



KERALA STATE BIODIVERSITY BOARD

EKAA

Environment, Kerala, Awareness, Action

E-Newsletter of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board

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International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 9 August

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is observed on August 9 every year across the world. This day is marked as the contribution and achievement of indigenous people who hold a vast diversity of unique cultures, traditions, languages, and knowledge systems. The day is observed to raise awareness to protect the social, economic, and political rights of the indigenous communities. As many human activities are damaging the ecosystem, the survival, identity, and livelihoods of many people are at risk. On 23 December 1994, the United Nations General Assembly decided, in its resolution 49/214, that the International Day of the World's Indigenous People shall be observed on 9 August every year. The date marks the day of the first meeting, in 1982, of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. On this day, people from around the world are encouraged to spread the UN's message on the protection and promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples. The theme for International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2021 is "Leaving no one behind: Indigenous peoples and the call for a new social contract."

There are over 476 million indigenous people living in 90 countries across the world, accounting for 6.2 per cent of the global population. Indigenous people are the holders of a vast diversity of unique cultures, traditions, languages and knowledge systems. They have a special relationship with their lands and hold diverse concepts of development based on their

own worldviews and priorities. Although numerous indigenous people worldwide are self-governing and some have been successful in establishing autonomy in varying forms, many indigenous people still come under the ultimate authority of central governments who exercise control over their lands, territories and resources. Despite that reality, indigenous people have demonstrated extraordinary examples of good governance.

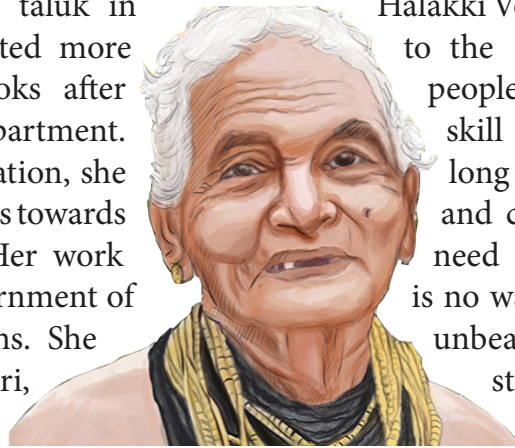
According to the 2001 census of India, the Scheduled Tribe population in Kerala is 3,64,189 (lunas – 180,169 and felunas – 184,020). Wayanad has the highest number of tribals (1,36,062). Idukki - (50,973) and Palakkad (39,665) districts are the next two that make the lion portion of the native tribal people groups in the state. The Paniya (Paniyar) are the largest of the 35 major tribes.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated many existing inequalities, disproportionately affecting populations all over the world that were already suffering from poverty, illness, discrimination, institutional instability or financial insecurity. From the perspective of indigenous people, the contrast is even starker. In many of our societies, the social contract, at the very least, needs some revision. Traditional community is the primary utilizers of forest biodiversity and hence, their proper involvement is the key for biodiversity conservation. Benefit Sharing is the anchor for ensuring their involvement in the biodiversity conservation and KSBB is hoping that in coming years, we could be able to ensure the ABS benefits to the tribal communities in a proper way for their betterment.



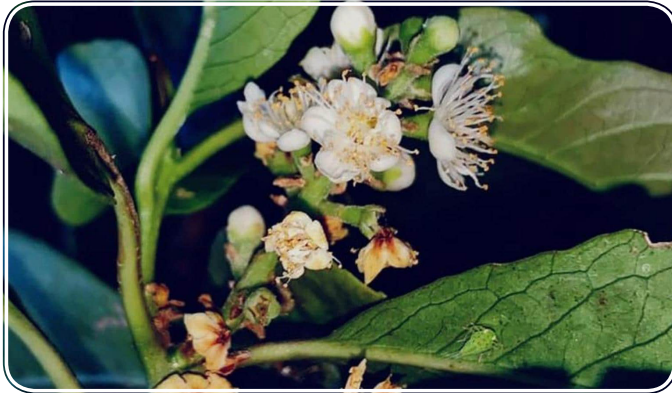
Eminent Personalities

Tulsi Gowda is an Indian environmentalist from Honnali village, Ankola taluk in Karnataka state. She has planted more than 30,000 saplings and looks after the nurseries of the Forest Department. Despite having no formal education, she has made immense contributions towards preserving the environment. Her work has been honoured by the government of India and various organizations. She was honoured with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award



