



# The Climate Pulse: A Swasti Dialogue Series

*Season 1 / Volume 1*

2nd May - 9th May 2023



**CAMPAIGN REPORT**



## **Foreword**

Our young team of public health communicators, who are equity champions, are gearing up for the worst of the climate crisis faced by the powerless and voiceless.

Currently anchored within the Centre for Strategic Communications for Public Health at Swasti, this team is understandably deeply invested in amplifying voices that bring to light the lived experiences of people around the climate crises and its impact on well-being. They share proven knowledge, insight, and learning around the solutions that have been born from these experiences.

The Climate Pulse Report - Season I is one such initiative and, I thank its participants for their vibrant multi-modal / multi-media involvement.

We must all step up to the times we are living in. As we work towards adding 100 million healthy days to the lives of the most marginalized amidst these difficult times, let us join hands to amplify lived experiences and find local, relevant, respectful, and just solutions for all.



**Dr. Angela Chaudhuri**  
*Chief Catalyst*  
*Swasti, The Health Catalyst*



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***Exploring the Climate-Health Nexus  
through the eyes of the people.***





## **Introduction**

Climate change has devastating health impacts, especially for the most vulnerable. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) climate change not only has direct health impacts, but also affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.

We, at Swasti, work towards adding more healthy days to the lives of people. The Center for Strategic Communications for Public Health recognised the need to promote dialogue about the climate-health nexus. We aim to include young people and budding researchers in the conversation and do it in a way that is palatable to non-academic circles. Academia is often daunting for the non-academic. While brilliant research is being done and new insights about the effects of climate change on people's health are being written about everyday, the general public is largely unaware. Further, the need to put young people 'in the know' was also apparent to us since large student spaces are excellent for knowledge-sharing and dissemination. The need was clear - to make information related to the climate-health nexus easier to grasp. Policy or social impact communications strives to make things simple, easy and interesting to read and understand and that is what we set out to do.

*Out of this desire, The Climate Pulse: A Swasti Dialogue Series was born.*

The series is a multimedia endeavor that aimed to look at various different aspects of the climate-health nexus and present it to our partners and audiences to two ends -

- To advocate for the need to recognize the worrying implications of the climate-health nexus.
- To put young researchers at the forefront and create a repository of information that can both inform the general public and be used to inform policies and social innovations.

The campaign saw six curated issues released and disseminated on social media platforms namely, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. A Twitter Space was also held with all the contributors. The pulse of the climate says that the time is nigh. Read on to know more!



## Themes

Submissions were welcome on the following five themes. Each theme was curated to be able to cover one important aspect of the climate-health nexus along with giving the reader context as to why the theme is important.



### **Relationship between climate change and the health of people - Climate Change & Health - A Worrying Connection**

The relationship between climate change and human health is becoming increasingly evident - extreme weather events, disruptions in food systems, and the rise of zoonotic diseases. The World Health Organization predicts that climate change will result in an additional 250,000 fatalities per year between 2030 and 2050.



### **Impacts of climate change on health of vulnerable populations - Disproportionate Health Risks - Vulnerable Populations & Climate Change**

Climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable populations due to systemic issues such as poverty and marginalization. Indigenous and tribal groups, people living with disabilities, children, farmers, street vendors, labourers, sexual and gender minorities, senior citizens, and other marginalised groups are particularly at risk.



### **Importance of making health systems resilient to climate change - Climate-Proofing Health Systems - Why and How**

Healthcare systems and health workforces are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, including infrastructure disruptions, power outages and less capacity. This impacts their ability to carry out their services and provide care. A 2020 study found that between 2000 and 2017, 383 extreme climate events disrupted health services.



### **Climate change and the rise of vector-borne diseases - Bitten by Climate Change - Global Warming and Vector-Borne Illnesses**

Climate change is already impacting the transmission and distribution of vector-borne illnesses, and these effects are expected to worsen. According to the WHO, the number of people affected by dengue fever has increased 30-fold over the past 50 years, and it now affects over 100 countries, putting 3.9 billion people at risk.



