

# ‘Climate Action Every-day’: Aparna Krishna's Guide to Sustainable Living for a Better Future

*‘Climate Change is not one person’s war; it is not a battle that can be fought by just one person or one group - it is a shared responsibility that requires collective effort and unity. Only by recognizing our interconnectedness and acting with shared purpose can we overcome this challenge and build a sustainable future for generations to come’*, says Aparna Krishna, a young engineer by profession, an environmentalist at heart, and a passionate enthusiast for sustainability and climate action, emphasizing the importance of individual actions in combating climate change.

In a world grappling with the devastating impacts of climate change, the question often arises: Can one individual truly make a difference? While many experts and policymakers debate the question and its possible answers, Aparna has her own answer to this question through her journey of transformation, resilience, and impactful action, serving as a source of inspiration - even for those of us directly pursuing careers in conservation through RHATC. Her philosophy, "Climate Action Every-day," is a call to adopt sustainable practices in our daily lives, contributing to a larger movement for environmental conservation.

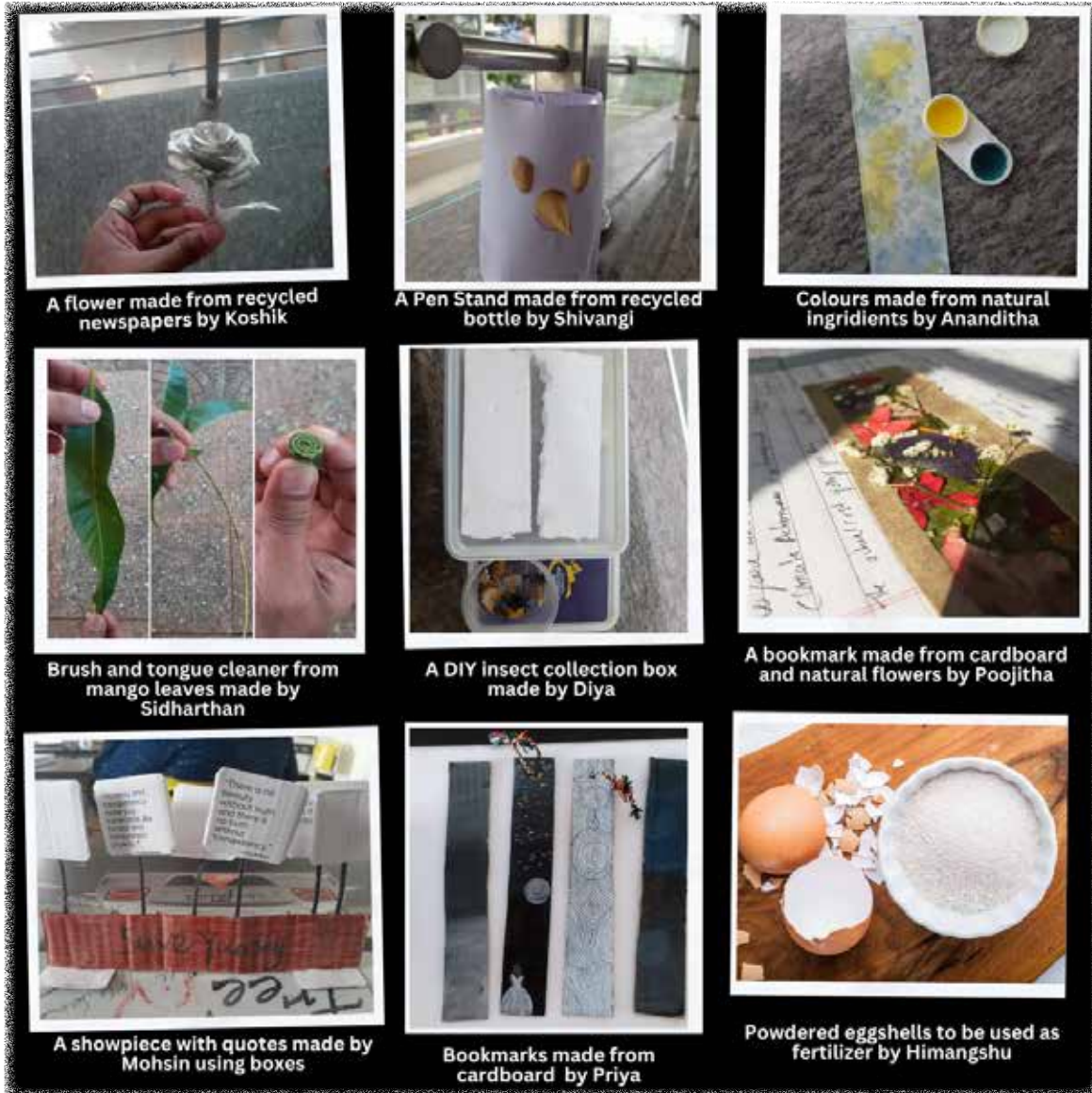
Though most people have some awareness of climate change, the details often remain in a grey area. Aparna began her session by providing clear insights into climate change, sharing projections of future global temperature increases across various scenarios - from a ‘business as usual’

