

MOUNTAINS CONNECT

September 2022

IMI NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Dear friends in our IMI Network or outside it,

I am extremely happy to write this message. That we are coming out with a newsletter after a considerable hiatus calls for celebration. Of course the pandemic did play a part in that but working from home did not help matters either.

IMI is an institution which must bring viewpoints from all across the Himalaya as this is our mandate. We do hope to report on this regularly through this newsletter. Furthermore, we do invite your articles and views on Mountain related issues which we can publish.

The Sustainable Mountain Development is now centre stage. And critically in the focus area of Sustainable Tourism. This is what we will be discussing in our Sustainable Mountain Development Summit XI to be held in Leh, Ladakh in October this year.

Sustainable Mountain Development is also the theme decided by the United Nations General Assembly as a recognition to the importance of mountains in maintaining ecosystem services for mankind in general.

With Climate Change being experienced all over the world in the form of wildfires, floods and droughts we cannot be mute spectators. Governments need to act on the pledges made in every COP. Heart wrenching scenes from fires in the United States, Australia and Europe to inundation by the river Indus of a third of Pakistan just tell us how potent Climate Change is. All that we can predict is that there will be greater intensities of such calamities in the future. Our Himalaya is especially more vulnerable and hence we have to think of all the adaptations and resilience that we can build.

Do spare a thought for all of this and let us do whatever we can as individuals as well as collectively. Whether it is in our homes or in the larger community we have to act now.

Please write in with all your comments on the newsletter and how we might improve it. With best wishes,

P. D. Rai
President IMI



THE HIMALAYAN CLEANUP 2022

A CALL TO ACTION AT
INDIVIDUAL,
INSTITUTION AND
SYSTEMIC LEVELS

The Himalayan Cleanup (THC) is an annual event undertaken, since 2018, across the Indian Himalayan Region, anchored by Integrated Mountain Initiative and Zero Waste Himalaya to highlight the waste crisis in the Himalaya and advocate for mountain sensitive policies and practices.

Reflect, Switch and Demand' was the theme for THC2022 that was conducted between 26 to 30 May across the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR). THC2022 was facilitated by CSOs, Educational Institutions, FBOs and Swachh Bharat Missions with 5000+ volunteers in 100+ cleanup sites across the IHR.

THC is grounded on the principle that waste results from design flaws and that producers must take responsibility for their products to resolve the plastic waste crisis. It also calls on decentralised waste management systems that is built on the foundation of waste reduction. THC motivates participants to adopt sustainable lifestyles and to raise collective voices against plastic pollution.

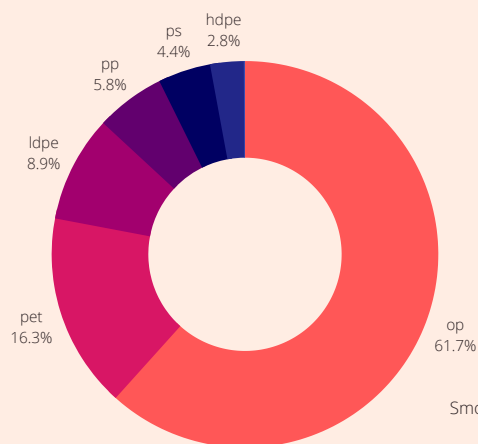
Waste and Brand Audit is central to THC and this year the cleanup picked and analysed a **total of 114376 pieces** of plastic trash. THC 2022 revealed that **92.7%** of the waste collected was plastic trash. **72%** of all plastic collected was **non-recyclable**, mainly multilayered plastics.

TOTAL SITES CLEANED - 150+
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS - 5000+
SCHOOLS /COLLEGES- 100+
ORGANISATIONS - 49
TRASH COLLECTED - 114376 PCS

The scourge of waste managers, these kinds of plastics are the main reason why mountains are burdened with a huge waste crisis, and they are found littering mountain landscapes, choking waterways, and filling up landfill sites

Further, THC data showed that 28% of plastic waste collected was recyclable (PET/ HDPE/ LDPE). However mountains have several limits for collection and transport and even such recyclable material such as PET bottles end up littering the mountains.

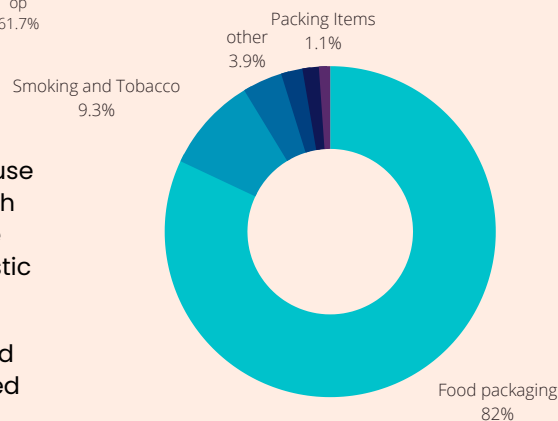
Almost 55% of the trash picked up was of the sachets category. These are being pushed to consumers for delivery of their products citing affordability and access by companies. However the sachet economy adds to the plastic burden on the environment, the price of which is paid by communities who are left to manage the unmanageable, either having to landfill or burn the plastics – both toxic actions.



