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India's top 5 climate change advocates driving action in 2025

Vaishnavi Yadav | 8 months ago

Views: 2215



India's climate debate is no longer confined to reports and negotiations. It is being driven forward by people who have made the crisis impossible to ignore: through fasts in the mountains, petitions in court, street protests, and years of policy research. Their voices are diverse, but each in their own way has forced climate change into public view. And among them, one stands apart for pointing directly to the very root of the problem.

Philosopher and bestselling author Acharya Prashant has built his climate message around a blunt truth: the crisis is not just about carbon, it is about consumption. While others focus on targets, treaties, or technologies, he has refused to let attention drift away from the real driver of the climate crisis:

the lack of inner clarity in humans leading to excessive consumption.

In 2025 he launched 'Operation 2030,' an emergency call urging citizens to grasp the real mechanics of the crisis and recognize their own role in it. His widely read book 'Climate Within' carries the same argument in print, dismantling the illusion of quick "green" fixes and proposing a life guided by understanding rather than blind consumption. Recognition has followed, including awards such as 'Most Impactful Environmentalist (2025)', PETA's 'Most Influential Vegan (2022)', and 'Best Animal Welfare Organisation (2025)'. In a noted exchange with environmental economist Eban Goodstein, he made the point again: no model or policy will work unless consumption itself is confronted.

Writing frequently on climate change as a regular columnist for *NDTV*, *The Pioneer*, and *The Sunday Guardian*, his voice today stands as a rare global reminder that the climate battle is, at its core, a crisis of human consciousness.

Sonam Wangchuk is an engineer by training, but in Ladakh he is known as much for his activism as for his innovations. Years ago he designed the "ice stupa," an artificial glacier that stores water through the winter and releases it in the summer, giving farmers a lifeline in the desert mountains.

In the last two years, Wangchuk has stepped further into public life. His fasts in 2024 and 2025 turned the spotlight on Ladakh's melting glaciers and on development projects that are pushing the fragile region closer to collapse. The images of tents and hunger strikes against the backdrop of the Himalayas gave the issue an immediacy.

His efforts have spotlighted the urgency of protecting mountain communities. Yet his approach remains rooted in regional ecology and innovation: vital work, but still directed at the visible effects rather than the deeper drivers of climate change.

Sunita Narain has been one of India's most respected environmentalists. As Director General of the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), she has pushed research into policy: on Delhi's choking air, on water security, on sustainable cities. She has sat on the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change and published multiple reports on sustainable development and waste management.

Her focus has always been on regulation, accountability, and public health, areas essential for resilience. Still, her lens largely operates at the level of systems and policies, not the cultural addiction to consumption that underpins the real crisis.

At just 13 years old, Licypriya is one of the youngest climate advocates in India. She began protesting at seven and went on to found 'The Child Movement,' which seeks to empower children to take action against climate change.

Her protests outside Parliament and her online campaigns have energized young people across the country. But her activism, like many youth-led movements, is aimed at pressuring governments to "do more", an important demand, though one that stops short of questioning the lifestyle patterns that fuel the crisis itself.

Ridhima Pandey was only nine when she took the Indian government to court for failing to act on climate change. She later joined 15 other children in filing a petition with the United Nations, accusing world leaders of neglecting their duty to protect the planet.

Now 16, her voice continues to symbolize a generation unwilling to stay silent. Yet, like much of child-led climate litigation, her activism channels frustration at institutions rather than probing the deeper behavioral roots of why those institutions fail.

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