

Hailing the Green Champs



Left – Right: Dr Naba Kumar Goswami, Alope Bhattacharjee, Dr Mihir Kumar Purkait, Arjun Deb, Santhosh Jayaram, A K Johari, S M Sahai, Jayanta K Sarma and Dr R M Pant were present at the occasion

Battling Climate Change

The Round Table Discussion held at Guwahati is the first of the series of discussions before the final award ceremony of the 9th edition of the JSW – TOI Earth Care Awards, to be held later this year. The series of discussions, which will happen across the country, has created a platform where thought leaders can discuss local climate change issues and ways to address it and share best practices from the region to be replicated by other regions

The first round table discussion, a part of the 9th edition of the Earth Care Awards (ECA), a joint initiative of The Times of India and JSW, was organised on April 10, 2019 to recognise the efforts of individuals, community groups and corporations to safeguard the ecosystem. The round table discussion highlighted locally evolved climate-friendly practices in the production and consumption regimes across multiple sectors with special reference to climate change.

The panelists at the round-table discussion included Santhosh Jayaram, partner, KPMG, A M Singh, IFS, principal chief conservator of forest and head of forest force, government of Assam, A K Johari, IFS, principal chief conser-

vator of forests (biodiversity & climate change) & member secretary Assam State Biodiversity Board, S M Sahai, IFS, director general for the Meghalaya Centre for climate change (Meghalaya Basin Development Authority), Dr R M Pant, director, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj - North Eastern Regional Centre (ministry of Rural Development - GoI), Jayanta K Sarma, AARANYAK (a scientific and industrial research organisation), Dr Mihir Kumar Purkait, head, Centre for the Environment, IIT Guwahati, Arjun Deb, executive committee member of ICC-Guwahati, AB Paul, former chief engineer, PHED, government of Assam

and regional head of Inrem Foundation, Dr Naba Kumar Goswami, senior fellow and area convener - Agricultural and Rural Extension, TERI, and Alope Bhattacharjee, consultant, JSW.

The awards are technically supported by knowledge partner KPMG and outreach partner Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Talking about the awards, Santhosh Jayaram said, "Awards are given to recognise the activity and also to disseminate good works in terms of climate change. The objective is to sit with the specialists to know more about climate change and to encourage people to take more projects to

restrict climate change". According to Alope Bhattacharjee, "The main objective of this initiative is to disseminate awareness about climate change. The South Asian region encompassing SAARC is considered highly prone to the vagaries of climate change, which is expected to result in global warming likely surpassing 2 degree centigrade by the end of the 21st century. We are trying to address this basic purpose through this Earth Care awards initiative". Appreciating the round table conference, A K Johari said, "It is a healthy sign that this kind of

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

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>> Round table discussion on climate change

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CONSUMER CONNECT INITIATIVE

initiative is taken. Usually, we work in the background. Only few people know how the intervention of climate change is being done. By recognising them, it will certainly encourage them".

To counter the climate change, certain interventions were prepared with the help of government of India. "We are having a project which is totally focusing on climate change adaptation in north east — especially in Sikkim, Meghalaya and Nagaland. By this project, we have done a couple of interventions related to water and soil conservations," said AM Singh.

At the round table conference, Arjun Deb spoke about the direct effect of climate change in their company as they had to change the designing of the transformers over the time. "This has an economic cost as there is a cost of time and designing. So the effort is to make a resilient network with respect to change of climate," Deb added.

According to Dr Naba Kumar

food security. Catchment area protection, command area development and water management programmes are implemented with the objective to bridge the gap between potential created and potential utilised in order to address the water and soil related issues at local level."

While talking about the impact of climate change in the north east, S M Sahai said, "Meghalaya is one of the most vulnerable states in terms of climate change as the socio-eco-health indicators are very poor in the state. The main objective of Meghalaya Climate Change Centre is to develop concept notes for various adaptation funds for climate change, conducting various studies such as carbon footprint study of Meghalaya and awareness creation." Almost half of the perennial springs in north eastern states have already dried up or have become seasonal. Dr R M Pant suggested a few steps to revive spring water systems in the north east region. According to A B Paul, ground water of Assam is contaminated with arsenic and fluoride affecting people's health. Hence, it is best to check before using it for irrigation or drinking purpose.

Jayanta Kumar Sarma spoke on the education outreach to restrict climate change. Sarma added, "Assam is an agrarian state. So, traditional agro-forest model such as vegetable gardening in the village houses can be used as an important climate resilient effort." Throughout the journey of the ECA, the emphasis has been on commitment and innovation towards climate-friendly processes, operations, and promotion of innovative scalable activities. "This discussion is a global wake-up call. Scientist, academicians, industrialist and government persons have participated and discussed all possible impacts and its remedy towards better economic and sustainable development of the society. We must all take an action together for sustainable environment," said Dr Mihir Kumar Purkait.

> Rokibuz Zaman
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