

Report on “Framing the Climate Change Debate” organized at selected University Campuses across North India



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FRAMING THE CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE

The symposia “Framing the Climate Change Debate” were organised by Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe) in selected University campuses in North India with the host University as a local programme partner. Centre for Environment Education (CEE) as programme partner and Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) as a knowledge partner. Finally inter-university debate competition took place at the American Centre, New Delhi. US Embassy, New Delhi financially supported the programme under the US mission India public diplomacy grants programme.

Programme Partners



Host organizations



Project Team

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IRADe-PR-57A(2018)

Contents

Background	4
Programme goals and objective	5
Summary of the lectures.....	6
Inaugural lectures	7
Lecture on Introduction to Climate Change	11
Lecture on Impact of Climate Change.....	11
Lecture on Climate Change Mitigation	12
Lecture on climate change adaptation	13
Lecture on Climate Change Policy Progress in India	14
Lecture on International Climate Change Policy Framework	14
Selection of students for a debate competition	14
Debate competition at university campuses and award distribution	15
Inter-university debate competition at American Centre, New Delhi.....	18
Role of Universities in hosting conferences.....	19
Project Innovation.....	20
Monitoring and Evaluation	20
Programme sustainability and promotion	21
Annexure 1: Event calendar for Universities	22
Annexure 2: Programme agenda	23
Annexure 3: Sample certificates given to University students participated in debate completion	24
Annexure 4: Sample promotion materials (Banner, Poster, and flyer)	25

Table of figures

Figure 1: Students asking questions to experts delivering lecture at Allahabad University.....	4
Figure 2: Climate courses conducted for students at University campuses.....	6
Figure 3: Chronology of Climate change lecture at University campuses	7
Figure 4: List of dignitaries present at the inaugural events at university campuses	10
Figure 5: Framework of Climate Change lecture	11
Figure 6: Drivers of Climate change discussed in Climate Change impact lecture	12
Figure 7: Energy System (sample only) discussed in climate change mitigation.....	13
Figure 8: Key sectors covered in climate change adaptation lecture.....	13
Figure 9: National Mission on climate change discussed in India policy progress lecture	14
Figure 10: Students participating in written examination to qualify for debate competition	15
Figure 11: Judges evaluating debating students at Allahabad University	15
Figure 12: Student debating at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi.....	17
Figure 13: Student receiving 1 runner certificate at Allahabad University.....	17
Figure 14: Inter University debate competition winner receiving trophy and certificate.....	19
Figure 15: Schematic diagram of the programme	20

Framing the Climate Change Debate

Background

Climate change is a major global concern. It has several disruptive impacts on society and different sectors of the economy including energy, industry, transport, buildings, etc. This will affect people's lifestyles and wellbeing, especially of future generations. It poses a major challenge to today's generation and needs serious human interventions now. On the one hand, it requires response such as increase in energy efficiency and greater use of renewable energy and on the other hand adequate measures to deal with higher intensity and frequency of extreme events, which are already felt today, such as heat stress, sea level rise, floods, droughts, cyclones, storms etc. The enormity of the potential consequences of climate change has been recognized across communities and countries, which is evident by the major international climate conferences and agreements such as UNFCCC, Kyoto protocol (1997) and Paris Agreement (2016) on climate change.

Figure 1: Students asking questions to experts delivering a lecture at Allahabad University



The symposia gave an opportunity to the university students and research scholars from various disciplines to get familiarised with issues at the cross section of climate change science and debate in addition to exercise their leadership, organisational, and public speaking skills. The symposia provided

the students with an opportunity to work together in a collaborative environment. They were assigned several symposium related task such as handling registration desk functions, receiving guest speakers, and the management of events etc. The symposia gave students a platform for interaction with the experts, which is not possible otherwise through the university curriculum. This exposure was motivational and kindled their interest in climate change awareness and research, environment journalism etc.

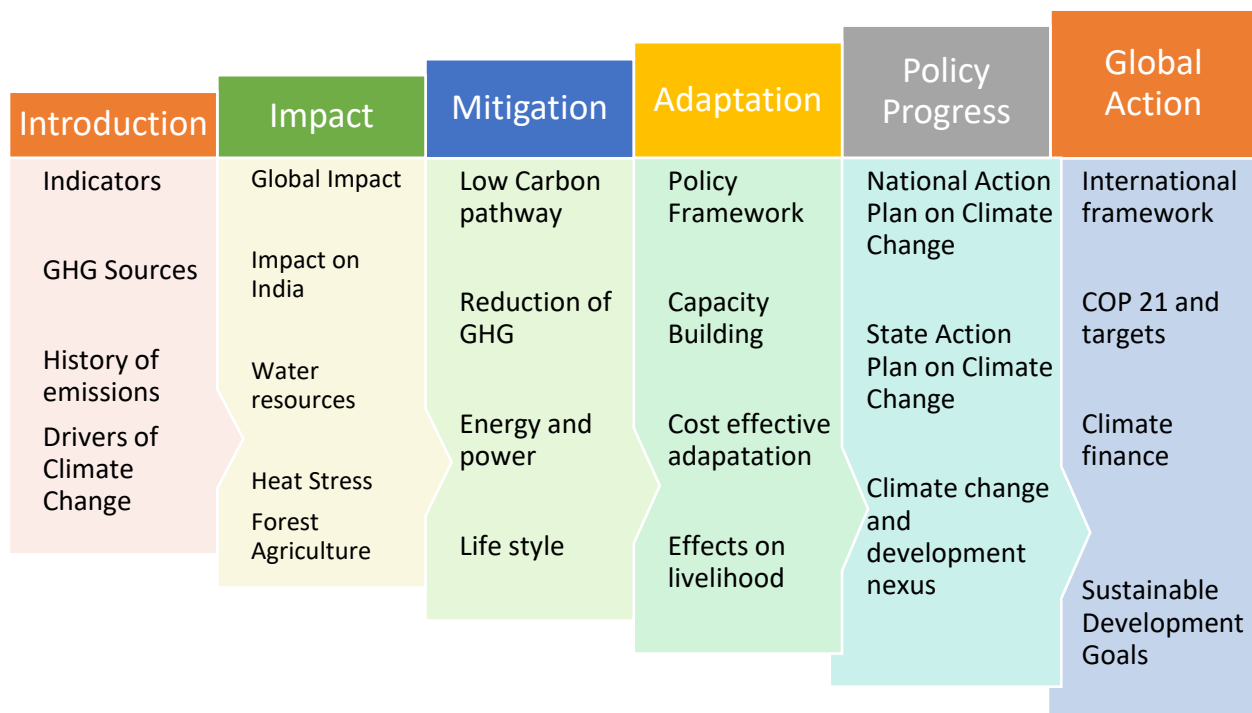
Feedback from the workshop was very positive. Participants saw great value in discussions with the experts, faculties from other universities, and the opportunity to network and to learn from one another, and an opportunity to explore new ideas.

