

from Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi, encouraged discussion and interaction. The speakers for this session included Prof. Meenakshi Thapan from Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi, Ms. Reshma Valliappan, Founder & CEO of 'The Red Door' and Prof. Girishwar Misra. The afternoon of the second day included five parallel workshops that participants could register for. These were designed and moderated by celebrated practitioners and experts: Prof. Michael F. Mascolo facilitated a workshop titled 'Building a Self

Portrait: Exploring Fragmentation and Integration', Dr. Niel. Altman & Dr. Jillian Stile did one on 'Contemporary Social Media and Fragmented Self', Prof. Siri Hettige moderated 'The Violence Within: Understanding Suicide and Interpreting Suicide Data', Ms. Reshma Valliappan conducted 'Exploring Mental Health through Creativity' and Dr. Suriya Nayak facilitated 'Gender, Oppression and Identity'. All workshops saw enthusiastic participation and promoted insight development and exploration. The conference was well

received and appreciated by academicians and students alike. It proved to be a meeting ground for academicians, practitioners, researchers and students and provided a space for active discussion and learning on the theme and beyond.

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## Rajputana Society for Natural History (Rajasthan, India) Conducted Seminar on Nature - Human - Wildlife and Mutual Co-Existence

The Rajputana Society of Natural History (Rajasthan, India) organised a Two Days Seminar on "Nature Human Wildlife and Mutual Co-Existence" in collaboration with Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (Delhi, India), and a few other local bodies like the Confederation of Community Based Organisations of India, IIP Foundation, *Nari Manch*, and The Voice of Community. The Seminar was hosted at Rajputana's Shakuntalam (Village *Ramnagar*, Bharatpur, Rajasthan), located adjacent to the World Heritage and Ramsar Site - Keoladeo National Park. The Seminar brought together experts from different disciplines to discuss and analyse the centuries old inter-connectedness between nature, human and wildlife, the now disappearing relationship between these entities and the need for reconnecting human society with the

other two realms of Nature and Wildlife. The Seminar also discussed the need and importance of overcoming the urban-rural divide while carrying out developmental activities for human communities. For development to be sustainable, it must focus not only on economic growth but also on environmental protection and social development of all sections of the society. This was the underlying theme of the Two Day Seminar, which witnessed large-scale participation of people from urban as well as rural areas. The Seminar was also joined by considerable number of youth mainly from the village communities.

The first day of the Seminar included two sessions, in which a series of presentations and talks were delivered by various Dignitaries and Experts from different disciplines.

Both the Sessions were moderated by Dr. Satya Prakash Mehra, eminent Wildlife Scientist and Founder-Advisor of Rajputana Society of Natural History (RSNH). The first session was conducted in the rural environment of Rajputana's Shakuntalam, Village Ramnagar and the second session was conducted within the boundaries of an academic institute J.K. College, Bharatpur. The Chief Guest of the occasion was Dr. Swaraj Vidan, Member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), Government of India. Dr Vidan urged all participants to not let the Indian culture and heritage be forgotten and reminded them that it is this rich heritage of India which makes her a culturally developed nation in the world. Dr. Vidan was joined by Mr. Abhay Singh of National Bank For Agriculture And Rural Development

(NABARD), India; Dr. Umesh Chandra Gaur of Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Delhi; Ms. Sadhana Gaur of Naari Manch; Mr. Surjit Singh of Banjara Society of Cultural & Natural Heritage; Dr. Sarita Mehra of RSNH and the Keynote speaker Dr. B.K. Gupta, Associate Professor, M.S.J. College, Bharatpur.

The Session began with mesmerizing Rajasthani Folk Dance *Ghoomar* performed by girls from rural communities trained by RSNH and was followed by introductory remarks and talks by the Dignitaries on the dais. The importance and contemporary relevance of the theme of the Seminar was highlighted by all speakers. Dr. Swaraj Vidan shared the rich legacy of India's past where every human being used to live in harmony with nature and wildlife as a way of life. Dr. Umesh Chandra Gaur appreciated and specially thanked the village participants for being present at the Seminar and encouraged them to continue to work towards rural development. In his Keynote speech, Dr. B.K. Gupta elaborated on Indian cultural and value system which has all the answers for the various environmental challenges being faced by India and the world today.

Both the sessions included interactive talks and presentations by Experts from the field of Environment, Wildlife, Media and other academic disciplines. These

included Dr. Govind Singh from Delhi, Dr. Vinay Singh Kashyap from Jaipur, Dr. Vivek Sharma from Ajmer, Mr. Anil Rogers from Udaipur, Mr. Mukesh Panwar from Dungarpur and Mr. Diwakar Yadav from Ajmer. Dr. Govind Singh reminded the participants of the vision of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Indian Nation, for carrying out inclusive development, so that the benefits of development can reach all sections of the society. He also urged the participants to join the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Mission) by keeping their surroundings clean and healthy. Dr. Vinay Singh Kashyap highlighted the intricate relationship between women and nature by focusing on the day to day activities carried out by women in their households. Dr. Vivek Sharma shared from his knowledge of working with snakes and other reptiles and created awareness and sensitization in the participants for learning to co-exist with nature and wildlife. His talk also focused on the different species of snakes found in Bharatpur and on how to keep oneself safe from poisonous snakes. Mr. Anil Rogers focused his talk on the need to minimize human-wildlife conflict while Mr. Mukesh Panwar introduced the fascinating world of butterflies to the participants. Mr. Diwakar Yadav urged all participants, especially the youth, to realize that there life will become meaningless if the wildlife around us ceases to exist. A key highlight of the

first day was the thematic display of philately themed on Nature and Wildlife. This was a unique initiative of Ms. Pushpa Khamesra and Mr. Ravi Khamesra (from Udaipur, India), of using postal stamps for raising awareness towards environment and wildlife.

The second day of the Seminar began with a field visit to Village *Umraind* in Weir Block of District Bharatpur, Rajasthan. All the Dignitaries and experts were taken to the recently constructed check-dam at *Umraind Nallah*, Village *Umraind* constructed with support from Coca Cola India Foundation (CCIF). The intricacies of the construction and working of the check-dam and also the benefits that the nearby region will obtain from it were shared by Dr. Sarita Mehra of RSNH. This was followed by the interactive public discussion led by Dr. Swaraj Vidan and other dignitaries with villagers from Village *Umraind* and neighbouring villages. The Two Day Seminar paved the way for more such interactions to bridge the deepening urban-rural divide in India. It thus served as a stepping stone for promoting inclusive and sustainable development of India as a whole.

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