

# A Brief Report on The Celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity, 2016

Date & Time : 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2016, 10.00 a.m.

Place: Indian Museum ABC Hall Kolkata

## **Inauguration:**

The West Bengal Biodiversity Board observed the International Day for Biological Diversity during a one day long programme at Indian Museum ABC Hall, Kolkata on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2016. The programme was attended by over 200 people from different segments of the society that included representatives of BMCs/ Research Institutes/ Govt. Organizations/ NGOs, students / Teachers of Schools, Colleges, Universities, general public etc.

The day started with *Rabindrasangeet* (songs of Tagore) performed by Dr. Swarnava Bala. Then welcome address was delivered by Dr. A. K. Sanyal, Chairman, WBBB. In his address Dr. Sanyal unveiled the theme of this year's programme- 'Mainstreaming Biodiversity: Sustaining People and Livelihood' and highlighted the significance of the theme in the light of the provisions of Biological Diversity Act, 2002 for betterment of millions of lives by sustaining biodiversity through participatory conservation.

During his speech he also highlighted about the importance for institutionalising Access & Benefit Sharing mechanism for effective implementation of the Biological Diversity Act, 2002 & Rules, 2004. He mentioned that during the last three years State Board has progressed in that direction which is evident in the fact that so far twelve such agreements have been signed with different bio-resource based industries and the signing amount would be utilized for the conservation and development of local biodiversity of respective areas. He also stressed that during the preparation of PBRs special attention should be given to identify tradable bio-resources and market value should be ascertained. Promoting business value of bio-resources based products can increase the business potentiality of that PBR area which in turn will help expedite signing of agreements. The need for capacity building of BMCs to negotiate and convince the bio-resources based industries in signing agreements also highlighted by him. The BMC representatives who attended the programme were requested to assess the potential bio-resources in their respective areas as well as to the adjacent areas where PBR is yet to be initiated and aware local people about its economic significance. He assured every possible technical and expertise help from the State Board.

## **Then the dignitaries present on the dais spoke on the occasion:**

- i. Sri Chandan Sinha, IAS, Principal Secretary, Dept. of Environment, Govt. West Bengal admitted that awareness about biodiversity has considerably increased over the years. There is a growing concern about the gradual loss of species all over the world. He stressed on the need of relating biodiversity to our life and mentioned that the relation of biodiversity is very much extended in our lives rather than being a topic for discussion especially for maintaining good urban health. He concluded with a hope that the lecture and debate will certainly make way for mainstreaming biodiversity.
- ii. Dr. Kailash Chanda, Director, ZSI made a brief speech on the occasion. The rich diversity of species in West Bengal spread over different eco-systems significantly featured in his speech. He expressed concern about the conservation of the biodiversity for the survival of rural mass totally dependent on biodiversity. He suggested for strict regulation

against bio-piracy to minimise loss of biodiversity and stressed on the need of mass awareness and every body's cooperation in the matter.

- iii. Dr. Paramjit Singh, Director, BSI in his deliberation stressed on the need of conservation of biodiversity in a big way. Biodiversity services should not be taken as granted as it is evident that drinking water needs to be purchased today to ensure quality of the water. He also stressed on the degrading health quality of people especially in the urban areas due to degradation of biodiversity.

On a solemn note, 11(eleven) PBRs were formally handed over to the Chairman of the Board by the members of the respective Biodiversity Management Committees viz., Egra Municipality, Gopalnagar GP ( Kolaghat II PS), Amdabad GP (Nandigram II PS), Amorshi GP (Patashpur I PS), Talgachari II GP (Ramnagar I PS), Birbandar GP (Khejuri I PS) of Purba Medinipur district, Alikosha GP (Dantan I PS) of Paschim Medinipur district, Panchra GP (Jamalpur PS) of Burdwan district, Tarakeswar Municipality of Hooghly district, Tiluri GP (Saltora PS) of Bankura district. Sutia G.P.(Gaighata P.S.) of North 24 Parganas district.

Annual Biodiversity Awards were conferred to Gobordanga Municipality BMC & Goghat II PS BMC under the best performing BMC category. A special appreciation award was given to Prof. Amallesh Choudhury, former Professor of Zoology & Environmental Science, University of Calcutta and an UNESCO expert, for his lifelong contribution towards biodiversity conservation in the state.

Prof. C. R. Babu of Delhi University graced the function with his key-note address on '*Biodiversity Park – an innovative approach not only for the conservation of natural heritage but also for sustaining quality of life in urban areas*'. In his 45 minutes excellent presentation he presented numerous examples making it a point on how biodiversity conservation can help sustainable livelihood for people. He warned about the threat of rampant species loss signalling a possibility of another mass extinction looming over. Conservation of natural heritage centres is not being considered in the matrix of modern day development programmes he concerned. Audience got an idea about how Biodiversity Park can help to visualise the biodiversity in a minuscule format. He cited various success stories of ecological restoration through development of park which acted as a good tool for the conservation of biodiversity and promoting livelihood and sustaining quality of life of urban centres. He expressed his pleasure that many urban centres are taking interest in Biodiversity Park which is a good sign to improve the urban health as a whole.

Next a cultural programme on the theme of biodiversity conservation was performed by the members of Itachuna-Khanyan BMC from Hooghly which was very much entertaining and applauded by the audience.

An intercollegiate debate competition was held on the topic "**Biodiversity conservation: is it necessary for livelihood development?**". Six teams each with two members from Ashutosh College, Maulana Azad College, East Calcutta Girl's College, Srirampore College, Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centenary College Rahara and City College participated in the debate. The debate was judged by Sri V.K. Jadav, IFS, Addl. PCCF, Dr. Saswati Sen, Director, WWF (West Bengal) & Prof. Dilip Mukherjee, Kalyani University. City College (Mr. Aditya Banerjee and Mr. Arkaprovo Matilal) was declared the winner of the debate. Mr. Aditya Banerjee of City College was adjudged as the best debater for the motion and Ms. Sukanya Basu of East Calcutta Girl's College was adjudged as the best debater against the motion. The session came to a close with the vote of thanks from Dr. S. N. Ghosh, Sr. Research Officer, WBBB. The Board treated all the participants with working lunch as a mark of hospitality.

## Some Glimpses of the celebration programme of International Day for Biological Diversity - 2016



Inaugural Session of IDB programme



Felicitation of Prof. C.R.Babu of Delhi University



Inaugural speech of Dr. A.K.Sanyal, Chairman,  
West Bengal Biodiversity Board



Special Appreciation Award was given to  
Prof. Amalesh Choudhury



Biodiversity Award - 2016



PBR release



Inter College Debate Competition



Prize distribution of the debate competition