

Message from the President

Sushil Ramola



In the last couple of months IMI activities in the Indian Himalayan Region have been nothing short of seismic with the idea of IMI gaining great interest and traction and an increased engagement of people. We are moving forward and in this inaugural issue, let me share with you the excitement of these developments.

The work of IMI and its committed volunteers on creating awareness and action on plastic waste pollution reverberated through some 250 locations and the tremors were felt all the way to Vigyan Bhawan on 1st June. The Apple Farmers' Meet in Narkanda HP in May for re-envisioning and scaling up apple economy brought the focus back on apples as a means to prosperity of mountain farmers. The workshops of the National Mission on Himalayan Studies project in Darjeeling, Aizawl, Itanagar, Kohima, Leh, Agartala, Imphal and Gangtok were attended by large groups in each location. Others will follow in Solan, Shillong and Dehradun to advance studies and learning on best practices in climate change adaptation.

Initiation of State Forums in Manipur and Meghalaya in the month of June followed by path breaking Legislators' Meet in Arunachal Pradesh received unprecedented interest from the political leadership in deliberating on the state contextualized issues of climate change impacting agriculture and water security. It also included a workshop on Bamboo for the first time. These meetings also resulted in IMI meeting the Honourable Chief Ministers and their senior officers in these states and obtaining their commitment to the mission of sustainable and integrated mountain development. I also had a meaningful meeting in Dehradun with the governing council and distinguished members of Sustainable Development Forum of Uttaranchal to align our common mission, goals and agenda.

Furthermore, the preparatory work on holding the SMDS-VII in Himachal Pradesh is in full swing.

The Governing Council and Members of IMI have come together like never before and our partners have supported us fully in this journey. On behalf of IMI, I thank you all from the bottom of my heart. Our resolve for 'Making People of India proud of our Mountains', is growing even stronger. All this work at IMI is a small tribute to Mother Nature and our People so we hope she will spare the mountains from her own seismic activities!

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Message from the Secretary



Fantry Mein Jaswal

I am delighted to introduce this first edition of the IMI Newsletter. We have been intending to launch the Newsletter for quite some time now, but due to various reasons it had to wait up till now. We intend making it a regular publication and to use it to keep you in touch with news and developments which relate to IMI, state chapters, our partners/ collaborators, and mountain issues. In this and future editions, we shall also be reporting decisions and discussions which take place at the Governing Council, GBMs, SMDSS, MoMSs, workshops etc. We shall also include stories/ articles contributed by members from across the Indian Himalayan Region.

You are aware that IMI is the only platform of its kind, and in the seven years of its even paced journey, it has gained traction. We have gained friends, partners, collaborators, supporters, and credibility, while we have stuck on to our core values.

Our projects with FAO, SDC and NMHS have gained considerable progress. We are now engaged in the process of planning our flagship event, the Sustainable Mountain Development Summit-VII scheduled to be held at Solan and Shimla in October 2018. The Himachal Pradesh chapter is the hosts. More on this as time goes by.

A big milestone in the history of IMI has been the relocation of the Secretariat to a rented accommodation w.e.f. 2nd July 2018. Our gratitude and appreciation to Late Dr. R.S. Tolia, IMI's Founding President, and Mr. P.D. Rai, IMI Councillor and MP (Lok Sabha) Sikkim, for their generosity in helping us tide over the initial period.

My hearty congratulations to the Secretariat team- Chhaya for designing and compiling the newsletter, John and Namrata for their support and contributions led by Ms. Shaifali Sharma, Executive Director, IMI, in putting together this first newsletter. We will need your support and contributions by way of stories, articles, anecdotes etc to make the newsletter a success.

Legislators' Dialogue held in Itanagar

IMI and Sustainable Development Forum Arunachal Pradesh (S DFA) in collaboration with Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme organized a Legislators' Dialogue on the *Implications of Climate Change on Agriculture and Disaster Risk Reduction*, followed by a session on *Promotion of Bamboo in Arunachal Pradesh* on 22nd June, 2018. Hon. CM of Arunachal Pradesh Sh. Pema Khandu graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. The dialogue also included the participation of dignitaries, Sh. Chowna Mein, Hon. Dy. Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Sh. T. Norbu Thongdok, Hon. Speaker, Arunachal Pradesh, Sh. PD Rai, Hon MP (Lok Sabha) Sikkim, Sh. Satya Gopal, Chief Secretary, Govt. of Arunachal Pradesh, and IMI Councillor, Sh. Sushil Ramola, President IMI, Sh. Ramesh Negi, Vice President IMI and former Chief Secretary, Govt of Arunachal, Smt. Fantry Mein Jaswal, Secretary IMI & Chairperson S DFA, Sh Shirish Sinha, Dy Head, Swiss Development Cooperation, and legislators of Arunachal State Assembly. Overall, the event held at the State's Legislative Assembly auditorium was attended by over 100 participants which included legislators, commissioners and secretaries and representatives from the media.



