

## Climate change and impact on NE water resources



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Various aspects of impacts of climate change on the water resources of the NE region as well as results from contemporary research relevant to the region and especially the Upper Brahmaputra basin area were in focus in a one day workshop on 'Adapting to Climate Change Impacts on Water in the Upper Brahmaputra basin in Northeast India' that was held at the Shankardev Sabha Kakhya of the Dibrugarh Hanumanbux Surajmal Kanoi (DHSK) College on November 17th, 2012.

The workshop was organised by Aaranyak (Guwahati), premier environmental research and advocacy organisation of India in collaboration with the DHSK College (Dibrugarh) with financial support from the India Water Partnership (New Delhi), according to Press communiqué issued by Aaranyak.

The workshop started with Dr Sanchita Barua, Associate Professor of Department of Zoology of DHSK College welcoming the participants after which Dr. Rajee Konwarh, Principal DHSK College inaugurated the workshop with her inaugural speech.

Dr. Partha J Das, Programme Head of the 'Water, Climate and Hazard Programme' of Aaranyak provided the background and the context of the workshop in his presentation. He informed the audience that this workshop was a part of the three workshop series that Aaranyak is organising for the Global Water Partnership-India on different aspects of water issues of Assam. He revealed that Aaranyak is having plans to collaborate with some educational institutions and civil society organisations of the upper Assam region to promote awareness and research on climate change impact, water induced hazards and water governance.

The technical session began with a presentation of Prof. Chandan Mahanta of IIT-Guwahati. Prof Mahanta elaborated on various aspects of

impacts of climate change on the water resources of the NE region and highlighted various results from contemporary research relevant to the northeast India and especially the Upper Brahmaputra basin area. He also suggested various adaptation measures to be taken up to deal with the changes and impacts triggered by climate change.

Prof. J.N. Sarma of Department of Geology, Dibrugarh University spoke at length on water resources of NE region, focussing on the Brahmaputra basin. Prof. S.P. Biswas, Department of Life Sciences, Dibrugarh University pondered on the impact of climate change on aquatic biodiversity of eastern Brahmaputra basin, in Assam especially on the fish fauna and how peoples' livelihoods are getting affected.

Mr. Rajeev Dutta, District Agriculture Officer of Dibrugarh demonstrated to the audience how the agriculture sector of the region has been affected by erratic rainfall and rising temperature concluding that climate change can also lead to gains in crop productivity on some occasions.

Dr. Tulika Goswami Mahanta, of the Assam Medical College, Dibrugarh illustrated about the proliferation of various vector borne diseases like dengue, malaria, black fever, as well as different water borne diseases as a result of possible impact of climate change.

The post lunch session was dedicated to an open house discussion and interaction with the resource persons on various aspects of climate change impact on the water sector in general and people's lives and livelihoods in particular. Both the resource persons and the participants suggested various strategies of adaptations and coping to the changes and impacts induced by climate change in the eastern Brahmaputra basin region.

Dr. (Mrs.) Arati B. Barua a US based engineer and a columnist in Assamese news paper addressed the audience as a special guest. She dwelt upon a range of issues such as irregular rainfall, increasing river sedimentation to impacts of large river dams which are becoming complicated due to climate change. She emphasised on reviving traditional ways of life to deal with environmental changes. The workshop ended with a vote of thanks by Dr. Partha J Das and Sanchita barua.

**Dr M Firoz Ahmed**  
**Aaranyak**

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editor

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