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Green Graduation - A New Initiative at Global Scale!!!

Green graduation is a new vista in the field of tree planting where every graduating student from an Agricultural University may have to plant a sapling as soon as he/she enters the university and nurture it until his/her stay. Being a four year professional course, the sapling planted can get established by the time student completes the degree. This act shall help in increasing the green cover, feeling for students to be close to nature and also help in biodiversity conservation. If the species are chosen and include some endangered species, green graduation can also act as a conservation of endangered species. Further, if it is made as mandate by ICAR, it can be eventually a big program at national level towards biodiversity conservation. One such initiative designed from UAS, Raichur has been discussed in the present report.

INTRODUCTION

“The Green Graduation programme” is an ‘One Student – One Tree’ concept; the most recent and up course an ambitious initiative of UNO, resolution passed during 2015 at Boston, which is intriguingly a part of the Sustainable Development Land (SDL) where every graduating student, professional or traditional, volunteer or obligated to plant a sapling, preferably a long-lasting such as trees; nurture them until their egresses graduates. The trees established shall be named after them through a certificate which carry information of the species planted, family to which it belongs with a photo stamped on their degree certificates. These help students to leave an everlasting impression in their alma matter; in fact, if they revisit after a span of some years, students can also proudly be evidence for their planted tree/s to their dear and near ones. Although Green Graduation program has already begun in the west, it is in infancy in India. Probably University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, (Karnataka) in

general and College of Horticulture, Bengaluru campus, in particular, supposed to be the first to kick off Green Graduation program in India; at least 30 students from College of Horticulture, GKVK Campus Bengaluru, have been certified as 'green graduates' completing their academic year during 2018-19. In fact, they entered University during 2015-16; a four year degree programme, and were allotted one sapling to plant and to nurture for a period of four years. A total of 103 graduating students have entered to be the part of Green Graduation of which

nature. It is fundamentally a student centric programme, has academic support, research possibilities and commercial value. It also helps in addition or preserving the biodiversity, even helps to preserve rare, endangered and endemic species of trees as a conservative approach. It promotes greening the environment and adds to health creating a micro environment. Carbon sequestration will help in fixing atmospheric carbon dioxide and release additional oxygen to environment. The biodiversity gets cumulated, on a temporal basis, at a specified



30 students successfully completed the assignment. Indeed, the initiative has been implemented at 9 constituent colleges, spread across Karnataka, of University of Horticultural Sciences, Bagalkot, where a total of 1135 species belonging to several families have been planted by students. Falling in line, 104 and 115 students of Second (2018-19 academic year) and first year (2019-20 academic year) B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture students of College of Agriculture, Bheemarayanagudi, Shahapur, Yadgir District of University of Agricultural Sciences, Raichur (part of Kalyana Karnataka) have taken a pledge and planted a total of 219 saplings of 'Western Ghats origin', comprising 52 tree species. In addition, even teachers also have participated, on a volunteer basis, in planting an additional 45 saplings. Planting of trees of Eastern Ghats origin, in subsequent years, can be a researchable issue for their survival and climate resilience. This can also help in retarding the species extinctions of birds and other mammals as the pool of trees may include fruit yielding species.

GREEN GRADUATION ON ENVIRONMENT

"Green Graduation" helps students to ingrain environmental consciousness and love towards

locality, if the programme is instituted in a scientific and true spiritual and structured manner. In addition, visitors, on different occasion, also are can plant saplings (for instance, Sri Sri Ravishankar Guruji has planted a Rudraksha sapling in the green graduation plot of College of Agriculture, Bheemarayanagudi) can increase the diversity and number of tree species. Structured planting of trees by forest department is routine or unstructured massive tree plantings made by NGO's are already in vogue. However, most often long term nurturing is a serious problem which eventually results in low success rate; up course it also depends on the place, tree species composition and type of attention. Green graduation gets significance in the era of climate change; not only planting trees but also identifying a few of them which are climate resilient can help to spread to non-traditional range. For instance, the planting made using Western Ghats species, in a totally hot dry climate, more precisely the medicinal/aromatic trees, if found climate resilient, can spread to farmers' plots eventually increasing their lively hood through additional income. Such initiatives if made through ICAR with its ICAR Institutes or SAU's can increase the green cover of India in a very short time and facilitate



farming community at large; even it can also lend a hand in doubling the income of the farmers – a national initiative. If ICAR formulate it as a mandate program, probably all the waste lands available across SAU campuses can Go Green and even it can also spread to adjacent lands with a tie up with Forest Department/ NGOs'. UGC has announced its decision of implementing at all Colleges in the country. In fact, The Philippines has already passed a law with a mandate of planting 10 saplings by every student. Kuvempu University of Shimoga, a traditional University in Karnataka has initiated "Green Graduation" in Shankargatta campus in Malnad where post graduate students have to enroll, on a mandatory basis, to Green Graduation but are allotted marks through evaluation at the completion of their degree for the work of planting, nurturing and after care during their stay. The minister for higher education, have had announced that if this programme is implemented in Karnataka alone, covering 25 state universities and 412 government colleges and other government institutions, it was estimated about 20 lakh saplings can be planted and nurtured. The

compulsion can be more effective than volunteer basis. An only question remains is in massive funding for such initiative because facility of watering plants, protection against both grazing by cattle and also anthropogenic pressure requires fund allocation. Even a few massive campaigns are needed to educate and sensitize students and faculty about the program. The awareness has already begun, at least in Karnataka, on a sporadic manner with some colleges or universities volunteering as part of 'Green Graduation' or 'Go Green' or 'One Student One Tree' or 'one graduate one sapling' programs. Only hope is it ought to spread to entire nation on a real time basis.

CONCLUSION

Green Graduation, if brought into reality on a real time basis, can boost biodiversity, green cover eventually help in mitigating issues related to climate change. New species can be introduced which can become a source of education in days to come.