



**G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment,  
Himachal Regional Centre, Mohal - Kullu - 175 126, HP**

*Minutes of Two Days Awareness cum Capacity Building program on Betula utilis (Bhojpatra) in Lahaul and Spiti district, Himachal Pradesh during 27<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>, September 2021.*

Himachal Regional Centre of G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment has organized two days awareness cum capacity building program on Betula utilis ( Bhojpotra) at Udaipur and Khoksar Panchayat of Lahaul and Spit district. On the first day, the program was organized at the Mahila Mandal Bhawan of Udaipur Panchayat of Lahual Block. Forest B.O., Forest guard of Kelong forest division as well as 46 participants including the members of Mahila mandal, Yuvak Mandal of Udaipur Panchayat were present during the first day of the program. At the onset, registration of participants were done by the researchers of Himachal Regional Centre of G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment. Then Dr. Renu Lata, Scientist-D, G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment- Himachal Regional Centre addressed the local youth, women and other representative of Mahila Mandal, Yuvak Mandal of Udaipur panchayat about the multipurpose use of Bhojpatra. She also highlighted the economic benefits as well as cultural values of Betula utilis (Bhojpatra). She emphasized the facts that due to climate change and over exploitation of Bhojpatra, this species is getting extinct in Himalayan Region. Hence she requested everyone for the the sustainable use of Bhojpatra which is a very important tree line species situated in the high altitude of of Himalayas (2500 to 4500m). Participants also shared their experience regarding the present status of Betula and also highlighted that the population of Betula is decreasing due to anthropogenic activities during the program. Forrest B.O. and Forest guard of Keylong Forest Division were also present during the program and shared their experience with the participants. Participants also highlighted that though in the nearby Miyar valley, comparatively large number of Betula utilis were present while there was a decline in the population of Betula utilis in other areas of Lahual Block.

On the second day, the program was organized at the Mahila Mandal Bhawan of Khoksar Panchayat of Spiti Block. About 50 participants including the members of Mahila mandal,

Yuvak Mandal and common villagers of Khoksar Panchayat were present during the second day of the program. At first, registrations of participants were done by the researchers of Himachal Regional Centre of G. B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment. Then Dr. Renu Lata, Scientist-D, G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment- Himachal Regional Centre addressed the villagers, local youth, women and other representative of Mahila Mandal, Yuvak Mandal of Khoksar panchayat about the various use of Bhojpatra. Pradhan of Mahila Mandal and the Secretary of Yuvak Mandal were also presented and shared their views. She also highlighted the economic benefits as well as cultural values of *Betula utilis* (Bhojpatra). She further emphasized the fact that due to various anthropogenic factors as well as climate change, this species is getting extinct in Himalayan Region. Henceforth, it is of urgent need to get proper information about the precise location of *Betula* patches in high altitude areas of North-Western Himalayas to assess the quantified information regarding impact of climate change and anthropogenic role on *Betula utilis* population using satellite data. She then requested the participants to share their views about the location of Bhojpatra. After that participants also shared their experience regarding the present status of *Betula* and also highlighted that the population of *Betula* is decreasing in their locality. Participants also highlighted that *Betula* patches were present in nearby Gramphu area where the population is comparatively increasing.



