

Roundtable on

Urban India and Climate Change Research

20 December 2018 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Maple Room, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi



Cities are increasingly seen as sites of action on climate change, and there is increasing research and policy discussion on the role that cities can play in moving towards a low-carbon development and resilient pathway. Local efforts across Indian states and urban regions demonstrate the increasing interest in this area. Yet, we know little about how urban India is systematically responding to climate change. What forms of interventions have found traction and which ones haven't? Who are the different actors involved? How does climate change interact with existing and pressing local urban priorities? What governance arrangements do they take? How can they be enhanced?

This roundtable aims to take stock of research till date, identify common findings, disagreements and blind-spots and discuss a future research agenda. It is structured around presentations by researchers on their ongoing or recently completed academic work on urban India and climate change towards the aim of building a community of researchers.

10:00 –
10:30 am Introductions

Urbanization in the time of climate change: Examining the response of Indian cities

10:30 –
10:50 am Based on a recent review, this presentation examines the governance forms and political motivations with which climate actions are pursued in cities. We suggest that future responses to climate change in urban India will be shaped by integrating multiple local development, mitigation and adaptation goals

Dr. Radhika Khosla (*University of Oxford*) & Ankit Bhardwaj (*Centre for Policy Research*)

Housing as Climate Resilience - Methodological Challenges in Research

10:55 –
11:15 am Urban Housing is considered to be important in increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change, namely to urban heat island, floods and storm surge. However, research on this presents multiple challenges. This presentation would highlight these methodological challenges based on a field work undertaken with regards to assessing urban heat island impacts.

Prof. Darshini Mahadevia (*CEPT University*)

Research Findings and Future Urban Climate Agenda

11:20 –
11:40 am The presentation attempts to give an overview of research findings in urban India and climate change discourse that has particularly evolved in the last decade. It reflects on new scientific results, shifting paradigms, spatial issues, policy concerns, financial underpinnings that bear strong urban sustainability imperative, drawing extensively from author's ongoing and completed research with the aim to deliberate on a future research agenda.

Prof. Mahendra Sethi (*Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University*)

Varying priorities during climate variability: Experiences from Indian cities

11:45 –
12:05 pm The last decade has seen an increase in awareness about climate change amongst Indians and decision makers, but there has been little effort by city managers to incorporate climate change within their development projects. While easy to criticize, it is also important to acknowledge the challenges in mainstreaming climate resilience that cities face. In this talk, I will discuss various technical and administrative challenges along with possible options for incorporating climate change within the current urban development in India.

Dr. Umamaheshwaran Rajasekar (*National Institute of Urban Affairs*)

Urban transformations for 1.5 °C: A revised framework for Indian cities

12:10 –
12:30 pm

IPCCs 1.5 °C Report exhorts urgency to scale up action on addressing climate change and urban transitions are key to deliver this transition. While urban climate action in India is beset with a number of methodological and implementation challenges, an interesting array of options and case studies have emerged. A piecemeal approach is not sufficient to meet national climate and development objectives and old frameworks need to be revisited. Using findings from two recent research studies, the presentation frames urban climate change action in Indian cities and aligning multiple objectives.

Prof. Minal Pathak (*Ahmedabad University & Technical Support Unit, WGIII IPCC*)

Taking stock of climate adaptation research: some considerations

12:35 –
12:55 pm

Using some recent research projects as examples, this talk will highlight some critical questions from an adaptation perspective. These projects focus on settlements as a starting point, to explore relocation risks due to climate-induced events & migration.

Dr. Amir Bazaz (*Indian Institute of Human Settlements*)

1:00 –
2:00 pm

Lunch

From 'ecologically subsidized' to environmentally vulnerable: changing climate, dwindling eco-infrastructures in an Indian mega city.

2:00 –
2:20 pm

This talk will engage with changing urban-environmental equations across long-term historical scales mainly focusing on 'blue infrastructures' (rivers, canals, wetlands, etc.) of Kolkata and the importance of incorporating historical and political ecological perspectives in understanding rapid urban change.

Prof. Jenia Mukherjee (*IIT-Kharagpur*)

Climate Resilient Flood Management Plans for Cities along the Brahmaputra

2:25 –
2:45 pm

The project funded by DFID and supported by Assam State Disaster management Authority, supports development of comprehensive flood risk management action plans for selected flood prone cities in Assam by assessing flood risks in project cities. The project further supports the development of three city flood management action plans, that will contain implementation strategies, details on monitoring and evaluation and information on budgets and financing and capacity assessments.

Dr. Divya Sharma (*Oxford Policy Management*)

Addressing climate change in Indian Cities: some preliminary observations

2:50 –
3:10 pm

The presentation will present initial impressions from an ongoing study on climate actions in India where the locus is city level governance. The study documents climate actions, actors, and drivers in cities, with a focus on partnerships.

Prof. Manish Kumar Shrivastava (*TERI University*)

3:15 –
4:00 pm

Open discussion and next steps
