

**NATIONAL WEBINAR  
ON  
'RETHINKING TO REBUILDING-STEPPING TOWARDS  
ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY & ECOSYSTEM  
SERVICES'**

Ganderbal, Oct 15: Department of Botany, Central University of Kashmir (CUK) organized an online invited lecture on “Rethinking to Rebuilding-Stepping Towards Environment, Sustainability & Ecosystem services” by Prof. Mohammad Latif Khan, Director Academic Affairs, Dr. Harisingh Gour Vishwavidyalaya.

In his presidential address, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mehraj ud Din Mir, welcomed the speaker and highlighted the importance of educating young minds in J&K about the vanishing biodiversity in Kashmir Himalayas.

In his special address, Registrar, Prof. M Afzal Zargar, highlighted the importance of the lecture with respect to current issues in ecology such as plundering of natural resources, ecological imbalances, climate change, forest fires, flooding etc. He emphasized the importance of teachers in educating the youngsters to spread the awareness for future generations.

In his lecture, Prof. M Latif Khan highlighted various environmental challenges and the need to rebuild link with nature to mitigate & reverse the same for better sustainable future. “Healthy ecosystem leads to better health in the human population.” He deliberated upon the current coal shortage in Delhi due to “overexploitation & subsequent consequences in near future.” He said there is an alarming rate of deforestation. “Approximately 80 percent of the world's forest cover has been lost at the rate of 375 km<sup>2</sup>/day. About 5 to 10 percent of species are lost in a decade. With the current deforestation rate, 60 percent forest cover will be lost from the surface of planet earth,” he said. He talked about the “damage” caused by road construction in the Himalayas and the need to rethink and reverse the trend to protect biodiversity. Besides, increase in the incidences of forest fires and its devastating consequences in the ecosystem were also explained in detail by the speaker. He said “each species has a right to live on earth” in a healthy biosphere, adding the land use change is the topmost cause of communicable & other diseases in ecosystems. Prof M.L Khan shared many success stories of restoration ecology in North-eastern States & highlighted the need of adopting such approaches in protecting damaged ecosystems in Kashmir Himalayas.

Dean School of Life sciences, Prof. Muhammad Yousuf, in his special remarks talked about his involvement in Jabalpur forests of Sal & Teak in M.P for 10 years. He requested Prof M.L Khan to work on the ecotone of Chhattisgarh.

Prof Azra N. Kamili (Convener), Nodal Person, Department of Botany, introduced Prof M Latif Khan by highlighting his academic achievements. Dr. Abid Hamid Dar, Director Science Campus (Co-convener) presented welcome address for all the dignitaries & participants.

Dr. Rafiq Lone, organizing secretary, highlighted the importance of organizing the lecture considering the importance of Biodiversity in the era of Climate Change and also conducted the proceedings of the lecture. Dr. Shaiesta Shah presented the vote of thanks and Dr. Sajad Ahmad Lone was the rapporteur.