

For Favour of Publication

Patna, May 2. A one-day conference titled “From Evidence to Action: Environmental Sustainability and Urban Futures in Patna” was organized jointly by The London School of Economics, Northeastern University, and Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) today.

Speaking on the occasion, Shree Dipak Kumar Singh, ACS, Director-General, and Chief Inquiry Commissioner of the General Administration Department in the Government of Bihar opined that we must act upon the ideas to change behavioral practices for protecting our environment. For instance, waste management will improve only if people start segregating their wastes at the source of its generation.

Professor Swati Dhingra of The London School of Economics presented the findings of a research study on waste segregation in Patna that she had done in association with LSE’s Professor Stephen Machin. Households were trained on how to segregate wastes and the segregation rates were measured before and after the training. It was observed that the benefits in terms of waste outcomes were 5 times greater than the costs incurred for training them. People continued to segregate even after the end of the study. She also added that 40 percent of Patna Municipal Corporation’s revenue expenditure goes towards waste management of the city. Professor Nishith Prakash of Northeastern University presented findings of his research titled “Inter-generational spillovers of environmental attitudes and behaviors.” School children in Patna were the subjects of his study. He found that children show a stronger response to the environmental curriculum in schools than their parents do.

Chief Information Commissioner of the Government of Bihar Shri Tripurari Sharan stated that fighting the climate change crisis will succeed only if we make it a participatory process for all citizens. People should be made aware of the deadly consequences of this grim reality. Shree Amir Subhani, Chairman of the Bihar Electricity Regulatory Commission stated that the government is striving to bring a citizen-focused sustainable and equitable supply of power to the public. Smt. Harjot Kaur Bumrah, Chairman-cum-Member, Board of Revenue of the Government of Bihar felt that education of people must go hand in hand with reforms to protect the environment.

While presenting a research study on Patna, Professor of Economics at IIT-Patna Dr. Nalin Bharti stated that the promise of the Smart City Mission is not translating into results on the ground. For instance, one can still find garbage strewn along some of Patna’s roads. There must be better co-ordination between different departments of the government.

Dr. Alok Ranjan, Director-Operations, State Health Agency, Government of Bihar held out for an integrated approach for tackling wastes, where government bodies tackling various aspects of pollution should come together rather than work in silos. At the outset, Dr. Ashmita Gupta, Associate Professor and Member-Secretary of ADRI introduced all the distinguished speakers to the gathering.

Also speaking at the conference were Dr. Ashish Kumar of Indian Meteorological Department; Shri Utkarsh Patel of CSEP, New Delhi; Smt. Lachi Singh, a PhD student and Senior Policy Fellow Joseph Feyertag of LSE; Shree Alan Cowell of Don Bosco Academy;

and Professor Suresh Pandian Elumala of IIT-Dhanbad; and Dr. Rashmi Barua of ISI-Delhi. Many young students of various colleges and schools of Patna attended the event.

(Abhishek Prasad)