Hon'ble Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Sh. Pema Khandu addressing the participants during the Legislators' Dialogue held at Itanagar



Shri Pema Khandu, HCM Arunachal Pradesh was the chief guest at the Dialogue

National Mission on Himalayan Studies Workshops

IMI project on ‘**Understanding Mountain Peoples’ Approach and Practices to Combating Climate Change in the Indian Himalayan Region: Research to Renewal and Reforms**’ under the ‘**National Mission on Himalayan Studies**’ aims to document adaptation good practices, with a focus on indigenous ways of managing natural resources by the mountain communities. A ‘Young Researchers’ Forum’ has been constituted with researchers from the IHR states and project is being led by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) as Principal Researcher. IMI state chapters are guiding the researchers to undertake activities related to the project. To reflect upon the selected cases in order to reconcile and align the research back to the project goal, state level roundtables have been planned. The purpose has been to identify case studies on good practices to climate change with the state experts. 8 such meetings have been in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Ladakh, Tripura, Manipur and Sikkim. By inviting experts with subject knowledge on selected sectors and who are driving adaptation planning in the state, the deliberations have focused on discussing biophysical and socio-economic drivers of vulnerability, measures being undertaken to adapt and gaps in planning. The roundtable steered discussions on how policy mechanisms in IHR can be strengthened with local climate change knowledge and make recommendations for the same. Further, these consultation meetings have facilitated more clarity on selection of case studies and lessons learnt in order to link it back to address policy gaps in state level planning.



Participants of Darjeeling-Kalimpong Roundtable held in Darjeeling on 23 March



Shri PD Rai addressing the Gangtok roundtable on 27 June 2018



Participants of Iripura Roundtable held in Agartala on 9 June 2018

Workshop on Revisioning and Upscaling Apple Economy of Indian Himalaya

As a direct outcome of the IMI-FAO workshop titled ‘New Age Himalayan Farmers: Perspectives and Experiences’ on November 29-30, 2017- a follow up workshop on revisioning and upscaling apple economy was held from 20th to 23rd May, 2018. The event attended by Sh. Shyam Khadka, FAOR, Sh. JC Sharma, IAS dr. Tej Pratap, PI-IMIFAO and Dr Ashwini Kumar, Chancellor, Shimla University along with participants from Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. The meeting provided an opportunity to capture glimpses of apple farming transforming household economy of Himalayan farmers in Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh and potential in other states of IHR. The key views discussed were on apple farming economy of the Himalayan States: experiences and likely future scenarios. Following which were sessions on the evolving landscapes of apple orchards in the Himalayas and on farm issues as influencing factors of apple economy of Indian Himalaya. The concluding talk on the day was on off-farm issues as influencing factors of apple economy of Indian Himalayas. The day saw sessions on apple farming and village Agro-tourism and on the challenges to upscaling apple farming and economy in India. The concluding activity to this workshop was a field visit to Kotgarh/ Baagi area.



State Level stakeholders' roundtable under NMHS project held in Imphal on 11-12 June was attended by Shri N Biren Singh, HCM Manipur



Dr. Tej Pratap giving opening remarks on the aims, objectives of Himalayan Apple Farmer Meet held at Narkanda, Himachal Pradesh

The Himalayan Cleanup

More than 95 per cent of the waste collected was plastic trash

The Himalayan Cleanup took place across the 12 mountain states on May 26th has revealed that more than 95 per cent of the trash collected during the cleanup was plastic waste. Responding to the call of the Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) and Zero Waste Himalaya, 200 plus organisations with over 15000 volunteers from across the 12 mountain states stood in solidarity to organise over 300 events of The Himalayan Cleanup. At a presentation on 1 June 2018 at Vigyan Bhavan, Delhi during the session on Himalayan Ecosystem organised by the MoEF CC as part of World Environment Day, IMI and Zero Waste representatives presented the findings of the cleanup campaign to an audience that consisted of Government officials, NGO members and other dignitaries.



