

TRUE ESSENCE OF DEMOCRACY

In the sacred tapestry of Indian philosophy, the phrase "Nagrik Devo Bhava", meaning "Citizen is Divine", shines as a timeless reminder of the true purpose of governance. It echoes the democratic essence that places the citizen at the heart of the system - not as a mere recipient of services, but as the very reason the system exists.

Inspired by the age-old Indian value "Atithi Devo Bhava" (Guest is God), this phrase takes a profound turn inward. It calls upon every public servant, institution, and policymaker to treat the citizen with utmost respect, empathy, and dignity. The message is clear - in every decision taken, in every service delivered, the citizen must come first.

"Nagrik Devo Bhava" is not just a moral ideal; it is the foundation for responsive, accountable, and people-centric governance. It envisions a government that listens before it acts, understands before it implements, and serves with sincerity rather than superiority. The citizen is no longer a passive observer but an active stakeholder, whose trust must be earned and upheld at every level.

This ethos finds powerful expression in modern initiatives like Mission Karmayogi, Digital India, Jan Dhan Yojana, and citizen charters across departments. The goal is to create a bureaucracy that is not only skilled but also sensitive - one that approaches its responsibilities as a form of public service rooted in humility.

Imagine a country where a teacher sees each student as a seed of India's future, a police officer protects not with fear but with care, and a clerk clears files not as a formality but as a promise. That is the dream of "Nagrik Devo Bhava" - a nation where public service is sacred, and the citizen is the center of every action.

In a time of rapid change and rising aspirations, this principle reminds us that good governance is not about control, but about compassion. It is about building trust, nurturing participation, and ensuring that no voice is too small to be heard.

Let "Nagrik Devo Bhava" be our guiding light - where the citizen is not just respected, but revered.

Earth Day: A Global Call to Action for our Planet

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Earth Day, celebrated every year on April 22, is more than just a date on the calendar; it is a powerful reminder of our responsibility to protect the only home we have - Earth. Since its inception in 1970, Earth Day has grown into a global movement involving over a billion people in more than 190 countries. It serves as an annual event to raise awareness about the environmental protection, ecological issues and promote sustainable living. The observance of Earth Day serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to safeguard the Earth's natural resources for current and future generations. In the face of pressing environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss and pollution, Earth Day is not just a celebration; it is a call to action. The significance of this day lies in educating people about the impact of human activities on the planet and encouraging them to take meaningful steps toward a healthier Earth. Each year, Earth Day is observed with a specific theme that reflects current environmental priorities. For instance, in recent years, themes such as "Restore Our Earth," "Invest in Our Planet," and "End Plastic Pollution" have guided initiatives, educational campaigns and community events. These themes serve as calls to action, urging individuals and institutions to adopt eco-friendly practices, reduce carbon emissions, support green technologies and commit to sustainable development goals.

Historical Background: The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, in the United States, led by Senator Gaylord Nelson, an environmentalist and politician from Wisconsin. Inspired by the growing public concern about pollution and environmental degradation, Senator Nelson envisioned a national day to focus on the environment. The success of the first Earth Day prompted the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the passage of landmark environmental laws, including the Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act. Since then, Earth Day has evolved into a global phenomenon.

Earth Day is significant for several reasons such as:

► **Environmental Awareness:** It plays a vital role in educating the public about the environmental issues facing the planet. From school children to policymakers, Earth Day serves as a platform to share knowledge and advocate for change.

► **Promoting Sustainability:** The event encourages individuals, businesses and governments to adopt sustainable practices. Whether it is reducing carbon emissions, conserving water or promoting green energy, Earth Day emphasizes the importance of long-term environmental stewardship.

► **Global Unity and Action:** Earth Day brings together people of diverse cultures, backgrounds and nations with a shared mission - to protect the Earth. This sense of global solidarity is crucial in tackling issues like climate change and biodiversity loss.

► **Influence on Policy:** Over the years, Earth Day has influenced environmental policy at national and international levels. It continues to push governments toward stronger climate commitments and conservation efforts.

Major Environmental Issues Highlighted on Earth Day

► **Climate Change:** Perhaps the most pressing issue, climate change is caused by human activities such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation, leading to global warming, melting glaciers, rising sea levels, extreme weather and loss of biodiversity. Earth Day raises awareness about the need for carbon neutrality, renewable energy and climate resilience.

► **Pollution:** Pollution of air, water and soil directly affects human health, contributing to respiratory illnesses, water-borne diseases and malnutrition. On Earth Day, individuals are encouraged to reduce waste, avoid plastic and participate in clean-up drives.

