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Opinion | Operation 2030: Confronting The Climate Crisis Through Inner Clarity



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Humanity today faces a self-inflicted crisis. Unlike past mass extinctions caused by nature, this one is born of human choices. While extreme heat and ecological collapse are symptoms, the deeper threat is our refusal to acknowledge and address the crisis.

This is why I've committed myself to 'Operation 2030,' an initiative by the PrashantAdvait Foundation. At the Foundation, we are of the realised view that the solution to the climate crisis runs deeper than politics or technology - it's rooted in compulsive consumption, which reflects in overpopulation, per capita consumption and the illusion that happiness comes from material gain. The real emergency is therefore internal. For over ten years, the Foundation has worked to bring this truth to light through wisdom literature, talks, and videos. Operation 2030 pushes this effort forward, urging a clear understanding of the crisis and our part in it - because real change begins with self-awareness.

Consuming Our Way to Collapse

To understand Operation 2030, we need to look at our carbon history. In 1750, carbon dioxide levels were a stable 270 ppm, rising slowly to 300 ppm by 1900. The 20th century, however, brought a surge, driven by industrialisation, world wars, and post-war reconstruction. By 1950, with growing prosperity, emissions spiked sharply, reaching over 10 ppm each decade and accelerating further in the 21st century. Scientific evidence made the link clear: more emissions, higher temperatures. A gradual trend had become an emergency.

By the early 2000s, climate change had moved from debate to global agreement. This growing urgency led to the 2015 Paris Agreement at COP21, which warned that crossing 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels could trigger self-reinforcing climate feedback loops-warming that continues even without added emissions. To stay below that threshold, countries committed to cutting carbon emissions by 43% by 2030, measured against 2019 levels. That's why 2030 stands as the defining year behind the name Operation 2030.



Operation 2030 is committed to addressing a crisis long neglected - a pledge to safeguard the future. But by 2025, that pledge is already broken. The 1.5°C limit, once targeted for 2030, has already been breached, with global temperatures now exceeding pre-industrial levels. The warnings were loud, yet we turned a deaf ear. This early breach makes the mission more urgent than ever - demanding that we confront the crisis already underway.

The Rising Volume Of Climate Warnings

Despite global pledges, emissions haven't dropped since 2019, holding steady at 58 gigatons of carbon dioxide. The Paris Agreement offered three paths: the green path aimed for 33 gigatons by 2030 to stay within 1.5°C; the yellow path targeted 39 gigatons, risking a 2°C rise and dangerous feedback loops; and the red path-our current path-means no real cuts, pushing us beyond 3°C with no clear limit as warming compounds itself. As of 2025, we're slightly beyond 58 gigatons.

Yet this crisis is largely missing from mainstream media. News, entertainment, and print media remain silent-and that silence is costly. Operation 2030 aims to break the silence, bringing the truth back into public discourse.

Climate Injustice

To meet the 2030 sustainability goals, each person must limit annual carbon emissions to 2.1 tons. By 2050, to achieve net zero - as defined by balancing emissions with what nature or technology can absorb - that figure must drop to 0.7 tons per person.

Current per capita emissions show stark divergence: While India stays within limits at 1.9 tons, the EU averages 7, the US 16, and countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE emit 20-25 tons. These aren't just numbers - they reveal deep ethical divides.

Those most responsible for emissions often make the least effort to reduce them. Wealthier nations, despite having the means and knowledge, continue to fuel the crisis while falling short on action. In the past decade, the top 1% of emitters-surpassing their fair share by over 20 times-have been linked to 1.3 million premature deaths, primarily in vulnerable regions like the global South, including India. The top 0.1%, often idolised figures, emit more than 1,000 tons per person each year. In contrast, the bottom half of the global population accounts for just 5% of emissions yet bears the brunt-facing floods, droughts, famine, and displacement.

This isn't just a climate emergency - it's a grave climate injustice. A privileged few enjoy excess, while billions are left to suffer the consequences. At the root of this divide lies a flawed cultural ideal: our definition of success, now in urgent need of change.

The Way Forward

1. Rethinking Success

The climate crisis is more than an environmental issue - it reflects an inner void. Our drive to consume stems from a sense of lack within. Operation 2030 questions the conventional definition of success, urging a shift from ownership to awareness, from dominance to harmony. True transformation begins with self-knowledge. To support this, the Foundation is popularising timeless wisdom through accessible philosophy. Though often dismissed as utopian, this path has already guided lakhs toward sustainability-drawing on Vedanta, Stoicism, Buddhism, Existentialism, and Deep Ecology.

2. Unmask the Real Culprits

We must critically examine the psychological, economic, and political forces behind our so-called role models. Many famous figures, while hailed as successful, are among the biggest contributors to the climate crisis. Operation 2030 will challenge this elite narrative-pushing for public disclosure of carbon footprints by influential individuals and corporations. Partnering with data-driven organisations, we aim to drive transparency and accountability.

3. The Hidden Price Tag: Accounting for Carbon in What We Buy

Today's prices ignore the true carbon cost of goods and services-whether meat or luxury travel. Operation 2030 urges carbon pricing and product labelling that reflect true environmental costs to guide consumer choices. Though used in regions like the EU and Canada, such measures remain underused. We aim to raise awareness around product emissions to shift demand towards low-carbon lifestyles and responsible consumption.

4. Making Climate a Political Priority

To shape political choices, public push is key - especially in democracies, where leaders won't act unless people compel them to. That's why Operation 2030 centres around the citizens. Every ballot cast, product bought, and digital action taken plays a role in steering the climate's future. Young people, especially, must act now - they are not just future victims but present forces of transformation.

Operation 2030 seeks to mark a turning point in human consciousness, transforming this external crisis into what may be our final and most urgent chance for inner awakening.

(Acharya Prashant, a modern Vedanta exegete and philosopher, is a national bestselling author, columnist, and founder of the PrashantAdvait Foundation. An IIT-IIM alumnus, he is a recipient of the OCND Award from the IIT Delhi Alumni Association for outstanding contribution to national development.)

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