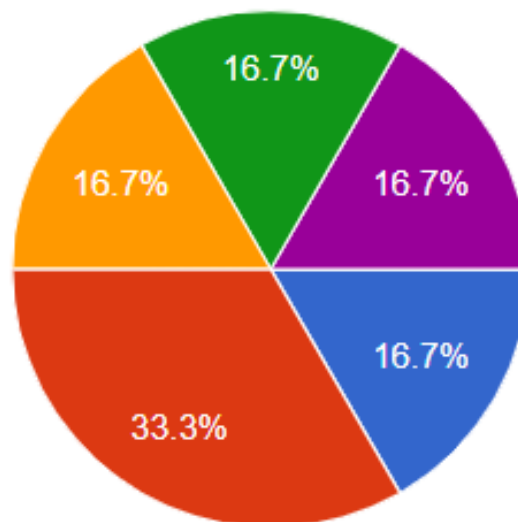


## Exploring Climate Change mitigation and adaptation strategies - Exploring Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies in the Age of Climate Change

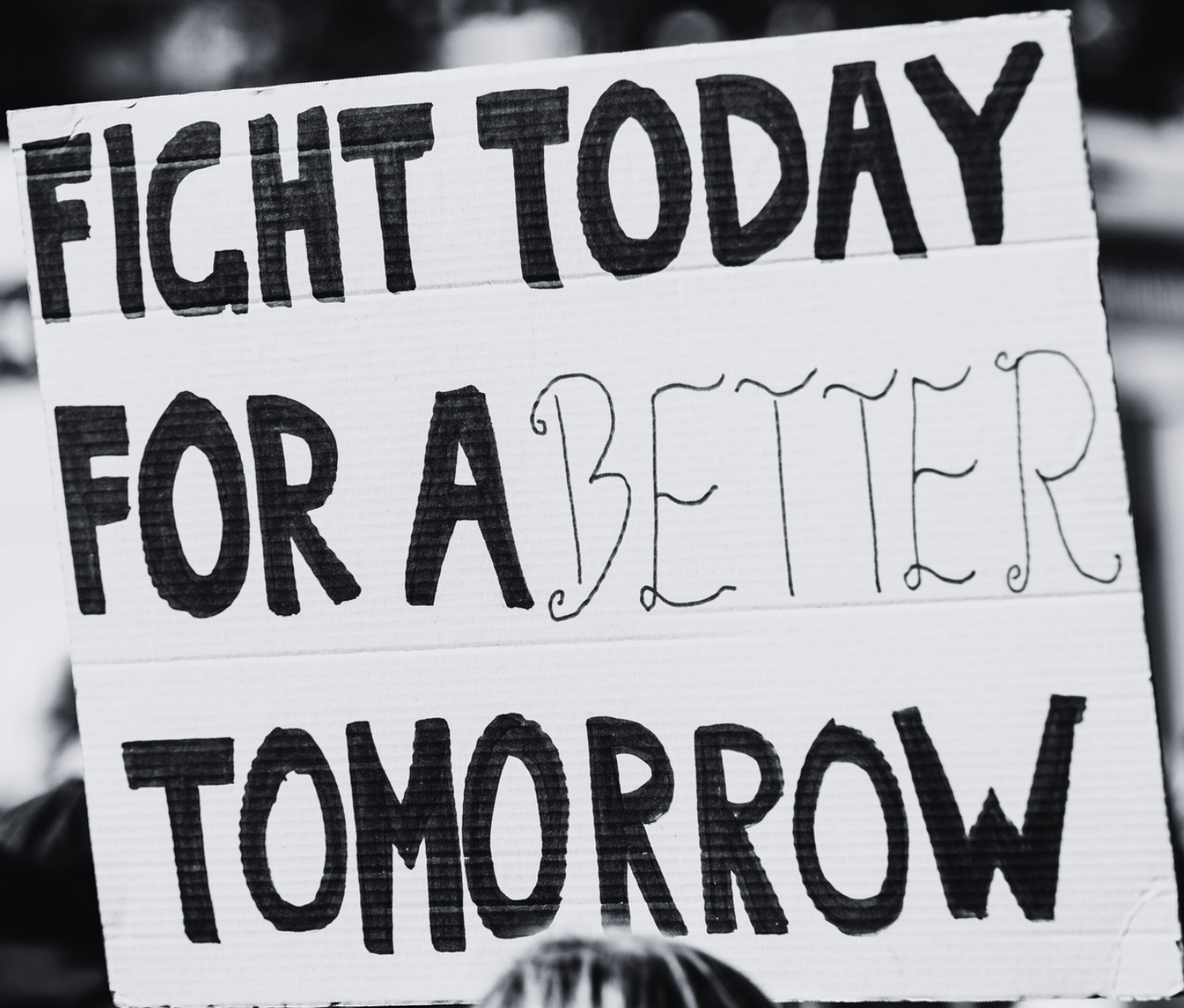
Climate change is already having significant impacts on the environment, economy, and society. The World Economic Forum's Global Risk Report 2020 identifies climate-related risks as among the top five global risks. We need to explore mitigation and adaptation strategies to mitigate its effects.

