

a two-day geological exhibition for students up to 12th standard. The exhibition was extended for three more days! Since then, the university has been receiving more applications in geology at graduate level! Geoscience in general, and principles of geology in particular inculcate a vision that nothing is enduring and our natural surroundings change constantly, evolving at a slow pace². This approach may only be initiated at schools by making fundamentals of geology a compulsory part of science to all future civil servants, engineers, doctors, scientists, farmers, lawyers, etc. A full campaign using information technology, exhibitions, documentary films on natural disasters, setting up of museums of natural history and 'natural excursions' may turn out to be a great success, as it shows positive response in the field to what is being taught in the classroom.

At higher level of education also, geoscience disciplines are best suited to initiate job-oriented 'add-on courses' as being promoted by the University Grants

Commission, New Delhi, at graduate level. The efforts made by Dr Harisingh Gour University to start such courses are worth mentioning. The university has proposed 'Soil and water chemistry and environmental awareness'; 'Environmental protection and methods of control'; 'Industrial waste management', etc. to offer Certificate, Junior Diploma and Senior Diploma in Part I, II and III years, respectively to science graduates. During their studies, students may work as consultants, e.g. in the agricultural sector they may help farmers in soil and water analysis to minimize use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, to give advice on better crop options in different types of soils in different climates, aquaculture, watershed management projects, etc.

For disaster management, the 'nature-oriented' bureaucrats and technocrats may understand importance of terrain evaluation in town-planning, watershed management, highway management, litigations in industrial/environmental management, etc.

It was rightly said, 'Will it take more than a tsunami-sized disaster for the country to initiate some meaningful measures to improve the educational scenario in earth sciences in the country?'³.

1. *Down To Earth*, June 2006, p. 17.
2. Radhakrishna, B. P., *J. Geol. Soc. India*, 2002, **60**.
3. Tandon, S. K., *Curr. Sci.*, 2005, **88**, 546–547.

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The state-tree of Arunachal Pradesh

Arunachal Pradesh falls under one of the global megadiversity centres, i.e. Eastern Himalaya. It is a botanical paradise. However, the state is losing its glory rapidly due to biotic pressure. Several steps have been taken by the government to conserve the unparalleled biodiversity of the state by establishing Biodiversity Reserves, National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, etc. The Supreme Court of India has completely banned the felling of trees in the state. However, there is practically no check on the destruction of the forest by the public themselves. Hence, there is an urgent need to create awareness among the public about the plant wealth of the state, leading to the conservation of biodiversity. Declaration of 'state-flower', 'state-tree', etc. by the government creates an emotional attachment between the people and the plants, due to which people start taking care of these plants.

During studies on the flora of the state, it was noticed that till date, the state tree

of Arunachal Pradesh has not been officially declared. My observations indicate



An adult toko palm

that 'Toko Palm' is the most suitable tree species to be declared as the state-tree of Arunachal Pradesh, because almost all parts of this palm are used by the local people. Though it is included in the *Red Data Book of Indian Plants*¹, its leaves are preferred for thatching houses in the region. The tree is practically the 'Kalp-vriksha' of Arunachal Pradesh.

It is therefore proposed that 'Toko Palm' (*Livistona jenkinsiana*) Arecaceae (Palmae) be declared the state-tree of Arunachal Pradesh.

1. *Red Data Book of Indian Plants*, Vol. I-III, BSI, Kolkata, 1987.

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