India has promulgated a single use plastic ban from 1 July 2022 which includes certain items and these banned items made 8.8% of plastic waste collected.

In line with earlier results, the food and waste intersect also emerged clearly from the THC data, with packaged food and drinks making an alarming 82% of all plastic waste collected. An indication of the junk and processed food culture that is overtaking the diverse local food cultures of the Himalaya that threaten the wellbeing of communities.

The Himalayan Cleanup 2022 brand audit revealed that PepsiCo India, CG Foods India Pvt. Ltd., Perfetti Van Melle, ITC, Parle Agro Pvt. Ltd., Hindustan Coca Cola, Nestle, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Mondelez India Food Pvt. Ltd., Dabur India Ltd were the top 10 companies polluting the Indian Himalayan Region.



Waste management is a challenging task in the mountains and this needs to be acknowledged with adequate resource allocation and mountain sensitive policies. Producer responsibility is key to solving the waste crisis. Our mountains truly deserve better.

IMI UPDATES

Counter Measures Project II – UNEP

IMI partnered with UNEP for their Project CounterMEASURE II: Promotion of Action against Marine Plastic Litter in Asia and the Pacific. The project objective was to develop a framework for broad policy recommendations for plastic waste management for the Indian Himalayan Region in line with the proposed National Action Plan for tackling Marine and Riverine Plastic Pollution in India.

A draft policy paper has been finalised which shall be circulated to other stakeholders in the IHR upon finalisation.



Call of the Mountains

Darjeeling Himalaya Initiative's annual event – Call of the Mountains was organised in Darjeeling on May 30, 2022. Key note speaker, Dr. Ghanshyam Sharma delivered a talk on Sustainable Agroecology to a packed audience representing Darjeeling's civil societies, academicians, Government officials and youth volunteers.

President IMI, Mr. PD Rai joined the event virtually to address the gathering. Mr. Praful Rao, President DHI provided the objectives of the event.



Peer Educators Project

As part of The Himalayan Cleanup initiative of IMI, 6 Peer Educator projects (1 each in Nagaland, Darjeeling, Manipur, Assam and 2 from Ladakh) have been supported for piloting initiatives of zero waste in their own areas. The Peer Educators were selected from a pool of 35 participants from the IHR.

Series of online training sessions were organised for them through Zero Waste Himalaya. The PEs are working on various projects such as awareness raising, waste segregation, composting, alternatives to single-use plastics, etc.

Peer Educators are supported from the EOCA and WWF- India grant.



SDFU – AGM and reorganisation

Sustainable Development Forum of Uttarakhand organised their 4th Annual General Meeting on September 3, 2022 where the activities of the previous year were discussed. The Board was appreciative of the efforts and contributions made by SDFU for UNEP's Counter Measure project. Plans were also drawn out for closure of the project with a sharing workshop with the State Government of Uttarakhand. SDFU plans to expand its work on the subject of waste management and plastic pollution, including climate change and a state level meeting is planned on the occasion of Uttarakhand Foundation Week in November.

During the meeting, elections for various executive posts were held. Dr. Rajendra Dobhal passed on the baton as Chair to Dr. STS Lepcha and Dr. G.S. Rawat also took over the Vice-Chairperson role, while continuing to hold the Treasurer's post.



Ladakh to host SMDSXI

IMI's flagship event – the Sustainable Mountain Development Summit is slated to be organised in Ladakh in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Forum of Ladakh (SDFL). SMDSXI shall discuss the theme of 'Harnessing Tourism for sustainable mountain development' through various thematic sessions.

SMDSXI which shall have support of LAHDC shall be conducted in hybrid mode, with participants joining in person and online.

The dates for SMDSXI have been finalised for October 10 – 12, 2022.

Partner's Corner

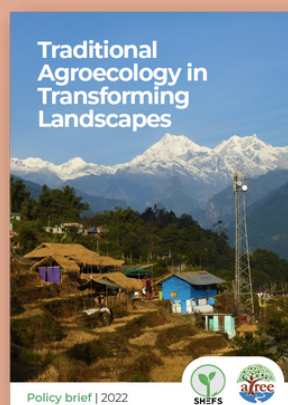
SDFA member / Founder of EB Project Nature (Arunachal Pradesh)– Mr. Egam Basar received the 'Jal Prahari National Award' from Ministry of Jal Shakti on March 30, 2022. The award was in recognition of his efforts to revive the Bolen springshed, the only water source for Soi Village in Leparada District, Arunachal Pradesh. 27 Ha of recharge area was restored to medium dense forest along with interventions such as trenching. Bolen spring was revived to perennial flow in 2017 which also led to revival of paddy cultivation in the village.

