Editorial

Welcome once again.

We are slowly approaching one of the major seasonal changes in the hemispheres along with crop cycles, animal migrations (bird, butterflies, caribous) and festivals. Interestingly, these activities of nature also craft the socio-cultural and religious identity of the human society which makes up an integral part of biodiversity. Human social behavior, cultural preference, religious inclination, and adaptive capacity are few of the key players between biodiversity maintenance and livelihood improvement. In the human-nature interface, language acts as a medium of communication to understand, explore and maintain natural world dynamics. For instance, the diversity of vernacular names and their underlying reasons, local wisdom of natural phenomena, traditional resource use patterns, aesthetic and spiritual connections with nature are the areas where language has a domineering role. Linguistic diversity is as astounding as biodiversity and is also under severe threat like its biological counterparts. Given worldwide concern on vanishing indigenous languages, United Nations declared the year 2019 as "Year of Indigenous Languages (IY2019)" to raise awareness as well as to acknowledge their enormous contribution towards the global cultural diversity. Our first article penned this relevant issue with an emphasis on how nature and culture are complementing each other in terms of language and whether a coordinated strategy can be implemented to conserve both of them. Likewise, from the uniqueness of language diversity we land on the forests of "living fossil", located in the Ziarat valley of north-western Pakistan. Amidst the rugged terrain, extreme weather and feisty tribesmen, there lies ancient juniper forest, one of the very unique kinds in the world. An internationally acclaimed ecosystem, Ziarat junipers are the lifeline of the region. This forest supports a myriad of lifeforms both plants and animals, provides ecosystem services and is the socio-cultural identity of the local people. Our second article presents a snapshot of the Ziarat valley, an under-explored biodiverse region. Next in line, our third article deals with another endangered life form, small fishes of eastern India. Once ubiquitous in all inland aquatic ecosystem, they gradually vanished from nature due to systematic aggression of market-friendly big fishes, both native and exotic. On their vanishing trail, issues like change in the aquatic ecosystem, impact on poor man's diet, micronutrient deficiency, and so on resurfaces. This fishy article reminds us of the diversity of lost fishes and their importance in our life.

In the wild food section, this issue covers species of *Debregeasia*, *Ipomoea*, *Pueraria*, and *Sesbania*, which are commonly available in the local food market but remain unexplored. Hope this documentation on their culinary use may compel us to diversify our food habit and to resurrect our acceptance to the cost-effective nutrient resource.

The snippets flaunt interesting fusion of natural phenomena as well as human-induced interventions. There are many shades, Olive Ridley turtles affected by global climate change, carnivorous vulture bees, coconut coir as coastal erosion breaker, Guantanamo bay prison as a research centre and, sticky rice from Bengal.

Enjoy your reading.

Rajasri Ray

RAJASRI RAY