

MEDIA COMMUNIQUE

Aaranyak-SSA holds teachers' workshop on biodiversity conservation

Guwahati, August 8: Making students and teachers of an education institution understand the importance of biodiversity in and around their institution can help them contribute towards its conservation. Such efforts at micro-level are very important for conservation of biodiversity in a bigger area.

With this objective, premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak (www.aaranyak.org) in collaboration with Samagra Shiksha Assam (SSA), Baksa district, conducted a day-long teachers' training workshop on 'Biodiversity conservation and sustainability education' in Baska district on August 3 at Nikashi High School.

In the workshop, senior manager of Aaranyak Jayanta Kumar Pathak emphasised on the importance of scientific approaches to address the various environmental issues starting from preserving traditional ecological knowledge, mitigating human elephant conflict (HEC), preserving water sources etc. Pathak also conducted a couple of participatory activities with teachers.

He underlined the need for immediate action to conserve the rivers and tributaries of BTC, which are the lifeline of thousands of people. Pathak highlighted that the practice of sustainability is not a new phenomenon for the indigenous community of BTC and cited the example of worshipping the Siju tree in Bathou religion as the community believe that the five branches of the tree represent the sun, earth, air, water and sky, which are survival of life on earth.

Pointing out the ecological uniqueness of northeastern region of India and the new educational policy, the District Programme Officer, SSA, Baksa district, Pranab Jyoti Kalita highlighted the increasing roles and responsibilities of teachers and necessity of collaborations with knowledge partners of different arena. He also discussed the possibilities of different activities of Youth and Eco-Club in shaping students' critical thinking, creativity with the practical applications to help them become environmentally conscious human beings and responsible citizens.

Aaranyak official Tanvi Hussain stressed upon the importance of sustainability education in school curriculum and understanding of biodiversity, natural resources and waste management for sustainable living and livelihoods. "Documentation of traditional knowledge on judicious exploitation of natural resources and its requisite incorporation with modern science is the key to overcome the challenges of resource scarcity and fulfilling the SDGs," she said.

Aaranyak's official Rabiya Daimary interacted with the teachers on the issues of HEC in Baksa district and other regions of BTC and importance of co-existence with wild elephants for its conservation and the initiatives taken by Aaranyak in the region for reducing HEC and damage to lives and property. Aaranyak official Wasima Begum demonstrated various components of the sustainability education programme with hands-on activities on campus biodiversity mapping, species diversity calculation using the quadrat method to gain comprehensive knowledge of the surrounding flora and fauna.

Dr Priyanath Basumatary of SSA, Baksa also attended the program and interacted with the teachers. Manna Singh Brahma, Principal of Nikashi High School facilitated the entire program and played a vital role in its successful completion.

The workshop was conducted with support from Wipro Earthian and SBI Foundation where total 28 persons actively participated which included 22 teachers representing 22 schools of 9 clusters under Baksa district.

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