

THE HINDU



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Corporates must do more for society, says Nooyi

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Chennai-born Indra Nooyi, who heads multinational giant Pepsico, made a pitch for greater contribution from the corporate sector to society and environment. Stating that Pepsi's role in the Zero Waste Centre of Pammal Municipality near Pallavaram was worthy of emulation, Ms. Nooyi, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pepsico, said such models of public-private-government participation could take the country forward.

Visits compost yard

She was addressing a large gathering of mediapersons at the Zero Waste Centre in Visweswapuram, where kitchen waste from all the 21 wards of Pammal Municipality is converted into manure through organic composting. Pepsi has been supporting the facility financially.

Among other initiatives Pepsico had launched, she said, their agro programmes helped them get in touch directly with the farmers involved in cultivation of tomato and potato to refine their farming techniques and increase productivity.

In the past three years, the company had conducted trials on direct seeding in paddy cultivation that could

save 30 per cent of water compared to conventional methods.

Thrust on saving water

They had launched a comprehensive watershed management programme to rejuvenate water bodies in Karnataka and Uttarakhand. As part of steps to conserve water, Ms. Nooyi said Pepsi was committed to achieving Positive Water Balance in its facilities in the next two years. "Our plants use just one third of the water they did five years ago," she remarked.

Along with the Punjab Government's Citrus Development Programme, Pepsi had established a large collection of "world class planting material" for farmers as India had the potential of being a major global source for citrus fruits like Florida and Brazil. This was to ensure the availability of citrus fruits round the year as the market for fresh fruit juices was increasing.

Abhiram Seth, Executive Director, Exports and External Affairs, Pepsi, who was present, said a few lakh saplings of citrus fruits were planted. But the project to expand it was difficult, as it was not easy to acquire farming land.

Ms. Nooyi said the country faced huge challenges ahead



GIVING SUGGESTIONS: Indra Nooyi, Chairman and CEO, Pepsico (centre), at the Zero Waste Centre of the Pammal Municipality in Chennai on Saturday. - PHOTO: A. MURALITHARAN

and they could be overcome only through the collaborative partnerships involving the corporate sector, community, government and voluntary organisations.

"No one can go it alone, not even the government, despite their best intentions," she remarked.

To a question on the pesticide issue surrounding carbonated drinks marketed by the multinationals, the CEO of Pepsi said all products were safe.

The levels of pesticide were

well below the stipulated norms and even lower than levels traced in baby food. "Pepsico's food and beverages are as safe as any other in the food chain," she said.

On the action plan for the future, Ms. Nooyi said the priority was to sustain the growth and retain the talent in the company as every one who had contributed to company's growth in the past one year was an asset. Asia, particularly the Indian sub-continent, was an important market, she added.