► **Deforestation:** Forests are vital for maintaining biodiversity, sequestering carbon and regulating the water cycle. Earth Day campaigns often advocate for reforestation, tree planting and the protection of natural habitats.

► **Loss of Biodiversity:** With species extinction accelerating due to habitat destruction and climate change, Earth Day stresses the importance of conserving wildlife and protecting endangered species.

► **Sustainable Consumption:** Earth Day promotes mindful consumption, advocating for less waste, ethical sourcing and sustainable production methods.

One of the greatest strengths of Earth Day lies in its inclusiveness and ability to unite people across cultural, geographical and political boundaries. From school children planting trees and participating in clean-up drives to scientists holding climate talks and governments signing environmental agree-

ments - Earth Day empowers everyone to contribute in their own capacity. Educational institutions organize workshops, eco-fairs and exhibitions to promote awareness, while social media campaigns amplify messages of conservation and sustainability to a global audience. In recent years, digital platforms have played an increasingly vital role in Earth Day celebrations, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where virtual events, webinars and online challenges kept the spirit of environmental activism alive.

How You Can Make a Difference

You don't need to wait for Earth Day to make a positive impact. Here are simple yet effective steps you can take every day:

- Use reusable bags, bottles and containers
- Plant trees and support local green spaces
- Reduce, reuse and recycle materials
- Save electricity and water at home
- Avoid fast fashion and choose sustainable brands
- Participate in or organize clean-up campaigns
- Support eco-conscious businesses and policies

Small actions, when multiplied by millions, create massive change.

While Earth Day is a time of celebration and reflection, it is also a call to urgency. The environmental challenges we face are complex and interconnected and addressing them requires sustained effort, innovation and cooperation at every level of society. Earth Day reminds us that every action, no matter how small, contributes to the greater good. It encourages us to move beyond token gestures and embrace long-term commitments to sustainability.

To conclude, Earth Day stands as a powerful symbol of environmental consciousness and action. It is a symbol of our shared responsibility to protect the planet. As the environmental challenges facing our world grow more complex, Earth Day reminds us that the Earth's future is in our hands. Through awareness, action and unity, we can build a sustainable future that values and preserves nature's richness. As we celebrate Earth Day each year, let us commit not just to a day of eco-consciousness, but to a lifetime of environmental care - for ourselves, for each other and for generations yet to come.

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Towards 1000 strategy & World Earth Day 2025



■ DR. PARVEEN KUMAR

Since its origin in 1970 till now, the World Earth Day has today become one of the largest secular observances in the world with over 1 billion people participating each year. This year as the day turns 55; it highlights the importance of planet and the conservation of its natural resources along with various ecosystems so that the food systems thriving upon and operating on this planet could work effectively to produce enough food for every one of us living on this planet. Earth, the only planet in this universe to host life is now home to about 8 billion human beings. Besides, it also asserts trillions of other organisms. It not only provides us with everything we want, but also everything we need to survive. This fifth largest planet in the solar system provides the food we need for life, water we need for hydration, air and the oxygen we need to breathe. Literally everything we need comes from this one planet. We rely upon it for our existence in many different ways. Everything in this planet demands proper conservation and a justifiable development without which a proper balance cannot be achieved. All the components of this planet are equally important and a disturbance to any one of the component have serious and adverse repercussions on the other components ultimately affecting the planet as a whole. Over the past few decades, human beings and various anthropogenic activities have irrevocably upset the balance existing on this planet and as a result, the world is passing through one of its severe crisis. The crisis if not addressed urgently and properly can lead to a catastrophe. The unprecedented global destruction and rapid reduction of plant and wildlife populations are directly linked to causes driven by human activity viz. climate change, deforestation, habitat loss, trafficking and poaching, unsustainable agriculture, pollution and pesticides to name a few. The impacts are far-reaching.

An important component of our planet is our land which we put to different uses. The land represent a natural ecosystem composed of many elements those exhibit diverse

bio physical characteristics that are inter-linked and interdependent. It also supports a number of economic activities and influences health and nutrition of man and animals. Due to poor soil and water management practices about 40 to 50 per cent of the land area suffers from degradation of one or the other kind. The indiscriminate use of plant protection chemicals during green revolution and thereafter in states like Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh to increase the crop yields has led to water pollution. Such is the extent that drinking such polluted water has resulted in many deadly diseases among peoples in the states like Punjab and Haryana. Temperature is on the rise. Sea levels are increasing. Floods and droughts are on the rise. Coastal areas are now unsafe for human settlements. One of the most talked of challenges of present day and that has received national as well as international attention is the plastic pollution and that too of Single Use Plastics (SUPs). If we do not act now, extinction may be humanity's most enduring legacy. To aware the masses about the threats to earth and to work for restoring the health of this planet; World Earth Day is celebrated every year on April 22.

