LEAVING BEHIND A DEGRADED EARTH

THIS is with reference to the item, “Air Pollution Reduces Life Expectancy in Children” (Science Reporter, Spectrum, June 2019). With burgeoning motorisation levels, increasing industrial activities, widespread construction activities to assist the growth of sprawling cities, the number of cities grappling with air pollution is on the rise.

World Health Organisation’s (WHO) air quality database, updated in 2018, lists cities on the rise on the basis of their annual average Particulate Matter (PM)2.5 concentration. According to the list, 14 of the world’s 20 most polluted cities are in India.

A report published in The Lancet in December 2018 revealed that in 2017 alone, close to 1.24 million people in India lost their lives due to air pollution-related health ailments.

Children are more vulnerable to air pollution because their brains and other organs are in a developing stage. Compared to adults, they have a large lung surface area relative to their weight and also inhale more air; they often breathe through their mouths, bypassing the filters of nasal passages, as a result pollutants go deeper into their lungs; they spend more time outdoors and this increases exposure; their internal passageways are smaller, which means that the lung tissue surface is exposed per volume of air they inhale; immaturity of children’s enzyme and immune systems that detoxify pollutants increase their sensitivity to air pollutants. The list of known or suspected damage includes low birth weight, birth defects, autism, asthma and other lung disorders, learning problem and obesity.

Air pollutants also impact the elderly. The lungs of an old person are less elastic and hence become less capable of filtering clean air and disposing the pollutants.

Non-eco-friendly practices undertaken by us in the name of growth seem to leaving our children and our elderly with a degraded earth and a diminished future.

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LANGUAGE & SPEECH DISORDER

ALL the articles in the April issue were interesting. I found the article Language & Speech Disorders very useful. Information about speech disorders is useful particularly for parents whose children suffer from such disorders. Many parents have no idea that these disorders can be corrected by proper treatment and therapy. Hope the article will be widely read by the parents whose children are facing these problems.

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• Choose informative, interesting, creative and topical scientific subjects to write on.
• Avoid academic, specialised and technical subjects.
• Write in a popular style to make the article/write-up appealing for a wider readership.
• Provide original photographs wherever possible.
• Do not forget to mention your name, current affiliation, complete, correct postal address, and e-mail.