

ENERGY

Why wrinkled clothes are good for our planet.



Illustration by Sadhana Saxena via AI

Synopsis

A few weeks ago, CSIR encouraged its employees to skip ironing their clothes once a week to reduce emissions. ET Prime did the math to understand the impact of such a measure if whole of India's working population were to take CSIR's approach. The results are interesting, to say the least.

Everybody wants to rule the world. Some want to save it for the future generations, but a slightly smaller number want to do it wearing un-pressed shirts, pants, salwar-kameez, and sarees.

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Take for instance the good folks at the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (**CSIR**), India. This organisation urged its employees to ditch the pressing iron at least once a week. However, **CSIR** was quick to take to X (formerly Twitter) clarifying that “no circular or official order has been issued” to its labs that staff refrains from wearing ironed clothes.

Nonetheless, netizens are arguing whether this campaign is a fashionable change in the name of saving the Earth, or a clever nudge that could spark a real change in the world’s most populous country?


Remember that the entire world is worried and trying to keep **temperature change of the planet to less than 2 degree Celsius**. Intrigued by CSIR’s unconventional approach, ET Prime posited the question: What if all of India’s working population follows CSIR’s advice? We decided to crunch the numbers and see if skipping the pressing iron once a week could truly translate into a greener future.

Climatic calculations


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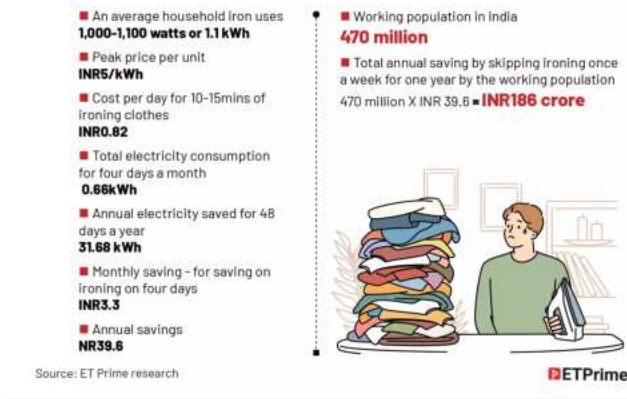
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Let’s see how wearing crinkly clothes on one day of the week helps us.

So, here’s how it goes.



1. An average household iron uses 1,000-1,100 watts or 1.1 kWh.
2. Peak price per unit - INR5/kWh
3. Cost per day for 10-15 minutes of ironing clothes - INR0.82
4. Total **electricity consumption** for four days a month - 0.66kWh
5. Annual electricity saved for 48 days a year – 31.68 kWh.
6. Monthly saving due to not ironing on four days - INR3.3
7. Annual savings - INR39.6
8. Working population in India - 470 million
9. Total annual saving by skipping ironing once a week for one year by the working population - 470 million X INR39.6 = INR186 crore
10. 10.Total electricity saved annually = 470 million x 31.68 kWh = 14 GW

Furthering our research into the impact of this campaign on **climate change**, we reached out to researchers and academics, asking the question – would this make a difference?

In a series of exciting e-mail exchanges, Karl Sterner Isaksson, COO of Climate Call, a Swedish climate-based game and research communication company, continued on the calculation by adding that the

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101 year 2023 reached an estimated 2.65 million tonnes of CO2 and that can be saved annually just by such a simple measure.

While the estimate seems reasonable, “My critique is that actual ironing frequency may be lower than assumed. A more accurate estimate might be that only half of India’s working population irons their shirts regularly,” Sterner adds.

According to E Somanathan, a professor of economics and planning unit at the Indian Statistical Institute, individual voluntary efforts to reduce consumption such as W.A.H primarily serve an educational role in the fight against emissions and pollution.

In his view, to seriously address the very dangerous issue of climate change and environmental degradation, there needs to be collective government-led efforts.

The unorganised footprints

Sterner’s Indian colleague, Prithivesh Ashok, a postgraduate in industrial ecology, was quick to turn our attention to another interesting facet. “While reading about the initiative, it stuck me that India has an ‘unorganised’ sector when it comes to ironing clothes – people on carts using charcoal powered iron boxes and is still a commonly sought after service,” he remarks, citing an [article](#) that there are about 10 million street vendors in India and each cart uses more than 5 kg of charcoal daily.

One can only imagine how significant is the **carbon footprint** of this charcoal ironing compared to the electric iron.

Points to ponder.

Given that the primary objective of this campaign is to raise awareness, Somanathan is rightly concerned that this approach might inadvertently backfire. It could potentially lead people to question the sincerity of those advocating for this cause.

- *Skipping one ironing session likely has a negligible effect on individual carbon footprint.*



BY

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might not resonate with everyone's desire for a crisp look.

- The campaign places the onus solely on individuals, potentially overlooking the role of manufacturers in creating more energy-efficient irons or the textile industry's **environmental footprint**.

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The question around climate change awareness hangs between quirky taglines and meaningful action. The CSIR campaign may not solve the climate change problem, but it will raise awareness (something that we all can use) and also make a few people feel that they contributed a little towards changing the fate of the **planet**.

(Graphics by Sadhana Saxena)

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Sachin

2 hours ago

One can write a few hundred words on any topic - relevant or irrelevant. There are other topics too. For instance, heating in winter; or cooling in summer. Cold continents like North America or Europe emit tonnes upon tonnes of carbon into the atmosphere. We could perhaps stop using heating there. That will be an overnight solution to the long... [Read More](#)



Jooluri Mattachari

3 hours ago

Poor and lower middle class folks are the saviours of this planet. The haves can take simple steps like moving away from bigger cars, using private jets, relying on public transport once a while, etc. Also, formal dress code needs to be done away with in corporates at least 2 to 3 days a week. Jeans and T-shirt should do.



Virendra Singh

15 hours ago

quite an idiotic idea. We can save a year's worth of ironing electricity by not using AC for a few hours .. This is what happens when Libtard leftists do maths

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