

One day International Seminar on “Global Warming and its impact on Women and Environment” 24.01.2018

Department of Women Studies, Bharathidasan University and Kudumbam, a Non Governmental Organization based at Pudukkottai district jointly organized a one day seminar on Global Warming and its impact on Women and Environment. Kudumbam is also a member of Emmaus International which is made up of 350 member organisations in 37 different countries in Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe.

To deepen the insights of Emmaus communities on Climate change and its impact on the poorest of the poor, 40 participants from 14 countries involved in Sustainable alternatives took part in the alternative tourism initiative through visiting heritage alternatives and people-based sustainable alternatives. Trichy was chosen as a site for the exposure where the participants visited several villages to study the tank irrigation systems, community forests and sustainable alternatives established by ecological farmers, in the neighbourhood of Kolunji ecological farm, Odugampatti at Pudukkottai district, Tamilnadu.



On 24th January 2018, Department of Women's Studies, Bharathidasan University organized jointly the seminar to discuss about Global warming, its impact on Environment and Women, and mitigation strategies. The seminar was inaugurated by Prof. Manishankar, the Vice Chancellor, Bharathidasan University. In his inaugural address, he pointed out the causes of global warming which is predominantly due to human interventions and how our responsible actions could save our earth from more disaster in the years to come. He did caution that if we failed to adapt and mitigate initiatives global warming, the future will be questionable and human will completely deviate from nature. He appreciated the initiatives and mentioned about the green initiatives and a separate committee being constituted to green the campus of Bharathidasan University.

While speaking on his introductory remarks Oswald Quintal, Director, Kudumbam NGO spoke about on how State policies have aggravated the impacts of global warming in agriculture, depletion of natural resources, destruction of shrub forests, bio diversity, agro ecology. On his

specific mention about the impact of chemical farming, he highlighted on how it affected the farm ecology with the disappearance of uncultivated foods which are not only the cheap sources of food for rural communities, but also for their health and nutrition securities. While commenting on the State policies on food production, he pointed out on how unsustainable policies completely neglected nutritious and low water utilizing crops such as millets and pulses in the interest of corporate agriculture model of promoting high solar utilizing and high water intensive crops such as rice and wheat and makes our nation with more people on diabetics in the World.

Prof .Rajamanickam, Vice President of All India People's Science Network has given a special lecture on the impact of global warming on environment. He highlighted the ever increasing status of Green House Gases resulted in the increase of 0.6 C surface temperatures in the last 150 years and the prediction of 3 degree more in the next 100 years which will bring unimaginable impacts on the earth, he cautioned. He also highlighted the source of green house emissions like industries, transport, retrieval of fossil fuel, power generation, agriculture, land use and burning of plastics and bio mass and how these actions are contributing to the environmental effects of Global Warming. Eco friend practices like promotion of organic agriculture, recycling of wastes into valuable manures, non-carbon path energy production systems like hydro/wind/solar/biomass and geo thermal methods could help in cutting down the Co2 emissions to a manageable limit. However, these actions needs solid people's participation and appropriate policy support from the State, he added.



Sharing about the perspective of Emmaus International on Global Warming, Gregorie Chauvear of Emmaus International, France expressed his deep concern on how the poorest of the poor in the World, especially the small farmers, fisher folk communities of Global South are affected very badly and how it widening poverty and exclusion by the decisions made by political powers and decision makers. Moreover, in most countries of these countries, governments have not invested in mitigation measures and reducing the industrial/transport emissions and hence the carbon based energy production remains at its highest, he added.

Depletion of natural resources has largely affected global warming. The capitalistic society has created a gap nature and culture. However, most women in the rural areas are still bound to cultural values due to lack of involvement in decision-making. Women are forced to adapt drought conditions. They walking miles to fetch water, feed cattle and cut firewood are not new images to us, said Prof. N. Manimekalai, Director and Head of the Department of Women Studies, Bharathidasan University. Poverty has women's face and drought, flood and other disasters ending up with poverty necessarily affect the women first and women most, including girl children. The drudgery of attending social reproductive activities spending more and long time during drought and attending the clearing of debries during flood and recover from

the disaster are all on women's head, which eventually take away the productive time available to women to spend on enhancing their skills and capabilities which continues as a vicious cycle where women failed to get equal opportunity to participate in decision making activities. Women's agency must be considered to be part of all the decision making committees, including water, irrigation, drought adaption, and over all village development committee to actively participate and contribute. The notion that women cannot perform or women cannot be disturbed attitude must be given up.

There was also a sharing session in the seminar in which 2 organic farmers – Ms. Usha and Mr. Kalaichelvan, from the target villages of Kudumbam NGO in Pudukkottai districts have shared their practical experiences on how they are handling the climate change situations through a set of organic practices, selection of low water utilizing crops like millets and also redesigning of their farming system from the previous mono cropping to mixed and multiple cropping system which are greatly helping them in reducing the risks in farming and come out successfully in dealing with labour, pest and disease management.

Prof. M. Ravichandran, Prof. Siva Ramakrishanan and Dr.Somasundaram, Members Syndicate participated in the Valedictory and distributed the Certificates. All the participants were provided with minor millet based lunch as part of the initiative to mainstream minor millet.

Dr. N.Murugeswari Professor, and Dr. Suba, Asst Prof, Department of Women's Studies co-ordinated the programme.