



Water & Wastewater workshop



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BRINGING HIMALAYAN CITIES CLOSER: LEDeG, BORDA organise water & wastewater workshop



Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG) in collaboration with Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, Bremen Overseas Research & Development Association (BORDA), Sustainable Sanitation Alliance

(SuSanA) India Chapter, and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) New Delhi organised a two-day workshop on 'Peer Exchange and Expert Talk on Water and Wastewater in Hill Town-Hill' on 25th and 26th October at Hotel Singge Palace

Conference Hall.

Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) LAHDC Leh Dorjey Mutup was the chief guest for the inaugural session. The other institutes to represent the workshop were Green Hills from Almora, Tata Institute



waste around and suggested that eco solutions should be adopted to reduce the consumption of freshwater.

The last presentation was made by Susmita Sinha, who spoke about wastewater management in hill towns. She informed the participants about the constraints in hill areas in planning, designing, construction, operation and maintenance of wastewater assets. She added that the designs of wastewater plant in mountains should be different from that in plain areas.

She stressed on the need to adopt a hybrid of centralised and decentralised treatment solutions for hill areas and addressing both black and grey water together. She also requested the stakeholders to adopt a technology that requires less energy, has low operation and maintenance (O&M) charges and is eco-friendly.

CEC LAHDC Leh Dorjey Mutup congratulated the organisers and thanked them for conducting the workshop. He requested the participants to share the most important lessons they've learnt from the workshop with others. He also shared that participants from different hill states should come together and discuss different approaches to

management of water & wastewater management.

The second day began for the participants with an exposure trip to the Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) where Snehit Prakash, Coordinator and Project Manager, shared with them the details of the FSTP- how it was conceived, constructed and commissioned in a record time of 51 days with support from the district administration.

Thereafter, the participants visited the public toilet at Zangsti where Pandurang Sagbhor, an architect, shared the design concept and different technologies used in construction of the toilet such as trombe wall, insulation and active heat gain mechanism.

Post-exposure trip, the participants assembled for another session wherein they were divided into groups. The groups were then asked to take their town as a case study and prepare its shit flow diagram on a template. Post-lunch, the participants provided water and wastewater service-level benchmarks and also shared the current status of water and their plans for the next five years. It was followed by a presentation from each group.

OBITUARY:



Sonam Dawa (Centre) with the Liveable Leh team during the planning retreat at LEDeG Hostel in April earlier this year

Shri Sonam Dawa

Shri Sonam Dawa, 84, an inspirational engineer and philanthropist, passed away unexpectedly on 25 October 2018 at SNM Hospital, Leh.

Shri Sonam Dawa was born on 18 October 1934 and grew up in Chemrey village, where he did his primary schooling at the Government Middle School. He later attended Government High School and was one of the few Ladakhi students to complete his matriculation in 1951.

He went on to attend Amar Singh College, Srinagar, where he completed his higher schooling and secured a second rank in the state. One of his classmates, Abdul Ghani Shiekh said that “Ka Dawa was my class fellow in matriculation and he was an intelligent, brilliant, and hardworking student.”

Given his passion for Ladakh’s development and an interest in mathematics, he found his niche as an engineer and majored in civil engineering from Tirupati Engineering College, Andhra Pradesh in 1957.

Shri Sonam Dawa then appeared and cleared the first Public Service Commission exam conducted in Jammu And Kashmir state. He soon joined as Assistant Engineer in Public Works Department, Leh. He used to enjoy his work and would remain consumed in it to the extent that he rarely went home for various festivals.

During his tenure, he contributed to the development of Ladakh and some of his biggest projects include the: Leh-Zangskar vehicular road, Leh-Nubra road, the roads that connect Puga and Korzok. Apart from this, he also supervised the construction of various bridges, including

famous ones such as those in Alchi and Choglamsar.

By the time he took voluntary retirement, he had risen to the rank of Chief Engineer and his versatility and capabilities ensured that he was closely associated with various other sectors. During his service in the government he served as a board member for Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board, as an Executive Councilor in LAHDC, Leh and as a member of Jammu and Kashmir Finance Commission.

After leaving an indelible body of work in the government sector, Shri Sonam Dawa joined the social sector. He was one of the founding members of Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG) and under his guidance LEDeG received many prestigious awards including the Right to Livelihood Award, which is known as ‘Alternate Nobel Prize’. He was also associated with the International Association for Ladakh Studies for several years.

In his lifetime, Shri Dawa focused on the development of Ladakh and on empowering youth and women. According to his colleagues and friends, he was deeply dedicated to his work and was a very disciplined, visionary and honest person. These are qualities for which he will be remembered for generations to come.

Shri Dawa was an exemplary personality who endeared himself equally to friends and adversaries. His demise is a great loss for the people of Ladakh. I extend my deepest condolence to his family and friends.

Shri Dawa is survived by his wife Norzin Angmo, sons, Sonam Kunskyabs and Jamyang Namgail, and daughter, Nilza Angmo.

PROMOTING ORGANIC PRODUCTS

LEDeG organises two-day Charasa Fest



Ladakh Ecological Development Group in collaboration with Charasa Village Association and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh organised a two-day event, “Serga- the Clay Festival,” at Charasa village in Nubra valley.

