

INDORE LOCAL CENTRE

Seminar on Light Pollution

June 27, 2010, Indore

As part of its programme of monthly seminars, the Indore Local Centre of ISLE organised a seminar on Light Pollution on Sunday 27th June 2010 at Hotel South Avenue in Indore. The seminar was delivered by Dr. Alok Mittal, Director; Indore Indira School of Career Studies. He explained that light pollution, also known as photo pollution or luminous pollution, is excessive or obtrusive artificial light. Light pollution is any adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night, and energy waste.

Light pollution is a side effect of industrial civilization. Its sources include building exterior and interior lighting, advertising, commercial properties, offices, factories, streetlights, and illuminated sporting venues. It is most severe in highly industrialized, densely populated areas of North America, Europe, and Japan and in major cities in the Middle East and North Africa like Cairo. It obscures the stars in the night sky for city dwellers, interferes with astronomical observatories, and, like any other form of pollution, disrupts ecosystems and has adverse health effects. Like other forms of pollution (such as air, water, and noise pollution) light pollution causes damage to the environment. The case against light pollution is strengthened by a range of studies on health effects, suggesting that excess light may induce loss in visual acuity, hypertension, headaches and increased incidence of carcinoma, changes in melatonin level enhancing the risk of breast and other forms of cancer in human beings, endangering flora and fauna, distracting migrating birds, affecting marine life, sea turtles, disturbing mating activity of reptiles, salamanders, bats, etc. Light pollution can be addressed by changing the habits of society, so that lighting is used more efficiently, with less waste and less creation of unwanted or unneeded illumination, switching off lights after business hours are over, using shielded electrical fixtures, enacting legislations to curb light pollution, etc. Several industry groups have recognized light pollution as an important issue. For example, the Institution of Lighting Engineers in the United Kingdom provides its members information about light pollution, the problems it causes, and how to reduce its impact. Since the early 1980s, a global darksky movement has emerged, with concerned people campaigning to reduce the amount of light pollution. The seminar was attended by Mr. Akhilesh Jain, Chairman, Mr. Dinesh Wadhwa, Secretary, Mr. Rajendra Raje, Mr. Anil Pundlik, Mr. Bharat Rawlani, students from professional institutes and other members of ISLE Indore Local Centre.