

Brief Note on CDG Talk by Prof. Pam R. Factor Litvak



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Talk on the “Evaluating Strategies to Mitigate the Harmful Effects of Air Pollution in Urban Impoverished Communities in India: Gender Aspects” delivered by Pam R. Factor Litvak; Professor of Epidemiology, Mailman School of Public Health Columbia University on 14th December at IIPS, Mumbai. The session has been Chaired by Professor Aparajita Chattopadhyay, Associate Head of the Centre of Demography of Gender, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai. Prof. Chattopadhyay welcomed and introduced the speaker Pam R Factor Litvak. Prof Pam has long experience in Epidemiology and Public Health at the Columbia University, USA.

She has been working in India in since 2019. Her ongoing project is on cognitive function and its link with gut microbiome in slums of India, she is working on the open trash burning and its health impacts in India. Prof. Pam obliged for the invitation to the CDG and IIPS for giving the opportunity to share her work with the young researchers and faculties. She began her presentation with the air quality index of India, the sources of air pollution and its impact on children’s health. A child who is exposed to unsafe levels of pollution can face lifetime health impacts. Even the child in the womb also gets affected from the air pollution and lead to premature birth, infant mortality, childhood cancer, acute respiratory infections, risk of heart disease etc. She mentioned that it is necessary to explore the gender dimensions of air pollution in the urban impoverished areas because the exposure level is different for males and females. Women must have a right to breath clean air. She mentioned that air pollution mitigation is a long process. Hence, we need to think of different mechanism to reduce the health effect of pollution. She beautifully demonstrated the link of gut microbe and how it varies based on the food we consume. She mentioned that gut health is deeply linked to mental health functioning, the mitigation of pollution is possible though modification of gut microbes and thus eating right food perhaps is the solution till air quality improves. Her ongoing research is exploring more on linkages of gut microbiomes and cognitive performance of children. Students asked questions on the method of measuring and mitigating approaches of air pollution, mapping of the data and on research collaboration with Professor Pam. Dr Suresh Jungari concluded the talk with vote of thanks to the speaker for having such an interactive session and encouraged the young researcher to explore the new horizon of gender and environment related research.