This report provides an overview of the workshop, background information and objectives, a summary of the lectures, debate competitions among the selected university students at the North Indian university campuses, and details of the inter-university debate competition organized at American Centre, New Delhi. For the student's reference, presentations and other support material used could be found on the IRADe website.

Programme goals and objective

Climate change is a multi-disciplinary subject. It covers natural sciences, meteorology, atmospheric sciences and applied sciences such as agriculture, forestry, engineering hydrology, etc. The overall goal of the symposia was to raise awareness and simplify the complex conversations on climate change issues while preparing the young leaders to participate in these discussions in an informed manner. It encouraged the youth to be the torchbearer for climate change awareness mission and research for development alternatives. India has been a key player in global efforts to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of climate change. However, looking at the complexity of the problem and the heterogeneity of Indian society, an intensive method of mass awareness needs to be adopted to combat climate change. The role of society in combating climate change is not all about taking adaptation and mitigating measures, but also raising mass awareness on the severity of climate change. To this aspect, this programme promoted multi-disciplinary climate change knowledge exchanges between climate change educators and students to highlight social, economic, scientific and technical issues related to climate change and environment, including the impact of changing consumption patterns and lifestyle. Each symposium had six lectures on climate change depicted in the schematic diagram below. These lecture series were followed by a debate competition among the selected university students.

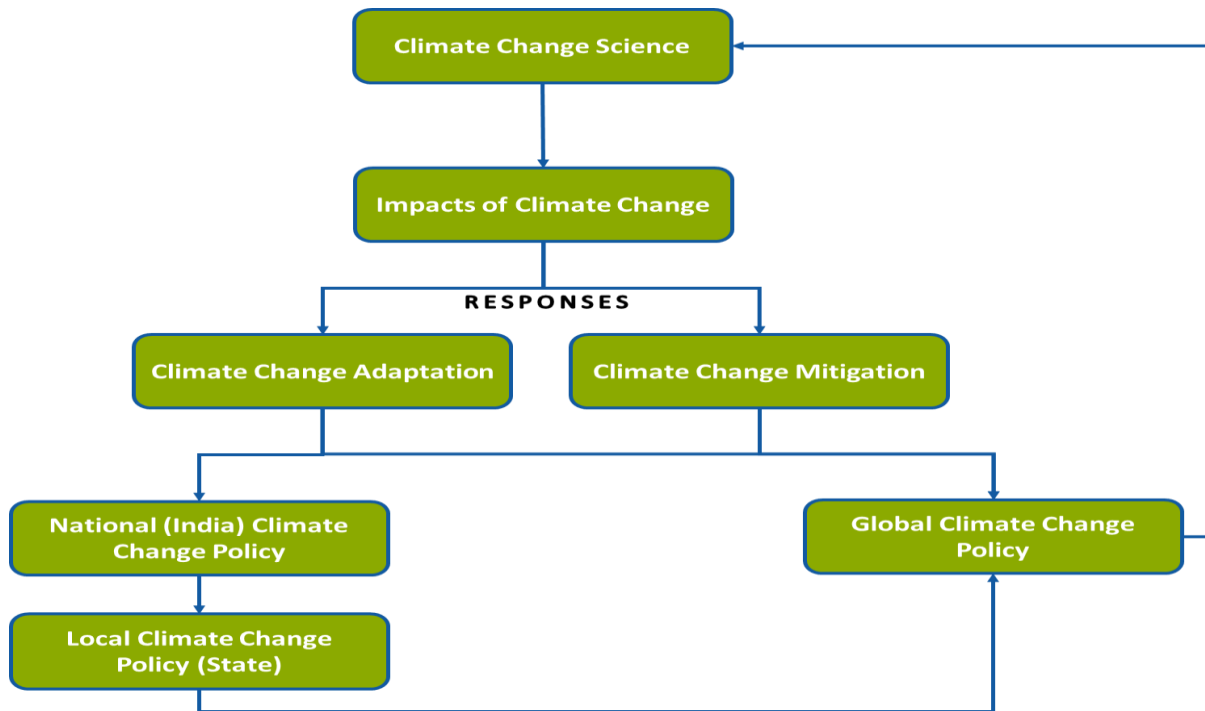
Figure 2: Climate courses conducted for students at University campuses



Summary of the lectures

A key aspect of the Climate Change lecture series was underscoring the inter-disciplinary linkages and foster students interest in the subject. The programme placed a high priority on bringing together faculties and students from diverse discipline in this knowledge exchange and debate on climate change. The lecture series not only familiarized the participants about the climate sciences and its impact but also discussed adaptation and mitigation measures. It discussed important global climate change issues, policies, as well as India's national and state-specific climate change policies. A team of experts leads discussions on each of the six selected topics (see figure 2). The symposia also gave an academic orientation as it made students and faculties aware of the similar programme on other campuses.

