



Rural India

Achieving Millennium Development Goals and Grassroots Development

POST-CONFERENCE NEWSLETTER

Hyderabad, November 10-12, 2005



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Minister for Agriculture N Raghuvendra Reddy lighting the lamp to mark the inauguration of the conference

Hyderabad, Nov 10-12: The third international conference on Rural India – Achieving millennium development goals and grassroots development, was a huge success in sensitising the governments, administrators, industry and the academia towards rural well-being and development, achieving millennium development goals and grass roots development and in obtaining an assurance from the government of Andhra Pradesh for setting up an earthcare policy institute.

The conference, organized from 10-12 November, 2005 at the Marri Chenna Reddy HRD Institute, Hyderabad, touched upon several economic, social and technological issues that impact rural India through scores of presentations, lectures and debates.

About three hundred delegates attended the three-day conference organized by the Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation of New Delhi and Hyderabad based Sahanav, NGOs working for sustainable development and earth care in association with the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

RURAL STRENGTH: Participating in the well-attended inaugural ceremony, Minister for Agriculture N Raghuvendra Reddy stressed on the importance of rural India and exhorted that rural India will remain the strength irrespective of giant technological strides and growing urban sprawl.

Dr KV Sundaram, Chairman, Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation, enumerated the significance of the event and hoped that the conference will judiciously dis-

cuss the successes and failures in development planning after independence and chart out practical and workable plans for the future.

Several thought-provoking talks by eminent speakers enriched the conference in the technical and plenary sessions on all the days.

The second day's proceedings saw the involvement of the state government in a big way. With the initiative and active participation of **K Raju**, Principal Secretary to Government (RD), PR & RD Department, several bureaucrats working for various organizations /initiatives like SERP, CEC, APSACS, Centre for Dalit Studies, DFID, CESS and NGOs like MV Foundation, AP Social Watch and Centre for World Solidarity participated and debated on various issues ranging from poverty, hunger, health, education and gender with respect to achieving millennium development goals by 2015.

DIGITAL DIVIDE: The plenary session on the third day had a distinguished guest in **Dr MV Rajasekharan**, Union Minister of State for Planning, Planning Commission, who chaired the session and gave away his valuable comments saying that the digital divide between India and Bharat should be bridged at the earliest. Eminent speakers like Dr RB Singh, Member, National Commission on Farmers, Dr GK Chadha, Member, Economic Advisory Council to

Prime Minister, Dr JNL Srivastava, former secretary to GoI and presently, trustee of IFFCO Foundation and Prof T Karunakaran, VC, Gandhigram Rural University gave away their valuable observations, suggestions and comments on the feasibility of achieving millennium development goals in the context of rural India, the dwindling investments in agriculture and how to save small farmers from an impending debt trap.

Technical sessions on the third day of the conference touched upon fostering agricultural growth, poverty reduction and sustainable resource use, reduction of spatial disparities and creation of employment, role of technology for sustainable development, creating digital opportunities and managing natu-

ral resources for rural prosperity. While Dr N Vijayaditya chaired the session on creating digital opportunities, Prof K Kannan took the lead in conducting the session on management of natural resources for rural prosperity.

EARTHCARE INSTITUTE: **Ponnala Lakshmaiah**, Minister for Major Irrigation, Government of Andhra Pradesh, who was the chief guest for the valedictory, said the AP government is ready to set up an earthcare policy institute and requested all the experts, NGOs and academicians who participated in the conference to come up with a concrete proposal to set up the institute in the state.

The minister said Andhra Pradesh government has the best ever policy for rehabilita-

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Minister for Major Irrigation Ponnala Lakshmaiah speaking at the valedictory

Wipe out poverty, not the poor

Hyderabad, Nov 11: Criticizing the state government, particularly the previous Chandrababu Naidu government, for its failure to achieve the targets set in the Vision 2020 document, CEC Director **K.S. Gopal** found fault with international and national agencies for their failure to discuss the contents of MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) set by UNDP. He remarked that MDGs will address problems of institutions like the World Bank and DFID only, and not of the poor. He termed MDGs as bogus and not relevant. He opined that if the State religiously followed the Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution, the country could have achieved MDGs long ago.

