



Jagannath International Management School

Vasant Kunj, New Delhi - 110070

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National Conference on Communicating Sustainable Development Goals

Waterman of India, Dr. Rajendra Singh, calls for local solutions for global environmental problems

The Department of Media and Communication Studies of Jagannath International Management School (JIMS), Vasant Kunj organised ICSSR Sponsored National Conference on 'Communicating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' on Wednesday, March 13th 2019 at the Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Center (IIC), New Delhi. The national conference was taken as an opportune moment to rethink about the transformational change and consider the multi-dimensionality of communication for social innovation and encourage students to become a key stakeholder in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals target 2030.

Objective of the Conference: Sustainable Development has been discussed globally including India. The 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs adopted by world leaders in 2015 embody a roadmap of progress for growth that is inclusive and sustainable which targets one and all. If we look at various development goals envisaged by UNDP, the conference stresses to provide a platform for intellectual guidance in the field of attaining SDGs.

Beneficiaries: Students, Academicians, Researchers, Media Practitioners, NGOs/ CBOs, Policy Makers, Corporates.

Inaugural Session

The Conference began on a high note with the participation of luminaires from the field in the Inaugural Session. The Chief Guests for the day included Waterman of India, Dr. Rajendra Singh, eminent water conservationist & environmentalist, and Mr. Abhay Kumar, India's Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Madagascar, Mr. Anil Sagar, Chief Reporter, Deshbandhu Newspaper along with Dr. Ravi K Dhar, Director, JIMS-Vasant Kunj and Dr. Neeru Johri, Head, Department of Media and Communication Studies, JIMS-Vasant Kunj.



The Session began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp and chanting of the peace prayer. This was followed by a welcome address by Dr. Ravi K Dhar, Director JIMS, Vasant Kunj, who set the tone for the Conference. He urged the students to be sensitive towards environmental issues facing the country. "Justice, equity and balance is an equation for *Dharma*. Man has created destruction and it is only after the state of balance that we can attain enlightenment. Hence, man needs to be at peace with nature and natural resources", said Dr. Dhar during his address.



Students welcomed Dr. Rajendra Singh, eminent water conservationist & environmentalist, popularly known as the Waterman of India with a standing ovation. In the keynote address Dr. Singh took students on a three-decade long journey of water conservation work undertaken by him in Rajasthan from 1985 - 2000. He coined the two key words for sustainability- discharge and recharge. Underlining the principles of sustainable development, Dr. Singh said, "Sustainable development is not possible without restoration and conservation and that it must be free from displacement, destruction and disaster."

He equated the role of rivers to that of a woman. As a woman gives birth to a child, rivers across the world have given birth to various civilizations. "India is a country of *नीर (water)*, *नारी (women signifying birth)* and *नदी (river signifying flow of life)*," said Dr. Singh. He added, "If we want to make India a global teacher again, we need to tackle international environmental challenges with indigenous knowledge systems."



A book of abstracts of the papers which were presented during the conference and a White Paper on River Ganga were released as part of the event by the eminent panelists.

Taking the session ahead, Mr. Anil Sagar, Chief Reporter, Deshbandhu Newspaper, enlightened students on the role and responsibility of a journalist in reporting SDGs. “If students really want to report and communicate on SDGs they should have a genuine concern for sustainability and the environment in their hearts,” said Mr. Sagar.

Mr. Sagar’s address was followed by the playing of the Earth Anthem. The Anthem has been penned by Mr. Abhay Kumar, India’s Ambassador-Designate to the Republic of Madagascar. Mr. Kumar shared with students how he got the inspiration to write the earth anthem which was released in 2000, “We have national anthem, we have school anthem, why not have an earth anthem.” Highlighting how the world has lost the flora and fauna, he said, “We have lost a lot of biodiversity in the last 50 years. Our greed has ruined the planet so we need to put our thoughts into action because this is the biggest existential crisis we are facing. As leaders of tomorrow we need to reduce the gap between our thoughts and our actions.”

Technical Session 1: 'Sustainable Developmental Goals 2030'

The first technical session was chaired by Dr. Rashmi Sharma, Scientist at NCSTC GOI and it was co-chaired by Mr. Shibanand Rath, EKJUT-A, a non-profit organisation based in Orissa, working towards affordable energy and healthcare.

Citing examples from tribal communities like the Bishnois to the Chipko Movement, Dr. Sharma said that the Sustainable Development Goals have always been part of the society before they were formally coined in 2015. She further discussed about the 5-Ps model – People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership to promote the participation of youth in SDGs. "Participation of youth will lead to achieving of SDGs," said Dr. Sharma.

Mr. Rath spoke about the Crèche, a positive initiative undertaken by his NGO Ekjuta that works towards the eradication of malnutrition- child care facilities at home. He further urged people to apply scientific methods to overcome their problems rather falling into the trap of self-victimisation.

After the chair and co-chair address, there were several paper presentations on various topics related to the SDGs.

Technical Session 2: 'Community initiatives, best practices and case studies along with challenges faced by CBOs, NGOs and Corporates'

The session on 'Community Initiatives, Best Practices, Innovations and Challenges Faced by NGOs, CBOs and Corporates' was chaired by Mr. Shubh Singh, Founder and CEO, New Fields Technologies Program Director – Universal Health Information Network. This informative session brought to light UN Sustainable Goal 3 – Good Health and Well Being for everyone. Mr. Shubh Singh spoke about the importance of digitizing health records, healthcare for females and children and the process for storing everything on the cloud.

The session included paper presentations from various participants including a presentation by Ms. Tahzeeb Fatma on 'the question of women in development'. She covered topics like taboos, traditions and gender inequality by referring to movies like Toilet – Ek Prem Katha and Padman.

Technical Session 3: 'Role of media networks including various forms of media engagements'

The final session of the day was chaired by Ms. Nandita Chibber, Head of Media and Communications at WaterAid India. Papers were presented on topics such as digital media, empowering gender equality, skill development and the challenges of fake news. Professors and scholars from various renowned universities presented their reports.

Ms. Chibber spoke about the after-Google era and the transformation of media in the digital age. "Media has a huge role to play in achieving the sustainable development goals," said Ms. Chibber. She showcased a viral campaign on drought affected rural villages made by WaterAid. She also shared how nowadays it is easier to popularise a cause through various social media platforms.

The Guest of Honour of the session was Mr. K.G Suresh, Director General, Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC) and a renowned journalist. During his address, Mr. Suresh encouraged students to use social media to promote positive stories of change. "Communication has become a monologue these days. The floodgates of information have been opened causing an information tsunami. It is important for media professionals to cover and spread positive stories of change and the information to be verified and to be packed with facts and figures," said Mr. Suresh.

A poster presentation was done by participants followed by distribution of certificates to the paper presenters. The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks extended to all the attendees by Dr. Neeru Johri, Head, Department of Media and Communication Studies, JIMS-Vasant Kunj.

Learning Outcomes of the Conference:

1. The primary outcome of the Conference organized by the Media and Communication Studies Department was to provide the opportunity to the college youngsters to listen and interact with the leaders working in the social sector.
2. Shared understanding on need for sustainable development and how key challenges can be addressed and opportunities leveraged.
3. Shared consensus on action needed for the implementation of the agenda.
4. Shared consensus on strategic planning and implementation of policies through consultative process.