

ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science (ICAR-IISS), Bhopal organized National Webinar on “Alternatives to Plastics for Sustainable Soil and Environmental Health” on 30 December 2020

During the *Swachhta Pakhawada*, a National webinar on “**Alternatives to Plastics for Sustainable Soil and Environmental Health**” was organized by ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil Science on 30th Dec, 2020.

Dr Ashok K Patra, Director, ICAR-IISS, Bhopal welcomed esteemed dignitaries and Panel members for this webinar and highlighted the importance of the alternative to plastics in agriculture. Dr. R.S Chaudhary, Convenor, briefed about the widespread use of plastics in agriculture and associated problems.

Dr. Suresh K. Chaudhari, Deputy Director General (NRM) and Chief Guest, Dr. C.L. Acharya, Former Director, ICAR-IISS, Dr H.Pathak, Director (ICAR-NIASM) and Directors’ of various NRM institutes graced the occasion.

Dr. Suresh K. Chaudhari, Deputy Director General (NRM), ICAR, New Delhi and Chief Guest of this webinar, emphasised and highlighted the need for alternatives of plastics in agriculture. He discussed the primary use of plastics in agriculture is to provide mulch, shade net, pond lining, greenhouse cultivation, micro-irrigation, etc and also indicated about the use of plastics in agriculture and importance of each of water drop under arid and semi-arid region. However, besides the benefits of using plastics in agriculture, there are also many associated threats with the use of conventional plastic materials. This national webinar is meticulously planned and appropriately addressing the strategies/alternatives to plastics. He also stressed the importance to study basic soil properties under mulch versus unmulched soils/field. During his chief guest address, he also deliberated on various alternatives to plastics, potential materials, recent advances, research and development and policy perspectives.



After the Chief Guest address, key note presentations delivered by Dr S.K. Jain, CIPET, Bhopal; Dr K. Subramaniyan, Professor and Head, TNAU; Dr A. Ramesh Kumar, Sr. Scientist, NEERI, Nagpur on various issues such as plastic waste management and biodegradable polymers; potential materials as alternatives to plastic mulches in agriculture and effects of plastic and plastic additives on soil and environmental health, respectively.

A panel discussion was also organized in this webinar comprising of Dr C.L. Acharya (Chair), Ashok K Patra (Co-chair), Dr H. Pathak, Dr K. Sammi Reddy, Pr. Scientist & Head, ICAR- CRIDA, Hyderabad, Dr B.L. Manjunath, Pr. Scientist, ICAR-IIHR, Bhopal, Dr. Pramod K. Panda, ICAR-IIWM, Bhubaneswar, Dr. Salom G.T. Vincent, Professor and Head, University of Kerala, Dr. Binoy Sarkar, United Kingdom and Dr Pradip Dey, PC, STCR, ICAR-IISS, Bhopal. All the panel members deliberated various issues of use of plastics, alternative materials (i.e. organic mulch, biodegradable plastics, cassava and corn starch, jute textile material, sugarcane trash fibres), different standards of compostibility and biodegradability of plastic materials. The vote of thanks presented by Dr Somasundaram Jayaraman, Organizing Secretary.