History of World Earth Day: Originated in 1970, the event is now coordinated and celebrated internationally by the Earth Day Network in more than 193 countries across the globe. Earth Day was celebrated in April 1970 for the first time to bring the environmental condition into the national agenda. On the first Earth Day, 20 million Americans took part in different U.S. cities. The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, when San Francisco activist John McConnell and Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson separately asked Americans to join in a grassroots demonstration. Dealing with dangerously serious issues concerning toxic drinking water, air pollution, and the effects of pesticides, an impressive 20 million Americans 10% of the population ventured outdoors and protested together. President of the United States of America Richard Nixon led the nation in creating the

Environmental Protection Agency, which followed with successful laws including the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Environmental Activist McConnell originally had chosen the spring equinox (March 20, 1970), but Nelson chose April 22, which ended up becoming the official celebration date. (Given that the date of the spring equinox changes over time, it may have made things more complicated to go with the astronomical event rather than just a calendar date.)

Theme of World Earth Day: World Earth Day 2025 is being celebrated with the theme, 'Our Power, Our Planet,' focusing on renewable energy and aiming to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030.

Clean Electricity: Clean electricity generation refers to producing electricity using methods that minimize or eliminate negative environmental impacts, especially the release of greenhouse gases and pollutants. This is achieved through the use of renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydropower, which replenish themselves naturally. Nuclear energy is also considered a clean source, though it involves the use of a non-renewable resource (uranium). Renewable Energy Sources includes solar energy which harnesses sunlight to generate electricity through photovoltaic (PV) panels or concentrating solar power (CSP) systems. Wind energy is produced by utilizing wind turbines to convert kinetic energy into electricity. Generating electricity from fast moving water constitutes hydroelectricity. The Geo-thermal energy produces electricity by extracting heat from the interior of earth. Biomass like wood or agricultural wastes is another source of producing clean electricity. Tidal energy can be produced by harnessing the power of tides to generate electricity. Nuclear energy is generated through nuclear fission. Green hydrogen is also a clean source of energy. Firstly Hydrogen is produced using renewable energy sources which can then be used for electricity generation through fuel cells.

Importance of Clean Electricity:

Clean electricity generation helps mitigate climate change by reducing reliance on fossil fuels like coal, oil, and natural gas, which release significant amounts of greenhouse gases when burned. It also helps improve the quality of air we breathe. We have seen and read reports of how our cities are grappling with pollution and issue of clean air. The vehicular emission and burning of crop residues by farmers have resulted in smog and this has made air poisonous. Air Quality Index (AQI) has deteriorated to such a low level that it has become a serious health issue. This can be taken care of by use of clean electricity. When we produce clean electricity, it means we are reducing or eliminating emissions from power plants which ultimately produce clean electricity and helps improve air quality thereby reducing the health impacts of pollution. Diversifying energy sources, including renewable and clean technologies also reduce our dependence on foreign energy supplies and enhance energy security. The development and deployment of clean energy technologies also lead to creation of jobs, stimulate economic growth, and foster innovation. In the country, large solar parks have been established which provide a significant amount of electricity to grids. A large no. of dams built on rivers also generates electricity generation.

Government Initiatives to Promote Clean Energy: Government of India has also started many programmes to augment clean electricity generation through various programmes like PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Pariyojana. PM KUSUM is another one of the largest initiatives in the world to provide clean energy to more than 3.5 million farmers. India also took the lead in forming an action oriented, member driven platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies, the International Solar Alliance (ISA). ISA was launched in 2015 by Prime minister of India and President of France at the United Nations Climate Change Conference held in Paris. ISA is guided by 'Towards 1000' strategy which aims to mobilize USD 1000 billion of investments in solar energy solutions by 2020, deliver energy access to 1000 million peoples using clean energy solutions, install 1000 GW of solar energy capacity and to mitigate global solar emissions to the tune of 1000 million tonnes of carbon dioxide every year. Accomplishing the 'Towards 1000' strategy of ISA needs sustained micro level efforts at our won end also.

We have to work to ensure that our actions in no way lead to emission of green house gases, degradation and pollution of our natural resources and lead to a situation where our natural reservoirs or carbon sinks are destroyed. The best way to ensure this is through mass awareness and the April 22 provides us an opportunity to make the peoples aware of the impending threat to our planet and the possible way out. Because; ultimately our power lies in the well being of our planet.

(The author writes on agriculture & social issues).

