His Holiness, The Dalai Lama delivered the keynote address on Sacred Values and Conservation at the 10th Dr. TN Khoshoo Memorial Award and Lecture. This is an annual event organised by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment, headquartered in Bangalore. This year's Award and Lecture was co-organised by Centre for Sustainable Development and Institute of Rural Research and Development. HH noted the rapid pace of change in the Himalayas, the abode of Gods and sacred landscapes. It is also the water tower of Asia and the melting of glaciers due to climate change as a result of global warming is a cause for concern, he noted. In his usual humorous style sprinkled with anecdotes, HH deftly wove several ideas that ultimately have a bearing on the way we live, the way we treat one another, irrespective of class or colour. He repeatedly emphasised the need for compassion. Even though he is a deeply religious person, he stressed the value of action over prayers. We need to think of the future generations, especially as we are social animals not living just for the day. The growing gap between the global north and the global south and the economic divide between the rich and the poor is also an important cause for conflict in society. Just as we need to reduce the stress on ecosystems through research and action, so too humans can reduce stress and anxiety in the self through meditation, developing greater trust in others. That will alone lead to greater harmony in society.
HH, the Dalai Lama bestowed the TN Khoshoo award for this year on AVANI, a civil society organization working in the Kumaon Himalayas. Rashmi Bharti and Rajnish Jain, the co-founders made a brief presentation on how local capacity is being built for more sustainable livelihoods based on local resources. Sandesh Kadur, renowned wildlife photographer, presented His Holiness a book on Himalayas authored by Dr. Kamal Bawa. Dr. Balachander, the Director of ATREE made the opening remarks and Mr. Raj Khoshoo proposed the vote of thanks for a successful event that was held at the Chinmaya Mission Centre Auditorium, New Delhi.