### Theme of Submission

6 responses



- Climate Change & Health - A Worrying Connection
- Disproportionate Health Risks - Vulnerable Populations & Climate Change
- Climate-Proofing Health Systems - Why and How
- Bitten by Climate Change - Global Warming and Vector-Borne Diseases
- Exploring Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies in the Age of Climate Change



# SUBMISSIONS





## **Issue 1: Climate Change and Health - Living with Solar Urticaria: Navigating the Effects of Climate Change and Pollen in India**

*Mahalakshmi S*

Three years ago, I developed Chronic Idiopathic Urticaria, which gradually subsided after a year and a half. However, after relocating to Bangalore in May 2022, the hives reappeared in March the following year. Despite consulting multiple medical professionals, the cause of my skin allergies remained unclear until the most recent physician diagnosed the condition as Solar Urticaria which was attributed to the increased exposure to pollen and UV radiation due to the city's altitude. Solar urticaria is a very rare chronic disorder characterized by rashes and hives.

The India Meteorological Department has reported that February 2023 was the hottest month since 1901, and a higher number of heatwaves are expected across North Indian states. As temperatures and levels of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) increase, there is also higher production of pollen due to increased photosynthesis, resulting in longer periods of time for pollen to linger in the atmosphere and affect a wider geographic area.

Technological advances to model and predict airborne allergens have come a long way. Self-injecting epinephrine injections are currently unavailable in India and current treatment involves anti-histamine tablets majorly. Extensive research to understand the impact of environmental factors on allergies, better policies for managing heat waves, and urban planning that accommodates changes in temperatures in India are required. Though manageable through medication, they can get quite debilitating and reduce an individual's Quality of Life. Hence, more information regarding them among the general public is essential.



*Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 2,50,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress*







## **Issue 2: *It's Time to Act : How Climate Change is Fueling Vector-Borne Diseases***

*Dr. Ranjana N Rao*

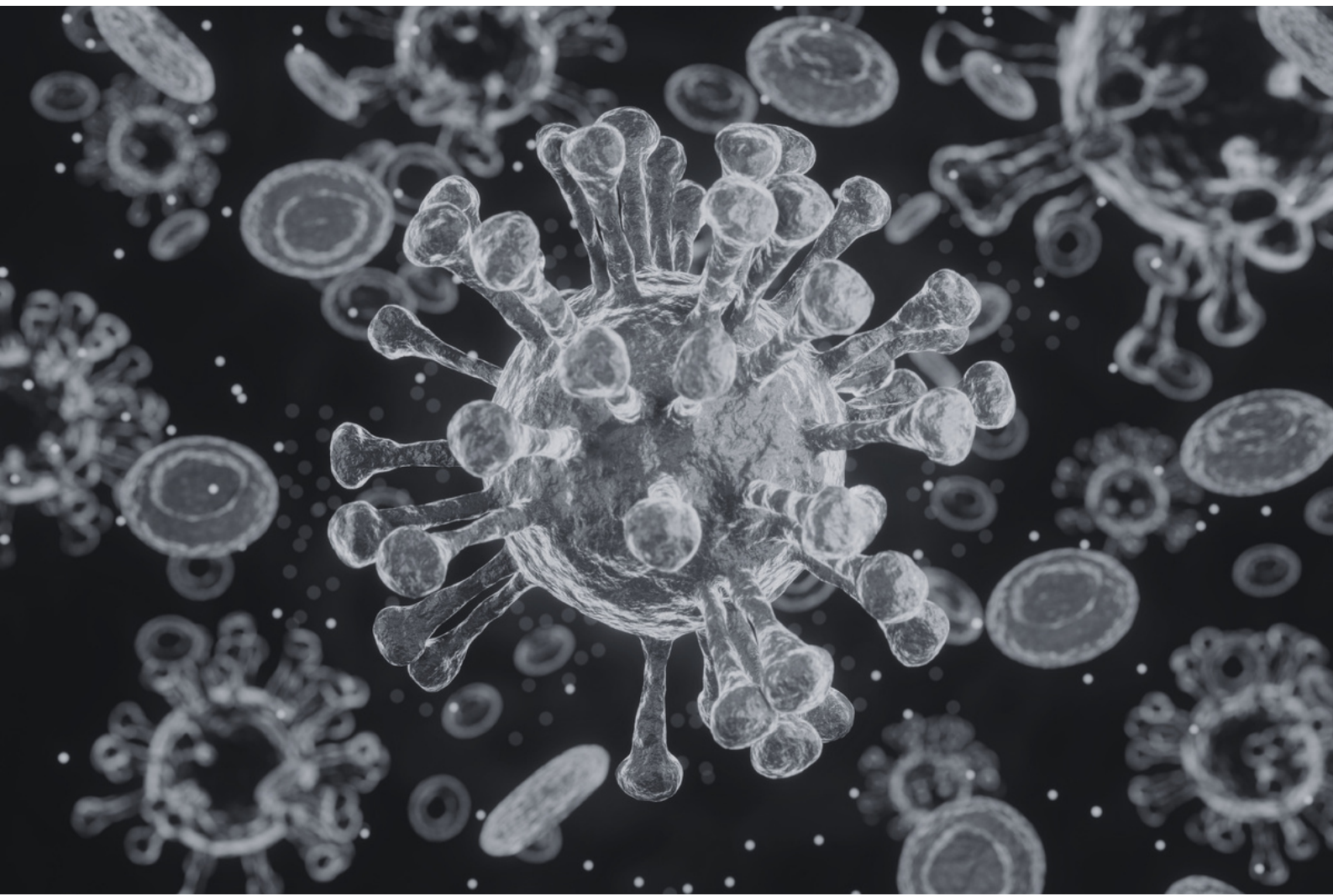
Climate change poses a severe threat to global health by exacerbating the spread of zoonotic diseases that transmit from animals to humans. The destruction of animal habitats caused by rising temperatures leads to increased contact between wildlife and humans, creating an ideal environment for pathogens to emerge and spread. Around 60 percent of emerging human diseases have their origins from animal species.

