

A Comprehensive Report of the
**Media Workshop 2021: Media as a catalyst for clean and sustainable
power generation**

14 September 2021

Organised by



**SHRI SHANKARLAL
SUNDARBAI SHASUN
JAIN COLLEGE FOR WOMEN**

Aakanksha Tiwari (Researcher, Environment & Climate Action, CAG)
Mala Balaji (Researcher, Environment & Climate Action, CAG)

Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge S. Saroja, Sumana Narayanan and Vamsi Sankar Kapilavai for their critical review of the report.

Special thanks to

M. Shanbagam, Assistant Professor, Department of Journalism and Communication and students from the Advertisement Club of Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women for coordinating with the Environment and Climate Action team of CAG for this event.

Programme

Time	Session	Speaker
3.00 pm - 3.05 pm	Welcome note	Ms. Aanchal, Student, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women
3.05 pm - 3.15 pm	Introduction	Mr. Vamsi Sankar Kapilavai, Senior Researcher, Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG)
3.15 pm - 3.45 pm	Media perspective on issues surrounding phasing out coal and transition to energy decarbonisation	Mr. Bhasker Tripathi, Development Journalist
3.45 pm - 4.00 pm	Q&A session	Ms. Saravanapriya, Student, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women
	Vote of thanks	Ms. Shrinithya, Student, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women

Synopsis

Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), in collaboration with the Advertisement Club of Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women, organised a media workshop to educate upcoming journalists about why and how to engage more people on the issue of climate change and how to tell the story of the climate crisis more accurately to the general public. The workshop sought to share the viewpoint of a journalist on energy transition and the issues around it.

After a short introduction by Mr Vamsi Kapilavai about the media perspective on coal phasing out and energy decarbonisation, Mr Bhasker Tripathi talked about how the media should interact with the local communities and what kind of mistakes they should try to avoid while narrating the story around climate change. Mr. Bhasker introduced several interesting facts and findings around communicating climate change. His talk was followed by a very interactive question and answer session with media students.

About the Speaker

For the last nine years, Bhasker has specialised in development journalism, writing on climate policies, environment, energy and their intersections. His work on climate change mostly

revolves around understanding the impact on the marginalised, the geopolitics of climate change and climate finance. In the past, he has worked with Land Conflict Watch, IndiaSpend, Gaon Connection and Hindustan Times. His articles are regularly published in India's leading publications including Business Standard, Bloomberg Quint, Scroll and Rediff. In 2014, he was named one of the best young journalists from developing countries. In 2019, he was awarded the 'Young Environment Journalist' of the year.



Abstract of the presentation

Media perspective on issues surrounding phasing out coal and transition to energy decarbonisation: An interactive talk on communicating climate change across the general public through media

Mr Vamsi Shankar Kapilavai, Senior researcher, CAG, delivered the introductory speech with the opening remarks on Tamil Nadu's reliance on coal and how it has been a major contributor to climate change in an already climate vulnerable coastal state. He also touched on the benefits of embracing renewable energy right from limiting unsustainable development to improving the financial, social and environmental conditions in Tamil Nadu. He went on to speak about how media coverage regarding climate change related issues especially in the southern states is very negligible and the reason could be due to lack of capacity, lack of data and training to cover the intricacies of climate science and policy as well as a lack of access to clear, timely and understandable climate-related resources. Most of the information which the public gathers about climate change is through media dissemination. Therefore the need to make this a national conversation along with creating awareness in this field is primarily the media's role. He spoke about the problems faced in getting the correct information out either due to media malpractice or the fossil fuel industry pushing climate change as a third rail. He concluded his speech by saying that climate change is in our backyards and the time to act is now. He then invited Mr. Bhaskar Tripathi to take over the floor and shed light on the media perspective on issues surrounding phasing out coal and transition to energy decarbonization and especially talk

about the role the media can play in order to engage more people on the issue of climate change and how to tell the story of the climate crisis and tell it accurately.

