



TRAINING CUM SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP ON 'BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND GANGA REJUVENATION' FOR THE OFFICIALS OF THE UTTAR PRADESH FOREST DEPARTMENT AT BRIHSPATI BHAWAN, CH. CHARAN SINGH, UNIVERSITY, MEERUT, 7TH JANUARY, 2017

DETAILED REPORT

The project 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation' is an integral part of the *Namami Gange programme* under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) initiative taken up by the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The one day 'Training cum sensitization-workshop' was organized as a part of the capacity building and stakeholder involvement initiative in order to apprise the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department personnel, representatives of the Gram Panchayats and Non Government Organizations about the aims, objectives and importance of the aforementioned project and to develop a partnership.

Date and Venue

The 'Training cum sensitization-workshop' took place on 7th January 2017 at the Brihspati Bhawan, Ch. Charan Singh University, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. The team from the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, arrived at the venue one day prior, on 6th January 2017, in order to fine-tune the agenda, to coordinate with the concerned parties and to oversee the final preparations for the workshop.

Team

The WII team included Dr. S.A. Hussain, Scientist G, Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, Scientist, Dr. Ruchi Badola, Scientist G, Dr. Gautam Talukdar, Scientist D, Dr. J.A. Johnson, Scientist D and two research scholars Dr. Pariva Dobriyal, Ms. Vaishali Vasudeva and two resource persons Dr. Pranab Pal and Ms. Sunita Rawat.

Agenda

The sensitization team agreed upon a draft agenda prior to the sensitization workshop, which was approved by the participants, as follows (Annexure 1):

Participants

The 'Training cum sensitization-workshop' was attended by the officials of the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department, representatives of the Gram Panchayats and Non Government Organizations. About 100 participants attended the workshop, of which about 30 were village Panchayat representatives ((Annexure 2 (a) - 2 (e)).

The Sensitization-Workshop

The event was graced by Shri Mukesh Kumar, Chief Conservator of Forest, Meerut, Government of Uttar Pradesh as the Chief Guest. Shri Lalit K. Verma, Conservator of Forests, Meerut also attended the workshop. Ms. Aditi Sharma, DFO, Meerut welcomed the audience. In his address, Shri Mukesh Kumar spoke about the significance of the Ganga River in the social, cultural and religious beliefs of the people of not only northern India but throughout the country as well as the neighboring countries. He also stressed about the importance and the role of biodiversity conservation in rejuvenating the Ganga River and how the project taken up by WII is not only innovative and scientific but also reliable and self-sustaining. He also talked about the importance of role of forest department in success of the project.

Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, Scientist G, WII, welcomed all the participants on behalf of WII and expressed gratitude for their presence. He provided a brief introduction to the project entitled 'Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation', which is a part of the Namami Gange programme under the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) initiative of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

The workshop consisted of two technical sessions. First session was on overview of the project Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation. During second session group discussions were held on issues faced by local communities residing along the Ganga River and their possible role of in Ganga rejuvenation and conservation of its aquatic biodiversity.

The chair and co-chair of both the sessions were Mr. Mukesh Kumar, Chief Conservator of Forest, Meerut and Shri Lalit K. Verma, Conservator of Forests, Meerut, respectively.

The first technical session comprised of four main speakers i.e. Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, Dr. S.A. Hussain, Dr. Ruchi Badola, and Dr. J.A. Johnson.

Technical Session 1: Overview of the Project

The technical session 1 started with a presentation by Dr. S.A. Hussain on 'Rare and endangered fauna of Ganga River: Conservation issues'. He discussed about the biogeographic zones i.e. Western Himalayas, Upper Gangetic Plain, Lower Gangetic Plain, East Coast that come under the mainstem Ganga River. He highlighted the representative habitats and fauna of the Ganga River i.e. Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), Golden Mahseer (*Tor putitora*), Gangetic Dolphin (*Platanista gangetica gangetica*), Otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), Turtle (*Batagur kachuga*), Resident and migratory birds, Mugger (*Crocodylus palustris*), Saltwater Crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*). He stressed on the conservation status