DharaVikas- A Success Story of Deythang, West Sikkim

Uden L. Bhutia, Young Researcher, Sikkim, NMHS Project

“Had it not been for the DharaVikas (spring rejuvenation) programme, the villagers would still be walking up these slopes to fetch water”, tells Hari Chandra Sharma, a field facilitator as he gives me his hand to get up from the fall I just had on the slippery muddy slopes of Deythang, a sleepy village in West Sikkim. As I dusted myself, I got up reflecting on the previous water struggles of the people of the village encountered daily in fetching a *gagri* (vessel to carry water). However, in the past few years Mr. Sharma has hardly heard any complaints on this issue.

People in most parts of the mountainous Sikkim depend on spring water for drinking and irrigation purposes. However, erratic rains and drought have resulted in the drying up of springs in many parts of the state, and even more so in the South and West districts. But, due to the innovative DharaVikas Programme of Sikkim’s rural development department, villages like Deythang have enough water and are now moving towards prosperity and self-reliance.

Implemented in 2008, DharaVikas was launched by Rural Management and Development Department, Sikkim in partnership with WWF-India and People’s Science Institute, Dehradun under the flagship of MGNREGA. It was implemented with the goal of rejuvenating drying springs by the method of arresting the speed of the surface runoff to make maximum water percolate into the soil to recharge the *Dharas* (springs).

Sikkim’s Dhara Vikas has succeeded in reviving 51 springs and four lakes in the South and West districts of Sikkim. The rejuvenation of the lake in Deythang has resulted in increased irrigation and in the cultivation of crops and fruits. The implementation of this programme has also helped in reducing landslides and downstream field damage. The programme has also helped develop a spring atlas for the state. Today, almost all houses have water harvesting tanks and water taps. “The number of pipes being tapped to the spring source is increasing daily, but the spring hasn’t dried up as it used to,” says Chewang Gyatso. The revival of Deythang Lake, today, provides sufficient water to 90 households which have helped support agriculture and horticulture activities. Sikkim’s DharaVikas programme has not only been successful in reviving the springs but has also earned accolades for their community-led programme leading to the empowerment of local communities and in decreasing their livelihood burden.



Meghalaya's Bamboo Drip Irrigation System (BDI)

Jonathan Donald Syiemlieh

Bamboo drip irrigation- an indigenous method of irrigation practiced in Meghalaya, is found in villages in East Khasi Hills and in Muktapur and Dawki in Jaintia Hills. These regions primarily cultivate betel leaves and areca-nut.

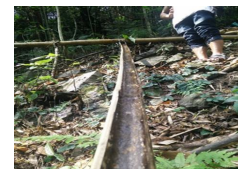
The bamboo drip irrigation practice uses the combination of gravity and steep slopes to facilitate the flow of water through the channels. BDI is designed to ensure controlled and efficient flow of water.

The bamboo channels require maintenance as it gets rotten over a period of 1.5-2 years. These bamboos are left to rot to mix with the soil. This maintenance is undertaken by a group of farmers who form informal cooperatives and retain this system.

Cultivator showing how the bamboo drip system is supported by wooden Y shaped bamboo sticks held above the ground and channelled from springs which are 500 meters away from the plantation. The allocation of limited water resources by the entire community is judiciously utilised.

The bamboo drip irrigation structure are systematically covered by the top half of the bamboo slit vertically in order to prevent any insects or leaves etc to fall into the water stream through the bamboo channels which can cause blockage or contaminate the water stream flowing through the bamboos.

The overflowing water restores the catchment area for farming purposes. The BDI process is so precise that water fed in at one end produces a steady trickle at the individual plant.



