

## **Greta Thunberg's Climate Message**

### **What is the issue?**

- In September 2019, a teenager Greta Thunberg addressed the UN climate change summit, which made widespread impact on the climate change discourse.
- There is more to the Swedish teenager-activist's point of view than mere emotion and passionate commitment.

### **What were Greta's remarks?**

- Greta accused world leaders of ignoring or deliberately looking away from the responsibility they have towards the young today and in the future.
- Her arguments would have pleased Mahatma Gandhi.
- He too thought that economics concerned solely with wealth undermines ethical responsibilities.
- It ignores justice as a primary human yearning and right.
- This was also the underlying theme of Greta's presentation to the leaders and representatives of different countries.
- One well-recognised issue is the direct connection between economic growth and the state of the environment.
- It is nearly half a century since the idea of 'limits to growth' was recognised and proposed as a ground for change in development policies.
- But still, those advocating speedy and high economic growth have been indifferent to the limits posed by nature on the theoretical scope of growth.

### **Who get to be the victims of this indifference?**

- Greta presented herself as a victim of the world leaders' indifference to climate change.
- She said, "you have stolen my childhood with your empty words."
- It is true because her campaign on climate change had cost her more than just school attendance.
- She was referring to the collective future of those who are young today and also to future generations.
- It is not the distant generations that will face the consequences of climate change; the crisis is already upon us.
- The futures of these young ones are bleak, not in the context of economic

slowdown but climate change.

- Certainly, as observed by Greta, higher income or status would not help to avoid the consequences of climate change.
- But not everyone is convinced about this argument.
- Richer nations as well as richer people in every nation continue to believe that they can buy relief and escape from the climate change consequences.

### **What was Greta's idea on adult-child relations?**

- Ms. Greta struck a new, unfamiliar note in adult-child relations.
- Human beings were used to deriving hope from their progeny.
- Children give them a sense of continuity, a symbolic conquest over death.
- Societies expect their long-pending problems to be solved by members of the young generation, with their creative and intellectual strength.
- It was this sentiment that Ms. Greta was referring to when she said, "You all come to us young people for hope."
- The steps currently under consideration for containing the consequences of climate change are far too inadequate to cope with the crisis.
- She thus reminded her audience that carbon emissions are crippling the capacities of the young in the early years.
- Notably, in cities like Delhi, doctors have been warning that children suffering from asthma cannot be expected to have a normal adolescence and youth.

### **Why are Greta's remarks notable?**

- Paradoxically, among millions of teenagers like her, not all are as apprehensive about the impending future.
- In fact, the growth-centric model of progress and the consumer goods appeals to the vast population of the young in many countries today.
- They might also feel quite confident that their leaders will find the way forward against climate change.
- Ms. Thunberg does not represent this vast crowd.
- She was not speaking on behalf of the children and youth in any particular country, but representing the voice of the young in a generic sense.
- Her Swedish education has made her critically aware of what is going on, imparting to her a sense of urgency and impatience to act.
- Gladly, in many countries, countless children have begun to identify with her.
- With new curricular initiatives taken in all national systems of education, school-going children now know a lot more about the meaning of climate change than their parents.

**Source: The Hindu**

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