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Villages to get climate managers

Manash Pratim Gohain

New Delhi: The battle against climate change is all set to go down to every village in the country. In a bid to create awareness about global warming, the government has decided to train and appoint "climate managers" in villages whose main task will be to create awareness and take steps for sustainable development at the grassroots level. Besides, they will be trained to handle natural disasters and prepare their areas to face such crises. Three agencies have been tasked with implementing the project—the ministries of panchayati raj and science and technology and the chair for sustainable development at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (Ignou).

Speaking to TOI, eminent agriculture scientist and Rajya Sabha member M S Swaminathan said the programme was aimed at meeting the challenges of climate change and sustainable development. "People at the grassroots will be the first to bear the brunt of climate change. So, we have decided to train people in villages to be climate managers. With



active support from Ignou, the course modules will be finalized in April 2008," he said.

He added that although the funding for the project was still to be quantified, the participatory ministries had agreed to help out with the modalities. "The 11th Plan has set aside allocations for capacity building and skill training under the ministries of HRD and panchayati raj, which will be tapped for this project," he said.

A meeting has been called from April 17 to 19 at the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, Chennai, to finalize the modalities of the programme. It will be attended by the sec-

retaries of science and technology, panchayati raj and agriculture ministries. "The task of managing climate change will be customized as per local needs. A man and a woman climate manager from each gram sabha will be trained in the science and art of managing climate change and enhance their capacity to cope with natural calamities," said Swaminathan, who will be coordinating the programme.

'A bid to conserve resources'

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New Delhi: Taking another step in its battle against global warming, the government has decided to train villagers to become climate managers. Agriculture scientist and parliamentarian M S Swaminathan will coordinate the programme.

The managers will create awareness on environmental issues in their areas and suggest steps to upgrade local ecosystems as well as measures to prevent natural disasters. For

example, a climate manager in Uttarakhand will suggest steps to prevent landslides. He will also take the lead in disaster management and rehabilitation. Similarly, climate managers in drought or flood prone areas will be trained to fortify their areas. "In this process, we will conserve and enhance our natural resources at the grassroots," Swaminathan said.

The climate managers are expected to train and create more resources at the village level to boost sustainable de-

velopment. The course module has been divided into five agro-climatic regions, and trainees will be awarded a certificate in climate management by Ignou.

The programme, set to roll out in July 2008, will not be conducted in classrooms. According to Ignou vice chancellor V N Rajasekharan Pillai, it will be conducted by trainers at the gram sabha or gram panchayat level using the internet. Ignou is also looking at tapping the potential of DTH TV as well as the open university.