

THE JOURNEY:

Hello!

I am Uttej, I am a 3rd Year Undergraduate Student. Hailing from beautiful Vizag, I have grown up in reverence of its blue waters & the quaint hills. Over the years, I gradually witnessed the greens disappear and the pristine beaches turn into plastic dumps and sewage sinks.

From running our home completely on renewable energy to leading plantation drives, my mother had a contagious passion towards environmental causes. Her narrations deeply impressed my young mind that countering climate change is the need of the hour.

I stand for what I stand on! I can only preach what I practice. I started my journey with local replantation drives and small lifestyle changes such as politely refusing polythene bags or carrying a bottle while travelling. Every baby step boosted my confidence and, from there, I never looked back. To me, the cause of Mother Earth became not just another cause to fight for but something of a founding principle to live by.

In the course of time, I realised the importance of scale and the power of policy in bringing out far reaching changes. Building on this, I've recently worked with the **Hon'ble Member Of Parliament** of Srikakulam to **implement a plastic ban in his district**. Here, I devised innovative participatory modules involving school children, youth, and the district administration. I'm also an eco-technology enthusiast and I am researching on closed loop processes for recycling of lithium ion batteries.

THE INTERNATIONAL ARCTIC EXPEDITION :

While on the pursuit, I've been fortunate to be selected as the "**Indian Climate Change Ambassador**" for the "**The International Arctic Expedition**" scheduled in 2019. In this two-week study we will **study and document the effect of climate change** on the Arctic.

The expedition leader, Robert Swan, has dedicated his life for the protection of the planet and has cleared **1500+ tonnes** of waste from the Antarctic. I am the **first IIT student** to be selected for this voyage and I eagerly await to take India's flag to the very corner of the earth.

THE BIGGER PICTURE :

Policy has a far fetching role in our fight against climate change. I'm an aspiring policy maker

and I had been elected as the youngest student council member in the history of IIT Madras.

Leveraging the knowledge, perspectives and exposure gained from the expedition, I will work with **renewed zeal and vigour** to come up with environment friendly policies. The expedition will also introduce me to change agents from **70+ countries** which will keep me updated with policy trends emerging from across the globe.

I wish to work specifically in the space of “**Regulations**”. I wish to reform outdated regulations hindering upcoming green technology and promote policies which encourage the same. For example, green buildings are facing serious regulatory hurdles, I wish to fix that!

ACTION POST THE EXPEDITION:

- ❑ My experience shall not be mine alone. Post the expedition, I will leverage digital media to communicate Arctic’s plight, thereby informing the conscience, opinions and actions of the people.
- ❑ Decisions of corporates have far reaching consequences. Post the expedition, I will work on an module to sensitise corporates of the reality of climate change, and the power they possess to radically change it.
- ❑ I will also develop a guide detailing small changes that individuals can easily incorporate in their daily lives for a sustainable living.
- ❑ I strongly believe that youth are the hope and future of the country and I have thoroughly enjoyed interactions with them in colleges. With a blend of storytelling and powerful communication, I will extensively share my experience to inspire them to be a part of the force against climate change.

This expedition is an opportunity for me to **amplify my commitment** to fight against climate and to develop a deeper understanding of climate change at the “**ground level**”, which is pivotal to any problem-solving exercise.

I would like to use this first-hand experience to **inspire many more** to take up arms against climate change, educate my peers, elders, and children about the issues at hand and **work towards guiding policy** in every possible manner.

Help me set foot on this incredible journey!