As global temperatures continue to rise, vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, zika, and many more are carried by mosquitoes, becoming an increasingly significant health concern in tropical regions, particularly South and Southeast Asia, where they affect vulnerable populations such as rural-subsistence farmers. The Lancet Climate Commission warns that climate change driven by human activities may reverse the public health gains of the past 50 years, with children, particularly the poorest populations, bearing 88% of the disease burden. The World Health Organization estimates that without mitigation strategies, there could be an additional 77,000 to 131,000 deaths among children under five years old by 2030, with vector-borne diseases being the most climate-sensitive.

It is crucial to implement multidisciplinary approaches like One Health to prevent zoonotic diseases and their spread. Such measures include improved sanitation, vector control, and effective disease surveillance systems. We must take appropriate action to limit the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, particularly in tropical regions, to protect global public health.



*According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 75% of emerging diseases and 60% of known human infectious diseases originate in animals.*







## Issue 3: **Disproportionate Health Risks:** **Vulnerable Populations and Climate Change**

Yajush Priyam



*"The image shows a tired young student trying to fill her water bottle. The tap which seems like it exists to dampen the wall is filling the bottle with its underwhelming stream as Delhi's heatwave rages on, a clear example of how climate change takes a toll on the vulnerable."*





*As per the World Health Organization, over 930 million individuals spend at least 10% of their family income on healthcare, and around 100 million people are pushed into poverty each year due to health shocks and pressures.*





## **Issue 4: *Mitigation and Adaptation For Climate Change Through Social Capital***

*Taarini Manchanda*

A wide array of social science literature emphasises the role of social capital in producing social mitigation and adaptation strategies across societies. Based on Lin's (2001) network theory, social capital is defined as the resources made available through bonding, bridging, and linking social networks together with the norms and information sent through those connections. In face of crisis, social capital plays a significant role.

The urban context offers a unique locale setting characterised by high population density, higher mobility, and interdependence. The poor population in vulnerable urban environments, particularly slums, relies on one another to meet basic needs. Existing physical, socio-political, and economic institutions, such as access to water, security, and microfinance, are more interdependent in urban poor neighbourhoods (Parker and Maynard 2015). In times of mitigation and adaptation planning, social capital becomes an imperative. This has been exemplified in the case of Mahila Housing Trust (MHT) where NGOs played a crucial role in bringing about radical gender-centred changes in climate policy approaches in India to increase the climate change mitigation and adaptation.

