

Trees get identity cards in Kolkata suburb

PTI | Sep 16, 2015

KOLKATA: Just like humans, trees too now have identity cards in a Kolkata suburb. As part of a project by Konnagar Municipality to evaluate the crucial role trees play in combating climate change, the authorities have issued identity cards for 28 varieties of trees. "Just like your voter ID card, the tree ID card has details like local name of the species, scientific name, geographical coordinates of its location, photograph, weight and wood density etc.," environmentalist Abhijit Mitra, who is leading the project, said.

Konnagar Municipality chairman Bappaditya Chatterjee said they have issued 3,000 such identity cards so far which were being hanged on trees. Just by looking at the identity card one can learn what was the contribution of which tree towards climate change, as plants sequester carbon from the environment. "The first thing for us to live is oxygen, which we get from trees. The second thing which plants do is absorb carbon, but the absorption ratio varies from one species to another and so it is very important for us to map them," Chatterjee said, while claiming this was the first such exercise in India.

Altogether 53 varieties of trees were found in the suburbs located in the neighbouring Hooghly district, about 25 km from here. Around 28 species of them were dominant ones comprising about 70 per cent of the tree population. Some of them include neem, peepal,

banyan, radhachura, krishnachura, tamarind, coconut, betel-nut etc.

To spread awareness on the crucial role played by trees in mitigating the harmful effects of climate change by absorbing carbon from the air, the ID cards were hung on many trees and displayed prominently in public places like railway stations, roadsides etc in the form of posters.

The entire field work and preparation of ID cards were done by a team of teachers and students of nine schools of Konnagar. The scientific study done by Mitra, also a biologist, show there were about 34,500 tonnes of tree (including twigs and leaves) per hectare in Konnagar town. "They contain about 16,500 tonnes of carbon, which is equivalent to 60,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide because chemically 12 units carbon contain 44 units of Co₂," Mitra said. To measure the wood density, they used laser instruments, while for calculating carbon dioxide content a CH analyser instrument was deployed. Next year, the team would again evaluate the carbon content of trees to check, which species has gained the maximum carbon level during that period.

"This will help us in deciding which trees we should plant to fight climate change," Mitra added.

Source:

<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/environment/flora-fauna/Trees-get-identity-cards-in-Kolkata-suburb/articleshow/48982063.cms>