of India, on 26 January 2020. She belongs to the Halakki Vokkalu tribe, is a classic example to the fact that utilising indigenous peoples' knowledge and management skill of natural resources will go a long way in protecting biodiversity and combating climate change. "We need forests. Without forests, there is no water, no crops, the sun becomes unbearably hot. If forests thrive, the state would as well," Gowda said.

Species Discoveries



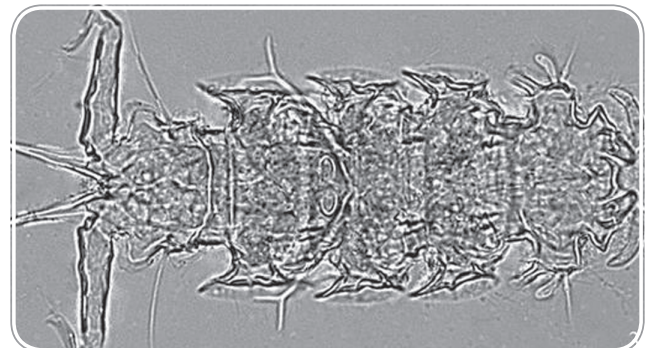
Three research scholars, (one from the United States), have discovered a new plant in Kerala's Ponmudi hills which is part of the Western Ghats, one of the eight hot test hotspots of biological diversity in the world. They named the plant '*Symplocos mohananii*' after Dr N Mohanan, former principal

scientist of JNTBGRI, Thiruvananthapuram. The scholars said the tree was named after the scientist for his outstanding contribution spanning 37 years in the field of taxonomy (classification of plants) and conservation of biodiversity. Mohanan discovered more than 33 new species from the Western Ghats. "The tree is very endemic in nature and we could spot only five of them during our research. Though it looks like other plants of the genus *Symplocos*, a critical analysis of micro and macro characters of it later revealed that the *Symplocos mohananii* is a different species," said the researchers who made this discovery.

(<https://www.biotaxa.org/Phytotaxa/article/view/phytotaxa.480.2.8>)

Stygarctus keralensis - a new species is the first taxonomically described marine tardigrade from the Indian waters, which makes the discovery a significant one, the researchers behind the discovery say. *Stygarctus keralensis* was discovered from Vadakara in north Kerala by a research team consisting of Vishnudattan N.K., Jayachandran P.R., and S. Bijoy Nandan, professor, Department of Marine Biology, Microbiology and Biochemistry, Cochin University of Science and Technology. J.G. Hansen, University of Copenhagen, was associated with the study. *Stygarctus keralensis* is the eighth species named under the genus *Stygarctus*, which grows up to a length of 130

micrometers (0.13 mm). The discovery is the result of an ongoing study on the ecology and diversity of the submarine groundwater habitats of Kerala. Their findings have been published in



Green Reads

“Legal Protection for Traditional Knowledge: Towards A New Law for Indigenous intellectual Property”, Anindya Bhukta, the author underscores the value of traditional knowledge and argues that legal systems need to ensure better protection of this knowledge, with a particular focus on India. This book is an ideal primer for readers looking to find out more about the laws concerning traditional knowledge. In “Legal Protection for Traditional Knowledge”, Bhukta has successfully illustrated the need for comprehensive protection of TK that crosses the boundaries of IPR and laws on patents, Geographical Indicators (GIs), trademarks and copyrights. The book shows how TK is significant in human life and history,

and how it is extracted from richly biodiverse countries of the Global South. However, the discussions in this book are more descriptive than critical, which makes it useful as a short handbook rather than as a reference book. Yet, through the simplicity of the analysis, this book will be helpful to students of law and other related subjects as well as general readers, providing the first stepping stone to understanding TK and the relevance of its protection.



