

Teachers for conservation



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Aaranyak in collaboration with Kalpadrum Foundation and Bhumi, and in association with the Kaziranga National Park Authority organized a three-day residential training and orientation programme for teachers from Karbi Anglong particularly from the area immediately south of the Kaziranga National Park. The training was held from 30th May to 1st June, 2013 at the Convention Center at Kohora. The Sarba Siksha Abhijan, Karbi Anglong sincerely permitted the teachers to attend the programme.

It is worth mentioning that though Kaziranga National Park is known for its over hundred years of successful conservation history, the Karbi Anglong hills in its vicinity and the communities living there in have hardly been made part of the conservation movement. The Karbi Anglong is an integral part of the Kaziranga natural world heritage site as connectivity of the entire landscape is vital for future conservation of the entire landscape. The seasonal flood occurring in the Kaziranga pushes the animals to move into the adjacent highlands of Karbi Anglong and in the process the animals move stressfully through the human dominated landscape that includes crossing of the National Highway 37. Further, the connectivity is disappearing very rapidly and the park is becoming an island within the landscape in coming years.

The teachers from Primary and Middle English schools from Basagaon and Bagori clusters of Rongbonve Block attended the training. As many as 24 teachers from twenty four schools participated actively during the training. The training involved discussion and orientation on various curriculum linked environmental issues including environmental education, development of students project, biodiversity and ecosystems, threatened wildlife of Assam, flagship species conservation and Kaziranga National Parks contribution, potential of Karbi Anglong Hills in landscape level species conservation, role of teachers in conservation and building environmentally aware future generation, science and environmental reporting from villages, etc.

On the first day the programme started with an inauguration event which was graced by S K Seal Sarma, DFO, Jitendra Kumar, ACF, and Mukul Tamuli, Range Officer Kaziranga National Park. Speaking on the occasion, the DFO expressed his gratitude to Aaranyak and other organizers for taking this step to reach the present and future generation about conservation of the entire landscape including the Kaziranga Park.

Several experienced trainers like Simanta Kalita from Center for Environment Education; Sameer Dutta, Sudip Kanta Basistha and Dharmendra Das from Kalpadrum Foundation; Uttam Saikia from Bhumi, local expert Punen Gogoi and journalist Swapan Nath; Kamal Azad from WWF India; M Firoz Ahmed and Arif Hussain from Aaranyak shared their expertise with the selected teachers.

One of the teachers, Ranjen Terang, said that they had never gone through such a training which, he said, gave so much of knowledge and exercise that would help them in preparing the students, the future generation for new challenges the world is going to face. Another teacher, Mrs Kalyani Hazarika said that the topic discussed in the training has helped them in understanding the conservation of ecosystems and not just a species and he realized that all section of people must come forward to contribute for conservation of environment and natural resources.

The participants also visited the park and understood about the role of the flood plain ecosystems in the park, its animals, ecotourism and its benefit to the local communities. Different environmental games and group discussion were part of the training and effectively used by the experts as ideal tools for the training.

Aaranyak has been working for the last 24 years on various environmental issues with diverse impact on our society. Its tireless effort helped in creating a positive scenario in the region's conservation movement and it has been instrumental in protecting many of the endangered species of the region like rhino, elephant and tiger through its intervention. For the last many years we are working in Kaziranga National Park (KNP) creating awareness, ensuring protection to animals and habitats by complimenting the management and trying to reduce the human wildlife conflict by organizing various stakeholders meet.

Dr M Firoz Ahmed

BY DR M FIROZ AHMED

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