Figure 3: Chronology of Climate change lecture at University campuses



Inaugural lectures

The university workshop started with a brief inaugural session with the lighting of the lamp, reciting university anthem or administer other ceremonial event set by University that set the stage for the lecture series programme. Following the inaugural function, university dignitaries and senior most IRADe representative addressed the students, research scholars and faculty member of universities from different departments on the significance of the subject. The programme was organized in eight universities across seven states in northern India (figure 3).

In Kurukshetra University, Dr. Smita Chaudhari, Dean of Environment Science at Kurukshetra University highlighted the key role that youth has to play in addressing climate change. She cited examples of initiatives taken on the campus, like vehicle free day once every week, cleanliness drive, use of solar lights, etc., which both sensitize the students and promote environment friendly behaviour. Dr.Kirit Parikh, Chairman of IRADe, said that climate change is not a futuristic event; we are already experiencing it in the form of extreme weather events. India has been a front-runner in addressing environmental and development issues, which is evident from India’s stand to analyse the links between climate issues and development at the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm Conference in 1972. He explained the progression of climate change negotiations from Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to Paris in 2015 and India’s position of common but differentiated responsibility. Dr. Kailash

Chandra Sharma, Vice Chancellor Kurukshetra University, reiterated the importance of sustainable development. He said industrialisation and socio-economic development had caused environmental damage that now manifests as erratic weather changes. He said that several countries, including India, have implemented legislation to curb the emission of greenhouse gases that cause climate change and stressed the need for the developed countries to take the lead in addressing this issue. Stating that western lifestyle and consumption patterns contribute the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), he emphasized the need to transform people's consumption attitude and behaviour at the individual and national level to effect a low-carbon development. He encouraged individual action for a multiplier effect by reaching out to more people.

At the Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer, Dr. L.K. Sharma, Head, School of Earth Sciences, Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer talked about Paris Conference of Parties. While addressing the students Dr. Kirit Parikh said that though India has so far contributed very little to climate change causes, its vulnerability is high and that the whole world has to come together and take joint action. He said that a majority of scientists agree on the science of climate change. Speaking of India's Climate Change mitigation efforts, he said India has taken lead by announcing ambitious renewable energy targets. Renewable technology requires large funds and it will take time for expansion. Meanwhile, increasing efficiency and sustainability in all our activities will help combat climate change.

At Chandigarh University, Dr. B. S. Sohi, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Chandigarh University talked about environmental hazards in the state of Punjab and cited farmers preference for water-intensive crops leading to depletion of crucial resources. He also drew students' attention to urban issues and the need for sustainable development. Dr. Jyoti Parikh, Executive Director, IRADe, said that we need an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach to address issues of climate change. Stating a few examples of extreme weather events and their impacts, she said that climate change impact is imminent and inevitable. She said we need both adaptation and mitigation strategies to combat climate change.

At Kumaun University, Prof. Ila Bisht, Associate Professor & Campus Head, SSJ Campus, Almora talked about Climate Change and its impacts in the context of the Himalayan region. Underlining the significance of the Himalayan region, the source of perennial rivers of north India, she said the Himalayan region is one of the most fragile ecosystems and has undergone many degenerative ecological changes in past. The melting of the glaciers is causing flooding and landslides as an immediate effect; however, in the long run, this will lead to water shortages. Already, many Himalayan villages are abandoned for non-availability of water, poor agriculture and resource scarcity. Prof. Hema

Joshi, Professor, Department of Botany, Kumaun University S.S.J. Campus, spoke on the trends of global warming and likely impacts from sea level rise, especially in the coastal regions of India. She said that salinity ingress and water contamination are also among the major impacts foreseen which will affect a large part of the population. Dr. Kirit Parikh described how the historic changes in the greenhouse are related to the life on earth, to the natural and the more recent anthropogenic changes, and to the emerging impacts such as global warming.

At Banaras Hindu University, Dr. Kirit Parikh emphasized that the action to address the issues of climate change was not only the government's responsibility, everyone must rise to the occasion and contribute their bit in the best possible manner. Prof. B.D. Tripathi, Coordinator, Centre for Environmental Science & Technology, Banaras Hindu University, talked about lifestyle and its relation with climate change. He also talked about the ancient Indian concept of *panch bhoota* or the five basic elements of survival 1) earth, 2) water, 3) sky, 4) air and 5) fire, and the need to keep them in their purest form.

At Allahabad University, Prof. Avinash Chandra Pandey, Professor, Department of Environmental Science, Centre for Atmospheric and Ocean Science Studies, University of Allahabad said, that climate change action should be supported based on the scientific facts, not on political interests. He encouraged the students to learn about the scientific facts of this issue to have its clear understanding. Dr. Jyoti Parikh talked about the multi-disciplinary nature of climate change.

At Jamia Milia Islamia University, Dr. Talat Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, explained how extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more intense. Discussing the role of carbon dioxide in climate change, Dr. Ahmad said that carbon dioxide was present in the atmosphere since the beginning of time with natural sources and sinks maintaining a balance in its atmospheric concentration. However, due to various anthropogenic activities, more gases are emitted than the capacity of the sink to absorb it resulting in the balance being disturbed. He exhorted students to adopt environmentally sustainable actions.