By establishing Community Action Groups (CAG), MHT stimulated interaction between community members and local government agencies which encouraged bridging and bonding networks. The intensification in social capital links brought about several positive results in the resilience of the community. For instance, in order to avoid floods, the neighbourhood elevated a street that connected to the main road. Additionally, they were successful in enhancing slum residents' capacity to effectively engage with city-level authorities in climate risk reduction alternatives for their areas (MHT 2018). The results of the efforts of MHT correlate with the IPCC AR6 WGII report which emphasises the relevance of social capital in as an agent of adaptation and mitigation (Pörtner et al., 2020). Resultantly, the function of social capital in increasing the community resilience of the at-risk population has become critical.





*Nearly 700 million of India's one billion population living in rural areas directly depends on climate-sensitive sectors and natural resources for their subsistence and livelihoods.*





## **Issue 5: Climate-Proofing Health Systems - Why and How?**

*Nandini Arora*

In the near future, climate change is bound to have an impact on a nation's health systems, this makes it a need of the hour to climate-proof our health systems. The pandemic played a major role in exposing the existing gaps in our systems. With our health systems already under a burden, moving forward, we need to find solutions that are climate resilient.

Climate Proofing Health systems essentially means strengthening them to be resilient and responsive towards the impacts of a changing climate.

Directly, climate change is bound to have an impact on Human Health as follows:

- The immense heat and cold waves: Our systems are still not capable of managing extreme heat and cold wave situations. This will not only poorly impact human health, but also animal life. It can also lead to loss of life. Moreover, it will increase the demand for energy consumption to deal with extreme heat and cold.
- Natural and anthropogenic disasters; extreme weather events: will lead to loss of life and damage to infrastructure. Along with that, Erratic precipitation patterns and changes in weather conditions will lead to poor Sanitation and Hygiene conditions, worsening the impact on Human Health and leading to water and vector-borne diseases.
- There has been an increase in zoonotic diseases (Zoonosis is an infectious disease that has jumped from a non-human animal to humans, WHO ) in the past and there is a high chance of pandemics occurring due to such diseases.
- tExtreme weather events will also lead to Agricultural losses- leading to food and nutritional insecurity.

However, indirectly too, climate change will threaten the systems to manage and protect Human Health (e.g. through the vulnerability and reliability of infrastructure or critical services) (WHO). Moreover, there will be uneven and unequal exposure of communities to these risks and vulnerabilities.

Therefore, It also becomes important for us to understand more about the concepts of One Health. 'One Health' is an integrated, unifying approach to balance and optimize the health of people, animals, and the environment. It is particularly important to prevent, predict, detect, and respond to global health threats such as the COVID-19 pandemic.





*According to the The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, approximately 3.3 to 3.6 billion people live in contexts that are highly vulnerable to climate change.*







## Issue 6: **Vulnerable Populations & Climate Change - A Photo Essay on Public Toilets for Women**

*Esha Aphale*

This photo-essay is an exploration of the state of public toilets in India, specially a public toilet in Pune, which is used by the community around it for bathing, and other activities.

The impact of climate change on public toilets cannot be ignored. In India, where temperatures can soar during the summer months and heatwaves are being ushered in, the lack of proper ventilation and cooling systems in public toilets can make them unbearable to use.

This leads to people avoiding public toilets and resorting to open defecation, which not only poses health risks but also has adverse effects on the environment.



*Image 1 - A public toilet used by a community staying near Fergusson College Road.*



## Issue 6: **Vulnerable Populations & Climate Change - A Photo Essay on Public Toilets for Women**

*Esha Aphale*



*Image 2 - The hallway of the toilet. The only light in the bathroom is due to an opening in the ceiling. There are no tubelights or lightbulbs.*



*Images 3 - Ventilation is minimal and not optimal*





## Issue 6: **Vulnerable Populations & Climate Change - A Photo Essay on Public Toilets for Women**

*Esha Aphale*



*Images 4 - Ventilation is minimal and not optimal - covered in bags and dirt.*

Not only do public toilets present health risks such as urinary tract infections, bacterial vaginosis, and other infections, but also, the lack of basic infrastructure in public toilets also leads to the wastage of water and energy and lack of proper waste management systems in public toilets adds to the environmental burden. With the increasing awareness of these issues, a public facility as integral as toilets have to be re-looked at.