Speaking at the session 'Poverty and hunger' on the second day of the conference, the CEC



(from left to right) Mallepally Laxmaiah, KS Gopal, K Raju and T Vijay Kumar at the session Poverty and Hunger

director expressed concern at the 800 million people who are still struggling for a square meal even after 58 years of independence. In Andhra Pradesh alone, about 30 per cent of chil-

dren have low birth weight and 63 per cent children are malnourished in spite of fact that the state remains the rice bowl of the country. He, however, appreciated the present state

government headed by YS Rajasekhara Reddy, for giving top priority to agriculture and irrigation sectors.

As Gopal puts it, programmes like food-for-work and mid-day meal scheme are being implemented across the country merely due to the intervention of the judiciary. In fact, governments are reluctant to implement the above said programmes that benefit the poor.

Mallepally Laxmaiah of the Centre for Dalit Studies pointed out that the failure of several government programmes is due to non-involvement of Dalits. Even in MDGs, to serious thought was given on Dalit sections. Besides, funding agencies like banks are still supporting the rich and not the poor. Goals

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Village renewal is the need of the hour



Dr KV Sundaram

Hyderabad, Nov 10: He dreams of a dynamic, self-sustaining rural India and has several strategies to make that dream come true. Dr KV Sundaram, Chairman, Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation, a natural and practical administrator par excellence, has several plans to make rural India a

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'Rural India is the strength of the country'

Hyderabad, Nov 10: Rural India was and will remain the strength of the country irrespective of the speed at which urban areas are growing in the country, exhorted Minister for Agriculture **N Raghuvveera Reddy**.

Inaugurating the third International Conference on Rural India - achieving millennium development goals and grassroots development - at The Marri Chenna Reddy HRD Institute here, Raghuvveera Reddy lamented that the contribution of agriculture to the country's GDP has decreased from 59% (1947) to 24% today. But 57% of the workforce in the country still depends on agriculture and it is necessary to enhance their skills if we wish to improve agricultural productivity.

Several innovative programmes taken up by the



State government - Rajiv Pallebata, Jalayagnam, Rajiv Yuvashakti - all aim at finding solutions to the problems of rural India and empower the rural populace, the minister said.



(left to right) Prof IV Murali Krishna, Dr KV Sundaram, N Raghuvveera Reddy, M Moni and P Chandrasekhar Reddy releasing the souvenir at the inaugural

At this juncture, it is very important to save and reuse every drop of rain water, Raghuvveera Reddy said and added that government is taking up micro irrigation programmes to save ground water. As part of this initiative, the government is extending the drip irrigation facility to one lakh hectares in the state this year, he said.

The government has taken up the model village concept and it aims for saturation in rural infrastructure. The programme aims at pooling up resources and providing drainage, toilets, safe drinking water, approach roads, school with a building and

teachers, electricity for every house etc. The yet to be named



programme will be 100% open and will involve villagers in deciding on the priority amenities they need in their village. The

government plans to pick up remote and under developed villages for this programme, the minister added.

All the efforts of the state government in the next three and half years would be to make rural India dynamic, the minister asserted. The minister requested the experts and NGOs participating in the conference to come up with solutions and guide the government to empower rural India.

Talking about the significance of the conference, **Dr K V Sundaram**, Chairman of Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation

(BVF), said mere linear expansion of plan outlays alone cannot ensure socio-economic change and it has to go beyond outlays to 'outcomes'. For this, he said, we need to adopt a holistic and integrated approach, involving the interplay of policy, strategy, planning and programming design, adopting the effective means and methods of implementation with people's participation. This calls for a huge task of promoting social engineering through rural renaissance movement, he said.