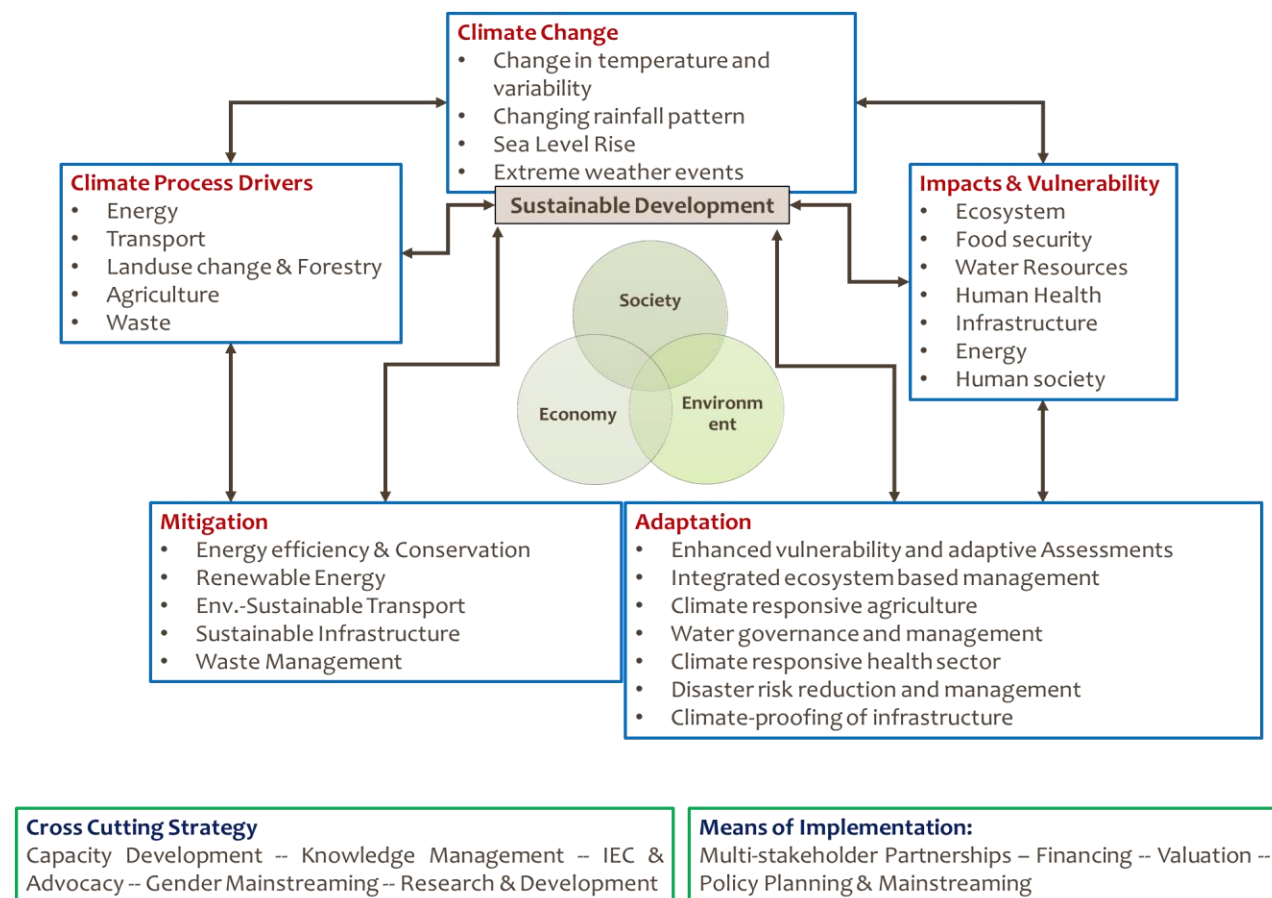
Figure 4: List of dignitaries present at the inaugural events at university campuses



Lecture on Introduction to Climate Change

In the introductory lecture on climate change, students were briefed on different aspects of climate change framework (figure 5). It talked about observed climatic evidence such as a change in minimum/maximum average temperature, erratic weather pattern etc. It also covered climate process drivers, especially the role of greenhouse gases and cross-cutting strategies for capacity development, knowledge management, etc.

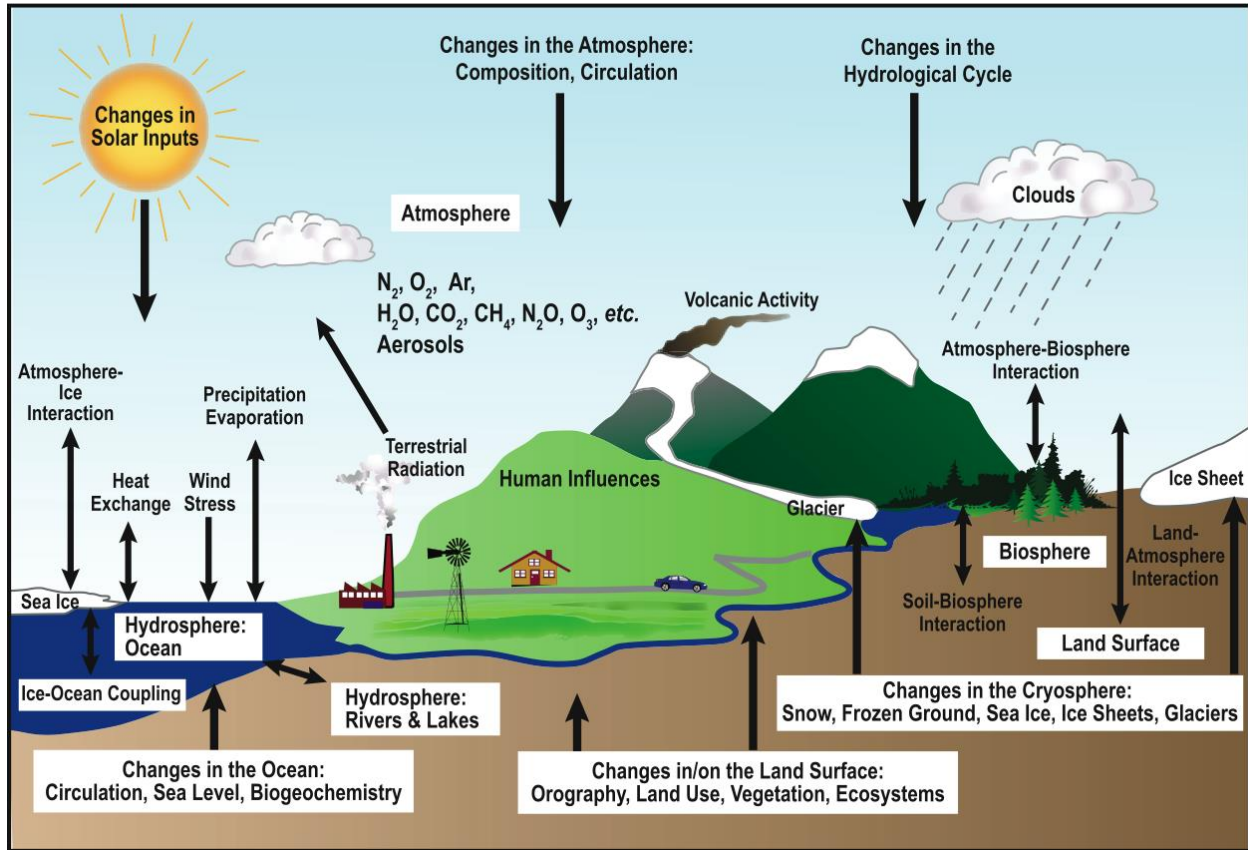
Figure 5: Framework of Climate Change lecture



