

Report (2017)

The department observed 'Geography Day' on 6th February 2017, an annual event which brings together students of Geography from different colleges. The event began with lecture and presentation by Professor Mondira Dutta, who specialises in Gender studies and is placed at the Centre for Inner Asian Studies School of International Studies, JNU. She highlighted the problem of trafficking of women and girls in India and emphasised the role of community to prevent and stop this ghastly trade. The lecture was an eye-opener and very well received by students. The second half of the day saw activities like quiz, poster making, and creating useful things from waste. All these activities were organised keeping in mind the essence of the discipline of Geography, and attracted enthusiastic participation from students.

The Geography department organised a State Level Seminar on 3rd March, 2017 in collaboration with ICSSR. The seminar was entitled 'Askot Arakot Abhiyan: A Historical Geography of Himalayan Communities'. The seminar focused on the Himalayan ecosystem whose fragility and transformative nature has always attracted scientists and social scientists alike including Geographers and Historians. The main speaker for the first session of the seminar was Professor Shekhar Pathak, a noted Historian. Some of the main areas touched by Professor Pathak were: One, the society: culture, caste structure, gender, traditional knowledge systems, health and education; two, the economy: agriculture, cottage industry, forest and non-forest produce, Indo-Tibet trade, tourism, impact of the economic policies, globalisation and liberalisation; three, the resources: status of land, water, forests, wild life, human resources and their management; four, Governance: panchayati raj, women's participation; and five, the Environmental scenario: deforestation, mining, dams, erosion, landslides, etc. Professor Pathak strongly recommended the use of indigenous knowledge in solving the problems of this region.

The second half of the seminar commenced with a documentary film show portraying a galaxy of information on the Askot Arakot Abhiyan focussing on the ecological challenges of the Himalayan region along with the challenges faced by the communities dwelling therein. The second segment of the seminar included the presentation of Dr. Kalpana Bhakuni. The deliberations were arranged to structure the idea of how natural scenery becomes visual resource. The landscapes were typified as the Focal, Panoramic, Vivid, Uniform and Feature landscapes, and were discussed along with the scenic variables to identify such landscapes. The 'Panel approach' to seek the consensus in order to evolve an evaluation of scenic potential was also touched upon. As a whole, the presentation upheld the natural scenery of Kumaon Himalayas as a potential natural resource of high order.

The department of Geography organized a one-day excursion to Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary located in the National Capital Territory of Delhi on 26 September. This man-made sanctuary lying in south-eastern part of Delhi plays a major role in absorbing pollution and act as a carbon sink, thus providing clean air to citizen of Delhi. It has a Conservation Education Center, established by Bombay Natural History Society and Government of NCT. The students of B.A. (Honors) Geography and B.A. (Program) participated in the field excursion, accompanied by faculty members of the department of Geography. The group undertook a nature's walk in the sanctuary under the supervision of trained personnel who acquainted the participants with intricacies of the micro-ecosystems in the sanctuary. The students watched various animals and birds and made an inventory of the butterflies found in the sanctuary. They were also shown a documentary on the life cycle of a butterfly in the conservation education center at the

sanctuary. The field excursion proved to be fruitful exercise for education in nature observation and conservation.