Prof IV Murali Krishna,



president, local chapter, BVF, welcomed the guests. Presenting the vote of thanks, **M. Moni**, secretary general, BVF, said rural India is being interpreted by different people in different ways. Rural India needs a holistic approach and a commitment from one and all. P Chandrasekhar Reddy, president, Sahanav, was present on the occasion.

Wipe out poverty, not the poor

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can be achieved only if government resources reach the needy, he remarked.

T Vijay Kumar, CEO, Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP), in his presentation, claimed that the state government has charted out a four dimensional strategy to eradicate poverty. Food security to the poor is the primary concern for SERP, and ensures that the existing source of income of the rural poor is stabilised and diversified. Reducing expenditure, risk management and increasing employment are its other concerns. SERP has developed a three pronged strategy to achieve food security for the poor, he added.

Participating in the interactive

session, PEN Chairman S.A. Rahim remarked that agencies like DFID are trying to 'wipe out' the poor and depriving them of their rights instead of eradicating poverty. He alleged that the government is trying to suppress local NGOs while implementing welfare programmes.

In response, Vijay Kumar said that several NGOs are working with these institutions in implementing various government programmes. Besides, dalits were also involved in programme implementation, he noted. Principal Secretary to Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K Raju conducted the proceedings. BVF Chairman Dr. K.V. Sundaram presented mementoes to all the speakers.



KV Sundaram felicitating KS Raju with a memento

Village renewal is the need of the hour

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buoyant entity.

The government of India, in its Vision 2020, proposed knowledge powered village complexes - PURA (Provision of urban amenities in rural areas) for effective planning and implementation of rural development programmes with people's participation which will lead to inclusive rural development. Dr Sundaram proposes a nationwide village renewal movement, based on a wider understanding of the PURA concept.

He then advocates a layered model of micro territorial production complexes in rural areas to trigger full utilization of natural resources and human potential. This model, Dr Sundaram says will provide backward and forward linkages and provides value addition to agricultural products emerging from rural areas enriching villagers' incomes.

Dr Sundaram says that in order to bring about inclusive rural development, with people's participation nexus, the growth im-

pulses need to be structured and built up at the level of "village clusters (VCs)", in a highly integrated and effective manner. This new concept of rural development can be translated into action only through 'social animators' (committed NGO's) and 'change agents' (researchers) joining hands with local bureaucracy / technocracy and local people and their institutions.

For creating an economically viable agricultural and industrial base for a village, Dr Sundaram proposed the autokinetic model of development. This approach envisages establishing locally integrated economic circuits to achieve the full development of the natural resources and human skills available in the villages. It is the same as the Gandhian concept of village swaraj or 'development from within', with the capillary mechanisms in place, but points to a definite method for augmenting rural incomes, Dr Sundaram said.

He then listed out other tasks in

tactical planning like guarding the basic physical well-being of the villagers by ensuring food and nutrition security, public health and sanitation; developing functional life skills, including upgrading of basic practical literacy skills at all age levels, providing practical training in marketable business and crafts and providing access to agricultural services including inputs and markets; breaking the isolation of the village and establishing external support relations through fostering institutional relations with public and private sectors; leveraging ICT for transforming the village into a knowledge-based society and others. The Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation hopes to seek to translate the operating vision elucidated above into a few pilot projects in different typological areas, Dr Sundaram said and added that the operating vision for rural development he outlined bear a close imprint of Mahatma Gandhi's vision for the reclaiming of the rural villages across the country.

Working to unite India and Bharat

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tion and afforestation in the country. It is not just creating irrigation facilities on a large scale but also taking every care to preserve the environment. The government is embarking on an ambitious afforestation drive to cover another 21,000 acres with forest.