Earth-Common place for all

■ RAVINDER KUMAR

Some lives in luxurious bungalows and some in huts, some live in city and some in the village, but has anyone ever asked themselves where do they live? If not then ask yourself.

Earth- The most beautiful planet of our universe, and its forests, rivers, deserts and oceans make it the most beautiful planet in the universe and this is the only planet on which there is life because of the availability of air, water and gasses needed for sur-

vival. We are very lucky that we got life and we are able to see this beautiful earth. Earth is not just a planet it is our home, our mother because we live on it, we eat from it and it fulfill our all necessities and does not charge us any rent in return. There are seven continents in the world on which more than 8 billion people live and this earth bears the burden of everyone without any discrimination, we got everything from earth like food, shelter, minerals everything which needs to human beings

and we must use these gifts wisely. We can never repay the debt of the earth but it is our duty to keep the earth clean and green and save these gifts given by nature.

Earth is our home, our earth is an amazing place, but it needs our help to thrive that's why each year on April 22 billions of people celebrate Earth Day to protect the planet from deforestation and pollution and on Earth Day we should take a pledge that we will make every possible effort to keep the Earth clean and not just on earth day,

we should try daily to make earth clean and pure and we should also spread awareness among people. Researchers estimate roughly 15 billion trees in the world cut down each year and also waste billion gallons of water and to avoid this disaster we should conserve water and planting trees to make our planet happier and healthier place to live.

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From Regional Roots to National Spotlight

WAM! to Crown India's Best Creators at WAVES 2025

■ SANTOSH KUMAR, SARLA MEENA & KAMNA LAKARIA
After months of regional contests and thousands of entries, finalists from 11 cities across India have been selected to take part in the WAVES Anime & Manga Contest (WAM!) national finale. The prestigious event will take place at WAVES 2025, India's first-of-its-kind media and entertainment summit, from May 1-4 at the Jio World Convention Centre, Mumbai.



WAM! is organized by the Media & Entertainment Association of India (MEA) and supported by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India as part of WAVES (World Audio Visual Entertainment Summit). WAVES is India's biggest platform for the AVGC-XR sector: Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, and Extended Reality. At the center of WAVES is the Create in India Challenges (CIC). Season 1 of CIC has made history with around 1 lakh registrations, including 1,100 international participants. After a detailed selection process, 750+ finalists have been chosen from 32 unique challenges.

Among the standout segments under CIC is WAM!. Over the last decade, anime and manga have grown rapidly in India. What started as a niche interest is now a major cultural wave. India has around 180 million anime fans, making it the second-largest anime market after China. The growth is not just in fans, but also in numbers. In 2023, the Indian anime market was worth \$1,642.5 million. It is expected to reach \$5,036 million by 2032.

WAM! tapped into this growing creative energy by offering structured opportunities for Indian creators to develop and pitch original IPs (Intellectual Property). It fills a gap in India's media industry by promoting original, culturally-rooted IPs. With the rise of global anime and growing digital literacy, WAM! gives students and professionals a platform to showcase ideas. It provides a clear path to develop pitch-ready IPs, access to industry mentorship and support from the government.

To bring this vision to life, the competition was held across multiple verticals: Manga (Student & Professional), Anime (Student & Professional), Webtoon (Student & Professional), Voice Acting, and Cosplay. The participants-carefully chosen across student and professional categories. WAM! followed a ground-up approach with contests held across 11 cities: Guwahati, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Delhi, Mumbai, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Bengaluru. The winners from each city were selected by a distinguished jury comprising industry experts from animation, comics, media and entertainment sectors. Their expertise ensured the selection of high-potential talent representing a diversity of voices and storytelling traditions. The regional rounds highlighted India's rich linguistic and artistic diversity, proving that creative talent knows no boundaries.

Building on this strong foundation, the national finale is not just about celebration-it's a launchpad. Designed to help participants become industry-ready professionals, it will feature live pitching sessions, networking with production studios, and showcase opportunities with international media giants.

The shortlisted creators now head to Mumbai for the WAM! National Finale at WAVES 2025, where they will present their work to an international jury and live audience. The finale promises high-stakes excitement, with winners receiving:

- All-expense-paid trip to Anime Japan 2026 in Tokyo
- Anime dubbing in Hindi, English, and Japanese by Gulmohar Media
- Webtoon publishing by Toonsutra

WAM! is more than a competition, it is a cultural movement aiming to address a key gap in India's media landscape: the lack of globally scalable, original content rooted in Indian stories. As WAVES 2025 approaches, the excitement builds. It's a celebration of talent, originality and the transformative power of storytelling.