*As per the WHO, globally, a total of 1.3 billion people in low- and middle-income countries live below the poverty line, 70% of whom are female. Women face higher risks and experience a greater burden of climate change impacts.*





# Meet the Authors!



*Mahalakshmi S is a doctoral researcher with a special interest in care, chronicity, and pain.*



*Dr. Ranjana N Rao is a public health professional with a dentistry background, currently working as a research associate at Swasti Organization. She has a background in dentistry and a Master's in Public Health.*



*Yajush Priyam is a final year student of zakir husain Delhi college. He is an English major who is interested in exploring Delhi and quizzing.*



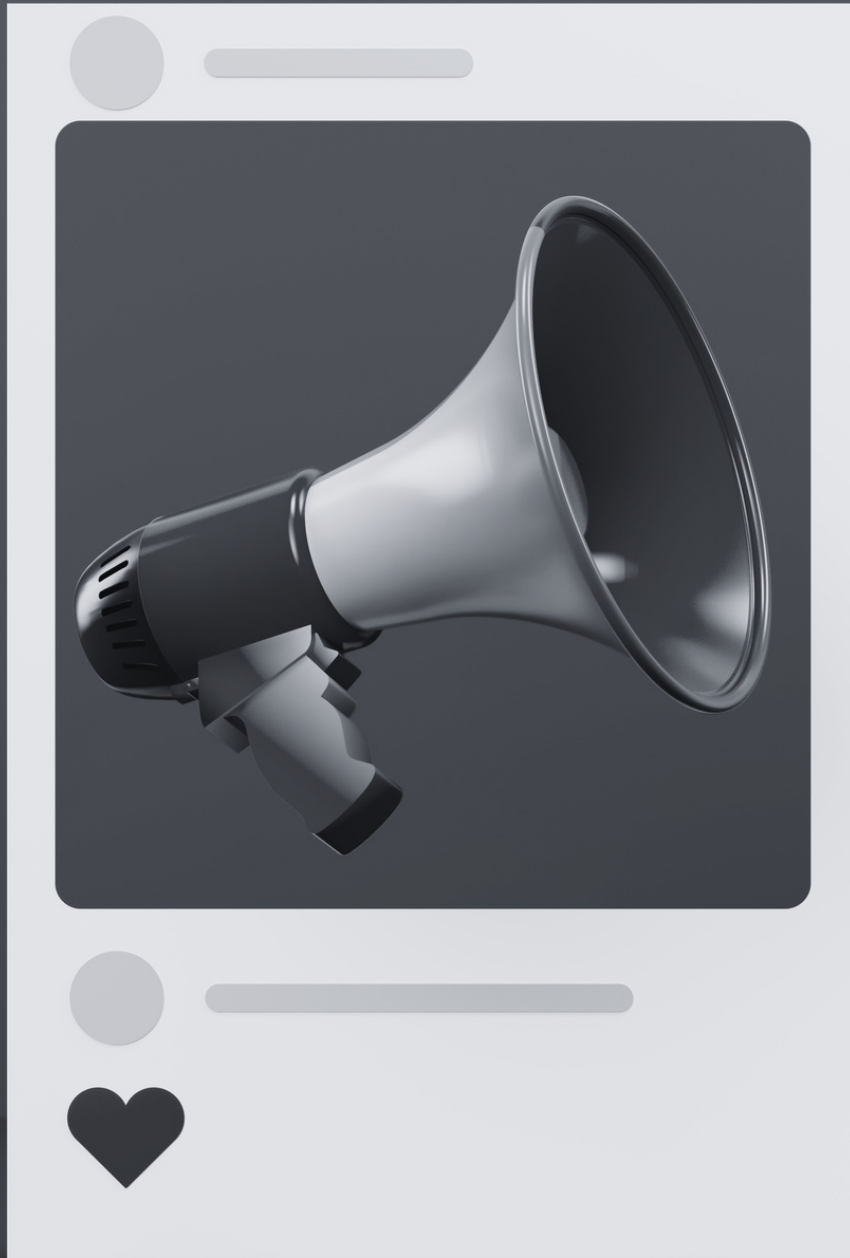
*Taarini Manchanda is a student committed to developing tangible public policy solutions to enable economic growth whilst accelerating sustainability and inclusivity.*



*Nandini Arora is a student at the University of Delhi. She is currently pursuing Environmental Science with a minor in Economics. She is highly passionate about Environmental Policy, Environmental Health, Sustainability, and Climate Justice and is a keen learner of the Japanese language and culture.*



*Esha Aphale is a 20 year old Journalism and International Studies student, who enjoys reading, writing, watching documentaries and cookies. Her focal point of interest in both of areas of studies is development and human security.*



