

PRESS RELEASE

Better pollution data: A necessary pre-requisite for abatement of air pollution

CEED organized experts' roundtable to develop plans for better air pollution monitoring

Patna, March 9, 2018: The Centre for Environment and Energy Development (CEED) organized a roundtable on 'Towards Better Monitoring and Public Access to Air Quality Data' in the city today with an aim to discuss plans to improve data monitoring and its public access for effective air pollution abatement. The roundtable also explored the emerging air quality monitoring technology and how it should be integrated into the existing air quality monitoring mechanism to inform policy formulation for a clean air action plan. The event was inaugurated by Smt. Sita Sahu, Mayor of Patna, who was the Chief Guest and was well-attended by various experts including government officials, civil societies' representatives, air pollution and health experts, senior lawyers, leading academicians, among others. The roundtable provided a notable opportunity to foster knowledge exchange between the participants.

While presiding over the roundtable, Smt. Sita Sahu, Mayor, Patna appreciated CEED's initiative to organize a discussion on air quality monitoring and its public access for combating pollution. Elaborating on the initiatives taken by the Patna Municipal Corporation on air pollution abatement, she said, "Patna Municipal Corporation intends to accelerate its efforts to reduce air pollution in urban areas by regulating the open burning of solid wastes and better management of sweeping of road dust." She added, "In the coming days, the administration will increase its efforts to improve air quality in the city by taking on other polluting sources, as informed by monitoring of air quality."

One of the key points that emerged out of the discussion was the lack of adequate air quality monitoring stations in Patna due to which it is difficult to come up with concrete solutions to reduce pollution. The discussion also preferred real-time monitoring stations to a network of manual monitors since real-time monitoring provides continuous monitoring. Besides they are also unbiased and are able to identify episodic air pollution days. The representatives of several institutions present at the discussion also emphasized the need for regular release of health advisories.

Mr. Abhishek Pratap, Program Director of CEED said, "We welcome and appreciate the recent announcement made by the Bihar Government to increase the number of real-time air quality monitoring stations in Patna and also urge the government

to make a similar announcement for other major cities of the state like Gaya, Bhagalpur, and Muzaffarpur. This will help understand the transboundary movement of air pollutants on a specific city's airfield." "For an appropriate management plan to improve the air quality in Patna or any other city, we first need to figure out the sources of pollution in a scientific manner. It is only through effective and continuous monitoring that we will be able to achieve this. Improved and effective air monitoring also helps in estimating the exposure and health effects on citizens due to air pollution.", he concluded.

Experts at the roundtable stressed on a collaborative approach for air quality monitoring and explored its challenges and opportunities during the open house discussion. The roundtable also helped identify the potential coordination opportunities among the stakeholders. CEED urges the government to formulate a Comprehensive Clean Air Action plan for Patna and would also request to improve the air quality monitoring in other polluted cities of Bihar.

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