approach to the most optimistic pathways. Yet, the pressing question remains: ‘What happens if we fail to achieve our goals?’. The answers are deeply alarming: projections indicate that 30% of species could face extinction, mortality rates will rise significantly, sea levels will increase, submerging small island nations and coastal areas, equatorial regions may become uninhabitable, and economic losses will escalate to unprecedented levels - consequences that demand attention and action from every individual. Climate action is a survival need, and it should not always be a top-down approach. It can be a bottom-up approach too. Here, Aparna’s philosophy comes handy – we can make our little contributions to the greater cause, making the world a little better, or trying to do so, one step at a time.

## The Concept of Everyday Climate Action

The idea of ‘Climate Action Everyday’ emphasizes incorporating eco-friendly practices seamlessly into daily life. Aparna Krishna champions a lifestyle where sustainability becomes a habit rather than a conscious effort or exception. She advocates for





©Himagshu Kalita

small, consistent actions that, when multiplied across individuals, create a ripple effect capable of driving significant environmental change.

Aparna firmly believes that the key to achieving this lies in three fundamental elements: awareness, to understand the impact of our choices; accessibility, to ensure sustainable options are within reach; and a willingness to change, to embrace a lifestyle that prioritizes the planet. By adopting this approach, she shows that meaningful contributions toward combating climate change can stem from even the simplest acts in our everyday lives.

Aparna shared a picture of her garbage and asked us to guess how long it had taken her to accumulate that amount. Naturally, we miscalculated - we were off by years. Some of us guessed it represented a week's worth of waste, while others ventured it might be a month's. To our astonishment, Aparna revealed that the garbage had been accumulated over several years!

Her minimalist and sustainable lifestyle left us awestruck, showing how intentional living and mindful consumption can significantly reduce waste and leaving a low carbon footprint. It was a powerful reminder of what is achievable when sustainability becomes a way of life.

## Key Pillars of a Sustainable Lifestyle

- **The 3R - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

Aparna emphasizes the importance of minimizing waste. She encourages practices such as reusing household items, repurposing old materials, and ensuring that recyclable items are correctly processed. We learned that the true cost of a product goes far beyond just the physical waste it generates; it includes the entire chain of production, consumption, and disposal - a cycle that we have the power to break.

- **Sustainable Consumption**

Choosing locally sourced, seasonal, and organic produce is a cornerstone of sustainable living. Aparna advocates for reducing the consumption of products with high carbon footprints, such as imported goods and heavily packaged items.

- **Energy Efficiency**

Aparna encourages adopting energy-efficient technologies, such as LED lighting and solar panels, alongside simple habits like unplugging devices when not in use and optimizing heating and cooling systems. The small acts like switching off the lights while we leave the room can make an impact.

- **Water Conservation**

Small actions like fixing leaks, using water-efficient appliances, and harvesting rainwater can contribute significantly to water conservation. Aparna highlights the interconnectedness of water use and climate sustainability.

- **Green Transportation**

Aparna promotes walking, cycling, carpooling, and using public transport to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. For longer distances, we can explore the options of electric or hybrid vehicles.

