



## WEBINAR ON Climate Change, Environmentalism & Covid-19

Addressing the issues of Climate change should be the top priority of humans at this point of time. Global temperature rise, wildfires, draughts and even the destructive hurricanes & tornadoes all happening time to time is because of the swift change in climatic conditions making it the biggest threat to human race.

New Studies suggests there's a relation between the climate change and the deadly viruses which in the recent years are causing destruction and ruining the entire ecosystem.

World Health Organisation in one of its article on *"Climate Change & human health – risks & responses"* suggests –

*"Today, worldwide, there is an apparent increase in many infectious diseases, including some newly-circulating ones (HIV/AIDS, hantavirus, hepatitis C, SARS, etc.). This reflects the combined impacts of rapid demographic, environmental, social, technological and other changes in our ways-of-living. Climate change will also affect infectious disease occurrence"*

Though Environmentalism is simply not equipped to transform the human culture, but it still can have an impact on our thinking. We already know that changes in infectious disease transmission patterns are a likely major consequence of climate change. So maybe, to address this very serious issue of currently ongoing catastrophe due to Covid-19 & many such viruses, Environmentalism is a small but a very impactful solution.

The webinar was organized jointly by City based – Focus Odisha Foundation and Mahashakti Foundation on 24<sup>th</sup> of July 2020. About one hundred participants drawn from a cross section of society and representatives of civil society organizations from across the country participated to present their opinions on the most pressing issues of climate change.

The discussion was started by moderator of the webinar, Mr. Sudarshan Chhotray who is a Sr. journalist having an experience of more than 27 years in the field of journalism. He started by quoting words of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore i.e. “Be the change you want to see in the world” and “We live in a world which we love” respectively. He added that these are unprecedented times the world is going through. He arose a very pertinent question whether climate change has a correlation with Covid-19 pandemic or not and put forward his concerns on exploitation of natural resources.

### Mr. Chandra Bhusan

Mr. Chandra Bhusan - CEO of International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology (IForEST) led the discussion. He said, till date there has been no scientific evidence which could make a correlation between Covid-19 and climate change. He added that the frequency of spread of zoonotic diseases (Ebola, SARS, MERS etc.) has increased drastically in last 20 years and most common cause of the same is increase of human interventions in the wild. According to him there are three prime factors responsible for this problem: deforestation - in which wild animals and humans are coming together, practice of eating exotic animals and intensive animal farms. He specifically illustrated the relation between climate change (warming of planet) and human diseases by stating that, a warming climate will increase the spread of diseases as climate change has a negative impact on human body's potential to fight pathogens. He suggested that a new paradigm of development is the need of the hour where we have to take care of environment and should nurture it. At the end, he explained that climate change will result in planetary implications such as floods, draughts, cyclones etc. and suggested that new environmentalism should be about resilience in economic system and resilience in environmental system.

### Mr. P.K Biswal

Mr. P.K Biswal who is a retired administrator worked in the Indian Administrative Services (IAS) started by raising his concerns on humans exploiting the precious natural resources such as forest, marine, mining etc. He stressed on giving top priority to ecology and environment in public planning. He emphasized to use natural resources in sustainable ways and said that environment planning should be in focus of economic planning. He further added that the air quality index of many metropolitan cities has improved since Covid-19 lockdown inferring human interventions the root cause of increase of air pollution. At the end of his speech he said “Covid-19 pandemic has got a lesson for all of us that whatever policy planning we do, we should introspect with impact on environment.