The festival was supported by Future Earth, All Ladakh Tour Operators Association (ALTOA), A Lifetime Trip, Ravine Trek, Unwind Outdoor and White Copper Travels. The festival aimed at fostering culture and social responsibility, and initiating a dialogue between the stakeholders in the village.

The objective of the event was to promote Charasa as a model village and also to facilitate tourism in the villager which is otherwise concentrated in Disket, Hunder, Panamik, Turtuk and Sumoor villages. There are many organisations which have rich traditions embedded in the ethics of protecting nature. Keeping that tradition alive, LEDeG has adopted Charasa to improve their social and

environment.

There is tremendous scope of tourism in Charasa, which falls under Panamik Tehsil and is 133 km far from Leh town. As the name suggests, Charasa (Lchag means Iron, Ra is ore and Sa means soil) is famous for its high quality clay and iron ore. Charasa was once the capital of Nubra and one can still see the palace of King Nima Namgail and Tsewang Namgyal known as Kharpochey Khar.

Another objective behind organising the fest was to build capacities of local villagers of Charasa, and to promote local organic products and sustainable tourism in Charasa.

The inauguration of the festival was done by Chief Executive Councillor, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh Dorje Mutup.

Tsering, Goba (village head) of Charasa village, gave the welcome speech and thanked LEDeG for conducting the festival. He said the villagers of Charasa with help from

Some memories from the Event



Contd.....



LEDeG would realise their goals of making Charasa a model village.

CEC LAHDC Leh Dorjey Mutup also spoke on the occasion and appreciated the efforts of LEDeG to help the villagers of Charasa. He said LAHDC and district administration would support the cause and also encouraged the people of Charasa to practice organic farming in the village.

Dr Nordan Otzer, Executive Director of LEDeG, shared with the audience the work being carried out by LEDeG and stressed that LEDeG has been promoting organic farming and activities related to sustainable development in villages.

The festival also showcased performances from different parts of Nubra, including school students from Charasa village. Northern Art and Cultural Society, led by its president, Tsering Sonam Sopari, presented a skit on the importance of organic farming. One of the songs performed by them addressed the current issues faced by people of

Ladakh.

Various games were also organised to entertain the crowd and keep them engaged. Lotteries with attractive prizes were sold on the occasion. The villagers of Charasa used the event to display and sell organic products and handmade crafts.

The villagers also set up a local food stall where they sold food prepared from organic products. In the evening, a film on women empowerment directed by famous Ladakhi singer, Dorjay Stakmo, was also screened.

More than 400 people participated in the festival on the first day, whereas the second day saw an increase in the footfall of participants and almost 2,500 people took part in the festival.

On the concluding day, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) Nubra, Deldan Namgyal, shared that he was overwhelmed by the hospitality of the villagers and extended his support for the development of the village. He also contributed Rs 20 lakh from his funds for the village.

MY EXPERIENCE

One Month in Leh



“Despite being born in a cold country such as Finland, I had imagined that the worst thing about Ladakh would be the cold weather. But fortunately, weather was not the worst thing. Actually I barely thought about the cold weather, except on some nights when I couldn’t feel my feet despite sleeping under four blankets.

When there are many amazing things around then it seems trivial to focus on the bad things. And there were a lot of amazing things to see in Leh and around Ladakh.

After a month-long stay in Ladakh, I have experienced the astounding beauty of Nubra Valley, the view from the top of the Khardung La pass, beautiful monasteries, the changing colour of the leaves of apricot trees in autumn as well as indulging in dried apricots, nuts and jam almost every day. And let’s not forget the magnificent view of a never-ending stretch of mountains from the windows of the Delhi-Leh flight. These things made me want to extend my stay in Leh for more than a month.

We also experienced warm

hospitality from the people of Ladakh. It is the kind of hospitality that makes you want to have another cup of butter tea even though you might not savour the taste of the salt tea. But you still drink it looking at the nice smile on the face of the person who is waiting to serve you.

We also had the opportunity to visit LEDeG for a week and understand the work they do. The time of our visit was perfect since it coincided with the Serga Clay Festival which LEDeG was organising at Charasa in Nubra valley. It was good to see the entire village coming together for preparation of the event as well as participating with full fervour in the festival.

We also learned about the other activities carried out in the region by LEDeG. The organisation works for improving the central part of Leh by keeping it clean and also by promoting pedestrianisation. They also work to ensure clean and safe groundwater for the locals. Learning about the work done by LEDeG for the environment in the region was an eye opener for me. There are people like me who come

to Ladakh for a visit and expect flush toilets and long and warm showers which is causing a negative effect on the environment. After that, I was more aware of my water consumption and also made conscious efforts to cut it down.

With the increase in footfall of tourists, it is important to adapt tourist activities according to requirement of the region and I am happy to see that LEDeG is working in that aspect.

Before my arrival in Leh, I felt that spending a month in such a cold place would be very demanding. My plan was not to come to India to experience cold. But once my stay in Ladakh came to an end, I wished that I could have extended my stay in Leh. My stay was filled with great experiences and I savoured tasty local food and met nice people. In the end, saying good-bye turned out to be the toughest thing.

