

The Perspective of Different Age Groups on Climate Change and Media

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Introduction

Climate change is one of the most serious global problems of the 21st century. The changing climate, including rising temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and unseasonal rains, is significantly impacting public health, leading to numerous problems. (Climate Change and Human Health, 2024) This research report studies the mental health problems and heat-related illnesses that arise in various age groups due to climate change.

Today's youth are susceptible to anxiety, depression, and long-term trauma due to climate-related disasters. Floods, droughts, and other disasters often disrupt schooling, affecting the educational development of adolescents. Climate change also has significant economic impacts, particularly on sectors like agriculture, fisheries, and tourism, where people often earn their primary income. In labour-intensive sectors, rising temperatures affect the production capacity of goods and other resources. Furthermore, climate change leads to respiratory problems in the elderly. (IPCC, 2023)

Present research will reveal the perspectives of different age groups, from adolescents and young adults to adults and the elderly, regarding climate change. It aims to explore how they perceive climate change, its impact on their daily lives, and how they utilize information provided by the media.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this study is to examine the perspectives of different age groups on climate change and the role of media in shaping these views. It seeks to understand how climate change affects daily life and how awareness varies across age groups, particularly among teenagers and young adults. The study also explores the types of media used to obtain climate change information, such as digital media among youth and traditional media among older adults. Overall, the research aims to identify age-specific needs and communication preferences related to climate change awareness.

Hypothesis

1. Individuals of different age groups have different perspectives on climate change.
2. Climate change affects different age groups in different ways.
3. Different age groups use different media to obtain information about climate change.

Research Design

The present research studies media consumption to understand which media sources people of different age groups use to learn about climate change, which media sources they rely on for information about climate change, and to what extent they seek information about climate change in their daily lives. The descriptive method has been used for the present research topic.

Data Collection Method

Primary Data: Data was collected through 200 questionnaires administered to individuals aged 14 to 56+ from urban and rural areas, supplemented by expert interviews and discussions to explore socio-economic impacts of climate change and information sources.

Secondary Data: Relevant articles, reports, research papers, books, theses, and online resources were reviewed to support the research.

Climate Change and its Effects on Different Age Groups:

Climate change is a global challenge that affects all age groups. Due to climate change, adolescents, young people, and the elderly face challenges in various areas such as health, education, economy, and employment.

Climate Change-

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), climate change refers to: “A change in the state of the climate that can be identified (e.g., by using statistical tests) by changes in the mean and/or the variability of its properties and that persists for an extended period, typically decades or longer.”

This definition includes:

Long-term shifts in climate patterns (temperature, rainfall, storms). Changes in both average conditions and the variability of the climate (e.g., frequency of heat waves vs average temperature). Changes that can result from natural causes (like volcanic eruptions or solar variations) or human activities (especially emissions of greenhouse gases). (Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability, 2022)

George Marshall's *Don't Even Think About It* explores why people deny or avoid the reality of climate change. It highlights psychological barriers, political influences, and misinformation that hinder understanding and action, offering insights to raise awareness about the issue. (George, *Don't Even Think About It: Why Our Brains Are Wired To Ignore Climate Change*, 2014)

UNESCO's Role in Climate Change:

UNESCO addresses climate change by promoting education, science, and policy for sustainable development. It supports countries in adapting to climate impacts, facilitates knowledge sharing, and provides tools and platforms for governments and institutions to tackle environmental challenges.

UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goals in Climate Change

UNESCO contributes to several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that are directly related to climate change. Some of the key climate change-based Sustainable Development Goals are as follows:

SDG 4 - Quality Education. (UNESCO, <https://www.unesco.org>, 2024) SDG 13 - Climate Action: (UNESCO, UNESCO, 2022) SDG 15 - Life on Land: (UNESCO, <https://pib.gov.in>, 2017) SDG 17 - Partnerships for the Goals.

Different media platforms disseminate information on climate change

Climate change is a major global issue, and multiple media sources provide information about it. Traditional media such as newspapers, television, and radio, along with government websites, scientific journals, and research publications, play an important role in spreading awareness and supporting understanding and solutions.

