

## **G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment**

Annual Day Celebration - 10 September 2020

1. The GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, an autonomous Institute of MoEF&CC, organized its Annual Day on 10th September 2020 using virtual platform. Prof Tej Pratap, Vice Chancellor, GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology delivered the 26th Pt. Govind Ballabh Pant Memorial Lecture "Future of Himalayan Farm Economy: Trapped in Limits, Conflicts, Aspirations & Institutional Apathy". The lecture provided a deep insight on state of Himalayan Agriculture and beautifully analysed transforming scene of Himalayan agriculture using ecological, economic and social drivers of change. The lecture very clearly gave a message that there are many local success stories and experiences of failures in the region from which others can learn what to avoid doing. Message is also wide and clear that there is lack of lateral flow of knowledge, information, and mechanisms for sharing of experiences, among the people and institutions of the Himalayan states. Also, it captured how the changes in social values are forcefully changing the ways mountain farmers are bound to evolve farming based livelihoods and economy of the future. Considering that the farming system still continues as mainstay for the region and the region is known for its rich agricultural diversity and practices, there is a need to take messages of this lecture forward to address issues of both agriculture based conservation and development in the region.
2. Guest of Honour of the function, Secretary MoEF&CC, Shri R.P. Gupta, mentioned, the Himalaya plays an important role in ensuring ecological and economic security to entire Indian subcontinent and beyond. Therefore, Government of India places this region on a high priority. In this context, the Initiatives at Government level, such as the National Mission on Himalayan Study (NMHS), as implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC) provide opportunity to cover diverse aspects of complex and vulnerable Himalayan Ecosystem. The Mission during last 5 years has made significant progress in commissioning action research projects across Himalayan States. Till date a total of 174 such projects have been funded. Also, to support independent researches in challenging areas of Himalaya a total of 175 Himalayan fellowships have been created for young researchers. Altogether, over 282 crores of rupees have been invested in this initiative. He appreciated Institute's efforts to join hands with Ladakh UT administration to organize 'Carbon Neutral Ladakh' summit. The recommendations of this summit have been agreed by the UT Administration for time bound actions. He desired, similar efforts need to be made in other

parts of Himalaya. Referring the Himalaya a nature dominated landscape, he mentioned possibilities for Nature Based Solutions from the region are high. Particularly in the wake of COVID-19 there is a growing interest of globe on medicinal plants, especially as immunity boosters. He appreciated that the Institute has initiated multi pronged action: (i) expert consultations through webinars, (ii) field action for promoting cultivation of medicinal plants, and (iii) developing demonstrations of degraded land restoration using Medicinal plants.

3. Among special guests of the event, Prof. AN Purohit, Padma Shri, appreciated Institutes progress and wished that Institute should contribute for understanding and preventing the losses due to increasing frequency of cloudbursts in the region. Dr. Eklabya Sharma, Chairman Scientific Advisory Committee of the Institute was of the opinion that Institute by its comprehensive work in Indian Himalayan region can play a catalyst role for science based development in entire Hindu Kush Himalaya. Prof. SP Singh former Vice Chancellor HNB Garhwal University emphasized on complex and much deeper role of Institute to understand complexities and address issues of the Himalaya. He recommended that Institute should build functional collaborations across region and play a role in establishing a mountain academy.
4. Chief Guest of the function Member of Parliament (LS), Almora, Shri Ajay Tamta appreciated the work being conducted by the Institute and its partners in the Himalaya. He encouraged the faculty of the Institute and other alike Institutions to put in more efforts to address immediate problems of the people. He emphasized on promotion of farmer to farmer interactions and practical demonstrations. Also, more efforts from research community are required to address issues of livelihoods in disaster affected remote areas.
5. Director of the Institute, Dr. R.S. Rawal, while delivering welcome address, briefed the house on major achievements of the Institute during the year. Also it was informed to the house that Institute celebrated the Annual Day by way of extended academic events during 25 August to 9th September. Which included 08 events (Webinars – 05; capacity building cum field actions – 03) and got inputs of 72 Experts/Panellists representing 54 Organizations and a total of over 250 Attendees were there. Dr. Rawal Informed, some of these events were specifically focused on addressing the issues of COVID affected persons in the Himalaya. The regional centres of the Institute organized popular lectures at respective centres. The function was attended by over 150 participants using virtual platform.