

A study to examine greenhouse gas emissions in schools of Chandigarh was initiated by CAPE /Environment Society of India which is the resource agency for NGC in Chandigarh. This study was undertaken in 32 schools (16 private and 16 government) spread across the city. Involving the eco club students of these schools, the resource agency first recorded the number of vehicles, type of vehicles (buses, cars and two wheelers) used for ferrying students and approximate distance travelled. From this information the emission of green house gases, carbon dioxide in particular, was estimated. The study was conducted during the morning hours. Eco club students physically counted the number of vehicles which came to drop the students to the schools in the morning hours. The recorded observations were tabulated and analysed. In addition to observations, students also collected some information on the number of private vehicles in Chandigarh city. The analysis of the study results revealed startling facts. For instance, the ratio of registered private vehicles to persons in Chandigarh when calculated showed a figure of 1:1.7, which is highest in the country



Congested city road

(vehicle to person ratio in Delhi is 1:4; Pune is 1:16). In 30 years (1971 to 2001) the population of Chandigarh tripled, but the vehicle numbers went up by 42 times. Today the number of private vehicles, cars in particular, that drop students to schools has risen according to the study. It also shows that the vehicles are more in private schools than in government schools. With the increasing number of vehicles the carbon dioxide emission has gone up.

The report is quiet worrying. It has been shared with the Department of Environment in Chandigarh, and with the schools where the study was carried out. The report also gives suggestions and recommendations. The report has been published in national and regional dailies for greater awareness. The study has provoked certain schools to take appropriate actions. Department of Environment and the schools are considering to promote the idea of car pooling, walking and cycling when the distances are short. A couple of schools are also considering to improve their bus service to help resolve the problem. The agency plans to conduct this study with the help of eco club students on a regular basis so that improvements can be monitored and decision making may be influenced in the schools.

Conveying their energy utilisation pattern , this interesting initiative makes students realise the kind of damage they are creating to the environment in general and public health in specific. This study carried out by the energetic eco club students stands out in education for sustainable development since it efficiently communicates the message of energy use efficiency in the transport sector to the fellow students, their guardians and the public in general and also to the decision making government bodies for the benefit of public health and environment, specifically addressing climate change aspect.



"The automobile has not merely taken over the street, it has dissolved the living tissue of the city ... Gas-filled, noisy and hazardous, our streets have become the most inhumane landscape in the world."

James M. Fitch