of aquatic mammals in which the status of Gangetic dolphin is endangered whereas smooth coated otter is vulnerable. In case of obligate breeding birds *Sterna acuticauda* (Black bellied tern) is under endangered category whereas in case of reptiles *Batagur kachuga* (Red-crowned roofed turtle) and *Batagur baska* (River terrapin) fall under critically endangered species. In case of fish, Golden Mahseer is under the endangered category. He highlighted about the protected areas along the Ganga River in five states (Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal). He discussed about the factors affecting the biodiversity of the Ganga River i.e. reduced water availability, water pollution, unsustainable resource extraction, habitat loss, decline in prey-base, poaching of wildlife. He ended his presentation on stressing upon one point that is lack of appropriate actions might result in permanent loss of the conservation dependent species.

An overview of the project “Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation” was presented by Dr. Ruchi Badola. In her presentation, she highlighted on the social, ecological, cultural and economic importance of the Ganga River. She also pointed out the challenges that the Ganga River is facing such as construction of hydropower projects, water abstraction, changes in ecology of river and diversion of water. Dr. Badola also emphasized on the significant role of the different stakeholders at international, national, state and regional level in this project. For the successful implementation of the project, an interdepartmental approach wherein all the departments are working in synergy as well as the various policies and Acts are undertaken. A basin level approach can be used wherein different aspects like- waste water, solid water, industrial fluid abatement and restoration of biodiversity can be worked out together. Dr. Badola emphasized on strengthening of the community participation in this project. She stressed that being the facilitators and key players we have a significant role in achieving the main goal of the project that is planning a scientific aquatic species restoration plan by involving multiple stakeholders. She gave an overview and expected outcome of the six components of the project that WII has undertaken i.e. (i) Establishment of Ganga Aqualife Conservation Monitoring Centre, (ii) Planning Aquatic Species Restoration for Ganga River, (iii) Capacity Building of Forest Department and other Stakeholders, (iv) Establishment of Rescue and Rehabilitation Centres, (v) Community Based Conservation Programmes for Species Restoration in Ganga River and (vi) Nature Interpretation and Education for Biodiversity Conservation of Ganga River.

The sessions were concluded by questions and suggestions from all the participants on the biodiversity conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation and the ways to strengthen the project in Uttar Pradesh with their active involvement. Proper conduction of socio-ecological studies, encouragement of more awareness generating activities, gaining social support especially from eastern Uttar Pradesh, polluted water from tanneries should be treated and used from irrigating the agricultural fields nearby were few suggestions given by the participants at the workshop.

Technical Session 2: Group Discussion

After group discussion, a representative from each group presented the key challenges and solutions discussed. Following key challenges and solution have been discussed during the second technical session:

Challenges for wildlife

1. Illegal hunting of fishes in the river, leads to decline in their population, hence not enough catch for local fisherman community.
2. Fishing nets being used these days, often capture non target animal species.
3. Chemicals are sometimes used to kill fishes which are also harmful for other aquatic organisms.
4. Effluents released by factories located on river bank, directly into Ganga, pollute the water and make the survival of wildlife difficult. Some of the Sewage treatment plants and effluent treatment plants are not working efficiently.
5. Religious and cultural festival celebrations put a pressure on the river.
6. Cremation on the river bank and immersion of half burnt bodies and dumping of dead animals affects the river health adversely. In addition, people also immerse idols and religious waste.
7. Increasing tourism has led to increased plastic and polythene waste on Ganga Ghats.
8. Thousands of unwanted animals are left unattended on river banks, which become a nuisance for farmers, villagers, and also destroy habitats and eggs of turtles, crocodiles and Gharials.
9. Illegal agriculture on the river banks is also responsible for wildlife habitat destruction.
10. Identification of people responsible for it and taking appropriate action is a difficult task.
11. Illegal sand mining is a major problem in the area, affecting the river banks.
12. The boundary of forest is unclear, which creates management problems.
13. Lack of lower working staff is hurdle faced by the management in the area.
14. Lack of resources like steamers and weapons makes it difficult to catch the fish hunters.
15. There is lack of knowledge, awareness and skills among local people in the area of wildlife conservation.