BHOOVIGYAN AWARDS: Eminent persons working for the promotion of ICT and earthcare policies were felicitated with Bhoovigyan awards on this occasion. Prof DM Nanjundappa, economist and administrator from Karnataka and Dr K Venkatasubramanian, educa-

tionist, economist, poet and a critic were presented with the Bhoovigyan Lifetime Achievement award posthumously. Several dignitaries received the Bhoovigyan Lifetime Excellence and Bhoovigyan Samman awards.

Gallery



KV Sundaram presenting earthcare memento to N Raghuvveera Reddy as P Chandrasekhar Reddy and M Moni look on



A section of the delegates keenly following the proceedings



Delegates enjoying sumptuous meal at the conference venue



At the registration desk



A delegate making a point

'AP ready to set up earth care policy institute'

Hyderabad, Nov 12: The Government of Andhra Pradesh is ready to set up an earth care policy institute in the state, Major Irrigation Minister **Ponnala Lakshmaiah** said.

Speaking at the valedictory of the 3rd International Conference on Rural India - Achieving Millennium Development Goals and Grassroots Development, the minister requested the experts, NGOs and academicians who participated in the conference to come up with a concrete proposal to set up an earth care policy institute in the state.

He said that Andhra Pradesh government has the best ever policy for rehabilitation and afforestation in the country. It is not just creating irrigation facilities on a large scale but also taking every care to preserve the environment.



(left to right) Ponnala Lakshmaiah, KV Sundaram, M Moni, N Vijayaditya and GK Chadha at the valedictory.



Dr K Rajagopal



R Ramprasad



KV Sundaram felicitating Ponnala Lakshmaiah. Dr K Rajagopal looks on

The government is pumping in Rs 46,000 crore into the irrigation sector to give boost to the agriculture sector, which was neglected for long. At the same time, government is concerned about preserving the surroundings, it has lived up to all the expectations, got all the clearances and has taken up afforestation in 21,000 acres to compensate the loss of forest cover and land, he said.

Dr K V Sundaram, Chairman of BVF felicitated chief guest Ponnala Lakshmaiah with a shawl and earth care memento.

Guest of honour, **Dr K Rajagopal**, Vice-chancellor, JNTU, said such conferences should come up with practical solutions, bring them to the notice of the government and continue efforts to realise the same. He also said JNTU has set up research and development cell to improve lab-to-land delivery of technologies.

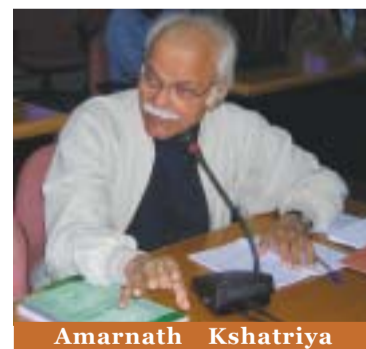
The Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation, on this occasion, felicitated experts from various fields.

R Ramprasad, executive director (projects), Sahanav, welcomed the guests and **M Moni**, Secretary General, BVF presented the vote of thanks.

'Develop sense of community'

Hyderabad, Nov 10: Stressing the need to transform words into action, emotion into activation and sentiments into service, Founding Director of SERVIS (Scientists, Engineers and Researchers Visitors in Schools) **Amarnath Kshatriya** called upon the participating delegates to help in evolving nodal points that will accelerate the empowerment of rural India.

Delivering the BVF Foundation lecture on "Empowering Rural India with SERVIS" at the 3rd International conference on Rural India at Dr. MCR HRD institute on the first day, Canada-based Amarnath wanted governments at all levels to develop a 'sense of community' among the youth to make India strong and proud. He proposed some



Amarnath Kshatriya

policy proposals which included establishment of a country-wide Gram Vikas Youth Servis (GVYS) to facilitate students to work as volunteers by adopting a village, to promote capacity building by the universities and conducting 'Corruption Hatao' workshops for human resource development at all levels.

