



## **PEOPLE AND FOREST: A PANEL DISCUSSION**

January 16, 2015 | 03:00 pm – 05:00 pm

Conference Hall, Aranya Bhawan, Medical College Road, Raipur

The state of Chhatisgarh, formed in the year 2000 is rich in biological and other natural resources. Of particular significance is the herbal flora and traditional knowledge associated with it. Forests account for almost 45 per cent of the state. The two major tree species in the state are Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and Teak (*Tectona grandis*). Other species include Bija (*Pterocarpus marsupium*), Saja (*Terminalia tomentosa*), Dhawra (*Anogeissus latifolia*), Mahua (*Madhuca indica*), and Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) etc. Aonla (*Emblica officinalis*), Karra (*Cleistanthus collinus*). Bamboo (*Dendrocalamus strictus*) constitutes a significant part of middle canopy of State's forests. A medicinal plant survey carried by the Central Council for Research in Ayurveda and Siddha, New Delhi in 1978, made an inventory of 750 herbal species belonging to 499 genera in 147 families. A total of 190 folklore claims based on 113 medicinal plants have also been recorded. Biogeographically the state falls under the Deccan Bioregion and is representative of the fauna of Central India that includes the Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Leopard (*Panthera pardus*), Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Sambhar (*Cervus unicolor*), Chital (*Axis axis*), Nilgai (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*) and Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*). The rare and endangered Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus bubalis*) and Hill Myna (*Gracula religiosa*) are also found here. Chhatisgarh is also rich in agro-biodiversity and has been traditionally known as the 'rice bowl' of India. The diversity of rice in the state is noteworthy. The state is equally diverse culturally and the inter-dependence between the forest-based communities and biodiversity is quite remarkable.

Given this, it is indeed a challenge to mainstream this biodiversity and also maintain this incredible biological and cultural richness. This panel discussion focuses on various initiatives in the state that have attempted to do so.