

# Welcome to *Shimla Eco Vibes*



Dear Readers,

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I welcome you to the inaugural issue of *Shimla Eco Vibes* – an e-magazine, exploring the dynamic intersections of nature, society, and culture.

It is *Navratri* – the festival celebrating the power of the divine feminine – and as we take this opportunity to launch Shimla Eco Vibes, we are full of hope that the Divine Mother will vouchsafe success in this venture.

Come Navratri, and the festive season sets in. The ebullience and exhilaration of the Bengali community of Shimla, the tourists and the local residents is so contagious that the town acquires a vibrant aura a couple of weeks ahead. It reaches a crescendo on the fifth day or Panchami when the idols of Goddess Durga and her companions are consecrated in the main hall of Kalibari. Artistic decors in the background, Alpana on the floor, the fragrance of flowers and the pious chant of the mantras create a sanctified ambiance; various cultural activities mark the evenings culminating in ‘*Sindoor Khela*’ on *Dashmi*. Artistic Bengali dances and drama performances, sonorous musical nights and other cultural activities recreate a mini-Bengal in Shimla. The blending of Bengali and *Himachali* traditions create a pleasant cultural extravaganza, eloquently expressing our concept of ‘unity in diversity’.

For over a century, Shimla's Bengali community has been celebrating Durga Puja with devotional fervour. Prof. Him Kumar Chatterjee, renowned artist and Chairman of HP University's Visual Arts Department, whose family has significantly contributed to the organization, decoration and management of the religious and cultural activities over the decades has a repertoire of authentic information about the growth of the festival. October or Ashwin is the month of festivals—here is *Navratri*, followed by *Kojagiri Purnima*, the festival of the full moon; and then comes *Karva Chauth* when women fast all through the day and eat food only after worshipping the moon. In brief, moon is the Lord of the rituals. With all their religious and socio-cultural overtones, these Mid-Autumn festivals are indicators of the fusion of ecology and culture which can be a significant factor in eco-preservation. They are life-affirming and offer celebration of the human spirit. Interconnectedness of all beings – human and non-human, which is the theme of Shimla Eco Vibes is amply corroborated by the festive season.

This debut issue of *Shimla Eco Vibes* brings to our readers a variety of scholarly articles ranging from environmental consciousness to gardening tips, and from cultural values to ecological restoration. The articles like *Prospects of Soybean Cultivation in Altai* and *Women: Guardians of Heritage and Nature* by budding writers Kunshchikov Nikita and Dhriti Gupta respectively talk about different shades of life. The thought-provoking articles by Shafarenko Sergei, Dr. Purnima Chauhan, Dr. Reshma and Dr. Bhatia have focused on the direct environmental concerns, while the articles by Dr. Anu Dogra and Dr. Negi share the gardening experiences and tips. The underlying theme of most of the articles points towards man's urge to forge a connection with nature and environment, which is inherent in the basic human instinct. A creative piece supported by moral stories by Dr. Usha Bande talks about the role that the parents and teachers can play in nurturing ecological consciousness among children. The story on nature walks by the young students and an article on Hattu Peak by Sh. Dharampal takes you to nature's wonderland. The poems by Ashok Chauhan and Kushi are thought provoking.

Launching this new magazine would not have been possible without the unflinching support of the Editorial Board and I would like to thank the esteemed members for associating themselves with Shimla Eco Vibes whole-heartedly. I extend a big 'thank you' to our contributors and also to our patrons for bringing some of the renowned minds on the platform of Shimla Eco Vibes where we hope to discuss and share our ideas for the cause of ecology. I believe that in future, the echoes of this magazine will spread far and wide.

Finally, I cordially invite our readers to send their contributions to the magazine in the form of poems, stories, articles, Shimla walks or tips on gardening and other issues linked to the basic focus. It would be an additional help if our readers share their ideas and suggestions because there is always a scope for improvement.

I hope you find SEV informative and that you enjoy the inaugural issue. We look forward to bringing you more meaningful and diverse contents in the forthcoming issues.

I would love to hear from you and would welcome your feedback! Please address all your questions, suggestions, or concerns, to [kalpsociety2013@rediffmail.com](mailto:kalpsociety2013@rediffmail.com)

Thank you  
Dr. Pankaj Gupta  
Editor

