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Role of Youth in Addressing Climate Change: Past, Present, and Future Perspectives of Thane District

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Abstract

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, and youth are emerging as critical agents of climate action. This review examines youth involvement in climate change mitigation and adaptation, tracing historical roles and current trends, with implications for Thane District in Maharashtra, India. Drawing on global and local assessments, the review highlights how youth participation — through advocacy, education, community programs, and policy engagement — has evolved. We also identify future pathways for enhancing youth contributions to climate resilience, including capacity building and institutional support. The findings underscore the urgency of empowering youth as partners in regional climate strategies.

Keywords

Climate Change, Youth Engagement, Thane District, Maharashtra, Climate Action, Policy Advocacy

Introduction

Climate change impacts — including rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and degraded ecosystems — pose significant environmental and socio-economic challenges regionally and globally. Youth are particularly affected due to their long-term stake in climate outcomes, yet they also represent a growing force for change. Globally and across India, youth organizations advocate climate literacy, mitigation, and adaptation strategies through digital platforms, grassroots campaigns, and policy dialogues [1][2]. In Maharashtra, initiatives like *Maharashtra Youth for Climate Action* provide structured opportunities for young people to participate in climate planning and advocacy, reflecting the increasing emphasis on localized youth engagement [3][4]. However, there is limited literature focusing specifically on Thane District — a densely populated urban and peri-urban region requiring targeted climate responses.

Materials and Methods

This review used **secondary sources** including peer-reviewed articles, organizational reports, and government and NGO documents related to youth climate engagement. Key literature was identified through thematic searches on youth roles in climate mitigation and adaptation at global and regional levels. Specific Maharashtra government programs — such as *Youth Engagement for Water Stewardship* and *Maharashtra Youth for Climate Action* — were reviewed to understand present frameworks for youth involvement in sustainability initiatives [3][5]. Sources were then synthesized into three thematic areas: historical roles, current dynamics, and future strategies relevant to Thane District.

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Historical and Global Trends in Youth Climate Engagement

Era	Youth Roles	Key Activities and Examples
Pre-2010	Early awareness and networking	Indian Youth Climate Network (IYCN) formed to unite young voices on climate and participate in policy discussions at UNFCCC platforms [1][2].
2010–2020	Mobilization and digital activism	Youth movements like <i>Fridays for Future</i> and climate strikes globally; increased use of social media for advocacy [6].
2020–Present	Structured education & advocacy	Government-supported programs such as MYCA train youth in climate action planning and policy engagement [3][4].
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Youth engagement has shifted from grassroots awareness to structured involvement in policy dialogues and climate projects. In India, youth organizations have played a key role in mobilizing action and representing national interests at global forums. This trend echoes the broader global movement of youth activists influencing climate narratives and actions.

Table 2: Current Youth Engagement Strategies in Maharashtra

Strategy	Description	Stakeholders
Formal Programs	Training modules on climate action planning and leadership via MYCA	Govt. of Maharashtra, UNICEF, NGOs [3][4]
Water Stewardship	Youth lead water conservation and groundwater sustainability efforts	HTED, ACWADAM, UNICEF [5]
Community and Digital Outreach	Grassroots campaigns, social media mobilization, eco-initiatives	Youth volunteers, civil society [6]

Presently, Maharashtra has systemic frameworks like MYCA that elevate youth from awareness to advocacy. Moreover, the *Youth Engagement for Water Stewardship* program mobilizes youth in practical climate action areas such as water resource management — especially relevant for water-stressed districts like Thane [5]. These initiatives demonstrate multi-stakeholder collaboration in climate education and community engagement.

Table 3: Future Pathways for Youth in Thane District

Focus Area	Actionable Pathways	Expected Outcome
Climate Education	Integrate climate curricula in schools and colleges	Better informed youth base
Policy Participation	Youth representation in municipal climate planning	Inclusive, youth-responsive policies
Local Action Projects	Urban greening, waste management, water conservation	Community resilience and sustainable infrastructure

Technology Innovation	&	Support youth-led climate tech and entrepreneurship	Green jobs and innovation growth
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The future of youth engagement in Thane District hinges on embedding climate learning within educational systems and providing platforms for young innovators to influence local climate policies. Such pathways will strengthen youth capacity to lead climate resilience efforts at community and institutional levels.

Conclusion

Youth play a pivotal role in climate change mitigation and adaptation. From early networks like IYCN to structured government programs in Maharashtra, youth have broadened their roles from awareness to active climate leadership. For Thane District, leveraging such models while expanding educational opportunities and policy engagement can solidify youth as integral stakeholders in climate strategies.

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