



Environmental studies in engineering curriculum are the need of the hour, says Dr. G D Agrawal

Description



From left to right: Arvind MAK, Dr. M Arunachalam, Dr. G D Agrawal, Dr. Vandana Gupta and Avigal

In the efforts to use media for creating awareness, the Department of Electronic Media and Mass Communication, Pondicherry University, has taken up an initiative â??Earth Mattersâ??. It organized a documentary film screening at SOM auditorium, on 31st January from 2.30 pm to 5 pm. Two documentary films,â??Run of the Riversâ?? and â??That Fired Soulâ?? by filmmaker Aravind MAK were screened.



G D Agrawal, speaks about the importance of environmental studies

The film Run of the Rivers is a documentary highlighting the Himalayan floods and the resistance of the local people towards Hydropower dams. In a panel discussion on Hydropower Dams and Energy in India, following the screening, special guest Dr. G D Agrawal, activist and environmental engineer emphasized that engineering curriculum across the country must include environmental flow as part of syllabus. He spoke passionately about how it is the responsibility of an engineer to stop a poorly planned project if it affects the ecosystem. He criticized the use of the term "Run of the Rivers" for hydropower dams, because such projects lead to the death of the rivers.

Dr. Vandana Gupta, an activist from Sri Aurobindo International Institute for Integral Health and Research (SAIIHR), urged the public to become more aware of the environment and do whatever is possible to conserve it. Also present among the discussants were Dr. M Arunachalam, Head of Department of Environmental Science, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli and Avigal, an Israeli filmmaker. Dr. M Arunachalam strongly advocated against using obsolete technologies to build power plants in the country. He also spoke about the harmful effects of shrimp farms in the coastal area created by clearing the mangroves which serve as a barrier for mainland against invasion of sea water. Avigal said that films like Run of the Rivers with such strong social messages should be encouraged and taken to the masses.

Aravind MAK, the filmmaker and alumni of Loyala College is also a fellow of the South Asian Free Media (a body of SAARC), shared his experiences while filming and expressed his gratitude to all those who have been a part of the film. The other film, "That Fired Soul" is his first documentary film which focused on Krishnammal, a Gandhian fighting for land rights of the marginalized.

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