

MEDIA COMMUNIQUE

ASTEC-Aaranyak organises orientation of CM's Climate Resilient Village Fellows in Kohora River Basin

'Assam Govt pins high hopes on outcome of Chief Minister's Climate Resilient Village Fellowship'

Kohora (Karbi Anglong), July 17: Assam government is eagerly awaiting the outcome of the village/community level research projects to be carried out by the first batch of PG level student, the recipients of the Chief Minister's Climate Resilient Village Fellowship programme to get a fair idea about how the community at the village level is prepared to face the impact of the climate change and adapt to the changed scenario at the local level.

Inaugurating the orientation workshop of the fellows at the community resource centre in Chandrasing Rongpi Village of Kohora in Karbi Anglong on Sunday, Secretary of the Science, Technology and Climate Change Department of Assam Government Ms. Laya Madduri said, "The three-month fellowship has provided the students with a wonderful opportunity to work with the village community on climate change impact and adaptation at the grassroots. Climate change phenomenon now determines policy decisions of the governments across the globe. So, it is always better to have an adaptation mechanism in place to face its severe impacts when it strikes us."

Calling upon the fellows to grab the opportunity with utmost sincerity and work hard on the fellowship projects so that they can become the 'agents of change' in respect of climate change adaptation at the grassroots level, she told them, "Go to the field with an open mind and sincerity to interact with the community extensively to understand how the community is facing the changes brought about by climate change at local level. Your accurate findings will be a treasure trove for the government and the community to work out a comprehensive state-level climate change adaptation plan at a later date."

She also interacted with the fellows to know about their perception about the fellowship and the responsibility entrusted on them by it. She told them not to get demotivated at any point of time as it was a huge challenge to study a village in the shortest possible time, come to a conclusion and accomplish a research project.

The orientation workshop of fellows during July 16 to 18 is being coordinated by the Assam Science Technology and Environment Council (ASTEC) in collaboration with Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org), a research-driven biodiversity conservation organisation that has been working on natural resource management in Kohora River Basin area in a participatory mode with the community.

Giving a brief background of the Fellowship for 2022-23, the Head of Environment Division of the ASTEC, Dr Chandra Baruah informed that 47 Fellows have been selected in the first batch who will be constantly guided by assigned Mentors and Fellowship Core-Committee Members. He said the work done by the fellows will be reviewed after one month.

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Senior Aaranyak official Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma explained how the fellows would be oriented to carry out field study through participatory learning/observation, village walk, vulnerability/risk assessment linked to weather and climate.

Aaranyak's senior biologist Dr M Firoz Ahmed said that during the orientation and their stay with the community would expose the fellows to Aaranyak's years-long work in participatory mode with the community to preserve Kohora River as well as improve livelihood and socio-economic of the indigenous Karbi people using sustainable participatory natural resource management. He exuded confidence that the Fellowship Programme would have a far-reaching impact as desired by the government.

A panel of Fellowship Core-Committee Members and some of the Mentors comprising Dr Partha Jyoti Das, Dr Sangeeta Borthakur, Rizwan Uz Zaman, Dr Jayanta Kumar Sarma, Dr Dhanjit Deka, Dr Binita Pathak during their interaction with the Fellows underscored the need to remain constantly focused and sincere on the objective of the fellowship programme and the expected outcome. The Fellows were repeatedly reminded about the importance of collecting only factual data so that the outcome of their work turns out to be of very high-value.

Director of Assam State Space Application Centre (ASSAC), P L N Raju and his team enlightened the fellows through his special presentation on Remote Sensing and GIS application in village study and assessing vulnerability and risk in the context of climate change.

A teacher of Chandra Sing Rongpi High School, Swapan Nath coordinated the traditional Karbi-style welcome of the chief guest Laya Madduri, P L N Raju, core-committee members and mentors to the inaugural session of the orientation workshop.

During the orientation workshop, the fellows are staying with the local community at various home stays, supported and promoted by Aaranyak as part of its ongoing activities in the villages and run by the village households so that they can have an idea about the life and livelihood of the community here.

*Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak.
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