

Workshop on Conserving Natural Heritage of J&K held at KU

Srinagar, Dec 22: Aimed at forging collaboration among different stakeholders for safeguarding natural heritage of J&K a one- day brainstorming Workshop on 'Conserving Our Natural Heritage: A Way Forward' was held at University of Kashmir (KU) here on Saturday.

During the workshop members from Judiciary, Academics, Natural Resource Management, Wildlife, Civil Society and Media discussed ways and means of safeguarding natural heritage including the rich biodiversity, flora and fauna of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The workshop was jointly organized by the Centre for Biodiversity and Taxonomy, Department of Botany, KU and Wildlife Trust of India (WTI).

Dean Research, KU, Prof Zafar A Reshi, Chief Guest on the occasion talked about the collective responsibility in conserving the natural heritage of the state.

Speaking on the pace of unsustainable developmental activities and over-exploitation of natural resources, Prof Reshi said, "We are exactly at the cusp of environmental crisis which needs active advocacy and immediate intervention from all the stakeholders, echelons of government down to the general public upto the grass root level."

He added "The data available about the natural resources of the state is insufficient. We need to provide a way forward to the government for formulating policies on environment and such brainstorming session would go a long way in achieving that objective."

Prof Azra N Kamli, Dean School of Biological Sciences, KU, who was Special Guest on the occasion said, "There is a dire need of awareness among the masses especially in rural areas as they are closer to nature. We need to stop the illegal trade of flora and fauna. The State Biodiversity Board should be pro-active and play it's role in conserving the environment."

Head, Department of Botany, KU, Prof Abdul Hamid Wani, who was the Convener of the workshop, said, "We cannot wait any longer to witness more disasters and deterioration of our environment. Public participation is paramount in the successful implementation of any program."

During the workshop the participants unanimously agreed that besides having a strong political will there is a need for better coordination among the stakeholders for successful implementation and enforcement of various environmental laws and regulation to put a check on illegal trade in flora and fauna and loss of wetlands.

Dr Anzar A Khuroo, Organising Secretary, presented the welcome address and conducted the proceedings of the workshop

Dr Riyaz Ahmad, Co-organising Secretary, presented vote of thanks.