Quoting V.K. Nambiar, permanent representative of India to the UN, that voluntary service is an integral part of the Indian ethos - known as *shramdaan*, Amarnath felt the need to harness social wealth for national development through national service scheme.

Referring to SERVIS and its activities, he said, it seeks to promote the spirit of voluntary service among the academicians and professionals and encourage them to participate in science and technology outreach initiative camps in rural India. SERVIS volunteers will act as facilitators helping school children to understand natural phenomena and technology with emphasis on environment and ecology.

Will this dream come true?

Hyderabad, Nov 11: Stating that Andhra Pradesh is one of the slow moving states in southern India, CESS Director **Dr. S. Mahendra Dev** has proposed five-point policy suggestions to take the state forward. Pro-poor growth, gender equality, focus



Dr. Mahendra Dev

on backward regions and social groups, sector specific interventions and improving institutions for better services were among the suggestions recommended by him. Without implementing these, people will remain poor even in 2015 i.e there will be 13 per cent poverty in Rayalaseema and 5 per cent in Telangana in 2015.

Dr. Mahendra Dev, in his presentation on "Poverty free, healthy and educated rural Andhra Pradesh - Where will Andhra Pradesh be in 2015", pointed out that in Andhra Pradesh, poverty rate varies from 47 per cent in Rayalaseema to 18 per cent in coastal Andhra. Disparities are quiet wide to achieve MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) within the time frame. He pointed out that malnutrition will continue among people

in spite of reduction in income poverty. He highlighted the need to achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality and improving all health indicators. Nearly 70 per cent of deliveries in rural areas will be done in hospitals by 2015, he added.

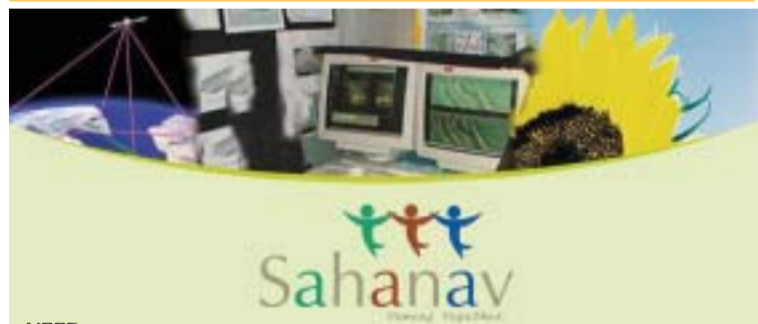
Pointing to his policy suggestions, Dr. Mahendra Dev stressed the need for having pro-poor growth oriented macro policies in the fields of agriculture, rural nonfarm employment, strengthening of self-help group movement, employment guarantee etc. He wanted the governments to make services appropriate to local needs i.e. in local languages, decentralization and local governance. He however noted that the groups and regions will not achieve its goals if there is 'business as usual' scenario.

Nandeswar, a delegate from Calicut, during the interactive session, pointed out that the data base prepared by the agencies is misleading as there is a wide gap between data collection and management. Everybody should work with dedication and sincerity to overcome such problems, he added.

PEN Chairman S.A. Rahim suggested redesigning of the planning process to remove all the 'ifs and buts' in implementation of welfare programmes.

BVF Chairman Dr. K.V. Sundaram, Secretary General M. Moni and Principal Secretary to Panchayat Raj and Rural Development K. Raju were present on the occasion.

Bhoovigyan Vikas Foundation and Sahanav thank the Government of Andhra Pradesh, students of JNTU and all the people who helped in the successful conduct of Rural India



NEED

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Small farmer being marginalised

Hyderabad, Nov 12: The conditions of the growing number of small farmers in the country is appalling with lack of support in terms of investment, technology, friendly markets and rural infrastructure and their condition has to be reversed if India wants to reduce poverty and achieve the millennium development goals, pronounced the speakers at the plenary session on the third and concluding day.

