



Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Mohali भारतीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान मोहाली

Knowledge City, Sector 81, Mohali (Punjab), INDIA - 140 306

नॉलेज सिटी, सेक्टर 81, मोहाली (पंजाब), भारत - 140 306

The biodiversity of Hindu Kush Himalayas is precarious, unless we act now, it will be too late

Press Release (June 05, 2024)

Mohali, Punjab, June 05, 2024. - "India is the 12th mega diversity country around the world with a rich biodiversity, yet the threat of extinction hangs over several species," said renowned Ecologist Dr. Eklavya Sharma (Padma Shri Awardee 2024 in science and engineering). He delivered the keynote lecture titled "Transformation for Resilience and Sustainability in the Hindu Kush Himalayas" at IISER Mohali " as part of World Environment Day celebrations.

Dr. Sharma, a pioneer in his field, is known for establishing the Hindu Kush Himalaya Assessment, a groundbreaking initiative that involves eight countries and over 300 leading researchers, practitioners, experts, and policymakers. In his talk he underscored the urgent need for discussion and public consensus for sustainable solutions to pressing environmental challenges. He emphasized that the Hindu Kush Himalaya region, a treasure trove of biodiversity and a crucial water source for millions, is facing rapid biodiversity loss, severe climate change impacts, and disaster risks. 'The Hindu Kush Himalayas are not just a geographical feature; they are a lifeline that supports diverse ecosystems and human livelihoods,' Dr. Sharma eloquently stated.

Dr. Sharma stressed that the threat to biodiversity necessitates transformative approaches to strengthen resilience and sustainability, and the collective effort of all the countries through which the Hindu Kush mountain range traverses. He emphasized that without regional cooperation, the challenges cannot be met. Furthermore, he discussed the interdependent role of environmental health, economic development, and social well-being. He advocated for integrated strategies that involve local communities, innovative technologies, and policy interventions, emphasizing the crucial role of each individual in this endeavor.

He elaborated some case studies and insights from the latest research on adaptive management practices, ecosystem restoration, and community-led initiatives. He also emphasized the role of education and capacity building in fostering a culture of sustainability among future generations.

World Environment Day has been celebrated on June 5 since 1972. This year's special theme is "Land Restoration, Desertification, and Drought Resilience."

The Director, Professor Anil K. Tripathi, welcomed him. Professor Tripathi introduced the speaker and said that ecologist Dr Eklavya Sharma is known worldwide for advocating the global mountain agenda for its restoration, especially for the Hindu Kush Himalayan region. He listed some of his renowned awards and distinguished positions in his 40 years of experience.

Professor Amit Kulshrestha, Dean of International Relations and Outreach, expressed heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sharma for sharing his invaluable insights and inspiring the audience. 'We are deeply honored to host Dr. Eklavya Sharma, whose work has had a profound impact on environmental science and policy. His lecture has provided us with invaluable perspectives on how we can

contribute to the resilience and sustainability of the Hindu Kush Himalayas,' Professor Kulshrestha remarked, acknowledging Dr. Sharma's significant contributions to the field.

The lecture concluded with an engaging Q&A session, where participants had the opportunity to delve deeper into specific aspects of Dr. Sharma's work. This interactive session not only showcased the audience's keen interest in the topic but also highlighted the potential for future research and collaboration. The event was well-attended, with a significant number of students and academicians from within the institute and tricity, further underscoring the importance of the lecture and its impact on the academic community.

About IISER Mohali. *The Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) Mohali is a premier institution dedicated to scientific research and education. Established to promote high-quality science education and research, IISER Mohali offers a vibrant academic environment and fosters interdisciplinary collaborations to address contemporary scientific challenges.*