



Webinar On

Environmental Perspectives of COVID-19:

A ray of **Bloom** in gloom

Distinguished Speakers



Dr. Krishnan Srinivasaraghavan
Head of Exploration
UNDP



Dr. S. K. Tyagi
Former Additional Director
CPCB



World Environment Day
June 5, 2020
11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Distinguished Speakers



Dr. K.S. Rao
Professor & Head
Department of Botany, University
of Delhi



Dr. Yogesh Gokhale
Centre for Forest Mgmt. & Governance
TERI University

Chairperson



Prof. Ranjana Agrawal
Director
CSIR-NISTADS & CSIR-NISCAIR

Moderator



Prof. Sujit Bhattacharya
Chief Scientist
CSIR-NISTADS

Co-ordinators



Dr. Madhulika Bhati
Principal Scientist
CSIR-NISTADS



Dr. Shiv Narayan Nishad
Scientist
CSIR-NISTADS

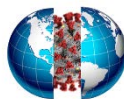
Organised By

CSIR-National Institute of Science, Technology and
Development Studies (CSIR-NISTADS)

A webinar was held on June 05, 2020 on WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY by CSIR-NISTADS

Environmental Perspectives of COVID-19

A ray of bloom in gloom



*World Environment Day
June 5th, 2020*

Concept Note

Only in a period of few months, the world has changed! The global outbreak of Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) has thrown up many unforeseen challenges of unprecedented scale before mankind. Despite adversely impacting the healthcare systems of countries and leaving a long-lasting negative effect on the global economy, this pandemic has also provided a strong interconnection between human activity and planetary health.

As a control measure, different countries including India called for a prolonged lockdown to prevent the spread of the disease. The lockdown led to closure of all the industrial and developmental activities and vehicular movement. Along with major economic and social disruption, the lockdown also showered unexpected gains in improving the global environment such as clean air and water. The lockdown achieved within a short time what even the implementation of several protocols, action plans technology interventions and other economic intensive approaches could not. Nature itself showed a very quick healing process as soon as human interference stopped.

These are, however, transient gains as they were primarily due to the lockdown that resulted in temporary shutdown of industries, transport systems and other businesses, and restrictions in the movement of people. The various studies and reports have largely focussed on the positive environmental gains, but have largely overlooked issues that may pose new challenges. For instance, the pandemic also called for very high levels of sanitization, which increased the demand for clean water. Another problem is the massive amounts of highly contagious medical waste that have been generated.

Thus, as the economy opens up, there is a need to develop policy strategies and an implementation framework that can sustain the gains that were achieved. Addressing the concerns of water demand and medical waste, among others, is also called for. Therefore, it demands revisiting extant protocols and frameworks, technology solutions and socio-economic pathways that have been developed for achieving a 'clean environment'. India has taken up various initiatives to move towards sustainable economic development. The 'post COVID-19' period thus provides an opportunity to achieve this aspiration.

The webinar was an attempt by CSIR-NISTADS to bring together thought leaders who can enrich this discourse and provide their insights into the new approaches the country should adopt for sustainable techno-socio-economic development.

Programme Details

Opening Remarks 11.00 AM -11.05 AM	Prof. Sujit Bhattacharya Chief Scientist , CSIR-NISTADS
Welcome Address 11.05 AM-11.15 AM	Prof. Ranjana Aggarwal Director, CSIR-NISTADS
Invited Talks	
Invited talk 11.15 AM -11.35AM	Dr. Krishnan Srinivasaraghavan Head of Exploration, Country Accelerator Lab, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Invited Talk 11.35 AM- 11.55 AM	Dr. S. K. Tyagi Former Additional Director, Central Pollution Control Board, New Delhi
Invited Talk 11.55 AM-12.15 PM	Dr. K.S. Rao Professor & Head, <i>Department of Botany, University of Delhi</i>
Invited Talk 12.15 PM-12.35 PM	Dr Yogesh Gokhale Area Convenor, Centre for Forest Mgmt. & Governance, TERI University
Question and Answer session	
12.35 PM-12.45 PM	
Vote of Thanks	




The event commenced with the introduction by **Dr. Sujit Bhattacharya, Chief Scientist, CSIR-NISTADS**. He highlighted the various initiatives being undertaken by NISTADS to develop focussed policy inputs on various aspects of COVID-19. He underscored that this webinar is part of this initiative to bring together the thought leaders to discuss upon the environmental issues surrounding this pandemic. Drawing from the concept note, he highlighted some of the salient points that has been raised therein. He concluded by thanking the Director for her inspiration behind this webinar with valuable inputs at every stage, and the distinguished speakers for giving their precious time to address this webinar.




