

Workshop on Climate Change and Natural Disaster Management- Towards Better Prepared Monasteries in Sikkim



May 3 – 5, 2012 at Rumtek Monastery

Organised by
WWF – India, Khangchendzonga Landscape Programme

In collaboration with
Rumtek Monastery
&
RCE Srinagar of Centre for Environment Education

Supported by
Rubin Foundation



Rumtek Monastery



REGIONAL CENTRE OF EXPERTISE
ON EDUCATION FOR
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ACKNOWLEDGED BY



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Background

Sikkim is a small landlocked state nestled in the eastern Himalayas of India. As with most Himalayan states, Sikkim is vulnerable to multiple natural hazards. Only recently one of the most devastating natural disasters to strike the little state was the earthquake of 18 September 2011 measuring 6.9 on the Richter Scale. The earthquake, with its epicenter in the Khangchendzonga Conservation Area, near the border of Nepal, was felt across North-East India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and southern Tibet.

Tremendous loss to life and property was recorded during this earthquake. Around 71 people died and several government buildings, multi-storied residences, markets and monasteries were partially or fully damaged. People panicked, fled their homes, sustained injuries and lost their loved ones. To add to their woes, the relentless monsoon rain showed no mercy and the ravaged state was cut off from the rest of the world. Telecommunication and power supply cables had snapped, water supply was disrupted and many people were stranded in the middle of nowhere. Thus, the breathtakingly beautiful and peaceful state of Sikkim was transformed into a chaotic state of loss, despair, agony and destruction.

Objective

Witnessing the utter helplessness of people against the wrath of nature, WWF-India, Khangchendzonga Landscape Programme based in Sikkim, in collaboration with Rumtek Monastery and Centre for Environment Education is holding a three-day workshop (May, 3-5, 2012) on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for the monasteries of Sikkim. This workshop is being supported by Rubin Foundation and is being hosted at Rumtek Monastery. The monasteries of Sikkim have been especially chosen for this DRR initiative because of their wide outreach to the masses and their status as the repository of people's faith and devotion. Moreover, with



monasteries already established at several locations, it will become easier to conduct and coordinate relief & rescue operations in even the remotest areas of the state. However, the monasteries themselves are old heritage structures that have not been constructed to withstand violent tremors. The buildings sustained considerable damages during the recent earthquake, raising concerns about their safety. While it is impractical to rebuild these structures according to the latest safety norms, it is possible to retrofit them to render them reasonably safe for the future.



The Climate Change and Natural Disaster Management workshop will thus, address issues of safe construction techniques, identify areas for improvement and upgradation of existing structures, understand climate change and its impacts, reiterate the relevance of DRR in these changing times, and the importance of being prepared for future.

Participants

The workshop will be attended primarily by the monks of Rumtek and 26 other monasteries of Sikkim.

Expected Outcomes

The programme is aimed at strengthening the capacities of monks in the field of DRR. Monasteries often being the first place people look to for respite and hope, it is imperative that the monks be well aware and prepared to help their people in times of need. Moreover, monasteries can enlist the help of local people during disasters, as well as provide informed assistance in rescue and rehabilitation efforts. And finally, monasteries with their wide outreach can help spread the message of DRR and generate greater awareness about climate change, natural disasters, mitigation measures and simple tips to protect oneself in disaster situations. Sikkim being a small state, it may be entirely possible for monasteries to reach out to a huge proportion of its 6 lakh population.



Programme Schedule (Tentative)

Day 1: May 3, 2012

- 03:00 PM Arrival and registration of participants
- 04:00 PM Tea
- 04:30 PM Introductory session - Self introduction of participants; Background and objectives; Workshop expectations
- 05:30 PM Environmental activities of Rumtek Monastery – A presentation
- 06:00 PM Break
- 08:00 PM Dinner

Day 2: May 4, 2012

- 08:00 AM Breakfast
- 09:30 AM Inaugural session
- 11:00 AM Tea break
- 11:30 AM Session 1: September 18, 2011 – Experiences and Lessons learnt
- 12:30 PM Session 2 “Understanding Climate Change” Presentation and discussion
- 01:30 PM Lunch
- 02:30 PM Group activity
- 03:30 PM Session 3 “Disasters – Understanding risk reduction” Presentation and Discussion
- 04:30 PM Tea Break
- 04:45 PM Group activity – “Reviewing our monasteries”
- 05:45 PM Interaction Session
- 06:00 PM End of Day 1
- 06:30 PM Film Show

Day 3: May 5, 2012

- 09:30 AM Recap of Day 1
- 10:00 AM Session 4 “Monastery architecture – Strengths and Weaknesses”; Presentation on survey of monasteries post September 18; Damage mitigation measures through construction/architecture; Interaction session
- 11:30 AM Tea break
- 11:45 AM Session 5 “Planning for the future” Group activity – “Being better prepared”
- 01:30 PM Lunch
- 02:30 PM Presentations from different groups on action plan
- 03:30 PM Summing up
- 04:30 PM Feedback session
- 05:00 PM End
- 06:00 PM Quiz
- 08:00 PM Dinner

Day 4: May 6, 2012

- 08:30 AM: Departure of participants