

Making Change Happen

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in association with Tata Steel Limited organized a thought provoking thematic track session titled, 'Making Change Happen' at the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS).

The objective of the session was to further strengthen the initiative, as it aims at sharing of its global experience at COP 24 and innovative initiatives undertaken by teachers to support their teaching-learning processes at the local level.

The Inaugural session emphasised its intention to strengthen environmental awareness and to share the experiences of the schools adopted by stakeholders in the same. Opening the session, Dr Annapurna Vancheswaran, Senior Director, TERI, labelled educators as the 'beacon of hope' in imparting environmental awareness. This was followed by a special address by Mr Pankaj Kumar Satija, Chief - Regulatory Affairs, Tata Steel Limited, who put forward the successful case studies in Jharkhand and Odisha, wherein the project has reached out to students – in particular, the tribals – for environment-friendly practices. Mr Satija said, "Through the Green School project, we want to address anomalies and gaps in the curriculum and spread the message of sustainability to all the young minds".

Further, Ms Neha, Fellow, Environment Education and Awareness Area, TERI and Principle Investigator of The Green School project, charted the success stories of the project through a snippet. She showcased the project activities that engaged students, teachers, community members and Tata Steel employees in promoting environmental sustainability. She further mentioned the vision of the project which is to empower students by creating awareness on climate change and to highlight ways in which a sustainable lifestyle can help mitigate the adverse impact of climate change, through effective water and energy resource management initiatives at local levels.

This was followed by special remarks by Dr B C Sabata, Director, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Combating Climate Change, Department of Environment, Govt. of NCT of Delhi – who stressed upon the 'eco-clubs' in schools which have already proved successful in over 2000 Delhi schools so far. He appreciated the key role of school children in environmentally friendly initiatives.

Further to this, Mr Manoj Kumar Gangeya, Director- HSMD, MoEF&CC, Government of India, delivered a Keynote Address where he expressed his Ministry's commitment to Sustainable Development Goals, evidenced by their ratification of all the international conventions, as well as active collaboration to meet the planned goals. Mr Gangeya stated, "Making change happen is the key message as schools and teachers are taught about Sustainable Development, which is beneficial for whole life. It is indeed a great step by TERI and TATA Steel to disseminate knowledge on sustainable development amongst the masses."

The vote of thanks was delivered by Ms Taru Mehta, Area Convenor, Environment Education and Awareness Area, TERI. Ms Mehta thanked all the delegates present, TATA Steel employees for their constant support and also participating in the event and also thanked

the teachers from all the locations present.

Post the inaugural session, the Plenary session 1 was held, where representatives from different locations of Tata Steel, shared their experiences of Community Impact Projects, that have undertaken exemplary work by project schools for restoring their natural habitats - thereby facilitating a positive change in their immediate surroundings.

One of the speakers, Ms Khushbu Prajapati, Executive-Education, Joda, TSRDS, highlighted the role of students in identifying the community behavior through surveys. She also informed about bridge schools, which raise awareness about the environment, and how 'water monitors' have been instituted in each of the schools to monitor water conservation practices.

Mr S K Satapathy, Senior Manager- MPP, Sukinda Chromite Mines, Tata Steel Limited, emphasized the need to preserve water for the future generations. He presented the work done in Sukinda with reference to water conservation, which involves restoration of natural springs for enhancing its usage by the villagers. He highlighted that this initiative is being undertaken to prevent surface contamination of the springs, hence ensuring sustainable utilization of natural sources of water. Additionally he mentioned that this restoration will also be a path which will connect the students to the environmental concerns of the society through a first-hand exposure on project implementation.

Mr Utsav Kashyup, Senior Manager—Environment and Forest, West Bokaro, Tata Steel Limited, mentioned the participation of students where they conducted a cleanliness drive on the banks of the Bokaro River near Pundi village, under Mandu block of Ramgarh district. During the two-hour long cleanliness drive, the students removed the garbage scattered on the river bank. They interacted with the people residing in the area and urged them not to throw plastic and other wastes in the river. They also urged the people not to use plastic carry bags.

The speakers stressed that collaboration rather than competition is the key to success for an entrepreneur, and that problems could be common but solutions need to be tailored to the contexts and opportunities.

The third Plenary discussion, Education for Sustainable Development - a Tool for Transformative Impact, was chaired by Ms Livleen K Kahlon, Associate Director, Environment Education and Awareness Area, TERI. She identified the missing links between Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and the prevailing School Curriculum.

Dr Chong Shimray, Associate Professor, Department of Education in Science and Mathematics, NCERT, while concurring with the concerns raised by Ms Kahlon, focused on regional variations that need to be inducted into environmental education.

Ms Shimray said, "We are learning about the environment, but not going much beyond it. Hence it is the responsibility of teachers to convey to the students the message of keeping the environment safe and secure for the present and the future."

Mr Ashish Jain, Director, Indian Pollution Control Association, New Delhi stressed upon the practical components of the education.

Mr Asif Khan Dehlvi, Founder, Karavan, also added to the discussion by highlighting the component of 'familiarity' in classroom teaching enabling students to relate to them.

Mr Rajesh Lalwani, CEO, Scenario Consulting, responding to the questions on use of online media, agreed that the present availability of mobile based apps and video streaming content would go a long way in active involvement of children for a sustainable future.

The speakers mentioned the need to popularize co-environmental issues, the culturalisation of education and the Information Technology tools being a boon for the entire portfolio to move forward.

The seminar focussed the discussion on rethinking education for a transformative change and reached out to the educators from remote locations of Jharkhand and Odisha.

More than 80 participants along with teachers and SPOCs from 7 locations across Jajpur, Jharia, Joda, Khandband, Noamundi, Sukinda, and West Bokaro participated in the event. It included Residential Bridge Course Centres (school for first generation learners), Feeder Model Schools (school for orphans) and ME schools (school for drop outs).