

The Role of Subnational Policies in Meeting the Climate Change Challenge – Learnings from Karnataka's SAPCC

Climate change poses a significant global challenge, necessitating coordinated actions at all levels of governance. While national policies establish the overarching framework, subnational policies and initiatives play a crucial role in translating these goals into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Karnataka State Action Plan on Climate Change (KSAPCC) serves as a noteworthy example of this paradigm, demonstrating how localised strategies can effectively address regional climate vulnerabilities while aligning with broader national and international climate goals.

This parallel session will focus on the critical role of subnational policies in combating climate change, focusing on Karnataka's SAPCC as a case study. The session will highlight key achievements, challenges, and lessons learnt during the plan's implementation. Participants will gain insights into:

- Innovative Approaches: How SAPCC integrates region-specific climate adaptation strategies.
- Stakeholder Collaboration: The role of government agencies, civil society, and local communities in ensuring effective policy execution.
- Policy Impact: Measurable outcomes in mitigating climate risks and enhancing resilience in vulnerable sectors.
- Scaling Up: Opportunities for replicating Karnataka's successes in other regions.

Through presentations, panel discussions, and interactive dialogue, this session aims to provide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers with actionable takeaways. By sharing learnings from Karnataka, the session will underline the importance of subnational leadership in addressing the global climate crisis.

Speakers

- Shri Kartikeya Vikram Sarabhai, Director, CEE
- Mr Sandeep Kumar Dubey, Programme Head, Hanns Seidel Foundation India
- Ms Rejini Simpson, Programme Director, CEE South
- Dr Amita Pandya, Dy. Director, GEDA
- Mr Mahesh T, Director Research, EMPRI
- Ms Shivika Solanki, Senior Manager, Climate Change, Vasudha Foundation

Presentations and Key Messages

Mr Mahesh T (EMPRI) shared insightful experiences and key takeaways from his work with the state government. He noted that the Karnataka government encouraged the development of region-specific, practical, and implementable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for effective climate action. Furthermore, he highlighted that the Environment Education Programme has established over 1,000 eco-clubs across the state to promote environmental awareness.

EMPRI also developed and disseminated handouts for state departments, including guidelines for implementing action plans and adopting best practices, such as alternative drying and wetting methods. Mahesh T also mentioned that the Karnataka government has initiated a Carbon Credit programme, which is being implemented in three districts, with support from collaborative efforts among stakeholders and government agencies. Finally, EMPRI introduced a Green Index Portal,

emphasising mandatory public funding disclosures under ESG reporting to enhance transparency and accountability.

Dr Amita Pandya (GEDA) outlined Gujarat's remarkable progress in the renewable energy sector. She highlighted that Gujarat has transitioned from small-scale solar projects to becoming a leader in solar and wind energy, achieving a clean energy capacity of 30 GW. The state champions green energy initiatives through programmes like PM KUSUM and EV promotion, earning recognition as a trailblazer in renewable energy.

Asia's first Climate Change Programme in Gujarat has supported over 300 research projects and established Climate Change Awards to encourage innovation. The Bal Urja Rakshak Dal initiative has educated and trained over 2,000 students on climate change awareness and energy conservation. Through Vibrant Gujarat, efforts such as GHG emissions monitoring, the expansion of the Kutch Solar Park with an additional 30 GW capacity, and practical projects like tree planting in Raj Mill and solar models in Modhera showcase the state's commitment to impactful, action-driven solutions.

Ms Shivika Solanki (Vasudha Foundation) shared an insightful overview of the foundation's innovative climate change dashboard and its initiatives. She presented the climate change dashboard, emphasising its utility in monitoring and visualising progress in climate action. Solanki highlighted four district action plans categorised as "yellow" in NITI Aayog's gram panchayat blocks, indicating areas that require further improvement and focus. She also shared findings from a climate public survey conducted to capture community perspectives and responses to the impacts of climate change. Finally, she discussed the implementation of Climate Smart Village programmes, utilising Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) activities to engage communities in localised, bottom-up climate action strategies.

Key Recommendations from the Session

- *Enhance transparency in ESG reporting:* Implement mandatory public funding disclosures under Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) reporting systems to increase accountability and transparency in climate actions.
- *Educational Initiatives:* Strengthen environmental education and awareness programmes, such as eco-clubs and youth-focused initiatives (e.g., Bal Urja Rakshak Dal), to engage communities in climate action at a grassroots level.
- *Expand Successful Initiatives:* Scale up programmes such as Karnataka's Carbon Credit programme and Gujarat's Vibrant Gujarat model in other regions, focusing on collaboration and region-specific solutions for greater impact.
- *Promote Collaborative Approaches:* Strengthen partnerships between government agencies, stakeholders, and local communities to improve the implementation of climate action programmes and drive impactful change.
- *Community-Led Climate Actions:* Prioritise local, community-driven climate action through participatory frameworks, such as Climate Smart Villages, and public surveys, incorporating bottom-up approaches to ensure that ground-level realities are integrated into policy execution.
- *Leverage Data for Effective Monitoring:* Utilise tools such as the climate change dashboard and public surveys to monitor progress, identify areas needing improvement, and ensure data-driven, community-inclusive climate action planning.

Outcomes and Announcements

The book "From Global to Local Climate Action on Ground: Learning from Karnataka's State Action Plan on Climate Change" was released, a valuable resource that encapsulates key lessons and best practices from the state's climate action journey.

Audience Engagement

During the session, a question was raised about how waste is monitored through satellite data. Dr Amita Pandya explained that Gujarat is utilising technology under the GCPC initiative, focusing on methane and biomass management. She stressed the importance of waste segregation and converting waste to energy. Another question was posed regarding the role of education and communication in synergy with SAPCC, as well as how KPIs are divided. Mr Mahesh T responded by mentioning that information gaps are being addressed through local language translations and training centres at Gram Panchayats. He also highlighted initiatives such as the "Havamana Mitra" radio programme in Karnataka, which disseminates climate change information, and the division of KPIs in Karnataka by sector-specific indicators and geographic levels for effective climate action.

Challenges or Issues Discussed

During the session, key challenges identified in implementing effective policies and evaluations, as per the OECD's 2023 study, were discussed. These included a lack of awareness or understanding of the necessity for such initiatives, with many questioning their relevance, and insufficient resources to conduct comprehensive surveys and evaluations, which hindered the effective collection and analysis of data. In addition, there is a need for impact-based programmes and action-oriented strategies to be integrated into government documents at the international, national, state, and local levels. Furthermore, leveraging satellite data for effective waste management, particularly for mapping wet waste, is an important area of focus.

Referred Case Studies

- During the discussion, Dr Amita Pandya highlighted that Modhera, a village in Gujarat, has become India's first solar-powered village. This initiative has not only helped reduce the villagers' energy bills but is also providing an additional source of income, as any surplus energy generated can be sold back to the grid.
- During the discussion, Mr Mahesh T highlighted that the Karnataka government is developing a carbon credit framework to enable farmers to transition to a sustainable agri-horticulture system. This initiative aims to support farmers in growing crops that reduce greenhouse gases, earn carbon removal units, and monetise them. The programme is currently being implemented in three districts.

Additional Notes or Observations

Mr Mahesh T shared that EMPRI plans to collaborate with CEE in developing educational materials to introduce climate change education to students and raise awareness among them.