Making a strong contention in favour of small farmers, **Dr RB Singh**, Member, National Commission on Farmers made a presentation on 'small farmers in globalised world'. He said 80% of land holdings in India are



Dr RB Singh

small that account for 36% of cultivated land and 45% of total food grain production. It is important to see that this section of agrarian community is not marginalized. He then listed out the main issues of concern - unfavourable market opportunities, low productivity, migration, nonfarm economy, access to technology and resources and policies and politics that govern small farmers.

It is not a good news in terms of agricultural productivity, as the number of small and semi-medium farmers is decreasing and the number of farmers with large land holdings is decreasing. Simultaneously, the proportion of marginal and small farmers holding live stock is higher than the medium and large farmers and increasing further, Dr Singh said.

Enumerating the government policy to support small and medium farmers, Dr Singh opined that creating off-farm employment, providing education, institutional credit, primary health facilities, insurance coverage, producer friendly markets, appropriate technologies, investment in rural infrastructure and redefining public-private-NGO partnerships hold the key in empowering the farmers. Most of the policies are failing at the implementation level, Dr Singh felt and exhorted that if we have to remove poverty and increase productivity, we cannot afford to abandon the small farmer.

There seems to be world wide obsession over the ongoing process of globalization but for globalization to be a success, localization has to be undertaken successfully. And in this context, the involvement of small and



Dr MV Rajasekharan (centre), Union Minister of State for Planning, Planning Commission chairing the plenary session

medium farmers is indispensable, whether it is in the context of poverty alleviation or food production, felt **Dr GK Chadha**, Member, Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister.

We are unable to overcome the conventional uncertainties that dog agriculture in India, Dr Chadha said and added that though the share of agriculture to GDP is progressively decreasing, we haven't been able to reduce our dependency of employ-



Dr GK Chadha

ment in agriculture. Investment wise, agriculture remains the most neglected area, with the public sector almost withdrawing from this sector. In spite of the finance minister's announcement that government is increasing agricultural credit by three times, the fact remains that much of the credit comes from non-institutional sources, Chadha said. He envisaged two consequences as a result of fall in agricultural investment - fall in future human capital as the critical import of education is



Dr MV Rajasekharan

missing and the limitation in terms of technology translation. At this juncture, chairman of the session **Dr MV Rajasekharan**, Union Minister of State for Planning, Planning Commission, commented that

agricultural credit is not made available to the farmer when it is required and efforts are now



Dr JNL Srivatsava

on to change this scenario. He felt that there is an urgent need to bridge the digital divide between India and Bharat.

To streamline credit scene, it is essential to reform the primary co-optive movement and self-help groups, opined **Dr JNL Srivatsava**, former secretary to government of India. They should be federated into larger bodies that can empower them and create a supplementing and complementing system of government support, Dr Srivatsava felt. Mission mode programmes should be taken up to reduce poverty and increase productivity, he said.



Prof T Karunakaran

For sustainable globalization, a neighbourhood community would be effective, **Prof T Karunakaran**, Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural University, said. This neighbourhood community is the lowest element with just 50-100 houses and has all the elements of development like water, education, infrastructure and health. It is a model social, economic and political unit and can perform its tasks much effectively, Karunakaran felt.

Creating digital opportunities



Dr N Vijayaditya



Sameer Kochhar



Seema Parihar

Hyderabad, Nov 12: Technology is not a barrier but an opportunity to empower rural India, felt speakers during the session on 'Geomatics for sustainable development and moving from digital divide to digital opportunities' on the third day of the conference. Several interesting presentations by professionals, vendors and academicians were made during the session. The session was chaired by **Dr N Vijayaditya**, Director General, National Informatics



N Vijayaditya presenting mementoes to V Raghavaswamy (left) and Satish Kaushal (right)

Centre (NIC).