Lecture on Impact of Climate Change

Lecture on the impact of climate change focused more on climate science (figure 5). It included causes of climate change and climate change impact across the globe. The lecture provided a comprehensive overview of the scientific evidence for climate change. To explain the climate change, it-included trends of weather pattern, change in temperature, and potential impact of global warming such as sea level rise, extreme heat wave etc. The lecture also included an impact on agriculture, forestry, water, health sector etc.

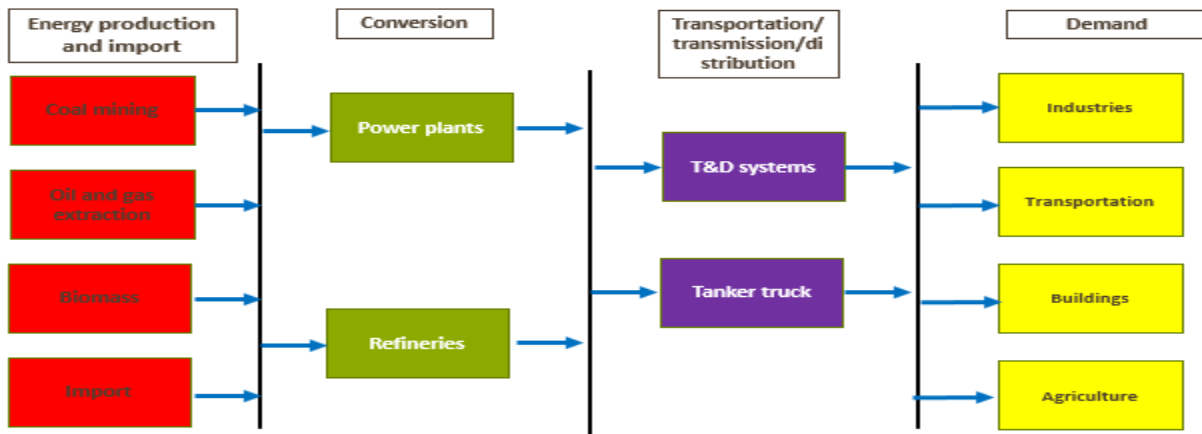
Figure 6: Drivers of Climate change discussed in Climate Change impact lecture



Lecture on Climate Change Mitigation

This lecture informed students about climate-friendly technologies that support economic development and at the same time reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The lecture covered basic concepts of mitigation, sources of emissions, demand-side and supply-side mitigation options (figure 6) pertaining to energy sectors. Further, it explored how the Indian government has led economic growth in a climate-friendly way despite its inherent complexities.

Figure 7: Energy System (sample only) discussed in climate change mitigation



Lecture on climate change adaptation

This lecture provided an overview of Climate Change adaptation concepts, elements of adaptation, India’s adaptation strategies, and the financing options available for adaptation. The lecture also delved on the sectoral approach (figure 8) of climate change adaptation and provided case studies to make the conversation lively.

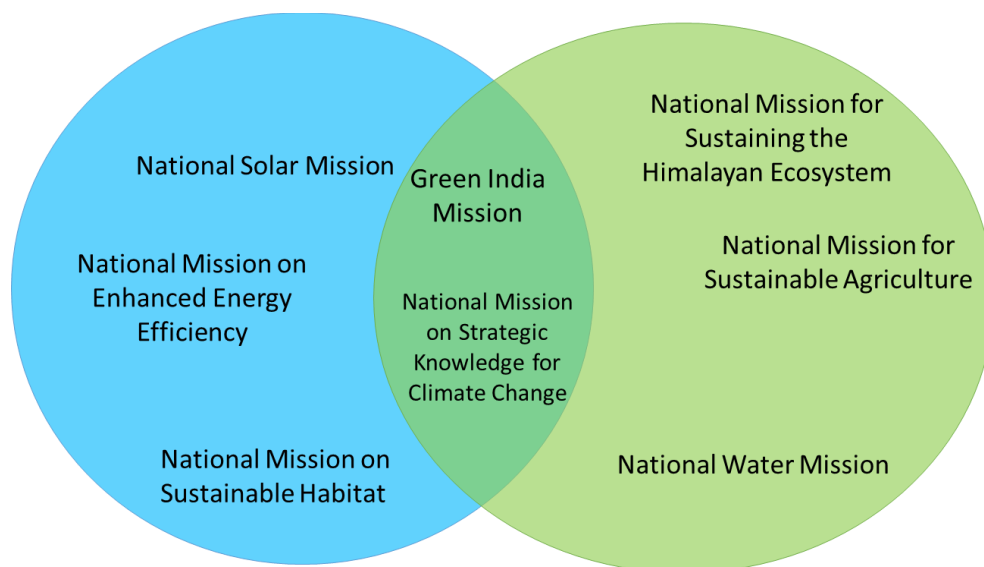
Figure 8: Key sectors covered in the Climate Change adaptation lecture



Lecture on Climate Change Policy Progress in India

The lecture talked in detail about India's eight national missions on climate change (figure 8), State action plan on Climate Change (SAPCC), India's progress on low carbon pathways and India's National Determined Contribution (India- NDC).

