



Amitav Ghosh

Bengaluru, July 28, 2016, DHNS

Climate change conversation



Climate change is one of the most pressing problems we are facing today. But not everyone is ready to acknowledge the severity of the issue or the consequences of our relentless race for growth.

In his latest book 'The Great Derangement- climate change and the unthinkable,' the acclaimed Indian novelist Amitav Ghosh argues that future generations may well think we are deranged. How else to explain our imaginative failure in the face of global warming?

At a panel discussion conducted by Penguin India in association with the Indian Institute of Science to mark the launch of the book, Ghosh discussed the issue of climate change and our collective and individual responsibilities in tackling this. The author was in conversation with Rohini Nilekani, chairperson, Arghyam Foundation, R Sukumar, Professor, Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc, J Srinivasan, Professor, Centre for Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, IISc and Kartik Shanker, director, ATREE and Dakshin Foundation.

At an interactive session which involved lot of witty remarks and scientific explanations, various topics ranging from interlinking of rivers to communication of the climate change problem to the common man were covered. It was to the credit of the panel that the audience was seen laughing and enjoying themselves wholeheartedly even though the topic in discussion was such a grim one.

One of the most important topics discussed by the panel was the inability of people to grasp the situation. One of the panellists talked about the failure to communicate the science behind the climate change conundrum because the writing was dense. To that Ghosh replied, "Communities believe that this is an issue of communication. They think that if people understand, they will act. I personally believe the issue is much grimmer. People do know everything, but they refuse to act."

The discussion then moved on to how climate change was also a political and economic issue as well. Rohini talked about how there was a need to change the economic narrative and how markets function.

Offbeat queries

Later on, when the audience got a chance to ask questions, many interesting and offbeat queries popped up, including one about the Indian culture of believing in 'karma' and how this might be an impediment to promoting scientific temperament among the people.

At the end of the interaction, Ghosh signed copies for members of the audience. The gathering, which comprised people from both ends of the age group, could be seen excitedly talking about the ideas discussed well after the event had ended.

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