Representatives from IBM, AMD and Microsoft India presented their companies' initiatives to empower rural India with latest technologies and how the world IT majors are partnering programmes for digital inclusion of rural populace. While **N Vivek** said that AMD is trying to provide affordable internet access and computing to people through its 50 X 15 initiative, Microsoft representative **Ravi** said that through project Siksha, Microsoft has trained 28,000 teachers and educated over two million students through localized curricula. Microsoft and Dristee are working together to create a rural commerce scenario. **Satish Kaushal** said that IBM has taken up several key projects aligning itself with the e-governance initiatives of the governments.

Sameer Kochhar, CEO, Skoch Consultancy, in his presentation 'Measuring Outcomes', said that 37% of tax-payers' money is be-

ing spent on e-governance projects in the country and listed out parameters that can be used for measuring the outcomes. He said that e-governance component should be inbuilt in all national programmes. More than just launching any e-governance project, penetration is the key, he said and added that scaling and replication of projects is the need of the hour.

Dr V Raghavaswamy presented the case of NRSA, detailing how remote sensing images can come to the aid in various aspects of rural development - drought monitor and management, crop assurance, crop monitor, livestock management, tele-medicine and tele-education. **Seema Parihar** or Kirorimal College, University of Delhi, said that it is mandatory for rural renaissance to develop a geospatial digital learning venture. Such a venture should involve academicians to fill up the digital divide, she opined and suggested a three pronged approach for the same.

MDGs: From vision to action



(left to right) Dr Nilay Ranjan, Dr MV Ramana, Prof Anjaneyulu, SA Rahim and Capt Arvind Sharma at a technical session

Hyderabad, Nov 10: Participating delegates representing various government and non-governmental organizations had differences of opinion on the eight MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) set by the United Nations in 2000. MDGs were primarily intended to eliminate poverty and social deprivation on a global scale. Some of them felt that the MDGs were framed to benefit World Bank and other international agencies. However, others opined that MDGs will help in bringing in greater focus to the aid policies particularly in the developing countries.

UNDP has identified certain problems to set goals in millennium development. The eight MDGs include eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

Making a presentation on

"Health care delivery system", **Dr. M.V. Ramana**, Chief Information Officer, Directorate of Medical Education, felt that it is impossible to achieve 100 per cent results on the targets set up by the MDGs. He observed that except for man-made accidents, people would be able to prevent problems like child mortality, spread of diseases like AIDS etc. He stressed the need for bringing awareness among people to overcome health problems. There is need for having re-engineering process to achieve goals, he added.

Expressing concern over the spread of AIDS across the world, **Dr. Ramana** remarked that every institution, including government organisations, wants to make money out of the AIDS disease. They make money through advertisements and other means instead of making efforts to contain the virus. AIDS could be eradicated on the lines of small pox.

Chairman of Participatory Employment Net (PEN) **S.A. Rahim** observed that it is not possible for the countries or states to achieving eight MDGs till extremism, epidemics and environmental disasters exist in the

areas concerned. He blamed both technocrats and bureaucrats, holding them responsible for not reaching to the grass root levels to benefit the poor. He also urged them to leave their egos and work towards achieving MDGs.

Rahim stressed the need for a change in the mind-set of the rulers and become instrumental in transforming words into action. He further stressed the need for involving local NGOs and people at the grass root level for effective implementation of welfare programmes and to take the state forward.

Dr. Nilay Ranjan of www.oneworldsouthasia.net has pointed out lacunae in implementation of various gov-

ernment policies resulting in starvation and hunger among the poor. He stressed the need for universalisation of primary education for complete elimination of gender disparity, economic growth etc. As part of achieving the goals, all children should be in primary schools by 2015, he added.

Director of MANAGE, **Dr. V.P. Sharma**, said that the current decade belongs to NGOs, while the last decade was meant for IT. He observed that NGOs will play an important role in achieving goals set by the UNDP. In fact, NGOs are helping the governments to set goals for state's development, he added.

