

Van Mahotsav at Kanpur Zoological Park

K. Praveen Rao, IFS

It is a festival of planting organised in the first week of July every year. During this week several lakhs of saplings are planted all over India to mark the arrival of monsoon and make the people conscious regarding the environment. During the week importance of planting the trees is explained in detail to the audience at public places and forums. The trees are better known for the way they control soil erosion, improve ground water table, improve fertility of the soil, provide food, fruits fodder, timber, fire wood. The trees help in purifying the air and provide us the much needed oxygen and soak the green house gas like carbon dioxide. Many trees have medicinal values and also act as habitats for wild animals.

The first national level attempt for making people conscious regarding afforestation was undertaken by national leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Abdul Kalam Azad and along with many others in July 1947 in Delhi. In the early 50's this movement was renamed by late Shri K. M. Munshi, noted educationist and nature lover, during his tenure as the Governor of Uttar Pradesh. Massive tree plantation drives were conducted with active involvement of the local population. With growing awareness of concepts of environment and ecological balance and environmental education introduced in school curriculum the Van mahotsav spread in to villages and towns. It is organised not just as a ritual is incorporated into daily protection of the saplings is done even afterwards.

In Kanpur Zoological Park Kanpur, Van Mahotsav is organised every year in the first week of July and this year on 3rd July, the van Mahotsav was organised in the zoo campus. The function was jointly organised by Kanpur Zoological park and Social forestry division, Kanpur. The function started with arrival of dignitaries and then NCC Cadets of 55 batallion UP gave warm welcome. P.K. Mohanty, has planted a Pipal (*Ficus religiosa*) sapling, Mr. Manoj sinha, has planted neem tree, and K. Praveen Rao has planted Pipal tree. Later the students, NCC Cadets, morning walkers, staff, media and other public moved to Chakor auditorium. The function started with Saraswati vandana with respects paid to goddess of vidya and gyan. Zoo Director welcomed the august gathering and he has thrown light on various activities that were taken up in the zoo in the last few years which fetched more turn out of



Mr. Praveen Rao, Director, Kanpur Zoological Park planting sapling



National Cadet Corps and other students participated in Vanmahotsav Day

public to the zoo. All are due to increase in green spaces in the zoo. During the year 10-11 the public turnout was more than 5.3 laks. Mr. Manoj Sinha, Chief Conservator of forests in his address stressed need of afforestation. Mr. P.K. Mohanty lauded the role of NGOs in spreading

environmental consciousness. After the function came to an end but the

Conservator/Director, Kanpur Zoological Park, Kanpur, U.P.
Email: kanpurzoo@gmail.com