### Dr. U.C. Mohanty

Dr. U.C. Mohanty who has a rich teaching experience of more than three decades on environment and climate sciences, pointed out that till date there has been no one to one relation between Covid-19 and climate change and stressed on the fact that environmental degradation results to climate change. He further added that climate change is a global issue but measures should be region specific because climate change affects different countries or regions differently. He raised his concerns on irresponsible and less serious behaviour of humans to climate change. He explained the difference between climate variability and climate change and emphasized that micro management of natural

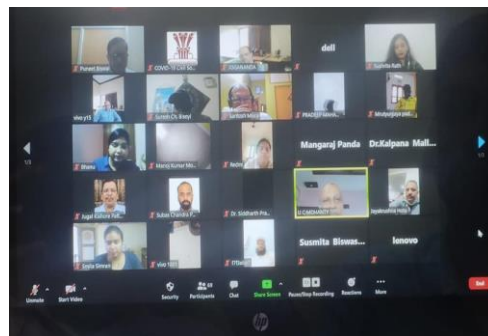
resources is very important to deal issues with climate change. Answering to a question based on the need of climate resilient crops he supported the idea and provided the benefits of cultivating such crops such as drought resilient and salinity resilient.

### Mr. William Stanley

Mr. William Stanley who is a social activist and has devoted his life for protection of community rights and community development shared his practical experiences of ill effects of climate change towards community development. He also shared that he was involved with community managed mini hydro-projects in Koraput district of Odisha and stressed to analyse the dichotomy of different community level development approaches. He further added that it's necessary to study how different communities can manage natural resources through economical sustainable processes. He raised his concerns on migration of different socio-economically backward communities because of climate change and Covid-19 and suggested to relate such migrations and find sustainable ways to tackle the same. He emphasized on scaling up of renewable energy projects and the need to go to the grassroots of community resilience. He stated "we cannot have sustainable policies for unsustainable development." In his concluding statement he focussed on how Panchayati Raj institutions can be empowered and capacitated to strengthen different socio-economically backward communities.

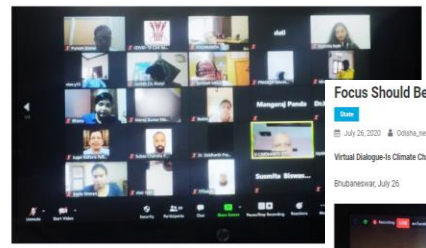
Mr. Sudarshan Chhotray summed up the outcomes and deliberations and Ms. Sushrita Rath proposed vote of thanks to all the participants.

### IMAGE GALLERY



### MEDIA GALLERY

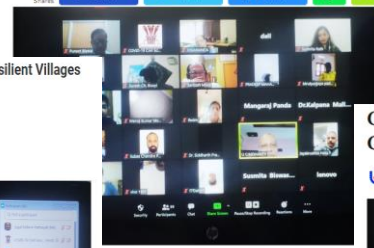
Virtual Dialogue on "Is Climate Change Anything to do With COVID Pandemic?"  
 Pragativedineservice Jul 26, 2020



**Bhubaneswar:** With breakthroughs and new inventions in Medical Science, COVID-19 may be short-lived, but climate change is here to stay. Climate change has been an essential crisis and would pose more severe threat to humankind. "We need to act on it sooner rather than later as climate variability and extreme weather events have become more frequent", said Visi School of Earth, Ocean and Climate Sciences of IIT Bhubaneswar Prof U C Mohanty. All its need is more focus should be on building climate and disaster resilient villages and preparing resilient cities, so that people will survive in future threats like Coronavirus Pandemic, added Prof Mohanty.

**'Focus should be on building climate, disaster resilient villages': Virtual dialogue on climate change**

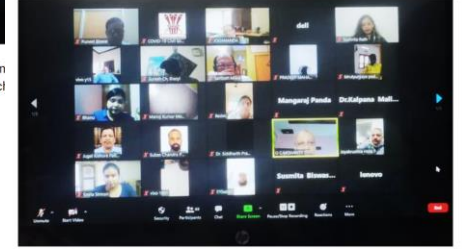
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July 26: With breakthroughs and new inventions COVID-19 may be short-lived, but climate change is here to stay. Climate change has been an essential crisis and would pose more severe threat to humankind. "We need to act on it sooner rather than later as climate variability and extreme weather events have become more frequent", said Visi School of Earth, Ocean and Climate Sciences of IIT Bhubaneswar Prof U C Mohanty. All its need is more focus should be on building climate and disaster resilient villages and preparing resilient cities, so that people will survive in future threats like Coronavirus Pandemic, added Prof Mohanty.