Originally published: 18 June 2020
 Author: Anindya Bhukta
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 Genre: Law, ISBN: 9781800430662, 9781800430662
 Pages: 192, Available at Flipkart: ₹5,251

Model Conservation Activities

Distributed “Thenvarikka” saplings for Jack Fruit Promotion

Because of the influx of exotic fruit varieties many of our local fruits are becoming unpopular among people, Jack fruit was one of such fruits till date. However, now things have changed, Jack fruit is getting international attention due to its food and medicinal value. Many research works are going on to evaluate its effectiveness in controlling diabetics and cancer. Several varieties are available in wild and in our homesteads. Based on the eating quality, “varikka” varieties are considered as superior and “Thenvarikka” is the most popular, but their population is less compared to others. Because of importance of Jack fruit in our food security, it has to be conserved and popularized. Veeyapuram, a backward panchayt in Alappuzha recently distributed more than 3000 grafted “Thenvarikka” saplings for

Jack fruit promotion. Majority of their jack fruit trees were lost due to water logging in flood 2018. This project namely “Thenoorum Thenvarikka” is a Model BMC project aided by Kerala State Biodiversity board.

Shri. Chandraprakash T G,
 District coordinator, Alappuzha



Palakkad MLA, Shri. Shafi Parambil inaugurating the planting of native fruit trees and palmyra tree (karimbana tree) as a part of Model BMC project at Mathoor GP

Establishment of a native fruit garden and Karimpana tree garden had been initiated in Mathoor Grama Panchayat in Palakkad in collaboration with Kerala State Biodiversity Board. The programme was inaugurated by Shri. Shafi parambil, Hon’ble Palakkad MLA in the presence of Panchayat President Smt. Pavitra Muraladheeran, Vice President Shri P.R. Prasad, Standing Committee Chairmen, Ward Members, and Biodiversity Coordinator Shri. Babu Bonaventure. Around 600 saplings of mango tree, jackfruit, goose berry, njavel etc were planted as first phase of the project.

Agro Biodiversity Project (RKI)



The project team including Dr. CK Peethambaran & Dr. Shaju CS (subject matter specialists), Dr. Suresh TA (Assistant programme Co-ordinator), Febin Francis (Thrissur District co-ordinator) and Shri. Adish Raj (Assistant Programme co-ordinator) visited selected farmer's plots at Thrissur district. The visit was conducted for five consecutive days from 4th August. They covered 13 block panchayaths covering 23 farmer's fields. Among these, 20 different farmers were selected as eligible for conducting farm schools. Representatives from different backgrounds were considered during the selection process. The team also visited Ollukkara farm having Vechoor cows. The efficient utilization and diversity available for tuber crops, vilwadri breed of cows, aquaculture practices were the significant aspects observed by the team.



BMC meeting @ Muhamma GP, Alappuzha



Pathiramanal LBHS-Public Hearing @ Muhamma GP



Model BMC meeting at Njeezhor GP, Kottayam



BMC meeting @ Ellavally GP



Visit at proposed biodiversity park site at Poothakkulam Gp with PETARDS team



BMC meeting @ Ambalappuzha north GP



BMC meeting @ Pinarayi GP



BMC meeting @ Edathwa GP, Alappuzha



KSBB team visit Asramam BHS site



August 15 Independence day celebration at KSBB Headquarters

Dr. C. George Thomas

Chairperson

Smt. Roney R. Pillai

Member Secretary

MEMBERS (Ex-officio)

1. Adl. Chief Secretary, Environment Department
2. Agriculture Production Commissioner
3. Principal Secretary, Fisheries Department
4. Principal Secretary, Forest & Wildlife Department
5. Executive Vice President, KSCSTE

KSBB MEMBERS (Unofficial)

6. Dr. K Satheesh Kumar
7. Sri. K.V Govindan
8. Dr. T.S Swapna
9. Dr. K.T Chandramohan

