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MAGAZINE NOTES

Eco-Anxiety and Climate Grief — An Emerging Crisis

15 January 2026 ·

ENVIRONMENT

SOCIAL ISSUES

GS1

GS3

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Eco-Anxiety and Climate Grief — An Emerging Crisis

 **Down to Earth** Chapter 9 · 1 min read ·

WHY IN NEWS

UNEP's report "Navigating New Horizons: A Global Foresight Report on Planetary Health and Human Wellbeing" (2024) officially warned of a massive emerging crisis gripping the world's youth — eco-anxiety or "climate grief."

Key Data

- **DTE Opinion Survey (2025):** 88% of youth (aged 16-25) feel the climate is changing; **94%** are worried about their future; over **half** feel "betrayed" and "helpless"
- Anyone born after **February 1986** has never experienced a month with "normal" temperatures
- UNEP termed it "an emotional catastrophe being visited on the next generations"

Manifestations

- **Eco-paralysis:** Numbing inability to act; chronic stress
- Urban citizens forced to incur massive out-of-pocket health expenses (purifiers, masks, taxis) just to breathe — "**clean air**" has become a **luxury commodity**
- Eco-anxiety is altering **demographic choices** — many youth deliberately choosing to remain child-free to avoid subjecting children to an uninhabitable future

Way Forward

- Channel eco-anxiety into grassroots activism ("Hope is a verb")
- Broaden educational curriculum to include "**consumption literacy**" — understanding carbon footprint lifecycle of everyday items
- Emphasise mindful, local consumption over convenience

UPSC Angle

- **GS1:** Social issues, demographic trends, youth
- **GS3:** Environment, climate change, public health
- **Essay:** "Is hope the best strategy against climate despair?"



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