

Centre for Social Research Webinar Series - 2

DISCUSSION ON GENDER & WATER: THE INTERSECTION


Panelists:



Dr. Fawzia Tarannum,
Assistant Professor
Coco-Cola Department of Regional Water
Studies,
TERI School of Advanced Studies



Mr. Yogesh Jadeja (Moderator)
Founder
ACT (Arid Communities and
Technologies)



Dr. K. Vijaya Lakshmi
Vice President
Development Alternatives Group

On
13th May, 2020 (Wednesday)
6:30 pm




Emphasising the Nuances between Gender and Water Issues

Dr K Vijayalakshmi, Vice President, DA participated as a panelist in a webinar on Gender and Water organised by Centre for Social Research on 13 May, 2020. Other panelists included Dr Fawzia Tarannum, Assistant Professor at Coca-Cola Department of Regional Water Studies, TERI School of Advanced Studies and Yogesh Jadeja, Founder, Arid Communities and Technologies.

Lakshita Iyer of Centre for Social Research started the webinar by sharing her thoughts behind the issue and explained how the onus of taking care of family's water needs is still on women.

Dr Fawzia explained intersectionality of water on the basis of caste, class, gender, religion; especially observed during COVID-19 outbreak. He said water has a socio-economic, legal dimension but gender dimension is not discussed in detail. He also pointed out that the need to include the third gender in such discussions.

Dr Vijayalakshmi focused more on water crisis in the country. She said water scarcity is looming across the country and since the demand is going up every year, sanitation outcomes are not delivered in large regions of the country. This has serious implications during COVID-19 situation. She also stressed on the fact that both surface and groundwater is exploited in India and wastewater is not recycled and reused by the major population of the country. 80% of the water needs can be met by recycling and reuse. Indians capture only 8% of rain water and it is important to invest more in water conservation structures. Highlighting a study carried out by DA in Dehradun, Bhubaneswar and few other cities, she said that a large amount of water is lost due to leakage causing water shortage which can be addressed by proper water management.

Dr Jadeja discussed about participatory ground water management. It is a method to manage and conserve the aquifer. In participatory ground water management, it is important to address both demand and supply and bridge the gap by developing tools for wise decision making by institutions and users.

The panelists also addressed the questions from the audience. Dr Fawzia explained statistics that in cases of fetching water, it is mostly 80% of women who perform the task. In most cases the girl child accompany the mother, which thereby affects their education too. The drudgery of women is increasing, as due to water scarcity and drought, women have to travel longer distance to fetch water for the household. The global economic gap index of 2020 data shows India stands at 112 among 153 countries.

Question on policies for water conservation and if they are gender neutral was addressed by Dr Vijayalakshmi. She referred to the National Water Policy and Composite Water Index of Niti Aayog to explain data on water scarcity and crisis. Enough plantations could also help in holding water but in terms of management of source sustainability, quality policies are not available. However, most policies are gender-neutral. Infrastructure alone is not enough, it is important to focus on capacity building of women too. Policies would help in proceeding towards a self-reliant India in a better manner.