



LAND ECONOMICS SOCIETY
AUM LAI CHAPTER, PUNE | MAHARASHTRA, INDIA

| Registered Trust No. MAHA 307/2013/Pune | PAN No. AAETA4633R |
| No. PN/CIT(Exemp.)/Tech/12AA/PuneRg/398/393/2016-17/3913 | No. PN/CIT(Exempt.)/Tech/80G/454/2016-17/4113 |

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON SECURING WATER FOR FOOD, ENERGY&ENVIRONMENT

9th September, 2023

The AUM LAI Chapter, Pune held the Seminar on Securing Water for Food, Energy & Environment on 9th September, 2023 in Pune at the Swami Vivekananda Auditorium of MIT WPU World Peace University who played co hosts for the event.

Mr Anil Hatkar, President AUM LAI Chapter, Pune along with Vice Chancellor of MIT WPU Dr R. M Chitnis and Chief Guest Dr Sanjay Chahande inaugurated the seminar by the traditional lighting of the lamp and were accompanied by Vice President AUM LAI Prakash Patil, AUM LAI executive committee members and other eminent speakers present on the dais.

The guest speakers were felicitated by AUM LAI President and committee members with mementos and MIT WPU also felicitated President AUM LAI along with the speakers.

Anil Hatkar President AUM LAI addressed the august gathering by stating that “the subject being discussed here today, has a Global recognition as The WEF NEXUS – Securing Water for Food, Energy & Environment and its relevance emerging for learning. In current times, the laws of life coupled with technologies are rotating around water, food & energy with many nuances. It is a tool for sustainable progress. India is a Global leader in biofuels technology & plants, compressed biogas (CBG) and has an inarguable future for Economic Development in these fields. Coincidentally the 18th G 20 Summit is addressing this very issue since it has many Global challenges for environment and climate sustainability but not limited only to these two.

In this modern era of Artificial Intelligence AI and Machine Learning ML and with tools such as ChatGPT you are in a position to lay your hands on a wide array of opportunities. However, you also need to explore your passion of work and select your stream of interest. Hopefully you have some strong takeaways from today`s sessions.

As India celebrates 76 years of Independence, I am charged with resilient hope that technology leadership, innovation & organizational strategy can accelerate the growth through case studies shared by our International fraternity to develop synergies. “

A number of sessions were designed for the day and divided into three sessions. The first session covered the WEF Nexus approach with a focus on Water & Energy. The second and third session covered Food and Water Sustainability touching upon Climate change respectively. These sessions threw light on Macroeconomics on a larger scale covering regional, national, continental & global perspectives in terms of fiscal, monetary and supply side policies.

It began with the keynote address by Dr Sanjay Chahande who shared his insights on The Challenges of Water resources regulations in the state of Maharashtra.

Dr Tushaar Shah economist and public policy specialist, Emeritus Scientist of the International Water Management Institute, Colombo and Professor Emeritus of the Institute of Rural Management Anand gave a Global Review on the Precept and Practice on the Water-Food-Energy (WEF) Nexus.

The WEF Nexus approach for sustainable Management of Groundwater in India was explained by Dr Himanshu Kulkarni.

An introduction to the future of Bio Energy in India was given by Dr Ravindra Utgikar from Praj Industries.

The second session began with the Mr Shekhar Gaikwad explaining the Political Economy of Sugar Industry in Maharashtra.

Mr Rajendra Holani & Dr Rajendrakumar Saraf recipient of the prestigious Jal Mitra Puraskar and author of two books Pani Apli Jeevan Dhara & Vision on Pollution covered the topic of Water Management in the Urban Sector.

The challenges and achievements in the Use and Upscaling of Solar Energy in Maharashtra was detailed by Mr Pankaj Tagalpallewar Deputy Director of Maharashtra Energy Development Agency (MEDA)

The concluding session covered the ways of Achieving Water Security for Food explained by Dr Suresh Kulkarni

Dr Nitin Bassi, IAS Senior Programme Lead Sustainable Water Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) New Delhi spoke on the Advances and Reuse of Treated Wastewater in India. Narendra Chugh shared his views on the Best Practices of Climate Resilient Cities.