National Level Seminar on DRR and Climate Change

Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative hosted a Call of the Mountains- National Seminar on DRR and Climate Change on 11 May 2018 at Darjeeling which saw unprecedented participation of officials from both the GTA and Govt of West Bengal to discuss key challenges in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The seminar was supported by IMI, NMHS and Caritas India. Post seminar Caritas-India has agreed to take up a 5 year project on landslide/earthquakes, waste management and advocacy issues in the Darjeeling/Kalimpong region, and IIT(Mandi) has set up a trial based low cost AWS/ landslide EW station at Himali Boarding, Kurseong



Dr. R.S Tolia Award

The Integrated Mountain Initiative (IMI) community suffered a great loss in 2016 with the passing away of its esteemed and visionary leader, elder, and guiding light- Dr RS Tolia. Dr Tolia conceptualized the idea of IMI and led it as its founding President. To commemorate the memory of Dr. Tolia and in gratitude to its founding President, IMI instituted an award to recognise individual efforts that have made impact in integrating and addressing the issues of mountain communities. The first award in 2016 was conferred upon AVANI Society from Pithoragarh. The applications for the 2nd Dr R.S. Tolia Award 2018 are open for nominations and the information about it on the IMI Website: <http://inmi.in/get-involved/dr-r-s-tolia-award-2018/>

Combating Climate Change- A Success Story on Spring/Stream Rejuvenation at Soi Village, Basar.

EB-Project Nature (GomarBasar)

Basar, in Arunachal Pradesh had been experiencing a rapid drying of its three important rivers- Kidi, Hie and Bam Hile. This had direct and drastic implications on farming and irrigation for wetland rice cultivations and orchards in the area.

In the year **2009**, the EB-Project Nature, erstwhile Environment Protection Group (EPG) decided to organize a river expedition and made a vulnerability assessment study to combat the drying of streams. This study revealed that the areas at higher altitude suffered from more issues of water scarcity and even more so in the dry winter months.

The project was then initiated in with the digging of 1000 rainwater harvesting pits of 2000 litres capacity each, in order to artificially recharge the entire watershed for stream revival. The initiative also focused on the revival and preservation of forests which also serve as recharge points. The recharging of the catchment area was initiated immediately from the monsoon of 2009.



The digging of recharge pits and water collection through rain water harvesting in 2011

By 2013, it was observed that the increased water collection in the pits had also led to an increase in the number of wild animals like the barking deer in the forest area. Sighting of wildlife such as leopards, bears and dogs had increased by 2014.

Alongside, the recharging of the streams, the project also initiated a micro- Bio-Resource Mission in year 2015 to identify rare herbal plants eaten by wild animals. The project raised seedlings and re-planted them in forest to provide food for wild animals and also to conserve the native rare plants of the area 5000 seedlings of 13 species were raised in 2015. This also added to the livelihood of the locals living in the area.



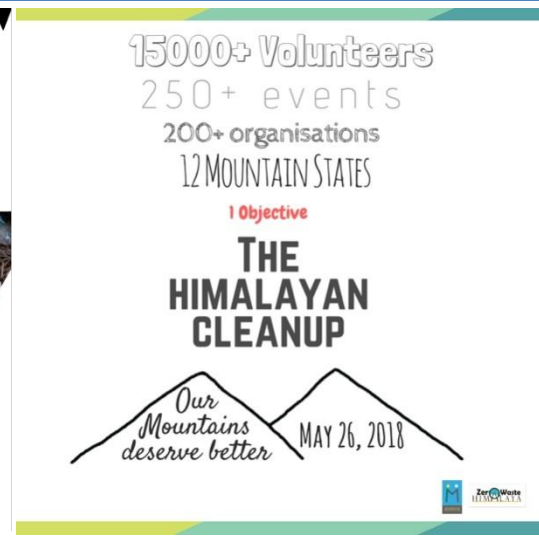
Project Outcome



2008 - 2018



From 2008 to 2018, the water conditions in the dry winter seasons have improved considerably. Thereby securing the livelihood of the people as well as the wildlife in the area



(L-R) The Himalayan Cleanup Held on 26 May Process started with a workshop in Gangtok, followed by Cleanup alongwith Waste and Brand Audit



(L-R) Roundtables held under the IMI NMHS Project in Itanagar, Aizawl and Kohima



Shri N Biren Singh, HCM, Manipur addressed the IMI NMHS Workshop on Climate Change on 11 June 2018 and extended his patronage



(L) Sustainable Development Forum Arunachal Pradesh met Shri Pema Khandu, HCM Arunachal Pradesh before the Legislators' Dialogue on Climate Change on 20 June 2018



Meeting with Shri Jairam Thakur, HCM, Himachal Pradesh for SMDS VII



Meeting with Shri Conrad Sangma, HCM Meghalaya



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