



KERALA STATE
BIODIVERSITY BOARD

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As part of the 3rd National Biodiversity Congress 2017, a five day long biodiversity fair named "Vividha" was organized from February 22-26 at Tagore Theatre, Thiruvananthapuram. Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala, Sri. Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated this Fair, which focused on exhibiting the major biodiversity components of India and Kerala.



There were a total of 69 stalls arranged by national, state, NGO, and private sector organizations. These stalls exhibited a diverse kind of bio-resource based products that are of food, nutrition, health, medicine, and income value as well as a range of eco-technologies that help sustainable agriculture and food production. The Fair also communicated effectively the types of genetic wealth of the country, and the issues related to conservation, sustainable use and equitable benefit sharing of Biodiversity.

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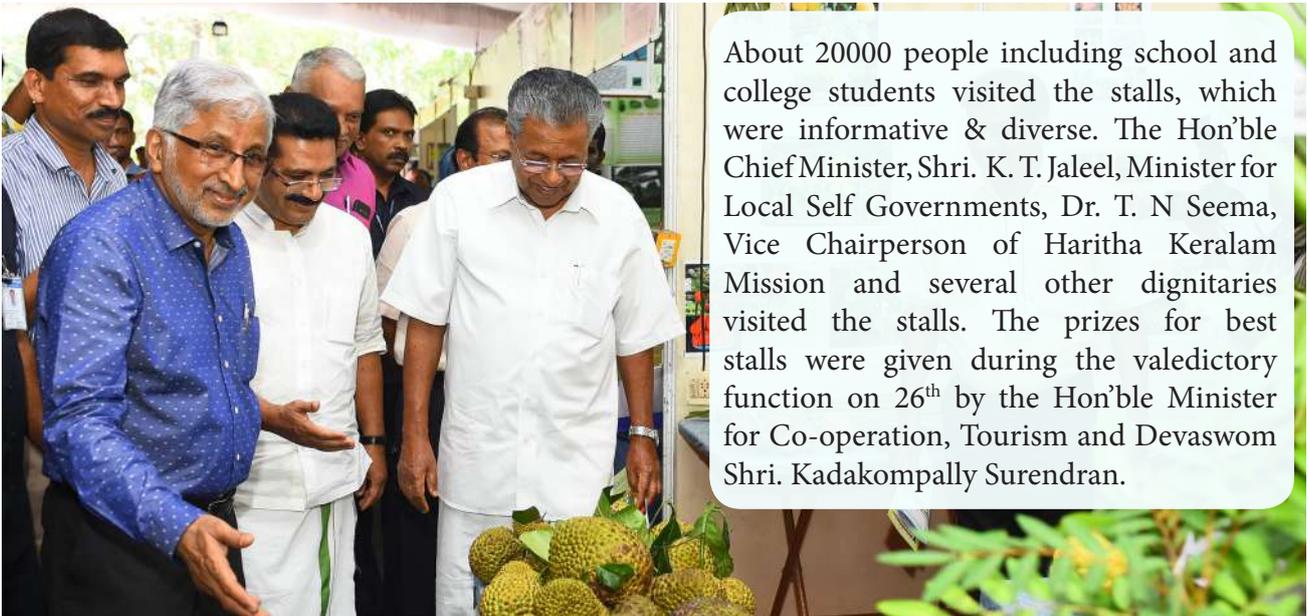
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About 20000 people including school and college students visited the stalls, which were informative & diverse. The Hon'ble Chief Minister, Shri. K. T. Jaleel, Minister for Local Self Governments, Dr. T. N Seema, Vice Chairperson of Haritha Keralam Mission and several other dignitaries visited the stalls. The prizes for best stalls were given during the valedictory function on 26th by the Hon'ble Minister for Co-operation, Tourism and Devaswom Shri. Kadakompally Surendran.

National Biodiversity Conference 2017

A conference on Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Sustainable development was held as part of the National Biodiversity Congress during 23rd and 24th February 2017. The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Amita Prasad, Addl. Secy, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt of India. The concluding session was inaugurated by Shri. T. RabiKumar IFS, Secretary, National Biodiversity Authority. The key note address was delivered by Dr. Amita Prasad IAS, Addl. Secy, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Govt. of India. The plenary talk was delivered by Dr. Balakrishna Pisupati, former Chairman, National Biodiversity Authority and present Vice-Chancellor, FRLHT, Bangalore.



