. All the participants preferred immersive experiences, eco tourist spots such as forests, tribal areas. The discussion highlighted that tourism has the potential to be life changing. It also detailed that to raise awareness, it is key to

experience and form a connection instead of just providing knowledge. Experiencing the beauty of nature and biodiversity would make people want to preserve it.

## Closing remarks

### **Dr. Mushtaq Memon** **Project Manager – The EU SWITCH-Asia RPAC**

Dr. Memon noted that to solve the three planetary crisis of climate change, loss of biodiversity and pollution - sustainable lifestyles, green products and services, and innovation are key components in all spheres such as food, fashion, and mobility. He emphasized the role of the youth as leaders and changemakers of today, for leading innovation, technology, social media, sustainable fashion, and food.

## Highlights of Discussion

The discussion highlighted that affordability and accessibility are key factors in mainstreaming sustainable choices in food, fashion, and mobility choices. Consumer education also plays a key role in enabling this transition and producers/ companies must provide the required, correct and easily comprehensible information to the consumers to enable more informed choices. The role of the youth is indispensable in driving the change towards sustainable production patterns. Also emerged the importance to value, support and inculcate local traditions, values, heritage, and practices which were traditionally sustainable and return to Indian values of being frugal. The time is high for making sustainable living as default way of life and youth should demand for the right infrastructure to support this. Further, there is a need for the design philosophy to be sustainable to create products which have a much larger lifespan, use safe or renewable materials and which can be reinvented.





## Annex:

### Annex 1: The Final agenda

Time	Programme
<b>2:00 - 2:05</b>	<b>Introduction</b> Dr. Fawzia Tarannum TERI SAS
<b>2:05 – 2:10</b>	<b>Welcome Remarks</b> Prof. Eklabya Sharma <i>Vice Chancellor, TERI School of Advanced Studies</i>
<b>2:10 – 2:20</b>	<b>Opening Remarks: Why promote sustainable lifestyles among youth?</b> <b>Mr. Edwin Koekkoek</b> <b>Counsellor, Energy and Climate Action – EU Delegation in India</b>
<b>2:20 – 3:00</b>	<b>Plenary Talk – Healthy People, Healthy Planet – Eating Sustainably</b> Dr. Chef Manjit Singh Gill President of the Indian Federation of Culinary Associations & Corporate Chef ITC Hotels
	Sustainable Mobility Ms. Sarika Panda Bhatt Associate Direction Nagarro, Co-Founder, Raahgiri Foundation and Bicycle Mayor Gurugrams
	Sustainable Fashion Ms. Payal Jain Founder Trustee, Prem Jain Memorial Trust
<b>3:00 – 4:00</b>	<b>Three Parallel Sessions</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Food &amp; Dietary</b> <b>Moderator: Ms. Sharmila Sinha</b> Founder Luchee, a sustainable food initiative</li> <li><b>2. Fashion and Clothing</b> <b>Moderator: Mr. Shaurya Patel</b> Assistant Manager, CSR, Tata Communications</li> <li><b>3. Travel and Tourism</b> <b>Moderator: Ms. Jayati Talapatra</b> President, Delhi Sustainable Business Council, WICCI</li> </ol>
<b>4:00 – 4:30</b>	<b>Summarizing the parallel session by moderators</b>
<b>4:30 – 4:45</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b> <b>Dr. Mushtaq Memon</b> <i>Project Manager – The EU SWITCH-Asia RPAC</i>
<b>4:45 – 5:30</b>	<b>Group Photo, High Tea and Short Cultural Programme</b>

## For more information

SWITCH-Asia event page:

<https://www.switch-asia.eu/event/youth-dialogue-on-sustainable-lifestyles-in-india/>

**Contact SWITCH-Asia Regional Policy Advocacy Funded by European Union**  
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**Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed Memon**

Regional Coordinator for Resource Efficiency

United Nations Environment Programme, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific  
Project Manager

Regional Policy Advocacy Component

(SWITCH-Asia – the European Union funded programme)

Email: [memon@un.org](mailto:memon@un.org)