

WHERE IS THE WORLD GOING WITH ECO-ACTIVISM?

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In recent times, we have seen a surge in environmental campaigns and protests. These actions have brought about changes of effect in many regions of the world. However, on a global scale, anthropogenic damage is still prevailing and is only increasing with every passing day. This is what brings us to look at the current groups and individuals constantly battling to bring about greater change worldwide.

Extinction Rebellion (XR), an international campaign group, was established in the United Kingdom. The movement started in 2018 after The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report on global warming. Ever since, it has actively protested in the streets of Adelaide, Brisbane, Denver, Heidelberg, Lausanne, New York and so forth. The movement is based on non-violent resistance to raise voices against climate change and biodiversity loss which will ultimately end the Anthropocene era via ecological collapse.

The activists have three core demands. First, the government must reveal the true picture of the crisis to citizens by declaring a climate emergency and work with other organisations to bring radical changes. XR is uncertain of their success but they are adamant to not remain silent any longer. They firmly believe that they have at least succeeded in increasing the dialogue and that, presently, civil disobedience is the only way to get on the radar of decision-makers. Second, the UK should hit zero carbon emissions by 2025. The six year timeframe has been criticised by some. But co-founder, Gail Bradbook stated, "We have left it so late that we have to step up in a semi-miraculous way to deal with this situation." And third, the government must form a citizens' assembly to devise policies and monitor progress. This would be formed by randomly choosing people to represent a cross-section of the society. The members would help solve the crisis by seeking advice from experts. The demands are UK centric, but are equally applicable to nations worldwide.

This year a demonstration took place in April. An eleven day protest starting from April 15, 2019 saw the arrests of 1,130 activists according to police. Demonstrators blocked five locations in London. All the locations, when looked from above, formed the hourglass "X" symbol of Extinction Rebellion. The hourglass (from their emblem) stands to show how the time is ticking away for most of the species. Each point focused on stated demands and awareness. Protesters across the globe staged mass lie-ins.

Amongst the thousands, actress Dame Emma Thompson and Olympic gold-winning canoeist Etienne Stott were a notable few. "I'm in a privileged position where I have been given this gold-medal platform.



With that platform comes some responsibility," said the Olympian. He further stated that he 'does not regret' his arrest. Stott had been carried away by the Metropolitan Police officers and later released on further investigation.

The protest has earned plaudits from Swedish teen activist, Greta Thunberg who rose to fame last year with the mass youth-led strike she initiated. Thunberg addressed the rally in Marble Arch on 21 April saying they were 'making a difference'. And there are many more uprisings scheduled to take place later this year.

Sixteen-year old Greta Thunberg has launched a novel movement globally. It started with a placard saying "Skolstrejk för klimatet" (school strike for the climate) and herself in front of the Swedish parliament building on August 20, 2018. Witnessing the inaction of people regarding the climate crisis, she protested every day during school hours until the Swedish general elections in September 2018. Later on, she reserved Fridays for strikes which were soon joined by thousands of students in solidarity. And thus, began the #FridaysForFuture campaign.

The teen has given speeches in several global forums. At the World Economic Forum in Davos, she has remarkably schooled world leaders. "I want you to panic. I want you to feel the fear I do. Every day. And want you to act. I want you to behave like our house is on fire. Because it is," she said in January this year.

The first global school climate strike on March 15, 2019 was massive. Such success helped Extinction Rebellion shut down parts of London and carry out civil disobedience to draw attention to climate facts. The second strike on March 22, 2019 followed similar vigour and drew students from as many as 130 countries to the streets. Students urged

world leaders and major organisations to drastically cut down on emissions and switch to renewable energy sources.

On the other hand, 14-year-old Alexandria Villaseñor, inspired by Greta, is doing her part in the United States. Being

an organiser of the Fridays For Future movement, she has spent twelve Fridays picketing outside of the UN. Other US based eco-rebels like Isra Hirsi and Haven Coleman are all jointly trying to spread Greta's message.

In line with scientists, the earth is undergoing its sixth mass extinction. A lot has been lost in the past years. Keystone and other important species are on the verge of extinction. Nature did equip animals to defend themselves by evolution. If we do not correct our behaviour we do not stand a chance to survive let alone thrive.

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Hiya loves food that you hate by norm- broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com



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