Solutions

1. Responsibilities must be clearly defined for each villager and Panchyat member to achieve the goal of conservation of Ganga River so that work can be done smoothly.
2. A team consisting of experts from Panchayati Raj, Forest Department and wildlife should be there to train the local villagers and conduct regular awareness programmes to ensure involvement of local communities.
3. Cleaning of banks must be done regularly.

4. Electric crematoria or gas based crematoria should be set up to reduce the demand of wood from forests.
5. Plants of religious significance such as Neem, Peepal, Tulsi can be planted on banks so that people do not pollute the area, and also enhance aesthetic value of Ghats.
6. Awareness is of prime importance. Workshops and seminars must be conducted regularly by a wildlife expert, as the village people have little knowledge on the subject. School students must be sensitized.
7. NGOs and spearhead teams should be formed to sensitize people in villages regarding importance of aquatic wildlife.
8. Strict action should be taken on illegal activities such as- sand mining, river bank agriculture, large scale fishing.
9. Local communities should be motivated through small incentives like certificates, emolument.
10. Rescue centers should be set up and provision of vet-ambulance and wildlife experts should be made available to help distressed aquatic species.
11. Local communities must be encouraged to practice organic farming that address the issue of pollution due to agriculture run-off.
12. There must be separate teams for survey and resolving issues of disputed forest boundaries.
13. People with technical expertise and skills can be very helpful in conservation of wildlife.

The session was ended by a vote of thanks by Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj. He appreciated the efforts and active involvement of the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department and representative of Village Panchayats and NGOs during the sensitization workshop.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

7th January, 2017	
0900- 0915	Registration
0915- 0930	Welcome Address- Ms. Aditi Sharma, DFO, Meerut
0930- 1030	Project Overview: Biodiversity Conservation and Ganga Rejuvenation- Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, Scientist G, WII
1030-1100	Tea
1100-1200	Rare and endangered fauna of Ganga River: Conservation issues- Dr. S.A. Hussain, Scientist G, WII
1200-1300	Challenges face by Ganga River- Dr. Ruchi Badola, Scientist G, WII
1300-1400	Lunch
1400- 1600	Group Discussion
1600-1630	Vote of Thanks- Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj, Scientist G, WII

PHOTO GALLERY



Chair, co-chair and participants at the workshop



Dr. A.K. Bhardwaj Scientist G, WII, introducing the aims and objectives of the sensitization workshop



A group of participants discussing the issue and challenges in their areas

MEDIA COVERAGE

मेरा शहर, मेरी जान

अमर उजाला 7

रविवार, जनवरी 8, 2017

डॉल्फिन, घड़ियाल, ऊदबिलाव और कछुआ हस्तिनापुर सेंकचुरी की शान

सीसीएसयू में वाइल्ड लाइफ इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इंडिया की तरफ से हुई वर्कशॉप

गंगा क्षेत्र में दूर तक एक जगह नहीं हैं ये चारों जलीय जीव, हस्तिनापुर सेंकचुरी में रहते हैं साथ

अमर उजाला व्यूरो मेरठ।

डॉल्फिन, घड़ियाल, ऊदबिलाव और कछुआ हस्तिनापुर सेंकचुरी की शान हैं। गोमुख से लेकर चंबल तक ये चारों जलीय जीव गंगा क्षेत्र में एकसाथ मौजूद नहीं हैं। केवल हस्तिनापुर सेंकचुरी में साथ पाए जाते हैं। इनकी मौजूदगी बताती है कि हैबिटेट डेवलप कर रहा है। इनको संरक्षित और सुरक्षित करने की आवश्यकता है। गंगा में घड़ियालों को री इंटरक्रास यहां पहली बार किया गया। कई और वन्य सेंकचुरी को खस बनाती हैं।

