

Featured Research at a Seminar by Council for Social Development

← Seminar on

Environmental Protection in India from the Perspective of the Poor

THURSDAY 21 - FRIDAY 22
SEPTEMBER 2023 SEPTEMBER 2023

VENUE: CONFERENCE HALL II, INDIA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE (MAIN), NEW DELHI

COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

In a timely and thought-provoking seminar organised by the Council for Social Development (CSD) on September 21 and 22, 2023, experts from various fields converged to illuminate pressing environmental issues in India and their profound implications, particularly for marginalised communities. The seminar, aptly titled 'Environmental Protection in India from the Perspective of the Poor,' facilitated discussions on pivotal themes, including India's climate commitments, biodiversity conservation, sustainable resource management, and environmental laws and governance review.

Theme 1: India's Climate Commitments and Their Implications

The seminar commenced with a comprehensive exploration of India's climate commitments and their far-reaching consequences. Chair R.R. Rashmi, a Distinguished Fellow and Programme Director at TERI, expertly led the discussion, accentuating the urgent need to address climate change. Speakers Nitya Nanda, Director of CSD, and Susmita Mitra, Assistant Professor at CSD, underscored the imperative of immediate collective action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The discussion spotlighted India's pivotal role in global climate efforts and the adverse impact of climate change on vulnerable communities.

Theme 2: Biodiversity Act - Implementation, Impact, and Possibilities

The second theme delved into the Biodiversity Act, focusing on its implementation, impact, and potential future directions. Chair K.B. Saxena, a Distinguished Professor at CSD, set the stage for an in-depth discussion. Biswajit Dhar, Vice President of CSD, illuminated the significance of biodiversity conservation and the challenges associated with effectively implementing the Biodiversity Act. Discussant Yogesh Gokhale, representing TERI, underscored the importance of preserving biodiversity for ecological stability and sustainable development.

Theme 3: Sustainable Natural Resource Management - Ensuring Access and Livelihood Protection for the Poor and Marginalised

The crux of the seminar lay in Theme 3, which spotlighted sustainable natural resource management and its implications for marginalised and impoverished communities. Devendra Pandey, Former DG of Forest Survey of India, presided over this critical session. Zeenat Niazi, Vice President of Development

Alternatives Group, New Delhi, presented a research paper crafted by Vaishali Kanojia, a research associate at Development Alternatives under her guidance. This research aimed to enhance understanding of sustainable natural resource management in regions like Bundelkhand by developing an integrated framework considering ecological, socio-economic, cultural, and governance dimensions. It marked a significant step toward resilient, adaptive, and community-centric approaches to natural resource management, reaffirming a commitment to enhancing rural well-being through sustainable practices and collaboration with local stakeholders.

Theme 4: Review of Environment Laws and Governance

The seminar culminated with Theme 4, which revolved around the review of environmental laws and governance in India. Chair Petal Chandhok, Head of National Green Tribunal practice at Trust Legal, Advocates, and Consultants, introduced this pivotal discussion. Speakers K.B. Saxena from CSD provided a comprehensive overview of environmental laws, shedding light on their strengths and areas in need of improvement. Nivit Kumar from the Centre for Science and Environment, New Delhi, served as the discussant, offering insights into the challenges of effectively enforcing environmental regulations.

The seminar concluded with an engaging Q&A session, during which participants delved into discussions aimed at finding solutions to India's multifaceted environmental challenges. This event provided a platform for experts to exchange ideas, share research findings, and advocate for the inclusion of social justice and equality in environmental policy-making.

As the world grapples with the dire consequences of climate change, this seminar underscored the critical importance of prioritising environmental protection from the perspective of the poor and marginalised. It emphasised that a sustainable and equitable approach to environmental management is not only an ethical imperative but also a key driver of India's economic growth and social well-being. The insights and discussions from this seminar provide valuable guidance for policymakers and stakeholders as they work towards a more environmentally conscious and just future for India. The seminar served as a reminder that protecting our environment is not just a matter of policy; it is a matter of justice and survival for all.