

REPORT ON CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (IDB) 2017

The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) 2017 was celebrated at Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding (IFGTB), Coimbatore, on 22nd May 2017. The theme of IDB-2017 was 'Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism'. Biologists and conservationists have expressed grave concern over supposed threats to biological diversity due to various reasons; one among them is negative impacts of unplanned tourism and related activities. As biodiversity is the foundation for life and the essential services provided by ecosystems, it underpins peoples' livelihoods and sustainable development in all areas of activity. Biodiversity, at the level of species and ecosystems, provides an important foundation for many aspects of tourism. Tourism potential of attractive landscapes as well as rich biodiversity and resultant economic gains is one of the supportive or strong justifications for biodiversity conservation. A well-managed tourist sector can contribute significantly to reducing threats to biodiversity and maintain or increase key wildlife populations and biodiversity values through revenue earned from this sector.

Understanding the importance of the theme 'Biodiversity and Sustainable Tourism' of IDB 2017, Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore organized one day field trip for research scholars and students of the institute on 22nd May 2017 to 'Kovai Kutralam', Coimbatore, a well known eco-tourism area situated in the Western Ghats. Dr. C. Kunhikannan, Head, Biodiversity Division of IFGTB explained about the importance of the International Day for Biological Diversity and various themes dealt with over the years. He also gave an overview of the biodiversity richness of the ecotourism area. The officials from the Tamil Nadu Forest Department briefed about various aspects of the eco-tourism activities going on there, especially the solid waste management, cleaning, maintenance of comfort stations, drinking water supply etc. and

involvement of local and tribal people from surrounding six villages in these activities. The research scholars and students visited Singapathy tribal settlement. Dr. K. Panneer Selvam, Scientist-D, Biodiversity Division explained about the dependence of tribal people on the forest for their livelihood. The participants interacted with tribal people. Later on, the group also visited a Furniture and Craft Making unit run by tribal people, wherein *Lantana camara* – the invasive exotic weed is used as the raw material.



**Participants and Tamilnadu Forest Dept. officials near the teak plantation at
'Kovai Kuttralam'**



Dr. C. Kunhikannan briefing about the importance of International Day for Biological Diversity



Explaining the utilities of certain plant species



Dr. K.Panneer Selvam addressing the group at Singapathi Village



Interaction of participants with tribal women



Interaction with tribal people.



Tribal woman explaining about Lantana furniture and craft making



Discussion on values of forest and its components