शनिवार को सीसीएसयू के बृहस्पति भवन में वाइल्ड लाइफ इंस्टीट्यूट ऑफ इंडिया देहरादून के एक्सपर्ट ने वर्कशॉप की। जैव विविधता संरक्षण एवं गंगा कायाकल्प प्रोजेक्ट नगमिंग गंगा कार्यक्रम के तहत चल रहा है। इंस्टीट्यूट के सीनियर साइंटिस्ट डॉ. एसएच हुसैन ने बताया देश को 10 बायोग्राफिक जोन में बांटा है। जिसमें गंगा चार जोन में विभाजित है। 2600 किमी लंबी गंगा का करीब 700 किमी का हिस्सा दूरी में है। 50 प्रतिशत वन्य जीव गंगा में पाए जाते हैं। हस्तिनापुर सेंकचुरी में डॉल्फिन, घड़ियाल, ऊदबिलाव और कछुआ की एकसाथ मौजूदगी को उन्होंने शानदार बताया। तीन तरह के ऊदबिलाव पाए जाते हैं। यह मछली खाता है। घायल और बीमार मछलियों को अपना निवाला बनाता है। इसे पानी का टाइनर कहा जाता है। डॉल्फिन पांच तरह की हैं। उन्होंने कहा पल्लुशन का डॉल्फिन को फिजियोलॉजी पर असर पड़ रहा है। सेंकचुरी क्षेत्र के आसपास के लोगों को जागरूक और जिम्मेदार होने की जरूरत है। मुख्य वन संरक्षक मेरठ जोन सुकेश कुमार ने गंगा नदी की सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक और धार्मिक महत्व पर प्रकाश डाला। जैव विविधता संरक्षण पर जोर दिया। एक्सपर्ट में डॉ. एके भारद्वाज, डॉ. शक्ति बडोला, डॉ. जेएस जॉनसन, डॉ. गीतम तालुकदार ने विचार रखे। वन संरक्षक मेरठ रंज ललित कुमार वर्मा, वन संरक्षक सहारनपुर रंज रमेश पांडे, वन संरक्षक मुरादाबाद आरपी वर्मा, डीएफओ अर्जुन शर्मा, डब्ल्यूडब्ल्यूएफ से संजोव यादव मौजूद रहे। वर्कशॉप में ग्राम पंचायत प्रतिनिधि और एनजीओ ने भाग लिया। गंगा पर सुझाव लिए।

चौधरी चरण सिंह विधि के बृहस्पति भवन में आयोजित वर्कशॉप में मंचासीन अतिथि।

सबके सहयोग से ही निर्मल हो सकती है गंगा

मेरठ | बरिष्ठ संवाददाता

चौधरी चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय स्थित बृहस्पति भवन में शनिवार को जैव विविधता संरक्षण और गंगा कायाकल्प विषय पर कार्यशाला हुई। इसमें दिल्ली, देहरादून और अन्य स्थानों से आए विशेषज्ञों ने विस्तार से जानकारी देते हुए वन विभाग के अफसरों और गांव प्रधानों को जागरूक किया। ग्रामीणों को वन्य और जलीय जीवों के बारे में जानकारी दी। इसके बाद गंगा किनारे रहने वाले लोगों ने गंगा को निर्मल बनाने में उल्लेखनीय सहयोग देने का प्रभोस दिया।

पश्चिमी जोन यूपी के मुख्य वन संरक्षक मुकेश कुमार ने न केवल उत्तरी भारत बल्कि पूरे भारतवर्ष के लिए गंगा नदी के सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक महत्व से अवगत कराया। साथ ही गंगा नदी के कायाकल्प एवं जैव विविधता संरक्षण के महत्व पर प्रकाश डाला। उन्होंने बताया कि भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान की ओर से संचालित यह



शनिवार को चौधरी चरण सिंह विश्वविद्यालय में आयोजित कार्यशाला को संबोधित करते अतिथि। • हिन्दुस्तान

परियोजना न केवल वैज्ञानिक एवं अभिनव है बल्कि यह विश्वसनीय एवं आत्मनिर्भर भी है। भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान देहरादून के पांच सदस्यीय दल

भी कार्यशाला में मौजूद रहा। डॉक्टर एके भारद्वाज ने कार्यशाला के विषयों की जानकारी दी। डॉक्टर एसए हसन ने जैव विविधता संरक्षण एवं गंगा