International Biodiversity Day 2017

The Biodiversity Day was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture Adv. V. S. Sunil Kumar, on 22nd May 2017 at Government Guest House, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram. Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen, Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board, delivered the welcome address and Dr. Dinesan Cheruvat, Member Secretary, gave away the vote of thanks. After the inaugural session the technical session was handled by Prof. E. Kunjkrishnan former Prof. & Head of dept. University college, Thiruvanthapuram. He delivered a talk on Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism.

The Valedictory function was inaugurated by Shri. Pinarayi Vijayan, Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala. Prof. (Dr.) Oommen V. Oommen welcomed the gathering. - Shri. P. Balakiran I.A.S, Director, Department of Tourism felicitated the function. Prizes for the Photography contest and Biodiversity Awards were distributed to the winners by the Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala. The consolation prizes for the Photography contest were distributed by Shri. P. Balakiran I.A.S. The Hon. Chief Minister released five books published by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board. This was followed by the experience sharing by the award winners and a brief introduction of the books released in the function.

IBD 2017





Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen
Chairman, KSBB

More than four years have passed since the first issue of "Green Life" saw light. The first issue was brought out with much enthusiasm right from naming the newsletter to the design. Since then many articles were written in this column on various pressing issues of the time. Looking back on the past five years of my tenure as Chairman I am proud to say that several important milestones were achieved. KSBB became the first State Biodiversity Board in the country to constitute BMC in all LSG's. This success has been achieved not only by my efforts, but also due to the untiring

Future is in our hands

The only way forward, if we are going to improve the quality of the environment, is to get everybody involved.

efforts of my predecessors and other staff members including the Member Secretaries, to mention specifically. KSBB is also on the threshold of achieving the colossal task of completing PBR preparation in all LSG's, another feather in our cap. The extensive field level exercise in demarcating ecologically sensitive zones in Western Ghats was really an eye opener whereby I understood that biodiversity conservation will not work if it does not address inequality and poverty among the farmers and poor. Their helplessness gave me the strength to go ahead with a model of inclusive conservation. The staff of KSBB had supported me in all my endeavour and has played a pivotal role in taking the message of conservation to the public to which I am thankful. As I look back I ask myself the question whether I have done justice to

the responsibility entrusted to me, I remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi "You must be the change you wish to see in the world" and the only thing I can say is that I have tried to emulate this. What makes people change their behaviour to a more sustainable consumptive pattern? Is it education or peer pressure or a gentle push in right direction? What is certain is that if we learn from our past mistakes and move with thoughtfulness we can create a win-win situation on the conservation front. This has to be our common agenda.

It is the time for a change, for a new Vision and Mission for the Board and I wish my successor all success in this endeavour and request the staff to extend co-operation and support to the incoming chairman.



Dr. Dinesan Cheruvat
Member Secretary, KSBB

Changes in land use pattern, declining agriculture, pollution and climate related issues are causing adverse changes in our environment, biodiversity and human life. Declining rainfall, increasing temperature, drought are felt by all. Declining health standards of Keralites causing increasing epidemic as well as other diseases are the concerns now. People now realises that

Biodiversity Conservation : Way forward

a happy, healthy living needs a healthy environment including clean air, clean water and safe food. Involvement of every citizen is necessary to improve the environmental standards for human welfare. (BMCs) and Educational Institutions can play major roles in creating awareness as well as action plans for improvement in our environmental standards. The Biodiversity clubs, Eco clubs, Bhoomitra clubs established in our educational institutions can also play key role in awareness creation and local efforts for environmental conservation. KSBB is taking action oriented programmes to strengthen BMCs of all LSGIs and Biodiversity clubs

of educational institutions. For this series of capacity building workshops were held in various districts of Kerala. It is delightful to see that many BMCs were already involved in conservation activities which can be taken up by others as models.

Though KSBB is the leading Biodiversity Board in India in many respects, being a part of biodiversity rich western Ghats, midlands hills and a highly productive sea and wetlands, the state has to further push forward an action oriented programmes like Harithakeralam with involvement of all concerned. I am sure that KSBB with BMCs can take active roles in such programmes.

Meetings of BMC, Farmers and Traditional Knowledge holders

The two important meets such as BMC Meet and Harithasangamam were organized as part of 3rd National Biodiversity Conference 2017 held at Thiruvananthapuram. About 280 members including the BMC Chairpersons, Secretaries and Members representing various Grama Panchayats, Municipalities and Corporations participated. The BMC meet served as a platform for sharing

of experiences and various issues faced in implementation of the Biodiversity Act and Rules. The programme was inaugurated by Shri. Pinarayi Vijayan, Hon. Chief Minister of Kerala. Hon. Minister for Local Self Government also addressed the audience. Harithasangamam, the unique meeting of traditional farmers and traditional knowledge holders was also organized in association with NBC 2017. The programme was conducted with a view to share the experiences of successful conservation practices held at various parts of the state.

