



Azim Premji University Colloquium Series

presents a lecture

"Agroecology and Sustainability"

Speaker

Debal Deb

Professor of Agroecology, Centurion University, Paralakhemundi, Odisha.

Date: September 08, 2016 (Thursday)

Time: 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm

Venue Seminar Hall, 10th Floor, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Watch the live broadcast of the talk by clicking <http://lectures.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/>. It can be accessed from Android and iOS devices too.

About the Lecture

In contrast with the mainstream chemicalized, industrialized agriculture, agroecology seeks to mimic the diversity and complexity of natural ecosystems. A wide spectrum of biodiversity at three levels - species, genetic and ecosystem levels - are key to system resilience, which explains why traditional agroecological practices are robust and sustainable, while monocultures and chemical-based modern agriculture is fragile in the face of environmental vagaries. Agroecology enhances long term sustainability of productivity of the farm ecosystem, rather than short term yield boom, and builds on the ecological integrity and communitarian values of the agrarian society, pivoted on the customary open exchange of seeds, local farmer markets, and sovereignty over the means of production. Thus, agroecology ensures both food security and social justice for all members of the community.

About the Speaker

Debal Deb is a biologist, with a doctorate in ecology from Calcutta University. Deb's work encompasses conservation of agrobiodiversity, forest ecology, and ancient 'sacred' ecosystems in eastern India. In 1997, Deb founded **Vrihi** (Sanskrit for 'rice'), India's largest non-governmental folk rice gene bank, conserving 1310 folk rice varieties *in situ*. His research farm **Basudha**, in Odisha, demonstrates ecological agriculture, ecoforestry, alternative energy use, and ecological architecture. Both Vrihi and Basudha thrives on friends' donations and Deb's personal earnings (from teaching assignments), and do not receive any institutional support. Deb's effort to

reinvigorate traditional communitarian ethos has revived many forgotten indigenous sports and musical traditions in Bengal. His freelance research in agroecology, crop genetic diversity, food web theory, forest ecology and ecological economics have been widely published in international journals. His latest book *Beyond Developmentality: Constructing Inclusive Freedom and Sustainability* (2009, Earthscan/ Routledge) contributes to development studies and ecological economics.

Deb has conducted post-doctoral research in human ecology of estuarine resource use at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (1988), and in ecological economics at University of California, Berkeley, as Ford Foundation Fellow (2001) and Fulbright Fellow (2009). Deb serves as guest faculty at the Tata Institute of Social Science (environmental economics), B R Ambedkar University, New Delhi (political ecology), and is Professor of Eminence for agroecology at Centurion University, Paralakhemundi, Odisha.