

CONNECTING WITH TREES

By Neelam Chandra



When we were kids and we would read in geography books that indiscriminate felling of trees led to climatic changes, we would wonder aloud if it was really possible. Sometimes, as young girls, we would also giggle and say, “How can cutting of trees affect climate so much?”

I also remember the time when the corporation persons had come to cut a tree in front of my house, which used to bear fruits. Of course, we would never get to eat those fruits, because they would always be taken away by young kids who would throw stones at them and take it; but when those people arrived, my mother stood there and said, “No. I will not let you cut this tree.”

They argued, “There is no other tree in this lane and we have been asked to make it flat.”

However, my mother stood up and said, “I am not allowing you, do what you want.”

Finally, they relented and went away.

As a teenager, I felt that my mother’s behaviour was awkward. Why did she fight for a tree? A simple tree whose fruits we did not even eat!

Understanding my discomfiture, she explained me, “Trees do not only give us fruits, but also shade. They keep the water table at appropriate levels and help maintaining the temperature of the surroundings. Should I not have argued for such a useful thing?”

I hardly comprehended what she wanted to say, but just nodded. How can trees help maintain the temperature, I wondered!



However, it is now that I realize its importance. I am in a transferable job and I keep moving from place to place. The colony where I stay in at present is a sort of separate township with a lot of green trees. In summers, while returning from the market, which is just at a distance of about 2 kms from our residence, the difference can easily be felt. The temperature gradient is about two degree

Celsius, which is quite significant. Thus, we begin with hot air from the market side and as we approach the colony, the temperature keeps falling and the breeze becomes quite pleasant. During rainy season, the scene is quite common when we have rains inside the colony; while outside it, it will be dry.

That we also get beautiful visitors in the months from October to February is another delight.



If such a tremendous difference can be felt in such small distances, imagine the amount of impact it would have on the mega level which covers the world? Should we indiscriminately keep felling the trees to build the concrete jungles? Will it not have a huge impact on the climate and the rains and the temperature? Will it not adversely affect the water tables? Will the lovely birds perish? Will the food chain not be disturbed? If birds and animals do not get plants, herbs and shrubs, flowers and fruits to eat; will it not affect the entire universe? Think, ruminant and reflect.

Trees are one of the most important links to a happy world and it is but natural that we give it due importance and care, if we wish the human race to survive happily.

There is a bliss in flowers

There is a bliss in honey bees

There is a bliss in nature

There is a bliss in the green of the trees.

I was so happy to see little efforts being taken by the construction people to take care of trees.



If you keenly observe this tree and the fencing, you will see that rather than felling the tree, the people who constructed the fencing, took care to modify it, such that the tree could be adjusted and also the purpose of the fencing served. If you deeply scrutinize the tree, you will see in it the figure of a man resting on the fencing, with one of his legs on the ground and the other on the fencing and laying in an inclined position, feeling happy that he has been taken care of!

In fact, the trees do have a mystical effect on us. I would like to narrate an example here. Whenever we have to go to the other side of the city, we have two routes. One is shorter, but had no trees and the other is longer but has several beautiful trees on its sides. I always prefer taking the longer route, for not only do I feel happy while driving, but also for a long time. The shorter route makes me feel more tired, while the longer one makes me enjoy a 'feel good factor' because of the greenery.



That nature and trees are connected to each other in more than one way was evident from a frame which captured my eye one day. Since I did not have a camera at that moment, I ran home to get one. Can you see the clouds tracing the lines of the trees in this picture?



Trees have a strong resilient power too and they teach you to spring back in all troubles. I would like to quote a small incident here.

There used to be a tree in front of the place where I used to go for yoga. Since someone complained that it is obstructing their view, it was cut one crazy afternoon. When I saw it in the evening, my eyes were moist. One more tree has lost life is what I felt. I was quite upset for long.

However, when it rained last month, my glance fell upon the tree again and I was pleasantly surprised to see that a small shoot had sprung up and was bearing leaves! If only we could be like these trees I thought! We lose hope after little failures, but not the trees. Nature teaches them to bounce back. A strong lesson was learnt by me that day, a teaching I am bound to never forget.



Love the trees and they will love you. Care for them and they will care for you. Be compassionate and they will bless you. After all they are living beings. Scientific experiments have already shown that they respond very positively to touch.

At the end, I would like you to have a glimpse of a photo. This photo is of a tree in my garden, and it looks like it too has hearts, doesn't it?



Bio:

Neelam Saxena Chandra is an engineer by profession (working in Indian Railways as Director. . More than six hundred of her stories/poems have been published in various leading Indian as well as international journals and anthologies. Two novels, one short story collection, three poetry books and four children's story books have also been published.

She has won various awards including POPULAR CHOICE AWARD in Folk Fusion category, RADIO CITY FREEDOM AWARD and Premchand Puraskar by Ministry of Railways.