

Press Release on IWD discussion in Diphu

IWD: Karbi women discuss issues potent for igniting social change

Guwahati, March 11: Premier biodiversity conservation organisation Aaranyak in collaboration with Centre for Karbi Studies (CKS) and Holistic Life Transforming & Empowering Society (HLTEC) celebrated the International Women’s Day (IWD) 2025 with a panel discussion at Yellow Tree Cafe, Diphu, Karbi Anglong in Assam.

Fifty-five participants from different educational and professional backgrounds participated in the event that was organised with the objective to create awareness among women and youths about the importance of nature conservation, natural resource management as well as issues and challenges faced by women in the 21st Century.

Panel discussions were organised on four key topics deliberated by different panelists. Panelist Dr. Bandita Teronpi, Assistant Professor of Lumding College deliberated on “Women as Custodians of Nature: Traditional Roles in Biodiversity Conservation in Karbi Anglong”.

Panelist Ms. Serlin Beypi, Forest Range Officer of Bokajan Range of Assam Forest Department deliberated on “Balancing Tradition and Sustainability: Women’s Role in Addressing Forest Conservation, Resource Management, and Climate Change”.

Panelists Ms. Charisma Rongpipi, Founder of Yellow Tree Café, Meraki & Happy Farmers and Ms. Serleen Engti Katharpi, Founder of Choi, a popular Karbi traditional clothing brand, talked on “Empowering Karbi Society: Women Entrepreneurs as Catalysts for Sustainable Development and Equity”.

Ms. Jirleen Rongpipi, Centre Administrator, Sakhi - One Stop Centre, West Karbi Anglong district deliberated on “Empowering Women in the 21st Century: Overcoming Challenges with Sakhi - One Stop Centre’s Perspective”.

The panel discussions envisioned important prospects on women’s contribution in forest and biodiversity conservation, women entrepreneurship for sustainable development besides focusing on women rights, legal framework and protection system for women safety to address the challenges faced by them today.

Dr. Bandita Teronpi said, “Karbi women are sustainable users and protectors of natural resources and does not encourage harm and damage to nature and natural system as per Karbi belief system”.

“Empowerment of women in my community to support them through small and micro enterprise has been my motto and I am proud that through my interventions women are getting opportunities and market. We must promote and use local products to support local enterprises and women involved in these”, Ms. Charisma Rongpipi, a renowned entrepreneur, said adding the power of women to usher in change must be utilized for the community and environment.

Panelist Ms Serleen Engti Katharpi, a textile sector entrepreneur, said “Women face multiple challenges when they try to earn for the family and herself. Support from fellow women and men is essential to make them successful. It's important to provide them that space and celebrate even small successes.”

Ms Jirleen Rongpipi, a community leader, said, “Access to the legal and judicial system by women in Karbi Anglong is a challenge. They need more access to ensure legal protection. They need more support to be successful in their life. She also highlighted ‘early marriage among girls’ as a big challenge for women.

Ms Sabin Rongpipi from Center for Karbi Studies, moderated the discussion efficiently making it a participatory and brain tinkering for both the panellists and the participants.

Dr. Firoz Ahmed and Jayanta Kumar Sarma of Aaranyak briefed about Aaranyak and its initiatives across NE India and shared their views on empowerment, conservation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development opportunities in Karbi Anglong. The event was made successful with the team efforts of Aaranyak, CKS and HLTEC members respectively.

The Natural Resource Management Programme of Aaranyak remains grateful to support of IUCN-KfW and US Fish and Wildlife Services.

Aaranyak is committed towards conservation of rich biodiversity and natural heritages of NE India by supporting indigenous people and communities for alternative and sustainable livelihoods as well as nature-based solutions.

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