Figure 9: National Mission on climate change discussed in the India policy progress lecture



Lecture on International Climate Change Policy Framework

The lecture offered an introduction to the theoretical and practical understanding of global climate issues. It covered how climate change policies were shaped, advocated and implemented. The main aim of the lecture was to provide students with a glimpse of how negotiations take place in the different Conference of Parties (CoP).

Selection of students for a debate competition

As per the project terms, 30 students were selected for debate completion at each university campus. Given the diverse academic backgrounds of the participating students, it was difficult to define a core set of competencies in a form that was amenable to testing. At the same time, we had to ensure that the prior educational background of the students did not hinder their selection for the debate competition. Considering this programme implementation challenge and the overarching programme goal to encourage students from varied disciplines, the questions in the qualifying examination were based on the 2-day lecture series only. This allayed the concerns of students from the non-environmental science background. Written examination comprised 30 multiple-choice questions. From this exam, the top 30 participants were picked up for the debate competition on the third day of the symposium.

Figure 10: Students participating in written examination to qualify for a debate competition



Debate competition at university campuses and award distribution

Selected 30 debaters were organized in three groups of 10 each. Each group was given a statement to debate. The process of debate allowed the participants to analyze the similarities and differences between various viewpoints. To evaluate the students in the debate competition, three judges, one each drawn from the host university faculty, a representative from CEE and IRADe, judged the performances of the students. Senior staff from CEE moderated the debate competition.

Figure 11: Judges evaluating debating students at Allahabad University



For a good debate, a statement or resolution was given to each group, which it could either affirm or negate. Ideally, people will be able to affirm or negate the resolution for a variety of reasons, with many possibilities for constructing sophisticated positions on each side. To this aspect, a group of 10 debaters was further divided into two groups of five each for the motion and five against the motion based on a lottery system. Most students demanded to research the topic that they are debating. Students were given access to the internet for 5 minutes to research and prepare their points on their topic for debate. After announcing the debate topic, permission was given for research. Each debate followed three rounds – opening round, rebuttal round and open floor round. In the opening round, based on their research, debaters presented the arguments in support of their position and each participant was given three minutes to put their thoughts. Next, in the rebuttal round, each participant was given one minute to state his/her rebuttal or counterpoint. Finally, in the open floor round judges or audience were allowed to ask the question of the participants. A total of 10 minutes were assigned for an open floor round for each debating group. Each of the three debate rounds was given equal weight. Based on the performance of the debaters in these three rounds, 2 debaters are selected to qualify for university level final debate competition. The evaluation criteria for the debate was the content and conduct of the participants, argumentation style, etc., in each of the three rounds (opening remarks, rebuttal round, and open floor round). Each round had equal weight, and the judges assigned the scores to participants based on their performance in each round. The debate process was repeated with a new debate topic for each debating group. For the next level, six students were selected from three debating groups of 10 students each.

Figure 12: Student debating at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi



At the final university level debate competition, the same process was followed and a university level winner, the first runner up and second runner up were selected based on their performance. All the other 27 students were given a certificate of participation.

Figure 13: Student receiving certificate at Allahabad University



Inter-university debate competition at American Centre, New Delhi

IRADe with support from the American Center, New Delhi, and CEE, Ahmedabad, organized inter-university debate competition at the American Center. The one-day competition was held on May 29, 2018. A total of eight-university level debate finalists took part in the competition, which was held in the American Centre. The programme raised university youth's awareness about climate change. Students from environmental clubs in Delhi were invited as the audience. The students debated the topic "for developing countries, economic development must take priority over climate action. Yes or no". Students were informed about the topics and were asked to present their views. Students were randomly selected to present their views in favour of motion or against the motion. Each student were given 5 minutes to present his/her view followed by a question-answer session of 5 minutes from the judges or audience participating in the programme.

The judges for the debate competition were Mr. Stewart Davis, Public Diplomacy Officer at North India Office, U.S. Embassy, New Delhi, Dr. Jyoti Parikh, Executive Director of IRADe and a leading expert on climate change, Dr. Kirit Parikh Chairman, IRADe and Dr. Ajit Tyagi President, Indian Meteorological Society. Stewart Davis along with Mr. Chandrashekhar Singh, Senior Research Analyst, IRADe moderated the session. A high dividend was placed on quick thinking and logical, thorough analysis. Based on these criteria, Satvik Patnaik from Banaras Hindu University and Deeksha Kumar from Kurukshetra University were jointly declared as the winner of inter-university debate competition. All the participants were given a participation certificate which was signed by a representative from the US Embassy, New Delhi and IRADe. The certificates carried the logos of the eight north Indian universities and event partners.

Figure 14: Inter-University debate competition winner receiving trophy and certificate



