

Hailing the Green Champs

CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE



L to R: Dr. S.P. Ramanathan, Dr. K.S. Kwikumar, Rupa Dawane, Dr. Sujatha Byravan, Dr. V. Selvam, Prof. R. Ramesh, Santhosh Jayaram, Nagahari Krishna L, Kiriti Sahoo, Dr. Sachin Gunther and Dr. Rengalakshmi

MANAGING THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

As a precursor to the 9th edition of the JSW-TOI Earth Care Awards (ECAs), a series of Round Table Discussions (RTDs) are being held across the country. The RTD held in Chennai was the 2nd in the series

V Nagarajan

India has a coastal line of 7,500 km and the issue of climate change is increasingly gaining importance as the coastline plays a major role in it. In a panel discussion, held under the umbrella of JSW – The Times of India Earth Care Awards, climate change and its impact on India's coastal belt and agriculture were debated by experts from varied sectors who suggested ways to mitigate the hardship to communities and farmers living in the coastal belt.

There was consensus among panelists about the need to empower the farmers and fishermen community on the impact of climate change. Santhosh Jayaram, Partner and Head -

Sustainability and CSR Advisory at KPMG, moderated the panel discussion.

"India has 1,382 islands and there is a paramount need to have setback area from high tide line (HTL). We do not have setback line and there are 718 agencies, each having different issues. We have discussed the HTL for the entire coastal area with all agencies, a major achievement that gives us base for survey and development," said Prof. R. Ramesh, Director, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Government of India.

"As 50-55 per cent of the people in India are dependent on agriculture and related activities, there is a need to look at climate change and its impact at the macro level. We need to build resilience

at the micro level as issues of energy are important and the problems of South India and North India are different," said Dr. Suhas P. Wani, Former Director, ICRISAT Development Centre.

Till recently sea level rise was considered as a project and hard data reveals that sea level has increased by 12 cm in the last 55 years due to the impact of climate change. "One of the focus areas at M S Swaminathan Research Foundation is to enhance the adopting capacity of the local community at the national level and there is also a need to increase the level of awareness about salinisation," said Dr. V. Selvam, Leader, Coastal Systems Research and Climate Change, M S Swaminathan Research Foundation.

"Skill building and capacity building

are essential at the ground level, especially in post-harvest management techniques," said Nagahari Krishna L, Director, Danfoss India, Marketing, Communications and Industry Affairs.

According to Nagahari Krishna, in a study conducted among 1,000 farmers who have ventured technically in Tamil Nadu for banana crop, the yield was three times higher than what was prevalent eight years ago. Similarly for fisheries, decomposition can be avoided through establishing smaller shops as urbanisation has created infrastructure selective to the climate.

"Climate is a crucial aspect in the climate change policy. There is least insurance penetration as of now in India. Extreme climatic change will have a lingering effect on the macro economy, it there is deeper penetration of insurance, the insurance cost and lingering effect will be reduced and as a result performance of the macro economy would be better," said Dr. K.S. Kavi Kumar, Professor, Madras School of Economics.

There is little awareness about green buildings and its advantages against climate change. "A study done by TERI in 2017 reveals that by 2023, if all new buildings coming up in Chennai Corporation region are minimum GRIHA 3 star or an IGCBC gold certified, it will result in a saving of 962-1015 mw of energy demand. This means that one thermal power plant can be entirely avoided, resulting in a minimum saving of Rs 4,800 crore," said Kiriti Sahoo, Fellow and Area Convener-Sustainable Buildings, TERI.



As regards coastal belt, the fishing community has not been happy about mapping HTL. "There is a definite need to implement the CRZ regulations 2018 and the authorities are still to develop the management plan," said Sujatha Byravan, an independent analyst, Development Sector, Climate Change, Technology.

The RTD series is being held with the aim to discuss local climate change issues, share to address it and share best practices to be replicated by other regions

For submitting entries please log on to www.earthcareawards.com

AWARD CATEGORIES

- Leadership in urban climate action
- Community-based mitigation and adaptation in water resources, agriculture and forestry, other land use, animal husbandry and climate risk proofing
- Innovation in climate action
- GHG mitigation in large enterprises
- Leadership of women-led enterprise in climate action

According to Sujatha, fresh water bodies from hinterland to coastal belt need to be resurrected and maintained, including the drainage basin for the rivers, water bodies etc., instead of looking at each space in isolation. "There are a number of successful agricultural practices such as those based on agro forestry method. It has been found to be the best. In fact the Andhra Pradesh government is going to do natural farming by 2027," she said.

The number of crops sowed in a year has been reduced by the farmers which is a major challenge for the government. "The number of crops in a year has been reduced from 3 to 1 due to changes in the rainfall pattern and extreme climatic conditions. There are challenges like crop insurance. While it is available for paddy, it is not extended to cash crops like mango and coconut,"

said R. Rengalakshmi, Director, IRD Tata Eco-technology Centre.

There are two aspects to the climate change. One is that we do not know the intensity by which temperature will increase by the end of the century. Second is the adaptation. Whatever temperature increase has happened so far, one cannot reverse it. We have to get prepared for it. For instance, if there is an increase in the temperature by one degree, there will be sea level rise," said Dr. Sachin Gunther, Associate Professor, IIT Madras.

"Farmers are not aware of the increase in night and day temperature. They are only concerned with water availability which is supplied through rainfall. In the Cauvery Delta, there were three crops sown earlier which has since been reduced to one crop. Due to climate change all over Tamil Nadu farmers do not go for traditional crops and look for alternative methods in which water requirement is less," said Dr. S.P. Ramanathan, Head of the Department – Climate Research Centre, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore.

According to Dr. Ramanathan, one acre of rice crop requires 50 lakhs litres of water when conventional methods are used. That is why farmers are advised to go for water saving technology like SRI (system of rice intensification) and direct seeding using seed drills. There will be 30 per cent water saving in SRI. The Agro Climate Research Centre of TNAU has been involved in studying the impact of climate changes on various crops.

"The Earth Care Awards were instituted in 2008 and this is the ninth edition of the award. They are given in 5 categories to those who are working in the field of mitigation and adaptation of climate change," said Rupa Dawane, Head - Water, Environment & Sanitation, JSW Foundation. While KPMG in India is the Knowledge Partner for the event, Indian Chamber of Commerce is the outreach partner and TERI is the Technical and Learning Partner.

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