Around 150 members attended the meet. The programme was inaugurated by Smt. Sugathakumari and about 15 members belonging to Kani and Kurichya tribe community were also honoured.



Plant novelties from the southern Western Ghats of Kerala

***Rotala kanayensis*:** Kerala Botanists (M.P. Rijuraj, M. Rajendraprasad, T. Shaju and A.G. Pandurangan (2017)) discovered a new plant species to science, which was collected from the muddy substratum of drying depressions on the lateritic rocky areas of Kanayi village, near Madayi in Kannur District of Kerala. The plant named as *Rotala kanayensis* belongs to the family Lythraceae.

The Genus *Rotala* L. has tropical and subtropical distribution and is represented globally by 44 species, with highest distribution in tropical Asia. India hosts 29 species, of which 24 are from the Peninsular India.

***Dendrobium anilli*:** This is new species recently described from the evergreen forests of Wayanad district of Kerala by Mr. Pichan M. Salim Dr. Jose Mathew, Dr. Dariusz L. Szalchetko. This beautiful little orchid species got published in the International Journal *Annales Botanici Fennici*.



Dendrobium anilli



Rotala kanayensis

District Level Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC) Strengthening Workshops

KSBB successfully completed the district level BMC strengthening workshops in all 14 districts with the support of concerned District Panchayath. The series of workshops started on 13th June 2017 in Wayanad district and concluded in Thrissur on 1st August 2017. The workshop proceedings were led by the Chairman and the Member Secretary of KSBB and out of 1034 BMCs in the State, about 70% BMCs actively participated. Various aspects such as functioning and statutory responsibilities of BMCs as envisaged in the Biodiversity Act, 2002,

need for biodiversity conservation, role of BMCs in environment / biodiversity conservation etc. were discussed in the workshop. In continuation with the workshop, an open forum was also held with the BMC members



Do you know this beach? It's Our Own Shangumugham

2017- International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) was observed with a cleaning campaign of Shangumugham Beach May 22nd was proclaimed as International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) by the United Nations with a mission to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. The theme for IDB 2017 is "Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism". This theme has been chosen to coincide with the observance of 2017 as an International Year of "Sustainable Tourism for Development" as proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly. With respect to this theme Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB) organized a beach cleanup drive with participation of students from Academy for mountaineering and adventure sports, All Saints College and Holy Angels School. The Chairman, Kerala State Biodiversity Board, Dr. Oommen V. Oommen addressed the gathering after inaugurating the function. Dr. Dinesan Cheruvat, Member secretary, Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Counselor, Solomon Vettukad spoke on the occasion. The need, self awareness, responsibility as a citizen for cleanliness



and the impact of Plastic on health of Ocean as an ecosystem were stressed by the speakers. On Wednesday morning 7.30 Am a group of 60 volunteers including the staff of KSBB wearing white t-shirts, caps, gloves and mask started picking up waste from Shangumugham beach. The waste was classified in to two basic categories degradable and non degradable and collected in separate gunnysacks. The clean up drive lasted till 9.00 Am, by the end of the drive 10 gunny bags full of waste was collected and handed over to Corporation for proper disposal.



Know Kerala's renowned environmentalists John C. Jacob (1936 -2008)



Prof. John C. Jacob was one of the pioneers of the environmental movement in Kerala, India. He was born at Nattakam in Kottayam. He earned a Post graduate degree in Zoology from Madras Christian College, after which

he joined the faculty at St. Joseph's College, Devagiri in Kozhikode. Eventually he headed up the Zoology Department at Payyanur College, where he worked until he retired in 1992. At Payyanur, in 1972 he started a zoology club that would form the genesis of campus-based nature conservation activities. The club also became involved in protesting threats to the environment. Jacobs also started a few "green" magazines stressing the need to preserve nature. He also set up the Society for Environment Education, Kerala (SEEK), which published an environment-focused magazine **Soochimukhi**. John C. Jacob led the movement against the Silent Valley project. He is the author of several books, including **Prakrithi:**

Nireekshanavum Vyakhyanavum and Urangunna varude Thazhvarakal. In recognition of his contributions to the environment, he was awarded the Kerala Biodiversity Board's Haritham Award and the state government's Vana Mithra Award. The name of the plant *Impatiens johnsiana* is dedicated Prof. John C. Jacob who was popularly known as 'Johnc', an ardent naturalist who had devoted his life to conserve the biodiversity of the Western Ghats. The new plant is endemic to these parts of Western Ghats on densely clothed tree trunks in evergreen forests at an altitude of 1500-700 MSL.