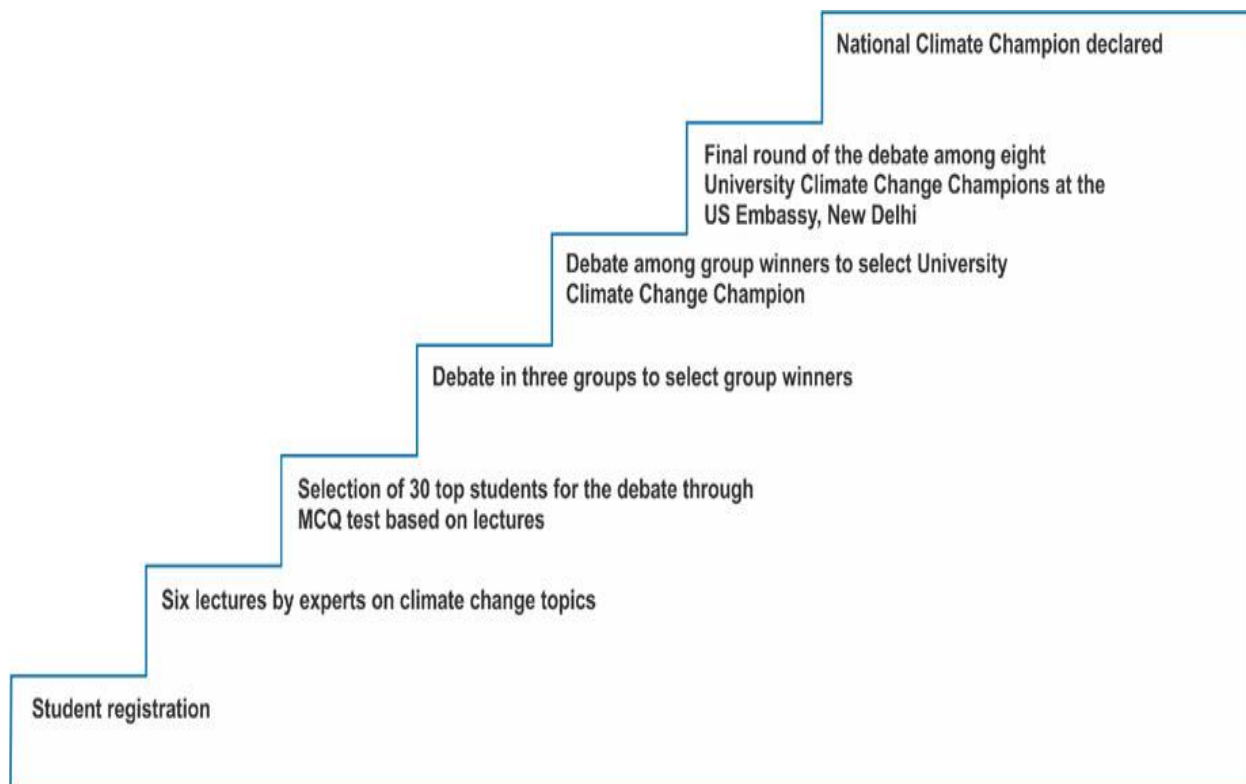
Role of Universities in hosting conferences

For organising these symposia, IRADe created an organisational core group of people to plan, organize and implement it. While IRADe managed overall programme detail and supervision, event publicity, student registration, etc., it received full support from the host universities.

IRADe senior staff visited each of the university campuses 1-2 weeks prior to the event for finalizing the event modalities with the University management which included a meeting with the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean and the faculty members of the coordinating department and research scholars who provided support in organizing the symposium.

The Vice-chancellor and the Dean of organizing department were briefed about the programme and an orientation training was organized for the faculty and research scholars where they were briefed about their role and responsibilities during and in the symposium. Support from the universities was very encouraging throughout. They readily provided all logistic support, seminar hall of appropriate size, car parking, technical help, and audio-visual equipment etc., on a nominal payment basis. Participation of over a hundred students was necessary to make the symposium a success. University support was well recognized in the event's publicity and encouraging the students, research scholars and faculty members for their participation.

Figure 15: Schematic diagram of the programme



Project Innovation

The motivation of this project was to engage students across various disciplines. Ample care was taken to prepare suitable modules for all the students irrespective of their academic backgrounds. The experts for lectures were chosen based on their prior engagements in similar workshops and training. The topics for the debate competition were kept very general in nature. While preparing the debate topics, question sets for the evaluation of the competing students and the lecture delivered by the experts, due consideration was given for a level playing among the students from different academic disciplines. During lectures, experts paid utmost attention that students are not only passive participants in the modules but guided them to use the gained knowledge for climate change. Students were thus kept actively engaged in the event and encouraged to use their learning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The feedback of the participating students was collected and analyzed for each lecture session. Based on their feedback, it was found that the lectures were comprehensible. Detailed examples helped them to form an understanding of climate change issues. The technical terms were simplified and explained.

All the sessions had sound content with supporting facts, figures, numbers, and graphs. The debate format worked well in the given time limit.

The programme facilitated a trans-disciplinary knowledge exchange between climate change experts and university students. The symposium at the university had participation from multiple disciplines.

Programme sustainability and promotion

The project has tremendous sustainable potential in building up knowledge inventory. As a start-up, this project creates a common platform for climate experts and university students, which was otherwise difficult to create through the university curriculum. This exposure was motivational for students to pursue the issues at the heart of climate change in terms of research, organizing awareness programs, environment journalism or taking it down to the community to for awareness. Under this project, the focus was on educating youth on pressing climate change issues while evaluating the status of existing knowledge and identifying the gaps.

Annexure 1: Event calendar for Universities

1. 6-8 April 2018 – Department of Geography, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi
2. 3-5 February 2018 – K. Banerjee Centre of Atmospheric and Ocean Studies, Allahabad University, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh
3. 11-13 November 2017-Department of Sociology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
4. 27-29 October 2017- Department of Geography, H.P.University Shimla, Himachal Pradesh
5. 12-14 October 2017- Botany Department, Kumaun University, Almora, Uttarakhand
6. 5 -7 October 2017-Department of Civil Engineering, Chandigarh University, Punjab
7. 21-23 September- 2017- School of Earth Sciences, Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer, Rajasthan
8. 13-15 September2017- Institute of Environmental Studies, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra, Haryana

