



It's July, and summer monsoon is roaming around the South Asian countries, a boon to the agricultural economy. Simultaneously, it is the time when news related to natural disasters reaches its peak. Floods, landslides, erratic rainfall, loss of livelihood, and damages to property are the known casualties recurring each year, even on the rise in recent times. Moreover, the future scenario looks grim due to the adverse impacts of climate change on the planetary system. Interestingly, we have remarkably improved our preparedness in terms of weather prediction, disaster management, and protection measures. Names like Doppler radar, weather satellites, forecasting models, and disaster management team are widely circulated on the media. On the other hand, the 'same' we are bearing the brunt of these catastrophic events.

So, where does the gap exist?

The gap is in our understanding of nature, often considered as the supplier of our materialistic demands. The uncontrolled requirement and excessive modifications push the natural dynamics beyond the carrying capacity where techno-centric remedies are of no use. For our water catastrophe factors like dam constructions, alteration in river channels, riverbed encroachment, sand mining, garbage dumping, and water pollution are already well-known and discussed topics but are often biased towards human-centric interventions like livelihood struggles and developmental issues. As a result, ecosystem losses and related matters are often considered collateral damage and never get due priority unless they hit rock bottom. Countless rules and regulations are in place to confront the situation, umpteen numbers of scientists, NGOs, and common people are trying their best to minimize the adverse impacts but without a genuine, strong, and collective social and political will the goal is still far away.

Our monsoon issue starts its journey from north-eastern India. Hosting the wettest places on the earth, a biodiversity hot spot, a region of flowering plant evolution, blessed with rich tribal diversity and culture, this region has many feathers in its' cap. It is interesting to note that where animal hunting is a part of the culture in that same area community-based conservation efforts are gaining momentum despite having challenges. The author with his engaging writing style introduces us to the Sino-Tibetan lineage of the Indian biodiversity and its' connection with the livelihood. Next in line, our second article talks about universal service providers of the agricultural fields, the honey bee. We are indebted to them for the valuable pollination services which ensure food supply throughout the world. But in exchange, we are unable to provide suitable living conditions to our crucial allies let alone the working environment. How about India? Are we doing anything good to them? Sorry, it's a big NO!!. The harmful agricultural practices have been intensified since the Green Revolution and the nightmare even increased due to skyrocketing demand of agrochemicals. Narrating the whole story, the author warns us about the consequences of aggressive market-oriented practices, especially on life-saving ecosystem services like pollination.

The wild food section introduces us to the culinary power of *Satawari*, *Amaltas*, Asiatic butterfly bush, and *Cholakara*. Amongst them, *Satawari* and *Amaltas* plants are famous for their medicinal use and landscape beautification purposes. However, the preparation of dishes like curries, chutneys, and desserts from them is certainly new addition for us. Likewise Butterfly bush and *Cholakara* are familiar to the rural people and local consumption is well known though sparsely documented.

Likewise, glimpses of Nature have a few interesting mini-articles ranging from cave to cotton. It will be amazing to discover the link between insects and sustainability, the mystery of glittering moss light inside the underworld cave, the pollination puzzle for kiwi fruit, and the tribal cotton from the Garo hills. Hope the readers will enjoy this rich platter of diversity in our newsletter.

Happy reading

Rajarsi Ray