Shantisthal sponsored by KSBB at Payyannur college dedicated to Prof. John C. Jacob

Story of a local Coconut Variety named “Edava Thenga”

Edava is a Panchayat situated at Varkala, a coastal town located in the southernmost part of Kerala. There is a local variety of coconut called “Edava Thenga” is very popular here, which came in cultivation by years of selective breeding done by village farmers. There are several distinct characters identified in this variety ranging from size, husk content to its different arrays of colour. A society has been registered for the conservation and sustainable use of the variety. This variety has helped to develop a handicraft cottage industry in the area. The protection of plant variety and farmers rights act 2002 envisage to establish an effective system for the protection of plant varieties and, the rights of the breeders and to encourage the development of new varieties of plants. Plant varieties present in wilderness cannot be registered, under PPV & FR Authority. However, any traditionally cultivated plant variety which has undergone the process of domestication / improvement through human interventions can be registered and protected subjected to fulfilment of the eligible criteria. The BMC of the Edava panchayath is now helping the EDAVA long fibre coconut farming community to go for the registration of this variety under the PPV & FRA in the year 2014 in India, and also to be included in the GI list of India.

Biodiversity Assessment of five water bodies of Kerala

Lakes and adjoining wetlands are one of the most biologically productive and inspiring places. Wetlands are renowned for their diverse, unique flora and fauna. They are the primary habitat for hundreds of species of waterfowl as well as many other birds, fish, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, odonates, butterflies, insects etc. With a view to make a realistic assessment of the status of five water bodies of Kerala, Lakes - Pookode, Vellayani, Sasthamcottah, Ashtamudi and Vembanad; Kerala State Biodiversity Board has proposed inventorying of the biodiversity by systematically monitoring the biodiversity and ecology.

Workshops



The workshop on biodiversity was organized by Kizhalloor Grama Panchyat at Kannur District BMC members and members of Grama Panchyat attended the programme Prof. Dr.Oommen V. Oommen Inaugurated the workshop Dr. Dinesan Cheruvat Member Secretary made the keynote address. Sri. Rajan President Kizhalloor Grama Panchyat presided over the function .



Chairman Prof. Dr.Oommen V. Oommen Inaugurated the ‘Paristithi Kaval Sangham’ the first venture to conserve and document biodiversity headed by BMC of Peruvayal Grama Panchyat at Kozhicode on 28.08.17. Dr. Dinesan Cheruvat Member Secretary made the keynote address. Ms.Remya Haridasan Block Panchyat President felicitated the occasion.

Biodiversity Awareness at a glance



World Environment day 2017 in association with Kaliyoor Panchyat, a tree plantation drive with the participation of school student of Vellyani area at Vellayani.



Ayyankali Memorial Arts and Science college, Pathanapuum World Environment day 2017 inaugurated by Prof.Dr. Oommen V. Oommen Chairman KSBB



Jyothis’ A contact and awareness programme to equip and empower higher secondary science students towards research aptitude development inaugurated by Prof.Dr. Oommen V. Oommen



Chairman’s visit at TCS Campus, Technopark. He appreciated TCS efforts for conserving Urban Biodiversity

Know Kerala's "Plant Genome Saviours"

The Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act of India 2004 recognizes the contribution of farmers and farm communities in the development of native seed diversity of many crop plants. As per the Act, they can register their traditional plant/seed varieties. Besides this, there is provision to provide "Genome Savior Awards" to individual farmers as well as farmer communities for their conservation efforts of native plant/seed varieties. The Protection of Plant Variety and Farmers' Rights Authority had initiated Genome Saviors Awards from 2001 onwards to recognize the farm communities for their contributions in the conservation and enhancement of crop seed diversity.

There are three categories of the awards envisioned under this Act. First one is Genome Saviors' Farmer community Award for the traditional farmer communities and the farmer's clubs. An amount of rupees 10 lakh set apart under this category along with certificate and the letter of appreciation. From Kerala, the Rice Cultivators Forum, Palakkadu, Pokkali Rice Cultivators, Ernakulam, Changanassery Banana Cultivators Society, Thrissur and the Seed Care Rice Conservation Society in Wayanad have received these awards.

Plant Genome Savior Farmer Reward and Farmer Recognition Award are the second and third



categories that aimed to the individual farmers who are involved in the conservation of traditional seed varieties and sharing it for further scientific research. An amount of Rs 1.5 lakh along with certificate and the letter of appreciation is the award under this category. During the period 2007-2016, 21 awards have been received by farmers as well as farm communities from Kerala state. We are introducing these Genome Saviours of Kerala in this newsletter one by one.

