

Message from the President.....

It is with a sense of immense satisfaction and pleasure I am writing Foreword of the inaugural issue of the South Asia Forum on Agricultural Meteorology (SAFOAM) Newsletter. It provides overview of SAFOAM activities

Despite the technological and scientific progress, the agricultural production and quality are highly weather and climate dependent in South Asia. Also, agriculture has a challenge to cope with climate change and variability and extreme weather conditions which significantly impact farm production in this region. At present there is need to enhance the quality of weather forecast and climate services and more so on application of meteorological information in various sectors particularly in agriculture in South Asian Region (SAR). There are number of constrains in application side of agrometeorology especially in SAR where the operational agro-met advisory services are in different stages. In India and Bangladesh, it is at advanced stage, in Nepal, Sri Lanka, Pakistan in modest stage, in Bhutan & Afghanistan it is initial stage and it has yet to start in Maldives. When applications of weather and climate information to agriculture are concerned, the agromet community in South Asia really have important role to play. Already a number of forums, agencies and organisations like South Asia Hydromet Forum (SAHF), South Asian Meteorologist Association (SAMA), Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), International Water Management Institute (IWMI) are doing excellent work to improve agricultural production in South Asia. Though different governments and semi government agencies are making their best efforts in improving the quality of life of farming community in this region, the agromet community in South Asia have to collaborate among themselves and more important is the involvement and cooperation across the boundary of the nation in this region. Based on this, the Idea of formation of SAFOAM is floated. This effort is very timely as many new developments in this area are happening concurrently in this region. The aims and objectives of SAFOAM also would be free exchange of ideas to help sharing of knowledge and information respecting the administrative set up within the respective government in member countries.



One of the important tasks of this forum would be to generate products for entire South Asia and place in seamless digital platform to prepare agromet advisories and corresponding Agromet Advisory Service bulletins. More challenges would be on the development of institutional mechanism along with good Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). for process-based simulation of different agromet products including remote sensing products. Under this forum no replication of work, competition, repetition work would be taken up; on the contrary the forum would capacitate the fellow agrometeorologists who are serving the different countries to facilitate by providing products that would keep us alive with the new information in regional basis and these products are nowhere available. The most interesting and challenging would be to share dynamic information and also, we need to deliberate the new products most important by different countries and regular update of the same. At this point of time there is a need to identify the low hanging fruits and ride on kind of transformative process which can be done or happen with the existing data available freely in public domain and our disposal would be knowledge pool for proper strategies of training for the new entrants from the member countries.

SAFOAM activities are steered up at the three levels. At the first level, concept of roadmap has been initiated and as a result six core groups with relevant themes have been formed. At the second level, six core group meetings were organised where in depth discussion was made on different thematic areas in order to make the foundation of roadmap of SAFOAM. According to me, second level of distillation is marvellous. At the third level of distillation finalisation of the roadmap as well implementation strategies of SAFOAM were made.

I am happy to see the work so far has been done from the launching of the forum. Overall structure of SAFOAM was being built up concurrently by building different components of the forum. As far as the Govt. of India's involvement on this initiative and sharing of data is concerned, Govt. of India is very keen in such collaboration in South Asia. Initially, there is need to establish a good footing in the forum and subsequently Govt. of India might be approached with clear transparency.

. I also take this opportunity to convey sincere thanks to Advisory Committee and Founding members of SAFOAM for their guidance and also for their generous contributions.

Dr.L.S. Rathore