Annexure 2: Programme agenda

Framing the Debate on Climate Change to Raise Awareness Programme

DAY 1

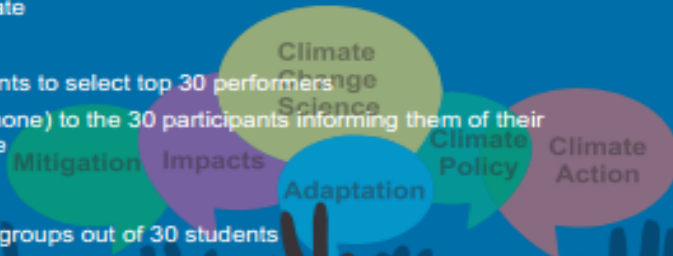
- 9.30 – 10.00 Registration for symposium
- 10.00 – 10.45 Inaugural session
Welcome address by Dr. Laxmi Kant Sharma, Head, Department of Environmental Science, Central University of Rajasthan
Address by Guest of Honour, Prof. Arun K Pujari, Vice-Chancellor, Central University of Rajasthan
Address by Prof. Kirit Parikh, Chairman, Integrated Research and Action for Development
Vote of thanks
- 10.45 – 11.00 Tea/Coffee break
- Lecture Series**
- 11.00 – 12.30 Introduction to Climate Change
- 12.30 – 13.30 Lunch break
- 13.30 – 15.00 Global Action on Climate Change
- 15.00 – 15.30 Tea/Coffee break
- 15.30 – 17.00 Impacts of Climate Change

DAY 2

- Lecture Series**
- 10.00 – 11.30 Mitigation on Climate Change
- 11.30 – 11.45 Tea/Coffee break
- 11.45 – 13.15 Climate Change Adaptation
- 13.15 – 14.15 Lunch break
- 14.15 – 15.45 Policy Progress in India on Climate Change
- 15.45 – 16.00 Briefing about the debate
- 16.00 – 16.15 Tea/Coffee break
- 16.15 – 16.45 Written exam for students to select top 30 performers
Communication (via phone) to the 30 participants informing them of their selection for the debate

DAY 3

- 9.30 – 9.45 Formation of 3 debate groups out of 30 students
- 9.45 – 10.00 Tea/Coffee break
- 10.00 – 11.00 Debate by group 1
- 11.00 – 12.00 Debate by group 2
- 12.00 – 13.00 Debate by group 3
- 13.00 – 14.00 Lunch break
- 14.00 – 14.30 Final debate among group winners
- 14.30 – 15.00 Closing remarks by Jury members; announcement of debate winner
Distribution of certificate of participation to each participant and the winner



Annexure 3: Sample certificates given to University students participated in debate completion



Annexure 4: Sample promotion materials (Banner, Poster, and flyer)



Kurukshetra University, Haryana
13-15 September, 2017



Framing the Debate on Climate Change

Selecting Young Climate Champions 2017/18

Climate Lectures followed by
Debate Competition

5-7 October, 2017
Chandigarh University, Chandigarh



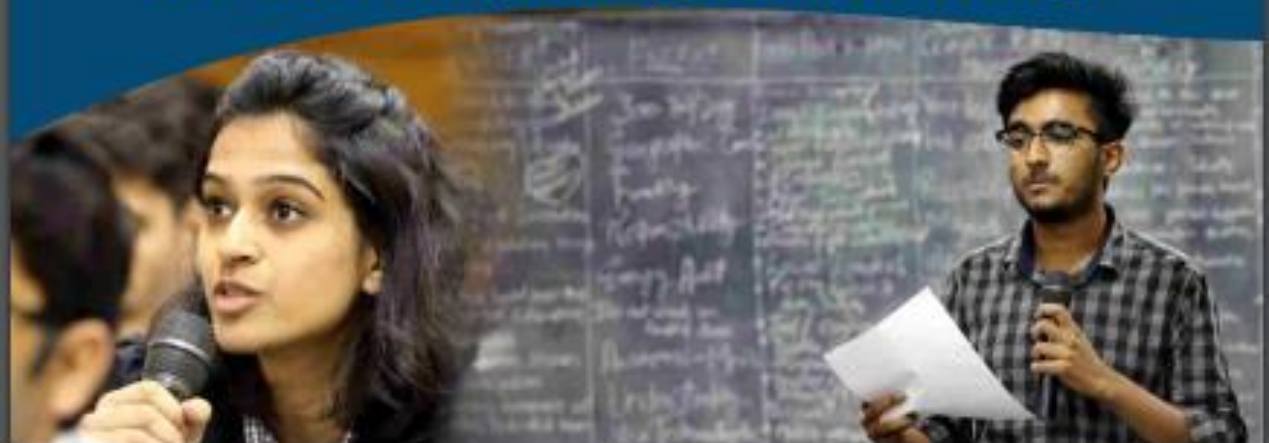
Open to all postgraduate students

Intensive lectures from leading National or
International Experts on Climate Change

Climate Change Debate among top performers

Final Inter-University Debate competition at the U.S. Embassy
in New Delhi and selection of National Champion

For more details and registration log on to <http://www.irade.org/>



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 [facebook.com/chimedeb](https://www.facebook.com/chimedeb)



CEE
Centre for Environment Education

Join the Opportunity to participate in a Climate Change Training cum Awareness Program followed by a Debate Competition. All student participants for the debate will get a certificate of participation.

Schedule

DAY 1 & DAY 2 – Lecture Series on Climate Change

DAY 3 – Debate Competition



Student registration

Organized by

Integrated Research and Action for Development (IRADe) is an autonomous advanced research institute, engaged in various research activities including Climate Change and Environment.

Partners

Natural Resource Defense Council (NRDC) is an environmental action organization based in USA which creates solutions for lasting environmental change, protecting natural resources across the Globe.

Centre for Environment Education (CEE) is an internationally acclaimed institution with its programmes focused on Environment Education and Education for Sustainable Development. www.ceeindia.org

Framing the Debate on Climate Change

Selecting Young Climate Champions 2017/18

A Debate Competition

Open to all postgraduate students

Lectures by Eminent Climate Change experts

A National champion to be rewarded at the U. S. Embassy in New Delhi

For more details and registration log on to <http://www.irade.org/>



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 <https://www.facebook.com/Framing-the-Debate-on-Climate-Change-1442872872461866/>