Mr. Bhasker Tripathi commenced with a general overview of global warming and climate change. He explained how it impacts human lives in the form of extreme weather events, rising temperatures, sea level intrusion, water scarcity, etc. He went on to talk about the disparity between developed and underdeveloped countries and how India is very vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

He then spoke about how media houses in India portray climate change as a future crisis when in reality, it is here and happening and people are experiencing the changes as we speak. The poor are most affected because they lack resources and infrastructure to protect themselves. He said this is where a journalist's role comes to the forefront. They should be asking the right kind of questions like who is responsible for climate change, who has the capacity to do more and what are the developed countries actually doing. He explained how developed countries are the main reason behind the current climate crisis we find ourselves in. The first political debate around climate change started in the 1992 Rio Summit and later in the 2015 Paris Agreement where it was decided that developed countries need to do the most to cut their emissions. But instead of cutting their emissions, they have shifted the responsibility on developing countries in the form of future net-zero targets which are flawed. He explained how setting a future timeline to achieve net-zero is not an effective solution and these are mere tactics by developed countries to circumvent the issue and continue business as usual.

He then enlightened the audience about common but differentiated responsibilities that were spoken about in both the Rio Convention and Paris agreement explaining the specific roles of developed and developing countries. He went on to speak about how a country can only do as much as its native conditions like employment, poverty, infrastructure allow it to. India has overachieved its targets and is doing more than expected of it. It has put forth an ambitious renewable energy target of 450 GW to be achieved by 2025. Therefore India is considered a climate leader in the global fraternity when it comes to climate action.

Mr. Bhasker Tripathi then spoke about climate injustice, noting that 50% of the population in India, who are poor, face the major brunt of climate change although their contribution to climate change is miniscule. Speaking of how India should deal with climate change, he noted that adaptation and mitigation are key. This can be taken up in different sectors - climate-resilient houses for the poor, increasing renewable energy capacity and so on. At the same time, moving towards greener energy will cause upheavals in the job market and this needs to be planned for and addressed. An example is the coal industry that employs millions and so phasing out the coal industry will directly impact many citizens.

He elaborated on the concept of climate finance and how murky an area that actually is. He went on to speak about how the developed world misrepresents this concept by considering any investment they make in a developing country in the renewable energy sector as climate finance. He also explained the disparity in climate finance within the country. He stated the

example of how the Electricity Act was originally formed by the central government but the implementing agencies are actually the state governments. He said that there was no uniformity in the policy followed by central and state governments and therefore emphasised the necessity for them to work in tandem.

He then informed the aspiring journalists who intend to report on climate-related issues to keep an eye on COP 26 which begins on 31st October 2021 in Glasgow, United Kingdom as it is the place where all the climate-related major action happens. He went on to talk about the kind of stories the journalists should be actually putting out, suggesting that if a journalist expects to write four stories per month, then she should focus three of those on the poor people who are impacted the most and have lost their livelihoods. Journalists should effectively use scientific evidence to tell stories of how vulnerable people are facing the brunt of climate change. He concluded the session by saying that the most brilliant journalism is not done by mainstream media but by fringe media which are in the form of blogs by small media houses and other organizations. He urged the audience to live up to the expectation that people have from journalists and bring out thought-provoking articles that actually address issues and educate the layperson on the impending climate crisis that is dawning upon us. He then opened the floor to the audience for questions.

The students asked quite a few interesting questions which were responded to in detail by Mr. Bhasker Tripathi. The questions varied from how media can reduce the gap between theory and practice with regards to public support towards the renewable energy industry, to the role of media in creating awareness and whether general media is more reliable than social media with respect to effective news delivery and public preference.

All the questions were eloquently and patiently answered by Mr. Bhasker Tripathi. He explained how the risk factor in the newly evolving clean energy investment is the reason behind little or no investment offered by banks. Hence journalists should specifically report on energy and climate thereby increasing the discord by bringing in experts, speaking to public representatives, departments, and investors. He stressed the need for journalists to report beyond a doomsday scenario and should rather focus on increasing awareness to the public. He also spoke about the kind of stories journalists should be reporting. He said it's the journalist's job to go to the field, speak to the farmer and tell the entire world that a farmer in Central India is going through an economic crisis because of the choice of energy the rest of the country or world is making. He emphasized that only by creating a dialogue by writing about these stories can we push the government to do more. He also spoke about how climate change and related issues should be a part of everybody's dining room conversation and it's in the hands of the journalists to create awareness in such a manner. He said that the discussion not only needs to happen with journalists reporting in vernacular languages but also there need to be more programs that are engaging with the public in order to help them bridge the gap of language.

The event concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Ms. Shrinitya, student, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women, followed by the recital of the National Anthem by Ms. Sahana, student, Shri Shankarlal Sundarbai Shasun Jain College for Women.

The recording for Media Workshop 2021 can be found [here](#).