

Biodiversity

A write up by Samyuktha N, 11 yrs, Bangalore

In December 2019, I was staying in Masinagudi, Bandipur, in a forest lodge, with my parents and sister. Bandipur is one of the world's largest and diverse flora and fauna, in Karnataka. We were surrounded by plants, trees, shrubs on all sides with insects, animals interlaced between them.

While we entered the Bandipur forest reserve, we were welcomed by a mother and calf elephant. They crossed the road from right to left while we stopped briefly to watch the beauty and majesty of these animals. When they galloped across, the dust on them flew in different directions making it most natural. A few metres along we came across the long and dark-tailed Macaque and the langurs. Some were stylishly seated on tree trunks while others were chirping and playing around. The spotted deer aplenty, were a sight to see and these shy creatures were found doing all watchful activities. We encountered more elephants, the wild boar, and the peacocks and peahens as we travelled along.

We were enthralled by the uniqueness of the wood-pecker and black doves, which were a rare sight. The evasive tiger was as evasive it could be. In the early morning, it was a sight to enjoy the butterflies, moths and types of insects which were occupying their majestic seats on flowers and plants around our guest house.

The flora around included the teak, rose wood, sandal wood, kinds of bamboo, Indian laurel and kino trees. There were flowers, fruits and shrubs of gooseberry, kadam tree, axle-wood etc.

It is not the beauty we behold here, but the importance of maintaining and safeguarding the flora and fauna which we are expected of. A rich and healthy biodiversity ensures that the earth heals itself much faster after any natural disasters. It also helps maintain the food chain and the interdependence of flora and fauna. Whether we talk about Bandipur or the Indian ocean, the biological diversity of forest and marine are to be preserved, promoted and nurtured for living beings to thrive on the Earth. Genetic, species and ecosystem diversity make up for the planet's biodiversity.

In the past century, indiscriminate industrialization, human population growth, poaching, excessive exploitation of natural resources and high pollution levels, have resulted in climate change, extreme weather

conditions, and environmental degradation. Over a million species have become extinct.

It is time we act now to save our environment and support international programs under Paris Climate Accord, afforestation and animal support activities being done by NGO's and Governments.

Urban environment is also of great importance as we need to safeguard the lung-space, water and greenery to make it sustainable. A few significant initiatives of Karnataka State Pollution Control Board are

- Roof top Solar energy for Apartments
- Water and waste management and recycling
- Sewage management
- Protection of lakes and water bodies from encroachment

These worthy programs help our city and countries across the world to develop in a healthy and safe manner, and ensures that our ecological and biological diversity are safe and sound.

**STAY SAFE, STAY HEALTHY – BIO-DIVERSITY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO
OUR EXISTENCE ON EARTH !**