Dr Chandrahas Deshpande member AUM LAI Chapter Pune gave the Vote of Thanks. He expressed gratitude to Prof Dr Vishwanath Karad & Dr R M Chitnis – Vice Chancellor, MIT WPU World Peace University for facilitating the entire event. He also thanked our industry supporters Surendra Sanas in particular, Fluxcon Infratek Pvt Ltd, Sarametal Castings, CREDAI Pune Metro.

It was a very exciting and learning experience amidst gathered eminent experts in the field of water energy food and environment. The final session on “*The Best practices of Climate resilient cities*” was followed by question-and-answer session, questions posed by audience specially the young students gave the impression that they were very involved and attentive to the entire duration of conference. It was indeed an insight into young ignited minds of college students present for the National conference.

In the opening session the speakers brought into focus the issue of ground water use for agriculture and energy nexus. Due to falling ground water levels the energy consumption graph keeps rising. Questions of great importance were flagged.

1. a. Role and relationship of solar energy availability and ground water extraction.
b. Will Availability of cheap solar power further push down the already depleted and lowered ground water levels, or reliable availability of power will in fact stabilize and rationalize the ground water extraction.
2. Since ethanol production which is currently at 430 crore litres in our country out of which 84 percent comes from sugarcane and only 16 percent from other food crops this production has to go up to 1100 crore litres in order to meet the target of 20 percent mixing with petrol by 2025. How feasible will it be to grow sugarcane which is water intensive, using petroleum-based fertilizers and energy produced by coal. It is a matter of research to study this complex issue.
3. Sugarcane production is a very important crop for Maharashtra state as more than 1 crore farmers depend on this crop. It gives direct employment to more than 40 lakhs sugarcane cutters, more than 40 lakhs people working in sugar factories and allied ancillary industries, transporters as well as indirect dealers and wholesalers of sugar. In face of such employment generating crop, question posed was whether such water guzzling crop be taken in areas which are water deficit and at intervals create drought like situations in certain geographies specially areas like Marathwada. Is there another crop which would yield similar or more income to farmers which will be suitable to water deficit areas. Can cropping patterns be aligned to the rain pattern.
4. On the issue of climate resilient cities example of Pune city was cited. Attention was brought to the fact that in spite of two important studies named as
 - a) Resilient Pune, preliminary resilience assessment study
 - b) Road map for Mainstreaming nature for a climate resilient Pune done by WWF

In both the studies it was pointed out that river is the most important fresh water resource and ecological service provider for the city and to protect the river utmost care be exercised in ensuring not to disturb the riparian relationship of soil and river water. Moreover, the flood plains be protected.

However overlooking the expensive experts' reports generated by the Pune municipal itself and not following the recommendations within the Pune municipal corporation is implementing a disastrous River Front Development project reducing the width and consequently potentially exposing the city to extreme flood events in the future.

It is within the River bed through which the metro rail corridor passes further reducing the water carrying capacity of River and creating potentially flood like situations.



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These were some of the highlights of a very important and exciting programme that was successfully carried out by AUM LAI Chapter, Pune team under the leadership of Mr. Anil Hatkar.

The purpose of holding the seminar in an educational institution gave AUM LAI Chapter multiple advantages. The most important aspect was that LAI got visibility in the next generation the young and aspiring students were made aware of the universally important subjects for sustainability in Climate Change on the one hand and on the other for necessities vis-à-vis luxuries through securing Water Food and Energy for eco-friendly environment. The August gathering with Government officials, NGO's, Bureaucrats, Academics in attendance was the silver lining with an over whelming response from citizens.

It was confirmed and agreed by the members that many such conferences must be held by AUM Chapter as they deserve their expertise in the field in association with LAI Global Initiatives. The coverage post the seminar was extensive and covered by the print and digital media which endorsed the success of the conference.

Anilkumar Hatkar
President