

Case Study: DPS Lava- Nagpur, India

Climate Action Education For All.

INTRODUCTION

In the heart of Nagpur, India, Delhi Public School (DPS) has emerged as a beacon of climate action education, spearheaded by the dedicated efforts of Ms. Shahnaaz Ojha. As a Social Science and Political Science educator for grades 9, 10, and 12, and the school's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Coordinator, Ms. Ojha has seamlessly integrated climate literacy into the school's curriculum. Her journey into climate action began four years ago with her involvement in global projects, notably the Climate Action Project, which has since become a cornerstone of DPS's environmental initiatives.

BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

DPS Nagpur's commitment to environmental stewardship is deeply rooted in its educational philosophy. The school's vision emphasizes global communication and collaboration, aiming to equip students with skills essential for addressing worldwide challenges. This ethos aligns perfectly with the principles of the Climate Action Project, fostering a culture where students are encouraged to think globally and act locally. Nagpur's geographical location, characterized by its central position in India and susceptibility to environmental issues like deforestation and water scarcity, further underscores the importance of such initiatives.

PORTRAIT OF A CHAMPION

Ms. Shahnaaz Ojha's passion for climate education was ignited by her exposure to international collaborations and the realization of the interconnectedness of global challenges. Initially introduced to the SDGs through school management, she quickly embraced the role, finding inspiration in the diverse efforts of individuals worldwide. Her approach emphasizes starting with personal action and expanding outward, believing that genuine commitment at the individual level is foundational for broader collaboration. As both a Global Schools Advocate and Mentor, Ms. Ojha has been instrumental in guiding educators and students alike towards meaningful climate action.

AT A GLANCE

- DPS Lava Nagpur was est in 2017
- 8.5 acre campus
- 700 students
- 90 teachers
- Student-Teacher ratio of 35:1
- English, Marathi, Sanskrit, and French
- Emphasis on holistic development

"I've realized that if you want to achieve the SDG goals you cannot do it in isolation. You need to collaborate with the people. The Amazon forest is getting destroyed, so it's not just a problem for the people in America, it affects everyone. We have to take individual steps also."

-Shahnaaz Ojha



**Climate
Action
Schools**



Mission.

Our noble mission is to wholeheartedly dedicate ourselves to serving our country and the world, nurturing exceptional global citizens who can propel humanity towards a brighter future. Our approach is deeply rooted in the principle of 'seva bhav', where the act of serving others is performed with utmost selflessness and grace, placing their needs above our own.

Vision.

Our vision is to engage students in meaningful experiences; Equip them with 21st century skills; Nurture a success mindset, curiosity and ambition; provide a safe & supportive environment where all are valued & thereby build a community of compassionate, creative articulate lifelong learners & responsible global citizens.

CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

Under Ms. Ojha's guidance, DPS Nagpur has implemented a series of innovative climate initiatives. One notable project addressed the proliferation of water-guzzling trees, such as the conocarpus, which, despite their aesthetic appeal, deplete groundwater resources and contribute to environmental instability. Collaborating with the NGO IMPACTO and the school's art department, students raised awareness about the ecological ramifications of planting such species. Additionally, the development of a plastic usage calculator app empowered students and the community to monitor and reduce their plastic consumption, promoting sustainable alternatives and fostering a culture of environmental accountability.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

Recognizing the power of community collaboration, Ms. Ojha has actively engaged with local governmental bodies to amplify the impact of environmental initiatives. In preparation for Earth Day, she liaised with the municipal corporation to identify suitable locations for tree plantations, ensuring that efforts were strategically aligned with the city's environmental needs. Given the rapid urbanization of Nagpur's suburbs and the associated environmental challenges, such partnerships have been instrumental in facilitating large-scale tree planting projects, with ambitious goals of planting hundreds of trees to combat urban heat and promote biodiversity.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The climate action projects spearheaded by Ms. Ojha have yielded tangible and impactful results. The plastic reduction initiative led to a noticeable shift in community behavior, with many residents opting for eco-friendly alternatives to single-use plastics. Educational campaigns on gender equality and domestic violence raised awareness and provided vital resources, such as helpline numbers, to vulnerable populations. Health-focused endeavors, including advocating for municipal fogging and drain cleaning during monsoon seasons, effectively mitigated mosquito-borne diseases, enhancing community well-being.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

Implementing these initiatives was not without obstacles. A significant challenge was addressing the lack of awareness among students about societal issues like poverty and hunger, given their relatively privileged backgrounds. To bridge this empathy gap, Ms. Ojha facilitated direct interactions between students and marginalized communities, fostering a deeper understanding and compassion. Additionally, resistance from local authorities regarding the removal of ecologically harmful trees required persistent advocacy and education to highlight the long-term environmental benefits of such actions.

LOOKING AHEAD

Looking ahead, Ms. Ojha envisions expanding DPS Nagpur's climate action initiatives through enhanced global collaborations and the integration of advanced technological tools. By fostering international partnerships, she aims to provide students with a broader perspective on environmental challenges and solutions. The focus will also be on developing innovative educational resources that empower students to become proactive environmental stewards, ensuring that the ethos of sustainability is deeply ingrained in the school's culture and beyond.