Dr. Ranjana Aggarwal, Director NISTADS welcomed all the speakers and expressed thanks for their participation. She underscored the high relevance of this webinar in this important occasion of World Environment Day being celebrated in the midst of a pandemic. Her talk drew insights from different perspective including India's long tradition and philosophy of looking at environment as integral to existence. She highlighted how we are learning from this pandemic. A positive gain has been on the environment with clean air and water. As the economy is opening up and we are moving towards unlocking, the key issue before us is the strategies our country should take, citizens adopting to the new norms of social behaviour among others so that the positive environmental gains can be sustained. The webinar is looking forward to the eminent speakers to put their perspective on these issues. She concluded by appreciating the organiser and technical team at NISTADS for organising this webinar.



Dr. Madhulika Bhati, Principal Scientist, CSIR-NISTADS introduced all the distinguished speakers to the audience. She highlighted their vast experience, scholarly work and various initiatives they have taken over the years. She introduced the title and theme of each of the speakers before their presentation.



Dr. Krishnan Srinivasaraghavan, Head of Exploration, Country Accelerator Lab, UNDP India, emphasised the role of “Citizen Science initiatives” in producing useful information that can complement traditional S&T on major environmental challenges such as air quality. The data sourced through citizen science projects can complement data from research laboratories to provide enhanced visibility, public endorsement and expanded outreach for S&T projects which are otherwise mostly limited to scientific audience. He cited the case study of Buenos Aires, Argentina which was coordinated by the UNDP to highlight how students were involved in collecting air quality parameters by fitting their cycles with sensor based micro kits. This allowed for dynamic collection of air quality parameters and complemented the government static data collected from monitoring stations. He said that this type of monitoring mechanism is also being initiated in India. Thus he emphasised that the added value of data from common citizens will also attract the attention of policymakers and give a much-needed push towards sound policymaking. He concluded his talk by calling for the need to promote citizen science projects as it contributes to the awareness levels of public, leads to their active involvement and contributes towards achieving developmental goals through participatory process



Dr. S. K. Tyagi, Former Additional Director of Central Pollution Control Boards, New Delhi talk was expansive in scope touching upon the various environmental aspects including environmental restoration, water and air quality. He discussed the positive environmental gains in water and air quality during this lockdown. However, he emphasised real achievement will be when we can achieve this quality when we get back to normal routine. He mentioned the pivotal role of technologies like IoT, water efficient technologies. He stressed upon the need to maintain the technology at source. He further drew attention to the need for urgent action to address the water scarcity issues facing the country. In this context he underscored the need for restoration of pond reservoir and encourage water recycling and reuse of water. He opined that an honest implementation of policy will be instrumental to remove the bottleneck. Strict compliance with environmental clearance need to be essentially followed by all industries and other sectors. In concluding remarks he said that now there is a need of serious thinking, creating new policies and implementation programs to reduce the concentration of

development hubs only in cities and have more such hubs in small towns and rural areas.



Dr. K.S. Rao Professor, Department of Botany, University of Delhi discussed the different biodiversity models with special focus on diversity. In this context, he discussed the diversity of institutional mechanisms. He particularly emphasised the role of community action leading to what you want to achieve. The lockdown in just two months made a big positive change for the environment. It in a way pointed out how human activities results in polluting air and water. Citing the example of cleaning Ganga, he emphasised the important role of community. Inefficient sewerage system is a big pollutant of the river which requires community and effective governance system. He concluded by emphasising the need to protect diversity which requires formal and informal institutions to be actively involved.



Dr. Yogesh Ghokale, Senior Fellow with The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). He is also the member IUCN Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual values of Protected Areas. His talk was centered on Minor Forest Produce, how it can be a saviour for COVID-19 migrants to rural India. He emphasised how corrective policy actions can lead to creating sustainable environmental ecosystem. In this context he highlighted the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY). This programme facilitates the local communities to collect several minor forest produces (MFPs) and those can be sold at a defined Minimum Support Price (MSP), at the same time value addition to these MFPs to develop marketable products could fetch better price. The forest resources and the traditional knowledge would come to rescue of over 30 crore forest dwelling population not only in such critical times but would also go a long way to form a substantial livelihood basis. In his final remarks, he underscored that positive gains from this programme requires strengthening the capacities of the stakeholders from local to national institutions.



Seminar ended with interactive question and answer session followed by vote of thanks by Dr. Shiv Narayan Nishad, Scientist, CSIR-NISTADS, New Delhi.

Contact for Details

Director, CSIR-NISTADS
Dr. K. S Krishnan Marg, PUSA gate
Contact: director@nistads.res.in

Link of webinar: <https://youtu.be/bXSxpBGY1ao>