This watershed project that took more than 15 years to show results, is now being used as a model for watershed conservation. The project strongly reinforces that water supply projects need to focus on source revival and not only distribution.

ATREE (Sikkim) has released a Policy Brief under the Sustainable and Healthy Food Systems based on their research in Dzongu region of Sikkim.

The brief highlights that the remote village has 82% households dependent on external resources, and recommends larger support for integrated agroecological farming, innovative supply chains and markets, and to enable farming of local resilient crops.

More information [here](https://www.inmi.in)



GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (Uttarakhand) organized a week long Plantation drive at Jyoli Village (Almora) as a part of celebration of Van Mahaotsav from 1st to 7th July 2022 and also at Katarmal village on 16th July 2022.

From 25th – 26th May 2022, Centre for Biodiversity Conservation & Management of the GB Pant Institute organized a programme on Water quality- health consequence and Entrepreneurship Development at Pithoragarh.

DLR Prerna (Darjeeling) is working to improve water quality and access with communities of Nagarifarms and Barnesbeg Tea Plantations in Darjeeling. Evapo-transpiration and Bio-digester pits with bacterial inoculum, improved absorption and plantations to manage faecal waste were piloted and found effective. Grey water management systems for kitchen and bathroom runoff were also designed with kitchen gardens. Water systems tapping natural springs to improve water access at the community level and rainwater harvesting systems are also part of the interventions. These have applications for the Swachh Bharat Mission and Jal Shakti Abhiyan in the mountains.

MOUNTAIN MATTERS!



Ladakh launches e-vehicle plan

The Union Territory of Ladakh has come up with an electric vehicle policy, "Ladakh's Electric Vehicle and Allied Infrastructure Policy 2022".

"The policy aims to transform Ladakh into a torchbearer in terms of the adoption of electric vehicles in the country and envisions to encourage and cultivate an EV ecosystem in the Union Territory. With this, the administration will encourage the citizens to procure and use e-vehicles to create a carbon-neutral future for the UT," a spokesperson of the UT administration said.

[READ MORE](#)



Scientists discover plastic and glass in elephant dung

A study published in The Journal for Nature Conservation reported the presence of plastic and other materials in elephant dung in the forests of Uttarakhand.

The study authors investigated dung samples collected from four sites in Haridwar (Laldhang, Gaidikhata, and Shyampur), and Lansdowne Forest Division (Kotdwar). Glass, metal pieces, rubber bands, clay pottery and tile pieces were also found in the analysed samples. This study provides incontrovertible proof that elephants ingest non-biodegradable, toxic anthropogenic waste, and that it is moving through their digestive systems.

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Himachal Pradesh prone to natural disasters, says study

A report by Department of Environment, Science and Technology has shown that out of the total 33 hazards, identified by High Power Committee, Govt. of India, the state is vulnerable to 25 hazards.

"The increased pressure on the mountain environment has contributed in some measure to environmental problems such as landslides, land subsidence, removal of vegetation and soil erosion. about 58.36% of the land is subjected to intense soil erosion, majority of which is located in the Himalayas and Himachal Pradesh.

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Meet A member

Mr. Rigzin Spalbar

Mr. Spalbar is a Governing Council member of IMI and a member of the Ladakh State Chapter - Sustainable Development Forum of Ladakh. He is the Convenor of the Organising Committee for SMDXI. Mr. Spalbar was an elected representative in the LAHDC from its inception in 1995 till 2015 as Councilor, Executive Councilor and twice Chair - CEC.



IMI ASSOCIATION

A person committed to the sustainable development of Ladakh and of the Indian Himalayan Region as a whole, he became associated with the IMI movement since 2011 through IMI's former President Mr. Sushil Ramola, and has worked to bring Ladakh in focus bringing the concerns and challenges of the region.

CURRENT AFFILIATION

He is active in an organisation that provides health services through a charitable hospital based in Leh. The hospital provides free medical aid to disadvantaged people belonging to the mountains of not only India, but also the neighboring countries.

CHALLENGES

Ladakh has undergone a sea change and not all change has been good. The region has lost their food sovereignty because of PDS, and there has been an erosion of culture too. Development of roads and better connectivity has meant more influx which at times far outnumber the local population. Tourism impacts on ecology and socio-cultural heritage of Ladakh are of deep concern.

FUTURE PLANS

With SMDXI right around the corner, Mr. Spalbar takes delight to be the enabler and convenor for the flagship event. The theme of "Harnessing tourism for sustainable mountain development" is very pertinent and there are great expectations from the summit, as well as from SDFL's association with IMI.

MOUNTAIN MOVES!



Prof. Sunil Nautiyal

(Alexander von Humboldt Fellow, JSPS Fellow) has taken charge as the new Director of G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (NIHE)



Mr. Jigmet Takpa (IFS)

has joined as first Principal Chief Conservator of Forest for the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Write to us at: progcoordinator@inmi.in