Dr. Sharma, in his presentation, highlighted the importance of

developing a global partnership to achieve goals set by the UN. He wanted the governments to ensure that all world population has access to television and radio services.

On this occasion, Agni Aviation consultant **Capt. Arvind Sharma** made a presentation on weather modification or cloud seeding experiment being successfully implemented in countries like US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, China, Thailand, Israel, Jordan and now in India.

Prof. Anjaneyulu, Director, Atmospheric Sciences, JNTU, conducted the proceedings. The speakers later had an interactive session with the participating delegates.

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Padmabhushan Prof Ch Hanumantha Rao receiving Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award from Major Irrigation Minister Ponnala Lakshmaiah



Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award to Prof Amarnath Kshatriya



Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award to Prof GK Chadha



Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award to LRA Narayanan



Bhoovigyan samman to Brig R Siva Kumar



Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award to Prof Krishnamurthi Kannan



Bhoovigyan samman to Dr Surinder Suneja



Bhoovigyan lifetime excellence award to Dr N Vijayaditya



Bhoovigyan samman to Sameer Kochhar



Bhoovigyan samman to Dr Arun Chaturvedi



Bhoovigyan samman to Dr Seema Parihar



Bhoovigyan samman to Prof IV Murali Krishna

Women hold the key to future

Hyderabad, Nov 11: Education, empowerment of women and gender equality hold the key in achieving the millennium development goals (MDGs) in the country, opined the speakers discussing on the theme 'Health, education and gender' on the second day of the conference.



IV Subba Rao

Chairing the session, **IV Subba Rao**, Principal Secretary, Health and Family Welfare Department, remarked that education is fundamental to health awareness. This would help in reducing maternal mortality, infant mortality and equips people to take care of their health.

To deliver better health services at rural level, the system should be made community centric, he opined and added that community health workers should be trained to take care of common ailments to provide the missing link in the system.

Talking on key recommendations of WHO to achieve MDGs, **Dr Ranga Rao**, former additional director, Medical and Health Services, said vulnerability of the poor to diseases is not just because of financial poverty but



Dr Ranga Rao

also due to paucity of information, knowledge and access to facilities. He then listed out areas that are calling for immediate attention like HIV/AIDS, old age and malnutrition in children and women. Talking about MDGs with respect to gender equality and women empowerment, **Kalamani**, Director for PR Programmes, Centre for World Solidarity, said the 10th Five Year Plan's goals are more ambitious than MDGs. She then listed out statistics pertaining to female work participation, literacy, gender parity, life expectancy, maternal mortality rate and sex ratio and felt that there is an urgent need for a rights based approach in health policies, protection of women's rights at every age, care for single/widowed women, gender sensitization and initiatives to curb child marriages. She remarked that MDGs envisioned removal of gender inequality by 2005, which is no where near the horizon so far.



Kalamani

Charting out the strategies and challenges in combating HIV/AIDS to achieve MDGs, **K Damayanthi**, Project Director (APSACS), noted that too much emphasis on sterilization to control population growth in



K Damayanthi

a way is leading to increase in HIV spread. The menace, which is growing at an alarming level, is leaving behind orphans, child headed families, missing generations and is resulting in role reversals. Forging partnerships holds the key, Damayanthi said, with people's representatives, private sector, media, civil society, key government departments, local body representatives and donor organizations, to increase awareness on the virus.

At this juncture, it is important to introduce high risk groups to effective interventions, equip school and college students with life skills, promote the use of condoms aggressively, introduce livelihood support programmes. It is also necessary to translate awareness into adoption of responsible behaviour, reach out to the youth at school/college, reducing the stigma and discrimination and last but not the least, translating political commitment to action, Damayanthi opined.

Speaking on education MDGs, **M Venkat Reddy** of MV Foundation said the goal of MDGs is to achieve universal primary education but there is no consensus on the goal itself. Contradicting news reports on the number of children in schools dot the newspapers every day leading to confusion.



M Venkat Reddy