Shri. Cheruvayal Raman (Plant Genome Savior Farmer Recognition Award winner 2016)

Shri. Cheruvayal Raman is an exceptional farmer in the field of small scale agriculture. He lives in Wayanad district, and is engaged in conservation and cultivation of traditional rice cultivars. While most farmers in Kerala are giving up rice cultivation, or going for cultivating modern hybrid varieties, Shri Raman is involved in conservation of many old traditional rice varieties. He maintains about 40 different rice varieties through careful on farm conservation over the last several years. Seeds of these varieties are shared with those who are interested in cultivating them. Shri Raman is actively engaged in educating people about the need and importance of rice farming and conservation of native rice varieties. (Source Dr. CR Elsy in "vitharivu" Published by Kerala Bhasha Institute 2017)

Strengthening of Biodiversity Club

As part of strengthening of the biodiversity clubs in the state Kerala State Biodiversity Board in association with Education department organized training programme for Club coordinators of biodiversity club at Idukki District, Newman College, Thodupuzha, Idukki on 19th August 2017. The programme was formally inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen, Chairman KSBB. Principal Newman College, Rev. Fr. Vincent Nedungatt presided over the function.



Mr. N. Ravindran District Co-ordinator welcomed the gatherings and Mr. Dr. Saju Abraham gave away the vote of thanks. After the inaugural function Prof. Dr. Oommen V. Oommen made a detailed presentation on biodiversity conservation. Dr. K.G. Ajit Kumar

spoke on the role of biodiversity clubs in conserving the nature and suggested the different activities of the club in the institutions. The training programme was attended by Club Co-ordinators of 195 institutions of schools and colleges of Idukki district.



Nature Camp

A Camp for the students of the Schools in the coastal areas of Kannur and Kasaragod Schools was conducted at Valiyaparamba, Kasaragod on 22nd and 23rd May, 2017 by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board. The 2 day Camp was held at Govt HSS, Padannakadappuram situated on the sea coast. The camp was formally inaugurated at 3.30 pm on 22.05.2017 by Dr. Ambikasuthan Mangad, an eminent writer from North Kerala. Sri. M.T. Abdul Jabbar, President of the Grama panchayath and the Chairman of the organizing Committee presided over the function. Members of the Grama Panchayath and BMC members were also present at the inaugural ceremony. Sri T.P.Padmanabhan, Director, Society for environmental Education in Kerala(SEEK) delivered the introductory talk. After the tea break at 5 pm, the participants along with the resource persons moved towards the sea coast for the field study of the coastal

biodiversity. By 7pm, the participants were back at the camp. A class on the conservation of sea coast and marine turtles and fish was delivered by Sri.P.V.Sudheerkumar, an expert in the conservation activities of 'Neythal' an organization working for the protection of the Sea Turtles in Kasaragod district. Local people also participated in the beach cleaning drive on 23rd May. Concluding session addressed by Member Secretary followed by planting of mangrove seedlings in the selected area.



Kollam Asramam-Heritage Site Meeting On July 22, 2017

A meeting was held regarding the proposal on declaring Kollam Ashramam Mangrove as a Biodiversity heritage site. It was chaired by Smt. J. Mercykutty Amma, Hon'ble Minister for Fisheries, Harbour Engineering and Cashew Industry. In her Presidential address she stressed the importance of conserving Ashramam Mangrove as Biodiversity Heritage site and initiated the discussion. Sri. M. Mukesh, MLA Kollam supported the proposal, stressing on the importance of conserving the Mangroves and reminding its capability to rejuvenate the ecosystem. The meeting was attended by Shri. V.Rajendrababu, Worshipful Mayor of Kollam, Smt. Vijaya Francis, Deputy Mayor, Kollam, Dr.Mithra.T. I.A.S, District Collector, Kollam, Smt. Dr. S Chitra, Subcollector, Kollam. Also officials from different Departments attended the meeting.

Dr. DinesanCheruvat, Member secretary, KSBB in his welcome address made a presentation on the Biodiversity Heritage site, its importance, rules and proposal of Kollam Asramam Magrove as Biodiversity Heritage site. The area already mapped was presented and requested to finalize the areas after incorporating suggestions.

Prof. N.Ravi, made a detailed explanation on the conservation history of Asramam Mangrove, the level of degradation it has undergone over years and about the moments and protests that have retained what is now. He proposed to build iron net fencing to the mangrove and also put security guard in place for the conservation of the mangroves, after the heritage site has been declared.