## Walking the Talk

Aparna's story began like many others - detached from environmental concerns, immersed in her career as an engineer at Bosch. However, something changed in her when she stumbled upon a video

documenting the Kerala floods. That moment became a catalyst for her, sparking a realization about humanity's role in environmental degradation and her responsibility to be part of the solution. Since then, Aparna has embraced sustainability not just as a lifestyle but as a mission. She dedicates her weekends to volunteering for environmental initiatives, including lake clean-ups and community-based restoration projects. Her commitment extends to her personal life, where she ensures that all her products - from toothpaste to cleaning agents - are eco-friendly and plastic-free. She even reuses the unavoidable plastic that comes her way, ensuring minimal waste generation.

Aparna's advocacy doesn't stop with her own actions. She influences her peers and has successfully inspired many, including her friends and her roommate, to adopt eco-friendly practices. Even while gifting others, she goes for environment friendly options.

## An Imperfect Environmentalist

Despite her extensive efforts, Aparna humbly calls herself an "imperfect environmentalist," a term that resonates with many of us who feel daunted by the complexity of sustainable living. Her honesty and authenticity make her relatable and inspiring, proving that no one needs to be perfect to contribute meaningfully to the planet's well-being.

After understanding the growing environmental crisis and our role in contributing to it, one might ask, "Should we just stop buying things?" The answer, of course, is no. It's not about completely ceasing consumption; rather, it's about making mindful choices and purchasing only what is truly essential.

We need to shift our perspective - seeking better, more sustainable alternatives and embracing practices that align with ecological well-being. Sometimes, the way forward lies in looking backward, drawing inspiration from traditional, low-impact ways of living that can guide us toward a

more sustainable future. Buying what we need and using what we have is the key!

### Overcoming Challenges

Aparna’s journey hasn’t been without obstacles. Like many environmentalists, she faced scepticism and ridicule early on. Her preference for cleanliness drives over social outings made her the subject of jokes among friends. Yet, her persistence paid off, as these very friends began joining her in such activities, recognizing the importance of her mission.

Here she shares five important mantras to remember:

- **Be Kind to Yourself**  
Living sustainably is not easy, especially when it often means going against the norm. Aparna reminds us to practice self-compassion and recognize that small steps matter.
- **Embrace Imperfection**  
It’s okay to be sustainable in one aspect of life and not in another. Sustainability is a journey, not a checklist, and progress is more important than perfection.
- **Avoid Extreme Idealism**  
Extreme idealism can serve as a vision, but life isn’t about rigid binaries—it’s about navigating the gradients. Aparna encourages a balanced approach that integrates sustainability into life in a practical and meaningful way.
- **Learn, Discuss, and Enjoy**  
Reading, exploring, and discussing environmental issues can be both enlightening and enjoyable. It’s a powerful way to deepen understanding and find creative solutions while staying engaged and motivated.
- **Find Your Community**  
Building and being part of a like-minded community is vital for support, motivation, and collective action. Together, we can amplify our impact and inspire each other to do more for the planet.

These mantras serve as gentle reminders that sustainability is a collective and evolving process, one that requires patience, learning, and collaboration.

### A Road for the Future

‘Climate Action Everyday’ is not just a slogan but a lifestyle that Aparna Krishna has championed. By adopting small yet impactful changes, individuals can significantly contribute to addressing climate change. Aparna’s message is clear: the road to sustainability begins with everyday actions, and everyone has a role to play. In her words, "A sustainable future is built not by a few perfect efforts but by millions of imperfect actions."

Aparna Krishna’s story stands as a powerful testament to the impact of individual action in inspiring collective change. Her journey reminds us that, while climate change can feel overwhelming, the path to a better future starts with each of us taking that first, decisive step.

Whether it’s reducing plastic consumption, participating in community initiatives, or making mindful choices in our daily routines, every action, no matter how small, contributes to the larger cause. As Greta Thunberg wisely said, “You must take action. You must do the impossible. Because giving up is never an option.” And perhaps even more poignantly, she reminds us that, “You are never too small to make a difference.”

Aparna embodies these principles, showing that change begins with us and that our individual efforts can ripple outward, creating a wave of transformation.

**Himangshu Kalita**, RHATC Fellow 2024–25, Zoo Outreach Organisation, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India.