

## PRESS RELEASE

### Community role key to secure Dibru Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve

Guwahati, Nov 10: The magnificence of the famed Dibru Saikhowa National Park and Biosphere Reserve in Tinsukia district of Assam was highlighted during International Day for Biosphere Reserves that was celebrated in the Biosphere Reserve for the first time in the state under the aegis of the North East Regional Office of the Ministry of Tourism Government of India in association with Dibru Saikhowa Biosphere Reserve/Dibru Saikhowa National Park and Aaranyak ([www.aaranyak.org](http://www.aaranyak.org)).

The day-long celebration consisted of three distinct sessions – morning nature walk and bird watching at Maguri Motapung Beel, a Gram Sabha on biosphere reserve focused on challenges and role on women, and the third one was an open session for dignitaries and audience. The 61 participants in the celebration included Tinsukia Tourist Guide Association official Ritupon Saikia and RFO Guijan Wildlife Range Ms Santana Medhi; Resource person from Tourism of India Asraf Hussain; members from Tourist guide association, Tinsukia; forest officials of Guijan Range; officials from Aaranyak Zakir Islam Bora, Bidisha Borah, Rimpee Moran, Ejaj Ahmad, Tibrajyoti Gogoi, Jiaur Rahman; Eco – Development Committees and local NGOs including Wild Feathers, Maguri Motapung Beel Eco development committees, SHGs and local communities.

Aaranyak officials Ejaj Ahmad, Tibrajyoti Gogoi coordinated the nature walk & bird watching session where participants undertook plastic picking, boat ride and captured a good number of photographs of birds in Maguri Beel along with local community members and officials of different departments.

Ritupon Saikia and Asraf Hussain coordinated the Gram Sabha Session, After the welcome session, a brief introduction on Aaranyak was presented by Zakir Islam Bora followed by the presentation on “Biosphere reserves: Challenges & role of Women” by Bidisha Borah and Rimpee Moran. Discussed on the definition of Biosphere reserve, its importance, difference between National Park and Biosphere Reserve, the different roles and challenges of women in Biosphere conservation, future threats and conservation challenges etc., in a participatory mode.

In the Open Session that followed the Gram Sabha Session, various livelihood opportunities were explored for the local communities so that they become less dependent on forest products. Related government policies were also discussed.

The audience was sensitised on how conservation of the biosphere with community engagement are instrumental to attain the goal of sustainable development that will secure community’s livelihoods as well as the resources of the biosphere.

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