Review of literature

George Marshall's book *'Don't Even Think About It'*: 2014 George Marshall's book *'Don't Even Think About It'* is a profound study of people's attitudes towards the serious problem of climate change. (George, *Don't Even Think About It*, 2014). The *Climate Change and Human Health Committee* (2024) report highlights the serious health impacts of climate change, including increased vulnerability, extreme weather risks, and physical and mental health problems. The study *Climate Change, Vulnerability and Health Effects: Implications for the Older Population* (2008) focuses on the elderly, identifying them as highly vulnerable to heat stress, chronic illness, and limited access to healthcare. Both studies emphasize the need for targeted health policies and adaptation strategies to reduce climate-related health risks. (David Filiberto, 2008). Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC): 2023 The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), through its online, has published the report "Climate Change 2023: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability," which provides an overview of information on how climate change affects populations across various age groups and sectors. (<https://www.ipcc.ch>, 2023)

People's perspectives on climate change across different age groups and the media

For the study on people's perspectives on climate change across age groups and the role of media, data were collected from 200 respondents through questionnaires and analysed using content analysis. Media

coverage of climate change was found to be important for public awareness, and journalists' views on reporting environmental issues were also included in the study.

The analysis of the age group of the individuals for the present research is as follows:

Age group	Total Respondents	Sections	Male-Female
People aged 14 to over 30	100	Rural - Urban	50-50
Ages 31 to over 55	100	Rural - Urban	50-50

1.1 Knowledge and Perception of Climate Change

Age group	Number of Respondents	In large quantities	In small quantities	Can't say
14 to 20	50	% 20	% 27	% 3
21 to 30	50	50%	-	-
31 to over 56 years	100	% 26	% 74	-

Climate change awareness varies by age and education. Younger and urban respondents, especially those exposed to education and media, show higher awareness, while less-educated older adults have limited knowledge.

1.2 Economic problems caused by climate change

A total of 160 respondents completed the questionnaire on economic problems caused by climate change, and their responses were analysed accordingly.

Table 1.2 Economic problems caused by climate change

Age of respondents	Number of respondents	Answers of respondents			
		High	Low	No effect	Can't say
17to 20	40	25	15	-	-
21to 30	40	30	10	-	-
31 to 55	40	28	12	-	-
55 +	40	36	14	-	-

Older respondents and those in lower-income brackets reported the strongest economic effects — particularly in rural areas dependent on agriculture.

Overall, economic impacts vary by age, with younger and older groups more vulnerable. Climate change affects low-income families most—reducing agricultural income in rural areas and increasing health, employment, and living costs in urban areas.

1.3 Main economic problems caused by climate change

Individuals from different age groups were asked to identify the main economic problem caused by climate change. Responses varied by age. The analysis of these problems is presented below:

Age of Respondent	Respondents	Economic problems caused by climate change for people of different age groups :	Percentage
		Responses received from the respondent	
17to56 +	160	The increase in the prices of food grains and other commodities	100%

21to 35	80	Negative impact on the earnings and livelihoods of people in different age groups	50%
30to56 +	80	Shortage of jobs in agriculture and industry	50%
17to56 +	160	Health problems and the resulting increase in healthcare costs	100%

Table 1.3 Main economic problem caused by climate change

All 160 respondents (ages 17–56+) identified rising food and commodity prices as the primary economic issue. 50% of those aged 21–35 highlighted natural disasters disrupting livelihoods, while 50% of respondents aged 30–56+ reported job shortages in agriculture and industry. Younger groups (17–35) emphasized higher food prices; all ages noted increased health and medical costs. No one reported income loss, job migration, or relocation.

1.4 Economic sectors affected by climate change

Individuals from different age groups were asked which economic sectors—agriculture, industry, tourism, or public health—are most affected by climate change. Their responses are summarized below:

Table 1.4 Economic sectors affected by climate change

Age	Respondents	Agriculture	Industry and manufacturing	Tourism	Health	Percentage
17to56 +	160	95	-	-	95	60%
		65	65	-	65	40%

As shown in Table 1.4, 60% of respondents aged 17 to 56+ reported that climate change most affects agriculture and public health, while 40% stated that its impact on industry/manufacturing and tourism is less significant.