**Climate Change Poses Bigger Threat Than COVID-19, Feel Experts At Webinar**

OB Bureau Jul 26, 2020



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## AGENDA

**Dt.: 24 July 2020**

**Time: 04:00 PM to 05:30PM**

Opening Remarks & Context Setting	Sri Sudarshan Chhotray Senior Journalist Director – Focus Odisha Foundation
Lead Presentation	Sri Chandra Bhushan CEO – International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology (iForest)
Guest Speaker	Sri Pradeep Kumar Biswal Former Special Secretary to GoO, Finance Department State Resource Person: Competition Commission of India
Chief Guest	Prof Dr. U.C Mohanty Visiting Professor – IIT Bhubaneswar School of Earth, Ocean and Climate Sciences
Honoured Guest	Sri Sujeet Kumar Honourable MP Rajya Sabha
Question Answer Session	Open for all
Moderator	Sri Sudarshan Chhotray Sr Journalist Convenor – Migration Watch India Director: Focus Odisha Foundation
Host	Sushrita Rath Strategic Team – Mahashakti Foundation



## PANELISTS:



Mr. Sujeet Kumar

Mr. Kumar is serving the nation, and the state of Odisha, as a Parliamentarian (Member of Rajya Sabha). He earlier served as the Advisor, in the rank of Chief Secretary, to the [Special Development Council](#) of Government of Odisha and as the [Special Secretary of Odisha State Planning Board](#) at very senior policy planning positions. Previously, he has worked at the [World Economic Forum](#) in Geneva, Switzerland, and for the [United Nations Development Program](#).

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Mr. Chandra Bhushan

Mr. Bhushan is an environmentalist and one of India's foremost [Environment and Climate Change Experts](#). He is presently the CEO of [International Forum for Environment, Sustainability & Technology \(iFOREST\)](#). He is an expert member for the BASIC group of countries (that includes - Brazil, South Africa, India, and China) on Climate Change. He was conferred with the [Ozone Award](#) by the [UN Environment](#) in 2017 for his contributions towards the framing of the [Kigali Amendments to the Montreal Protocol](#).

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Prof.(Dr.) U.C Mohanty

Prof. Mohanty after three decades of teaching experience in IIT Delhi, is currently associated with IIT Bhubaneswar as a Visiting Professor in the [School of Earth, Ocean and Climate Sciences](#). He has also served the [DST National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting](#) for more than two years as [Joint Director](#) and [Head of the Research](#).

Prof Mohanty served the [Odisha Bigyan Academy](#) as its President from 2013 to '15. He also served as Vice President of [Indian Meteorological Society \(IMS\)](#) and Senior Associate of [International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy](#).

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Mr. P.K Biswal

Mr. Biswal is a retired IAS who has worked in different key positions in the State Government. He was the [State Nodal Officer](#) of the SDG and has recently retired as a [Special Secretary](#) in [Finance Department](#). Mr. Biswal now works as the [State Resource Person](#) for [Competition Commission of India](#).

## MODERATOR:



Mr. Sudarshan Chhotray

Mr. Chhotray is a Journalist since 1993 who has worked with leading Media houses in the Country. He Started his career with BLITZ Mumbai. And has worked for Humanscape, India Today, Tehelka, India Insight, Outlook and of recently his by-lines are there in Firstpost.com, The Wire, News18 Network & International Publications like The New Humanitarian etc. As a first Generation TV Journalist he has worked in Ajira Odisha, Aankhon Dekhi, Aaj Tak and ETC NEWS.

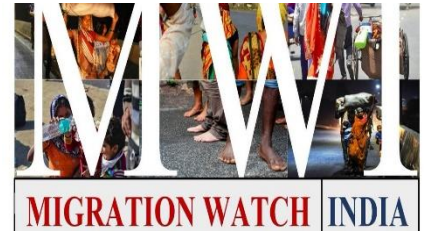
*Organized by*



Focus Odisha Foundation



Mahashakti Foundation



Migration Watch India

Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/3059951718?>

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Live On - <https://www.facebook.com/MahashaktiFoundation/>

