

## Report on Awareness programme for women Panchayat of North Sikkim at SIRD, Karfectar on 16.12.2014

A reorientation programme was organized by State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), from 15.12.2014 to 18.12.2014 for Women Panchayats of North Sikkim District. The SIRD, which is situated at Karfectar, two Kilometers away from Jorethang, South Sikkim, is the apex training institute of the Rural Management and Development Department and entrusted with various training and research activities pertaining to local self governance and rural development. The facilities and infrastructure of the institute are also utilized by various other departments and organizations from time to time.

The participants were from following GPUs in North Sikkim: Tingchim Chadey, Mangshila Tibuk, Ringhim Nampatam, Singhick Sentam, Tingvong, Sakyong Pentong, Lingdong Barfok, Passingdang Saffo, Hee Gyathang, Lum Gor Sangtok, Rongong Tumlong and Kabi Tingda. There were 33 (thirty three) women participants comprising Zilla Members, Panchayat Presidents, Panchayat Vice-Presidents, Panchayat Secretaries and Panchayat Members.



Sikkim Biodiversity Board was given a slot of one and half hours on 16.12.2014 to bring awareness to the participants about Biological Diversity Act, 2002 and Roles and functions of Biodiversity Management Committees. The Board was represented by Mrs. Usha Lachungpa, Addl. Dir cum State Project Co-ordinator (UNEP-GEF-MoEF-ABS Project) and Ms. Shewani Pradhan, Assistant Conservator of Forest, Sikkim Biodiversity Board.



Mrs. Usha Lachungpa gave a presentation on biodiversity and its importance. Further, they were informed that the BD Act, 2002 does not impose restrictions like some Indian Acts such as Indian Forest Act, 1927, Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, etc. It focuses mainly on biodiversity conservation, sustainable use of bio-resources and the Access and Benefit

Sharing provisions which will help them in earning sustainable livelihood by using their traditional knowledge on the use, conservation, etc. of natural and genetic resources as well as retaining the Intellectual Property Right (IPR) of an individual or community. She further mentioned about the different agencies like National Biodiversity Board and State Biodiversity Board at the national and regional level to implement the BD Act, 2002 and the need for the formation of the Biodiversity Management Committees (BMCs) at the local level. She highlighted that the role of the NBA and SBBs are to see that the concerned villages and the villagers through local BMCs get full benefit of their traditional knowledge, natural resources, etc. by acting as a mediator between them and the organizations who are trying to use or already using their resources for commercial benefits by signing ABS agreements.



Miss Shewani talked about the need and importance of forming Biodiversity Management committees at GPU level. The participants were informed about the processes involved in the formation of the committee, its composition, member's selection criteria, tenure of BMC, etc. She emphasized that the members

should be drawn from amongst the traditional healers (*Amchis, Vaidhyas, etc.*), NTFP collectors, fishermen, academicians, etc. because their responsibilities includes promotion of biodiversity conservation, their sustainable use, preparation of documents like People's Biodiversity Register (PBR) which will be their sole property to claim their IPR, etc and that they should be the local residents possessing the Sikkim Subject Certificate or Certificate of Identification. It was also informed by her to the participants that the NBA will provide a start-up grant through SBB for BMC constitution, office set-up, etc. nevertheless, they should continuously provide feedback to the SBBs in the matter of traditional knowledge and biodiversity related issues. Upon constitution, the BMCs need to pass a resolution to open a bank account in the nearest nationalized bank with BMC Chairperson and Secretary being joint signatories on cheques.

The programme concluded following a feedback session, and distribution of 33 sets of SBB Flyers giving brief information on the Biological Diversity Act 2002 and roles and functions of BMCs as well as copies of the Format of Minutes of the Gram Sabha for constitution of BMCs. The SBB team also met with the officials of the SIRD and requested for intimation during such opportune programmes in future for wider dissemination of biodiversity related issues among the local communities and organizations, before departing to Gangtok.