

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE – SESSION 2

SALIENT POINTS

The participants in the second thematic session on climate change unanimously opined that to tackle the issue of climate change, creating local awareness among communities is paramount. The plan of action of the civil society at the community level, as outlined by the participants, should include -

1. Building preparedness of the communities
2. Learning lessons online; and sharing knowledge both online and offline
3. Creating a data bank of resource persons working on climate change belonging to NGOs, Government and International agencies

Role of ICTs:

ICTs alone cannot prevent the effects of climate change. But they can help in creating awareness among people; alerting them with the right kind of information to negotiate the repercussions of climate change. ICTs can be used to highlight the plight of people affected by climatic changes and draw attention to those who now stand threatened by it.

Of late it is being observed that three categories of people are slowly emerging in the population of South Asia -

- The first category comprises only 20% of the population but has control over 80% of the resources.
- The second category comprises 40% of the population and owns 15% of the resources. This category follows the theory of percolation and is occupied with efforts to add itself to the first category.
- The last 40% of the population has access to only 5% of the resources and is viewed as a liability by the Governments.

This lopsided distribution of resources needs correction and greater attention must be paid to the third category of people. If ICTs are to truly act as developmental tools, then we must ensure that the third category is empowered and strengthened through appropriate knowledge, utilising information and communication technologies.

However we should not think of computers as the only technological tools, as they are not accessible to all. There are alternative tools, for example, visual media and radio

that should be explored. Video can be quite effective in educating people on climate change. Apart from video, the use of radio should also be looked at because it has a very wide reach and has been in use for a long time.

The Target Audience:

Focus must be laid on educating children and they must be targeted from the school level itself. Environmental education should be integrated into the school curriculum, including education through visual media. In addition to this, the traditional media should also be utilized as they have a better, wider reach and acceptance among people.

The right kind of information needs to be shared with the right kind of audience and this should be tailor-made according to the audience. However the message that needs to be reinforced equally, across all groups, is that - ***“Climate change is universal and no one can be excluded from the disastrous effects of climate change.”***

People, irrespective of a rural or urban background, must be sensitized about the judicious use of energy resources. Nowadays, even villages are seen to be paying less regard to natural resources and are gradually going the city way. This trend must be checked before the problem becomes compounded; and for this awareness and education is a must.

In the context of Nepal –

OneWorld South Asia and its partners should focus on dealing with specific problems pertaining to climate change. However at the same time, the need of the marginalised and the most vulnerable has also to be kept in mind, particularly from the point of view of their livelihood. We need both short and long term planning to address these issues.

In Nepal, a variety of traditional media can be employed to educate the people, for instance, posters, pictorial charts, dramas, etc. These initiatives should target people across all communities and segments of the population. It is essential that a sense of ownership is built in the public to mobilize positive actions amongst them. In other words, the strategy to be adopted can be described as *“thinking globally and acting locally.”*

