



Editorial

Hello readers, CEiBa team is happy-presenting the 2nd issue of the newsletter for the year, 2019.

Six issues of the newsletter are out and it turned one and a half years now.

One primary aim of the newsletter is to tell about the fascinating realms of the natural world to the readers who represent all sections of the society. Our authors and team members work relentlessly to keep the contents simple, easy-digesting yet scientifically correct. We anticipate our newsletter will fill up the pervasive gap between science and the society and will receive applause from our readers.

With this in mind, this time our article section starts with 'Food from *paataal loke*'. The literary meaning of '*paataal loke*' is underworld or in a coarse term underground. Against the backdrop of flood-prone Kosi river basin in North Bihar, local economically down-trodden people are heavily dependent on diverse underground life forms for their food supply in lean season and as an alternative nutrition resource. A field researcher's first-hand account on these traditional practices describes the natural resource diversity and people's adaptive power to explore and exploit it. In continuation, our second article is also on food but covering one of the important but under-explored components of modern-day food chain, the consumers or buyers. Unbelievable maybe, but food consumers are one of the prime factors responsible for shaping up agro-biodiversity. It is the preference for certain food which partly prompts agriculture production, intensification, and homogenization; on the other hand, the same customers' desire for unique and rare types also influences local agri-flora and fauna conservation. Our second article describes this complex and conflicting topic with rice as an example. It dabbles in *Basmati* to *Palghat Matta*, high-yielding varieties to local landraces, 5-star hotels to farmers' house, and agriculture to cultural practice to give us a flavor of consumer-driven angle of rice diversity. Next in line is an article on forest ecosystem. Majority of us perceives forest as a place with uninterrupted distribution of trees. For ecologists, this apparent tranquillity poses a series of questions on the underlying laws of distribution. What are the driving factors behind the pattern of plant distribution? Is it solely dependent on environment? Seed dispersal? Competition for resources or chance factors? This article narrates this inside story of the tropical forest through a learner's perspective. Hope our next visit to the forest will be more meaningful and enjoyable.

In wild food section, members like *Nelumbo* sp., *Diospyros* sp., *Ziziphus* sp. and *Cordia* sp. with their diverse foody sides made their place. Many of which were in regular diet even a generation ago, but they have disappeared from our plate as well as from market. We hope that readers can recall some of the dishes and resurrect the link with these unconventional foods described through vivid descriptions, images, and associated food maps.

Coming to the end, snippets on dark diversity, bird airport, floating guava market, superfood of the Bible – Manna, and wild food of Bengaluru are also crowding the readers-basket.

So, welcome and have a very happy reading.

Rajasri Ray

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