

## Children from Indian Himalaya Learn about Importance of Marine Biodiversity on International Day for Biological Diversity, 2012

International Day for Biological Diversity was observed on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2012 around the world and the Himalayan states of India were not far behind. The states of Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand saw numerous children participate in the celebrations through different activities that combined learning with fun.



Children with Saplings

in speech, essay-writing and poster-making competitions.

In Uttarakhand, students took it upon themselves to create awareness about biodiversity in their village communities. They put up small skits to spread the message of biodiversity protection.

In Jammu & Kashmir, the day was observed by over 100 children and 10 teachers at Mountain Valley Education Institute, Sheeri. Members of RCE Srinagar, along with teachers of the school, spoke to the children about the history and importance of the day. Examples of positive action from around the globe were cited to understand the large scale

initiatives being undertaken in different countries. The speakers also stressed upon the gradual decline in local floral and faunal species of J&K. Even micro-organisms in the soil are being affected by chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Climate change is greatly impacting the agricultural biodiversity of the state. The children learnt about the theme of the day – Marine Biodiversity. Located far from seas and oceans, the audience was very interested in learning about marine species that inhabit the oceans. In addition, they understood the links between glaciers and oceans, mountains and

coasts, and how all systems are interconnected and integral to each others' survival.

These programs were organised at different locations to commemorate the day as part of *Paryavaran Mitra* and RCE Srinagar initiatives of CEE Himalaya. RCE Srinagar is a network of like-minded individuals and organisations in Kashmir working for the cause of behavioural change towards sustainable development. *Paryavaran Mitra*, the world's largest school-based climate change and sustainability education programme, covering over 2 million schools in the country, is reaching out to over 15,000 schools in the Himalayan states.



A Participant at the Speech Competition



Drawing Competition in Progress



Team RCE Srinagar with young participants