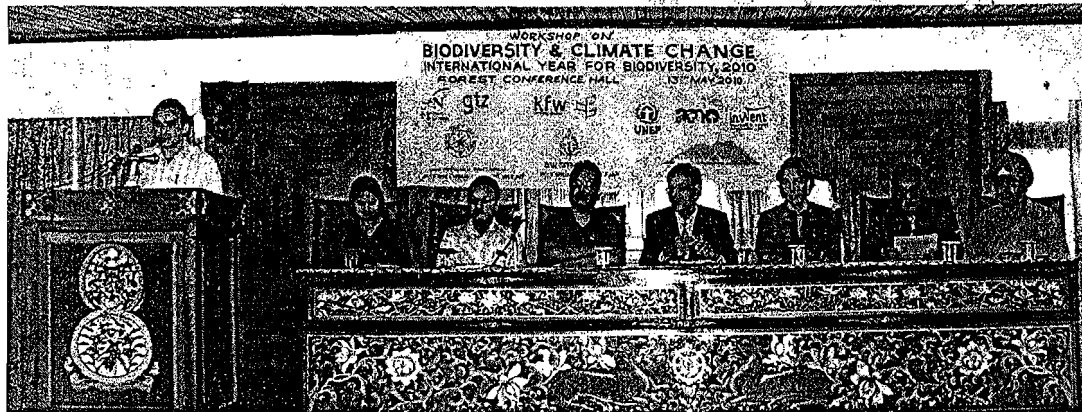


Bio-diversity conservation in Sikkim vital for climate change



Staff Reporter

GANGTOK, May 13: To discuss the action plans of climate change in reference to bio-diversity conservation in Sikkim, a daylong workshop on bio-diversity and climate change was held today here at the forest conference hall.

Organized by Sikkim State Council of Science and Technology in collaboration with The Mountain Institute in India (TMI), State Bio-diversity Board and German Technical Corporation (GTZ) KfW and Inwent along with GEO magazine, the workshop was attended by a congregation of environmental scientists and research scholars.

The workshop started with the inaugural address by State Science and Technology Secretary LM Arrawatia, who spoke on the importance of the Biodiversity and Climate Change. He also gave a brief background on the proposed collaborative worked with GTZ to develop the State Action Plan for Climate Change (SAPCC). Mentioning that the USP of Sikkim is the rich bio diversity of flora and fauna, the secretary said time has come to think seriously on the matter of climate change and its adverse effect on Sikkim's bio-diversity.

Senior Research officer of State Forest Department Usha Lachungpa while making her power point presentation on biodiversity and its importance in Sikkim said the dwindling bio-diversity is a serious problem and must be checked immediately.

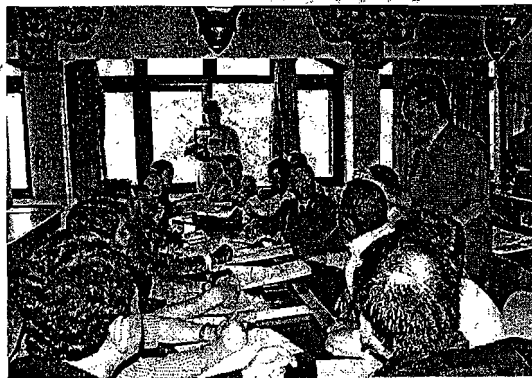
She added that the loss of natural habitats and alterations due to climate change are detrimental to the survival of animals and birds.

State RMDD Additional Secretary Dr. Sandeep Tambe explained harmful effect of the climate in particular to rural waters. He also highlighted the initiative of Dhara Vikash programme in Sikkim through which the ignorant people are taught to conserve and preserve the natural water.

Vera Scholz of GTZ said there is a need to understand the biodiversity-ecotourism-development linkages in Khangchendzonga National park. She further said the basic idea of GTZ visiting Sikkim is to explore the eco system from the biodiversity and development view point and then share the learning at national and international level to enhance the awareness on the value of biodiversity.

LB Rai from GB Pant institute of Himalayan Environment and Development also made his presentation on climate change impacts phonological variation of Rhododendrons, while by Dr. Ghanashyam Sharma, Program Manager TMI-India, Experience delivered on Biodiversity and Traditional documentation.

This technical session was followed by a Group discussion on Biodiversity and Climate Change. The participants were equally divided into three group where each group came out with a innovative idea and inputs for the State Action Plan for Climate Change. All three participants dis-



cussed on various issues related to Climate change adaptation and Biodiversity conservation. The detailed summarized points were presented before the house by each group for further suggestion and inputs. The output of the group discussion is expected to contribute in drafting and brainstorming session for State Action Plan for Climate Change proposed on May 14 and 15.

The workshop witnessed more than 90 participants from diverse group. The participants include the senior officials of Forest, Environment & Wildlife Management, Horticulture, Agriculture, Science & Technology, Sikkim University, Tadong Government College, ELIIM University, NGOs from all four districts, Biodiversity Management Committee (BMCs) and other civil society organizations.

This workshop was preceded by a two day eco-trek. The action day is a part of the global program of German Ministries for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and for Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU).

The two day eco-trek

was coordinated by Nima Tashi Bhutia from TMI-India and Sonam Rinchen Lepcha from State Council of Science & Technology. The participants included the officials from GTZ, Inwent, GEO, BMZ, nature guide, social worker, ecotourism expert from Khangchendzonga Conservation Committee (KCC) and taxonomist from (SCST) and research scholar from ATREE. The team visited the holy lake at Khecheopalri in West Sikkim and then trekked to Yuksam via Leythang village on May 11.

On arrival at Yuksam, the team interacted with the members of KCC and other tourism stakeholder, followed by a local cultural programme. On May 12, the team visited Norbu Gang (coronation throne), Karthok lake, KNP check post, Zero waste centre, home stays and interacted with the local community.

The basic idea of the trek was to explore an ecosystem in the buffer village of Khangchendzonga National Park (KNP) from an "biodiversity and development" viewpoint with special focus on "Ecotourism" as an opportunities for Biodiversity conservation.