कायाकल्प विषय पर प्रस्तुति करते हुए इस कार्यक्रम की पृष्ठभूमि, उद्देश्य एवं क्रियान्वयन विषय पर विस्तार से जानकारी दी। डॉक्टर रूचि बडोला ने

गंगा नदी की जलीय जैव विविधता के संरक्षण में स्थानीय समुदायों एवं स्थानीय संस्थाओं जैसे पंचायतों को भूमिका पर चर्चा की। जनहित फाउंडेशन की निदेशक अनीता राणा ने भी स्वच्छ गंगा अभियान को लेकर कई सुझाव दिए।

अंत में ग्राम पंचायत प्रतिनिधियों तथा वन विभाग के अधिकारियों से गंगा नदी के कायाकल्प हेतु सामूहिक चर्चा के माध्यम से सुझाव लिए गए। डीएफओ अदिति शर्मा ने कहा कि इस दौरान महत्वपूर्ण सुझाव दिए गए, जिससे गंगा कायाकल्प कार्यक्रम को प्राथमिकताएं तब करने में सहायता मिलेगी। इसका आयोजन भारतीय वन्य जीव संस्थान देहरादून के तत्वावधान में कराया गया। इस मौके पर मुख्य वन संरक्षक पश्चिमी जोन उत्तर प्रदेश मेरठ मुकेश कुमार, वन संरक्षक मेरठ वृत्त ललित वर्मा, वन संरक्षक सहरानपुर वृत्त रमेश पांडेय, वन संरक्षक मुरादाबाद आरपी वर्मा, एसडीओ संजीव कुमार समेत विभिन्न संस्थाओं के 200 प्रतिनिधि मौजूद रहे।

Forest dept unveils plans to attract tourists to Hastinapur bird sanctuary

Sandeep Rai@timesgroup.com

Meerut: As winged visitors arrive at Hastinapur wildlife sanctuary in large numbers, the forest department has unveiled a plan to attract bird watchers and photographers from far and wide to come and visit the over a dozen wetlands located along the 170-km stretch of the Ganga river in the district. The aim is to apprise wildlife lovers about the immense eco-tourism potential of the sanctuary.

As a part of its capacity building and stakeholders' involvement initiative, a one-day workshop was organised by the Wildlife Institute of India on Saturday for the sensitisation of Uttar Pradesh forest department personnel about the aims, objectives and importance of the project, keeping in view the current conservation scenario in the country. Chief forest conservator, Meerut zone, Mukesh Kumar, said, "There is no denying the fact that the 170-km-long stretch on either side of the river Ganga is rich in biodiversity. What is needed now is to draw tourists' attention towards it. Inviting



A recent survey by wildlife experts from across the country discovered 16 wetlands in the region, where more than 150 species of birds, including woolly necked stork, intermediate egret and grey heron arrive

bird lovers and ornithologists at a time when migratory birds arrive will go a long way in publicising the region." A recent survey by wildlife experts from across the country discovered 16 wetlands in the region, where more than 150 species of birds, including woolly necked stork, intermediate egret, grey heron, etc, arrive. "Soon, we will high-

light one wetland at a time and provide information on how to reach there. We will cover all the 16 wetlands in this manner," said Kumar. Bird lovers and experts are upbeat over the development. Speaking to TOI, Asad Rahman, former director of Bombay Natural History Society said, "This is a great effort by the forest department

to facilitate adventure trips for bird lovers who can enjoy bird watching in the vast wetlands along the river Ganga. It will certainly boost eco-tourism and will provide a good outlet for nature lovers. I hope with time, adequate resting facilities will also be provided to tourists." Rajat Bhargava, a renowned ornithologist, said, "At a time when rapid urbanisation is snatching away the opportunity from our youngsters to witness these beautiful birds, this step by the forest department is a silver lining. If work is done consistently on this project, I am sure we will not only be able to conserve these avian species but also leave a lasting legacy for the next generation."

"Though the region does not have any tiger, which is a major attraction in Corbett, we do have dolphins, gharials and turtles. And if all goes well according to plans, we will also have rhinos in the region. The aim is to develop this stretch as an eco-tourism zone. The 16 wetlands trip is just the beginning," said Kumar.