

Need to Bring Right Technology to the Lowest Level to Protect the Environment: Naina Lal Kidwai



*L-R: **Bunker Roy**, Founder Director, Barefoot College, Rajasthan; **Naina Lal Kidwai**, Group General Manager and Country Head, India, The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd.; **Ravi Singh**, Secretary General and CEO, World Wildlife Fund India; Moderator: **Karti Sandilya**, Former Resident Director General, Asian Development Bank, Washington, D.C.*

"If we bring right technology at the lowest level, it would not only make enormous difference to the life style of these people but do a lot of good to the environment also," said **Ms Naina Lal Kidwai, Group General Manager and Country Head, India, The Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd (HSBC)**.

Sharing information and her recent experiences from HSBC Climate Survey that covered over nine countries, including India, she said, "The responses from the people of India proved to be quite revealing to me. The message we got from the common people here was: yes, we can do it. That showed a lot of optimism and willingness to do things on their own. In comparison, the people from developed world, especially from the countries like France and Germany, proved to be far more pessimistic and they looked more upon the government to do something in this respect."

"In India we need to do a lot of things on so many different fronts like education, health, family welfare, building roads, power generation, airport development etc. Along with this huge responsibility, can we really afford or do we have money and time to think about environmental issues?," asked **Karti Sandilya, Former Resident Director, North American Regional Office, Asian Development Bank, Washington, D.C.**

He was speaking as the Moderator of the **Session on 'The Environment: Whose problem is it?'** at **'Ideas India 2008'**, organized by the **Aspen Institute India**, here today. The panelists expressed their concerns over the issues of climate change and environmental degradations. They also attempted to examine whether India is cognizant of the huge environmental challenges facing the country and the world. Or has 'going green', the new global catch phrase of the 21st century, become a matter of passing the buck in India?

Mr Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO, World Wildlife Fund India, said, "On the issue of environment we really don't have many choices. There are two main areas of environmental concerns. One is physical space like forest areas or wildlife habitats or river or rural and urban clusters etc. Another is usage of renewable resources. In order to find the right answer we need to look at both aspects."

Stressing on the urgent need to find proper solutions of environmental problems, he cautioned, "Our forests and the entire eco system is depleting fast at an alarming rate. It is no more a looming disaster. In fact it is already with us."

"It enjoins on all of us to do something to protect ourselves and our environment for the simple reason that it affects all of us directly, though we may not be responsible for the problem," he added.

The famous social worker and the **Founder Director of Barefoot College, Mr Bunker Roy**, said, "from my long experience in the heart of rural India, I am now convinced that given the right direction and proper training, people can be master of their own destiny and can undertake difficult tasks with an ease of professionals. The most important thing is to provide them right opportunities."

"In this information age we have realized the enormous power of information. In the Indian context, it is equally important to find ways for informal information system along with the formal one," he added.

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