

CEED launched a network on health and air pollution for the Indo-Gangetic region

Deteriorating air quality is a risk to public health in Bihar

Patna, 27 November 2018: Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED), in collaboration with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS – Patna), organized ‘**Safeguarding Life from Air Pollution**’ with the active participation of distinguished doctors, including pulmonologists, cardiologists, nephrologists, dermatologists, orthopedists, among others. A health network was launched in Patna to bring together medical practitioners, CSOs, academicians, civil societies and other key stakeholders on one platform with the aim to increase awareness on the public health impact of air pollution. The conference was inaugurated by Hon’ble Health Minister of Bihar, Shri Mangal Pandey in the gracious presence of Dr Ashok Ghosh, Chairman, Bihar State Pollution Control Board and Dr Sahajanand Singh, President–Indian Medical Association (Bihar). The aim of the dialogue was to further strengthen the debate on air pollution in the Indo-Gangetic region and also address the need to highlight the health concerns for air pollution control.

The Chief Guest of the event, Bihar’s Honourable Health Minister Shri Mangal Pandey during his keynote address said, “Public health concerns require special attention when we speak of air pollution control. We understand that Bihar is one of the third most affected states in India in terms of mortality because of rising air pollution as per the Lancet Commission report. Our department understands the urgency of the situation and is also willing to take steps to reduce the health impact caused by deteriorating air quality. We have prioritised it for collaborative and real action and are also looking into gaps that need to be addressed urgently.”

Mr Ramapati Kumar, CEO, CEED in his welcome address pointed out the need for stronger and more integrated actions to deal with the threat of air pollution on public health in the Indo-Gangetic region. He said, “Looking at the deplorable situation of air quality in the urban landscape of the Indo-Gangetic states including Bihar, we need to develop a strong framework for the integration of public health information into policy development. Also, there is a lack of pertinent research and relevant data in the public domain in terms of air pollution impact on health. In order to develop a better understanding of the Air Quality Index (AQI) and the preventive measures for air pollution, we need to develop coordination among the government, medical practitioners and academicians. Through today’s dialogue, we aim to compile scattered health information available in plenty and to encourage the use of this data in framing air pollution control policies.”

The Guest of Honour, Dr Ashok Ghosh, Chairman, Bihar State Pollution Control Board, said, “CEED's effort to develop a health network on air pollution control is commendable and is truly a step taken in the right direction, which will defi-

nitely foster positive engagement. Today's dialogue has provided an opportunity for us to develop effective air pollution management strategies. The need of the hour is to encourage experts to conduct health studies on air pollution and to monitor health impacts on a regular basis. For this, we are working on developing a robust air quality monitoring system in the state. Also, we understand the need to develop a public information system based on daily air quality and the issuance of health advisories accordingly."

The expert forum during a moderated session discussed ways to improve health information on air pollution. The expert panel recommended a coordinated approach to control air pollution to be implemented as early as possible.

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