# **SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS**

*Season 1 | Volume 1*



Instagram 



swastihc



Likes



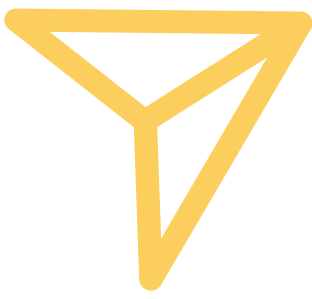
200

Comments



13

Shares



48

Engagements



199

Views



772

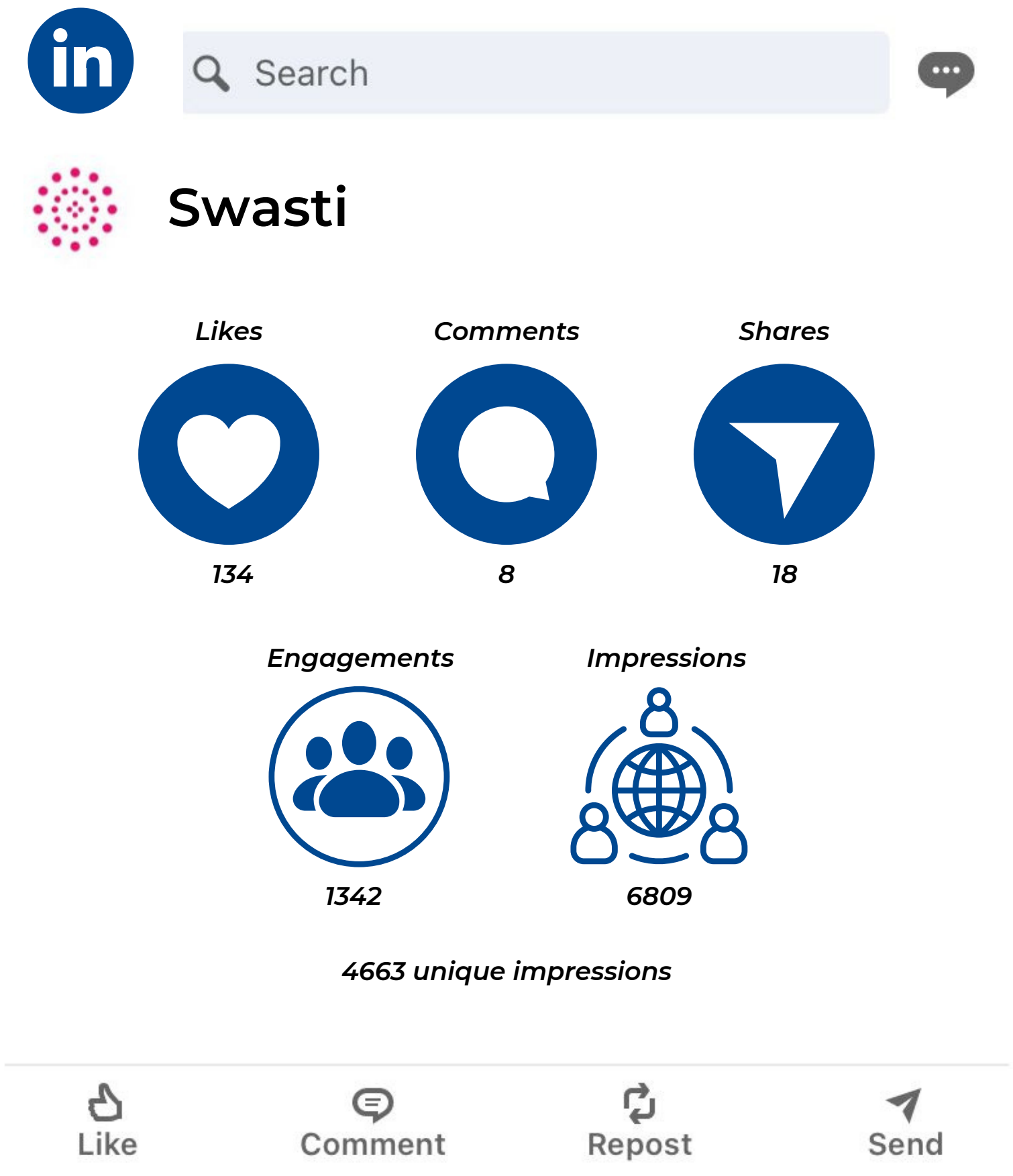
Saves



25



Instagram - We saw high participation on Instagram with 200 likes. We were able to reach over 2100 accounts over the course of the campaign!



Engagement on the pieces was high on LinkedIn, crossing 100 likes and generating a total of 1342 engagements over the course of the campaign!



