

# Beyond Mere Resilience: combating water instability

By Ahaan Dev

Crash! The rain smacks against the window with such force it shakes the entire frame. Trees, cars, and even buildings are swept away by a colossal force: a flood! Believe it or not, this actually happens to many people here in America. However, the most dangerous thing is not the flood. Most people can survive the torrent of water, even if their property does not. The scarcity of potable water: that's the real killer. The prompt for this essay refers to "resilience" (here defined as "the ability to recover quickly from difficult events") but to really create positive change, we need to enact behavioral changes on both a local and global level.

In the U.S we assume we will have clean drinking water but it should not be taken for granted. It is actually a precarious resource. A flood might pollute a drinking water source with mud or destroy the entire source altogether. For example, in 2009, continuous rain fell in Georgia and this flooding caused many reservoirs and wells to be destroyed. This flooding caused over \$250 million in damages. Conversely, droughts can evaporate all of your city's wells and reservoirs. Droughts can also kill plants and even cause massive wildfires. For example, due to drought in California, gargantuan wildfires rage every year endangering peoples and animals.

What can we do to be more resilient to floods and droughts? We need to conserve water, so when a drought or flood comes we will have clean water to use and share. The most common waste of water happens in your bathroom. When your toilet leaks it can cost you greatly, both in terms of money and water wastage. Another way to conserve water is by not letting water run when you are brushing your teeth. You could keep your plants somewhere in your lawn where you can use harvested rainwater. Using these techniques is a good way to conserve water in your community.

However, while conserving water is important, treating the root cause of water instability (climate change) is key. To reduce climate change you can begin with simple things. The use of CFL or LED bulbs can use 75% less energy than regular bulbs. This conservation would prevent releasing greenhouse gasses that fuel climate change. Planting trees is another good way to help. Trees help the air and the earth by absorbing the carbon dioxide and other harmful gasses we produce daily. Governments and businesses, especially, have to pitch in to help decrease climate change. While trying to save water and planting trees are worthwhile contributions, the only way to make a dent in climate change is on a global scale. We Americans are doing our part by conserving water but only with help from our government leaders can we affect real change. There are a lot of things happening in the world but nothing affects the whole world like climate change. This should be the central discussion of the next G8 summit.