

Kyoto-Kashi collaboration: BHU signs MoU with Japanese varsity

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Varanasi: Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development (IESD), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Graduate School of Global Environmental studies (GSGES), Kyoto University signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) as a part of the Kashi-Kyoto partnership, on Friday. The MoU has been signed to strengthen academic and research collaboration between both the universities.

Both the universities had earlier undertaken a joint study, 'Climate and Disaster Resilience of Varanasi: City, Zone and Ward profile' in close partnership with Varanasi Municipal Corporation. The study aimed to provide a baseline information for building city's resilience by identifying the root cause of vulnerabilities with multi stakeholder approach.

It may be noted here that the report was prepared by Kyoto university team, including Rajib Shaw, Ranit Chatterjee, Prof AS Raghubanshi and Prमित Verma, based on government records and people's verification within three months time.

Highlighting the major points of the MoU, director IESD Prof AS Raghubanshi said that it includes exchange of faculty members, masters and PhD students and also of science materials and publications of both the



Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development (IESD), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Graduate School of Global Environmental studies (GSGES), Kyoto University signed a MoU, as a part of Kyoto-Kashi sister-city partnership on Friday

universities. "The MoU aims at collaboration and recourse support between the two universities. It involves exchange of faculties and students, organising joint conferences for them and deputation of experts from BHU to Kyoto University and exchange of necessary information between the two varsities," he said. The Delhi-based Kyoto-Kashi office has also asked to prepare a university-level comprehensive MoU soon, he said, further adding that a joint degree programme of 6 months to a year for students is also in the offing.

Prof Rajib Shaw from Kyoto University opined that the study of climate and disaster resilience of the city is crucial for building

city's resilience. "It is the first ever MoU of Kyoto University signed with an Indian university and we are happy to work with BHU by taking forward the step to do complimentary research and identify places where technical collaboration is required." The MoU with BHU is the first step in this direction, he said.

According to a comparative analysis of 2011 and 2015, the city's resilience has increased from 2.86 to 3.20 while a detailed analysis shows that city has undertaken environment policy and land use planning. An increase in frequency of small scale disasters, and natural ecosystem vulnerability has also been shown in the analysis.

"The comparative analysis of five zones indicates highest resilience for Adampur zone (3.08) and lowest resilience for Dashaswamedh zone (2.40)," he said. While in Bhelupur and trans-Varuna zones, sanitation and solid waste management needs urgent attention and environmental policy implementation is required, Dashaswamedh, Kotwali and Adampur zones needs improvement in good governance and budget related issues.

"For this, zonal learning centers, linked at the city level, should be established. Also, we are planning to establish five citizen forum where members of local committees, NGOs will come together and put forth their views," he said, adding that community participation is a must for development of city.

As a part of five-year MoU, a student of town planning of Kyoto University, Neha Sahoo will pursue PhD from BHU and while former MPhil student, BHU, Prमित Verma will take up a complimentary research and an interim report will be given within a year and a half, said Raghubanshi.

Varanasi mayor, Ramgopal Mohaley, vice-chancellor of BHU, Prof GC Tripathi and dean of GSGES, Prof Shigeo Fujii along with the representatives of Japanese embassy, Akio Isomata and Hiro Yuki Mase were present on the occasion.