



## PANEL DISCUSSION

### November 4, 2014, Tuesday

CMS VATAVARAN, New Delhi & Punjab State Council for Science & Technology Chandigarh in collaboration with the Department of Botanical & Environmental Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar organised a panel discussion on Inland Waters and Wetlands Biodiversity of Punjab at Conference Hall of Guru Nanak Bhavan, Guru Nanak Dev University from 11:30 am - 2:00 pm on November 4, 2014.



**Delegates along with the experts during panel discussion**



**Experts on the Dias**

The event commenced with an introduction by Mr Sundeep C Srivastav, Head Coordination – CMS VATAVARAN, New Delhi, who greeted all distinguished guests and delegates. It was followed by a welcome address by Dr N Bhaskara Rao, Chairman, CMS, New Delhi, who outlined the progress and achievements of the organisation across India as well as other countries, such as Korea, Dubai etc. He informed the audience that such events have been conducted previously at Puducherry and will be taken to Raipur, Agra, Gangtok.



**Dr N Bhaskara Rao, Chairman, CMS New Delhi welcoming the guests & delegates**



**Mr Sundeep C Srivastav, Head Coordination – CMS VATAVARAN introducing the experts to the delegates**



The main purpose of the panel discussion was to mark the rise of key problems faced by Punjab such as falling water table and pollution via industrial sources.

The session was moderated by Dr Adarsh Pal Vig, Associate Professor, Department of Botanical & Environmental Sciences who extended a warm welcome to all dignitaries present including Mahavir Singh, IFS, Divisional Forests Officer, Amritsar; Prof A K Thukral, Professor, Department of Environment and Botanical Sciences, GNDU, Amritsar; Dr Satnam Singh Ladhar, Additional Director- Environment, PSCST, Chandigarh; Ms Geetanjali Kanwar, Senior Project Officer, WWF, India, New Delhi, and all NGO members such as Mr Prabhdial Singh Randhawa, Mr Babbar (Mission Aghaaz) and Mr PS Bhatti.

In his brief session with the audience, Prof A K Thukral talked about the three wetlands of Punjab under the Ramsar Convention with the prime agenda being Harrikke Wetland.



**Dr Adarsh Pal Vig, Associate Professor, DoBES, GNDU moderated the panel discussion**



**Prof A K Thukral, presenting his paper on the topic Inland Waters and Wetlands Biodiversity of Punjab**

He requested for the government to help reduce the levels of phosphates to minimum 0.5 % from the current amount of 20-27%. He urged the audience to use natural detergents like reetha and shikakai to avoid fertilizer runoffs into the wetlands. Treatment of waste water should be practiced so that it can be used for irrigation purpose, he added.

Dr Satnam Singh Ladhar talked about rampant climate change that has set in motion and triggered problems such as flooding and drought in certain areas. He advised counselling and awareness of common people and their sensitisation to environmental issues such as sewage disposal etc.

Shri Mahavir Singh talked about the legislative provisions and government policies in place to fight biodiversity loss such as the India Forest Act and Wildlife Protection Act. He proposed the enactment of the concept "ikk manukhh laave dass rukh" and quoted the example of controlling natural hazards such as forest fires across Punjab. He urged implementation of strict laws against poachers and smugglers and urged the audience to practice afforestation.



**Dr Satnam Singh Ladhar, Additional Director – Environment, PSCST, Chandigarh chaired the session**



**Shri Mahavir Singh, IFS, DFO, Amritsar is expressing his views on the topic Inland Waters and Wetlands Biodiversity of Punjab**

Ms Geetanjali talked about various scientific preservation strategies in practice at Harrikke.



**Ms Geetanjali Kanwar, Senior Project Officer, WWF India, New Delhi is delivering her presentation on the topic Inland Waters and Wetlands Biodiversity of Punjab**



**Delegates interacting with each other during the panel discussion**

Later on, an open house discussion was initiated by Dr Saxena who cited over-population and climate change being the biggest challenges. He proposed organising a film-making competition for the students on biodiversity and wildlife themes.

Representative from NGOs, scholars, faculty members actively participated in the Panel Discussion, which highlighted various local issues, such as absence of safe drinking water, public toilets, green belts, etc.

The vote of thanks was given by Prof. Saroj Arora and all the dignitaries were felicitated by the faculty of GNDU with "green souvenirs- potted plants" to deliver a strong green message on the occasion.

The Panel Discussion concluded with a special screening of the film, titled "Smarty Plants," by Kavita Bahl and Nandan Saxena (Winners for Rajat Kamal -Silver Lotus at The National Film Awards 2011), which delivered a special message on the practical utility of otherwise aesthetically pleasing plants.



**Open Forum on "Inland Waters and Wetlands Biodiversity of Punjab"**



**Felicitation of Experts during panel discussion**



**Prof Saroj Arora, Faculty, Department of Botanical and Environmental Sciences, Guru Nanak Dev University who is giving vote of Thanks**