

Public outreach programme organised at BGSBU under the ambit of Aazadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

To commemorate the Aazadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a public outreach programme for tribal communities of Pir Panjal Region was organized by Department of Botany & Environmental Sciences, in collaboration with WWF, India, Field Office Rajouri & School of Rural Development and Environment on “Consultation of the stakeholders from the Nomadic Communities Towards a vision for sustainable management of Rangelands of Pir Panjal”. The motive of the Programme was to sensitise the tribal communities about the conservation and sustainable management of alpine pastures to cater the needs of the nomadic communities. In the programme, Professor Akbar Masood, Vice Chancellor, BGSBU congratulated the Departments for organizing such a Programme highlighting very important and relevant issues of conservation of ecosystems with community participation. Prof Akbar Masood emphasized that such programmes go a long way in sustainable use of biodiversity in harmony with humans. Dr Shaikh Ghulam Rasool, Chairman, School of Rural Development and Environment highlighted upon the bylaws which originated out of consistent discussion and interaction of NGO’s with tribal communities for the proper management of pastures. Advocate Ayaz Ahmed Zaki, a renowned member of tribal community highlighted how tribal communities used to coexist with nature in harmony in the past. With the development of infrastructure like roads, transmission lines and other developmental projects, a lot of impact has been there upon the sustainability of the pastures and in the lifestyle of the tribal communities in rangelands. Professor Iqbal Parvez, Dean Academic Affairs suggested to the organisers to educate and learn from the mutual interaction of the tribal and the scientific communities so that the pasturelands are properly managed and their resources are sustainably used. Dr Susheel Verma, Associate Dean, School of Biosciences and Biotechnology impressed upon the participants to follow the bylaws as suggested by them to WWF & SRDC for their existence in such areas of the Pir Panjal so that structure and resources of rangelands are saved. Dr Shreekar Pant, Coordinator, Centre for Biodiversity Studies, in his welcome address spoke about the relevance of the programme and appealed to all the stakeholders to contribute towards sustainable utilization of the bioresources in Pir Panjal. Mr Rohit Rattan, Associate Coordinator, Incharge Western Himalayan Programme, WWF, India, Field Office Rajouri presented the context of the outreach programme and threw

light on the background of the initiatives and continuous interactions with communities to sustainably manage and conserve Pir Panjal rangelands. In the afternoon session Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Tribal Affairs, J&K Government addressed the participants and spoke about the Government schemes and policies about conservation, management and sustainable use of biodiversity by nomads and tribes of Pir Panjal region. He assured of his Department's full cooperation and support to BGSBU and the collaborators for implementation those schemes at ground level so as to address the issues of tribal communities and allay their fears. A lot of participants expressed their views about the bylaws and their vision for the conservation and management of rangelands in Pir Panjal. Dr Mamta Bhat, Assistant Professor conducted the proceedings of the programme and suggested to follow the deliberations and recommendation emerged.