

Provrat Chandra Neogi Memorial Lecture by Somnath

The Provrat Chandra Neogi Memorial Lecture (1st of the lecture series) was held on April 9 at 17:00 IST in the Alumni Seminar Hall of the Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur. The programme was organised by the Arun and Dhriti Deb Centre of Water and Environmental Studies (ADDCWES), bringing together academicians, researchers, and students to engage with critical issues of ecological restoration and community participation. Generous support for the event was available from the Provrat Chandra Neogi Endowment Fund, donated by distinguished alumnus Dr. Prabir Kumar Neogi, 1962CE.

The event commenced with a formal welcome, which was anchored by Dr Madhurima Das of ADDCWES. The distinguished guests, including the Director of IESTS Prof. V M S R Murthy, Prof Arun Deb as the Chief Guest, Er. Somnath as the invited Speaker and Prof. Pratik Dutta, the Dean of Research & Consultancy, were greeted with flower bouquets by the PhD research scholars. This was followed by a brief introduction to the occasion, outlining the legacy of Er. Provrat Chandra Neogi.



In the welcome address, the Director of IESTS, Prof. V M S R Murthy, highlighted the importance of the Centre of Water and Environmental Studies (ADDCWES) and the memorial lecture. He mentioned about Er Somnath and his work by explaining ecological balance through Adivasi-driven solutions for sustainable environmental management. The Chief Guest, Arun Kumar Deb, in his address, emphasised ADDCWES and the ongoing work of the ADDCWES in developing interdisciplinary research. The Dean (R&C) Prof. Pratik Dutta then introduced the speaker, highlighting Er. Somnath's extensive experience in working with rural and indigenous communities through the Association for India's Development (AID). The whole programme was live on Google Meet for the participation of the international dignitaries and participants across India.

The lecture titled “*Community-Based Ecological Restoration: Working and Learning from Adivasis of India*” was delivered by Er. Somnath, Development Coordinator of the Association for India’s Development. The main lecture, extend over approximately 40 minutes, provided deep insights into community-led ecological restoration practices. The speaker illustrated how Adivasi communities sustainably manage forests, water resources, and biodiversity through traditional ecological knowledge. He also highlighted the importance of local communities or the Adivasis, who are not simply beneficiaries but active leaders in environmental conservation efforts. The session highlighted grassroots approaches to environmental restoration, emphasising indigenous knowledge systems and sustainable practices followed by Adivasi communities across India.

The lecture was highly engaging and informative, encouraging participants to rethink conventional methods and models. During the session, a 15-minute interaction period took place between the participants and Somnath. This time allowed for meaningful conversation and engagement, where the participants had the opportunity to ask questions, share their thoughts, and receive feedback from Er Somnath.



The programme concluded with the presentation of a memento to the speaker as a token of appreciation by the Centre Director of ADDCWES, Prof. Anirban Gupta. A formal vote of thanks was delivered by the Centre Director of ADDCWES, expressing gratitude to the invited speaker, all dignitaries and attendees for making the event successful. Overall, the Provat Chandra Neogi Memorial Lecture served as a meaningful platform for knowledge exchange and highlighted the critical role of community participation in achieving ecological sustainability.

Somnath is a social activist who works with Adivasi people of eastern and central India. He passed out of BE College in 1990 from Electrical Engineering Department. After working in the industry for a total of 15 years, he left corporate work and became a full-time social activist, dividing his time between the US and India. In both places, he has been involved in movements of social justice for marginalized people. In India, his work has been with rural communities in Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.



Lecture recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUvV80iiZPk>