

Report on the Opening Ceremony of the Research School on Dynamic Sustainable Solutions 2025

**Jointly organized by International Centre for Applied Systems Science and Sustainable Development (ICASSSD), Cambridge ON and the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Dayalbagh, Agra – 282 005 India
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The opening ceremony of the Research School on Dynamic Sustainable Solutions 2025, organized by the International Centre for Applied Systems Science and Sustainable Development (ICASSSD) and the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, was held on May 24, 2025. This event marked the formal launch of an academic and research initiative aimed at advancing interdisciplinary solutions for sustainable development through systems thinking. The ceremony brought together renowned scholars, institutional leaders, and a diverse cohort of student researchers, setting the tone for a summer of intellectual engagement and collaborative learning.

Prof. Apurva Narayan, an Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario, opened the event with an introduction to the ICASSSD. Established in 2022, this independent, international not-for-profit organization is registered in Canada with its sponsoring agency being the Ra Dha Sva Aa Mi Satsang Sabha, a charitable organization in Agra, India. Prof. Narayan highlighted the organization's commitment to advancing system science and sustainability in line with the vision of the United Nations. The audience was briefed on the organization's growth and its expanding impact, particularly its successful collaboration with educational institutions around the world. A notable achievement was the onboarding of six researchers in partnership with the Dayalbagh Educational Institute and the University of Western Ontario, who received full scholarships for their participation.

Prof. Narayan also highlighted several notable research contributions made by affiliated scholars. These included publications in leading journals and presentations at global forums, such as the 12th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD), organized by the United Nations, and the European Conference on Artificial Intelligence. These accomplishments underscore the high quality and global relevance of research supported by ICASSSD with support from DEI.

Mr. Gur Sarup Sood, President of the Dayalbagh Educational Institute and the Ra Dha Sva Aa Mi Satsang Sabha, delivered the opening remarks. He emphasized the importance of developing dynamic, adaptable sustainable development models and proposed integrating ethics, value systems, and conscientious behavior into the global sustainability framework—suggesting these be considered as the 18th Sustainable Development Goal. Reflecting on the 2015 Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030, Mr. Sood called for urgent, collective climate action to prevent global temperatures from rising beyond 1.5°C. He also presented the Dayalbagh Model for Sustainable Development—a holistic, community-driven framework functional for over 110 years—as an inspiring model that integrates organic agroecology, healthcare, education, innovation, and local governance.

Following this, Professor C. Patvardhan, Director of the Dayalbagh Educational Institute, discussed the importance of reducing excessive consumption and promoting mindful living. He

urged participants to reflect on the growing gap between needs and wants, and encouraged educators to instill sustainability values in future generations.

A major highlight of the ceremony was the inaugural keynote address delivered by Professor S. Mahendra Dev, a distinguished economist with deep expertise in public policy, agriculture, and poverty alleviation. He has recently been appointed as the Chairman of the Economic Advisory Board to the Prime Minister of India. Introduced by Professor Pami Dua, Professor Dev spoke on the evolution of the sustainable development discourse, stressing the integration of equity, environmental stewardship, and economic growth. He warned that global progress toward the SDGs remains limited, with only 16% of targets on track for achievement by 2030. He pointed to innovations such as renewable energy, local resource management, and national coordination mechanisms as potential accelerators of progress.

Professor Dev also introduced India's "Lifestyle for Sustainable Development" initiative, which promotes sustainable behaviors and consumption patterns. He explored the critical role of agriculture in sustainability, advocating for climate-resilient and nutrition-sensitive approaches. He stressed the need for diversified cropping systems, crop insurance, and robust research-extension networks. Additionally, Professor Dev examined the potential of digital technologies to improve food systems, noting both their promise and associated challenges like data privacy and automation-related job displacement. He concluded with a call for balance—between growth, equity, and nature—in shaping the future of sustainable societies.

Following the keynote, Professor Pami Dua offered reflections, reinforcing the importance of combining internal (ethical) and external (policy-driven) approaches to sustainable development. She emphasized the pivotal role of community participation in achieving the SDGs.

Dr. Ashita Allamraju then provided an overview of the Research School 2025, outlining its objectives, format, and interdisciplinary approach. She welcomed this year's vibrant cohort of students, representing a broad range of academic institutions. The 2025 Research School brings together participants from the **Dayalbagh Educational Institute**, **IIT Roorkee**, **IIT Bombay**, **Delhi University** (India), **University of Toronto** (Ontario), **Memorial University** (Newfoundland and Labrador), **Western University** (Ontario), **McMaster University** (Ontario), **University of Calgary** (Alberta), **University of Alberta** (Alberta), and **Georgia Institute of Technology** (USA). This rich diversity of perspectives and disciplines is expected to spark new ideas and deepen global collaboration on sustainability challenges.

The ceremony concluded with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Miss Usha Sharma, one of the directors of ICASSSD. She expressed her deep appreciation to all the speakers, institutional partners, and participants. She emphasized the importance of sustained collaboration and knowledge exchange in furthering the Centre's mission.

Some Glimpses of the opening ceremony of the research school

Concept and developments

- These three summits Stockholm (1972), Rio Janeiro (1992) and Johannesburg (2002)
 - advanced the notion of three pillars of sustainable development: **environmental, economic and social**.
 - Ensuring a healthy planet, Promoting economic growth: Improving social well-being
- In 2008, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) advanced a new concept the green economy.
 - In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient, and socially inclusive
- Rio+20 (2012): The 2012 conference emphasized the related concept of a “green economy.”