For you

Following



SwastiHC

Likes



136

Comments



6

Retweets



40

Views



6710

Impressions



4069

Engagements



304



Twitter - The bird app saw major reach with over 6500 views, 4000 impressions and over 300 unique engagements!





Swasti

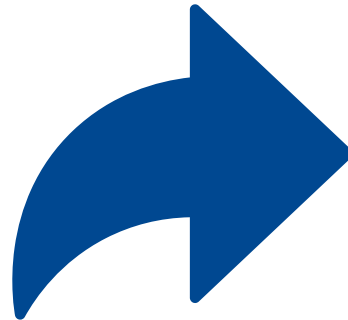


*Likes*



34

*Shares*



5

*Engagements*



52

*Reach*



726



Like



Comment



Share

Facebook- the app where most of our community members are,  
showed a remarkable reach. We were able to reach over 700 people.



# **THE CLIMATE PULSE: THE DIALOGUE CONTINUES**

*Season 1 | Volume 1*



The campaign was concluded on 9th May 2023 using a Twitter Space with the contributors of the Climate Pulse Campaign to further the dialogue, moving from written and visual media to a conversation-based format.

Twitter Spaces is a unique feature on Twitter that allows users to have live audio conversations on the application. There can be 2 hosts, 11 invited speakers, and unlimited listeners.

The theme of the Twitter Space was “The Climate Pulse: The Dialogue Continues.” The aim of the Twitter Space was to engage with the contributing authors and our social media audience to understand the importance of raising awareness on the climate-health nexus, empathize with the experiences of people and examine frameworks and systems currently in place.

During the Twitter Space, the speakers discussed their pieces, put forward the gaps in the current climate-health systems, and highlighted research that shares frameworks for mitigation and adaptation. The conversation revolved around the experiences of the contributing authors, what motivated them to join the conversation around climate and health, and the various ways in which climate and health intersect and impact people, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Through the conversation, a few key learnings emerged:

- ✚ There is a need to increase climate-health awareness.
- ✚ It is important to include young people in the conversation and make research more accessible and palatable to the masses.
- ✚ While there are mitigation and adaptation strategies and policies in place, they can be improved using more intersectional research.

The Twitter Space brought a more nuanced and intersectional understanding of the climate-health nexus. It furthered the understanding of various issues people face due to the climate-health nexus and worked towards problem-solution. It also gave voice to budding academics who want to make research and academia more accessible and palatable for the masses.

Scan here to listen  
to the Space







Swasti, The Health Catalyst  Host

# The Climate Pulse: The Dialogue Continues

56 tuned in · May 9 · 49:19



Play recording



Speakers



Listeners



Viewers

5

56

123



## **Concluding Note**

Ideating and working on The Climate Pulse: A Swasti Dialogue Series was an insightful experience. We are thrilled to mark the successful conclusion of this impactful campaign that aimed to bring attention to the vital connection between climate change and health.

Throughout the campaign, we have explored various themes, delving into the concerning implications of climate change on human health, the disproportionate risks faced by vulnerable populations, the need to bolster resilient health systems, the impact of climate change on vector-borne diseases, and the urgency to explore effective mitigation and adaptation strategies.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one who contributed to this campaign. Your insightful perspectives, dedicated efforts, and valuable research enriched the discussions and spaces and created a valuable repository of information for both the general public and policymakers.

We are truly proud of what we have accomplished through the first volume of The Climate Pulse: A Swasti Dialogue Series. By sparking conversations, raising awareness, and paving the way for impactful actions, we have taken significant steps toward addressing the pressing challenges at the intersection of climate and health.

*Let's talk climate-health! We look forward to working on more submissions and collaborating with YOU for the next volume!*



Kamalkoli Majumdar  
*Communications Associate*



Gaytri Rai  
*Communications Associate*

The Center for Strategic Communications for Public Health  
Swasti, The Health Catalyst



**SEE YOU NEXT  
SEASON!**





## ***References for statistics used in the report***

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2. <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/health-effects-global-warming-developing-countries-are-most-vulnerable>
3. <https://www.thelancet.com/countdown-health-climate>
4. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(22\)01540-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(22)01540-9/fulltext)
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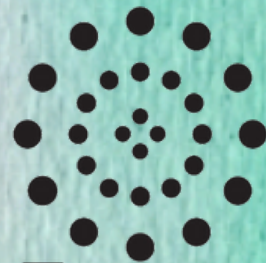
## ***References for the Submissions***

The references used in the submissions have been compiled issue-wise in a Google doc for easy access.

*Please scan the QR code  
to access it!*



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