1.5 The effects of climate change on health

Age	Respondents	Health problems caused by climate change in people of various age groups; Number of responses received from respondents				
		Heat-related illnesses	Respiratory diseases	Infectious disease	Mental health problems	All
14 to20	50	50	50	50	-	-
21to30	50	35	50	-	50	-
31 to55	50	50	50	50	29	25
56+	50	50	50	-	-	-

Table 1.5 shows climate change impacts on health across age groups. Ages 14–20 face fatigue, anxiety, and respiratory issues; 21–30 report heat-related illnesses and stress; 31–55 experience chronic and infectious diseases; 56+ are most vulnerable to heat, respiratory problems, and fatigue. Rural areas suffer from limited health services, while urban areas see increased pollution-related lung diseases.

1.6 Impact of Climate Change on Education:

A survey of 200 respondents found that 50% of those aged 14–20 reported significant educational impacts from climate change, while most aged 21–55 reported minimal effects. However, all respondents noted personal or family schooling difficulties, with younger groups citing travel disruptions and older groups highlighting impacts across all levels and rising education costs.

1.7 Climate change and the media:

The study reveals age-based differences in climate change media use. Youth (14–30) rely on digital media and education, while those 31+ prefer television, newspapers, and community discussions. Trust

varies by age and location, with urban groups accessing information more easily than rural populations. Most receive updates daily or weekly, though accuracy perceptions remain moderate. Younger groups stress awareness and energy reduction, adults focus on education and tree planting, and elders emphasize policy action and sustainability.

Analysis of Interviews with Environmental Journalists:

Climate change information shared through the media is important to the public. To understand journalists' perspectives, interviews were conducted with media professionals who report on environmental and climate issues. Representatives from outlets such as Ashish Shinde (Journalist/Sub-Editor, Pudhari, Kolhapur) (Pudhari, 2025), Abhishek Patil (Former Agricultural Meteorologist, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara; Ex-Kisan Weather Section, All India Radio) (Abhishek Patil, 2025), Sangam Kamble (Reporter, S News Channel, Kolhapur) (Sangam Kamble, 2025), Pooja Marathe (Journalist, Tarun Bharat Social Media Desk, Kolhapur) (Pooja Marathe, 2025), Vijay Patil (Chief Representative, Punyanagari, Kolhapur) (Vijay Patil, 2025).

The interviews reveal that climate change reporting in Kolhapur media relies heavily on scientific data, expert opinions, and government sources such as the IMD, Pollution Control Board, and disaster management offices. Journalists cover daily weather updates, extreme events, seasonal changes, and long-term impacts on agriculture, health, and urban environments. Both print and broadcast media emphasize accuracy, verification, and expert interpretation. Audience response is generally strong, particularly during monsoon and extreme weather periods, with readers and viewers seeking timely, simple, and practical information. Rural audiences show high engagement with agriculture-related forecasts, while urban readers focus on heat, pollution, and environmental risks. Media professionals also observe growing public awareness and participation in climate action initiatives such as tree plantation, conservation efforts, and community discussions.

Verification of hypotheses

- **Hypothesis 1 Individuals of different age groups have different perspectives on climate change.**
The findings confirm that climate change perceptions vary by age. Younger groups show higher awareness due to education and social media and mainly identify human causes, while adults and elderly rely on experience and traditional media, attributing change to both natural and human factors. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.
- **Hypothesis 2 Climate change affects different age groups in different ways.**
The findings show that climate change affects age groups differently. Youth and the elderly are most economically vulnerable, health impacts are highest among children and older adults, and educational disruptions are greater in rural areas and among primary and higher education students. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.
- **Hypothesis 3 Different age groups use different media to obtain information about climate change.**
Findings show that youth rely mainly on digital media, while middle-aged and older adults prefer traditional sources. Trust also varies by age. Urban groups access information easily, whereas rural populations face digital barriers. Thus, the hypothesis is supported.

Conclusion

The study finds that climate change has significantly increased heat, irregular rainfall, and health problems, affecting agriculture, business, and trade, and reducing household incomes. Educational systems are also disrupted due to school closures, interruptions in online learning, and postponed examinations. The findings further indicate that social media often circulates incomplete or misleading information, making it difficult for the public to access accurate climate-related knowledge. Therefore, effective communication strategies are essential. Environmental education in schools, verified digital content, and village-level

awareness campaigns are necessary to improve understanding across all age groups. Overall, coordinated efforts in education, media communication, and policy implementation are required to address the growing challenges of climate change.

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