We need to talk about biodiversity. Ask anyone to define biodiversity and their definition may be confused with that of ecosystems. Ecosystems are actually a sub-sector of biodiversity. Have you taken a walk through your local park and observed the liveliness (or even lack thereof) around biodiversity?

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Council (GHMC) has been active at Indira Park, Botanical Gardens, Jalagam Vengal Rao Park and others in ensuring the ecosystems in these biodiverse-rich spaces are balanced and well taken care of. Their one-year-old Dog Park in Gachibowli is an example of a typical biodiversity park taken into the 21st Century, by inviting pawed pals.

And then there’s the ever-prevalent topic of organic farming. Narayan Murthy, principal founder of GoodSeeds, points out that for a farming biodiversity to thrive, the very ecosystem in which it thrives has to be carefully maintained through ethical farming practices. “You really have to watch how the environment functions in terms of bio-climatic conditions.” One also has to observe how the animal-life in that same ecosystem interacts with the earth and with the plants. One of the biggest conversations in this space is organic farming about which GoodSeeds loves to educate people.

We’ve munched on the ever-popular kodo millets, which are an integral part of the humid Deccan plateau agri-history. Containing 11% protein, many Government hospitals have been ensuring this is in constant supply to convalescents. More recently, the city has been favouring browntop millets (andu korralu in Telugu) with around 3,500 kilograms of these millets coming into Hyderabad every month from various farmers in Karnataka, where they’re largely grown and harvested.

Hitec City-dwellers, who’ve long commuted to niche markets in Kukatpally, Mehdipatnam and Erragadda, are now getting their own share in the millet fun. (In fact, in the entirety of Telangana, there are 36 Rythu Bazars working in the State with temporary/semi-permanent structures being funded by Agricultural Market Committees.) Head to any Rythu Bazaar. That’s an ecosystem on its own... you’ll see more teens along with their parents asking, “Mummy, I want snake gourd this week,” not just because the vegetable looks cool but because they’re just that much more aware of the benefits.

So how are you embracing biodiversity? What can you do to take this once-a-year conversation forward to space that’s more, well, daily?

Today we celebrate UN International Day for Biological Diversity. Are you all for healthier ecosystems?

:: DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

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