Jullay and see you again Ladakh!”

*Charlotte Winberg
Networking intern, Future Earth,
visited Leh in October 2018*

EJM COLLEGE STUDENTS visit LEDeG



Dr. Nordan giving a presentation about a liveable Leh

Students from Eliezer Joldan Memorial College, Leh visited Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG) Office campus on November 5. More than 30 students along with two professors came for an exposure tour and also to learn about the activities carried out by the organisation.

Dr Nordan Otzer, Executive Director of LEDeG, gave a presentation about the Liveable Leh project which is funded by European Union and co-funded by BMZ. He

shared with the students that the Project aims to tackle the escalating problems in urban areas of Leh town.

He further added that the Project will work in four keys areas: water and wastewater management, solid waste management, urban mobility (including promoting pedestrianisation), and open and green public spaces.

Later, the students went to see the public toilet at Zangsti where Rishav Paul, an architect and designer of the Zangsti public toilet, informed

them about the aesthetics, design and material used in the construction of the toilet.

He shared that maximum effort had been put on using local materials for the toilet and he also added that the toilet was designed in such a way that the water doesn't freeze in winters.

Then, the students proceeded towards Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant (FSTP) where Tamchos Gurmet, senior engineer, shared information about the design and working of the plant.



Rishav Paul educating the students about the design of the Zangsti toilet

IRMA STUDENTS

interning at LEDeG



*IRMA Students
outside the LEDeG Office*

Nine students of Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) are currently doing a six-week internship at Ladakh Ecological Development Group (LEDeG). The students- Avi Anuj Jain, Diksha Aneja, Mukul Verma, Monanshu Shah, Priyanka Trivedi, Shruti Takalkhede, Hrishikesh Krishnskumar and Sujaya Kumara- came to Leh in second week of October and will return on 28th of November. The students were in Leh for their Village Field Segment (VFS) training programme.

Over these last six weeks they performed duties as assigned and also worked on field assignments based on their ability. The internship gave them a real world work experience. The students from IRMA worked in four villages in the Nubra valley for three weeks.

Shruti Takalkhede and Priyanka Trivedi worked in

Tigger village and listed drinking water as one of the major challenges faced by the locals. Similarly, Diksha Aneja and Nikita Lalge, who worked in Panamik, observed problems related to lack of street lights, improper roads and adequate drinking water in winters.

The team comprising Mukul Kumar, Hrishikesh Krishnakumar and Monanshu Shah listed lack of market for organic products at Tirisha village as one of the problems faced by the locals. Meanwhile, Avi Jain and Sujaya Kumara conducted research in Ayee village and found lack of opportunities for the locals even though the demand for organic products have increased in the last few years.

The teams also completed surveys of their respective villages for the VFS. The students are presently preparing a Micro-Level Plan (MLP) report of the villages.



The interns working on a site

Shot on OnePlus
By IRMA

WALKABLE CITIES REDUCE Blood pressure and Hypertension risk: Study



The pedestrian-focused North Laine area of Brighton

Research finds significant link between the walkability of a city and the blood pressure and hypertension risk of the people who live there

The largest-ever study of the link between city walkability and blood pressure has been held up as evidence of the “intangible value of urban design” in improving long-term health outcomes, say researchers.

The study of around 430,000 people aged between 38 and 73 and living in 22 UK cities found significant associations between the increased walkability of a neighbourhood, lower blood pressure and reduced hypertension risk among its residents.

The outcomes remained consistent even after adjustments for socio-demographic, lifestyle and physical environment variables, though the protective effects were particularly

pronounced among participants aged between 50 and 60, women, and those residing in higher density and deprived neighbourhoods.

The paper was published in the *International Journal of Hygiene and Environmental Health* this week. With hypertension a major risk factor for chronic and particularly cardiovascular diseases, researchers at the University of Hong Kong and Oxford University said the findings demonstrated the need for public health interventions to factor in urban design.

“With the increasing pace of urbanisation and demographic shifts towards an ageing population, we become more vulnerable to chronic diseases,” said Dr Chinmoy Sarkar, an assistant professor at the Healthy High Density Cities Lab of the University of Hong Kong and lead author of the study. “Public health interventions must

consider the intangible value of urban planning and design.

“We are spending billions of pounds in preventing and curing cardiovascular diseases – if we are able to invest in creating healthy cities through small retrofits in the design of our neighbourhoods to make them more activity-friendly and walkable, then probably, we will have significant savings in future healthcare expenditures.”

To measure a neighbourhood’s activity-promoting potential, researchers developed a composite index of walkability comprising relevant urban metrics, including residential and retail density, public transport, street-level movement, and proximity to attractive destinations.

Poorly designed spaces generally inhibited walking and physical activity, promoting sedentary lifestyles; and were detrimental to social interactions, and as such associated with poorer mental health and wellbeing.

Because walkability was “based on the underlying design of the city”, said Sarkar, cities could be modified or designed to encourage it. “Such investments in healthy design are likely to bring in long-term gains as they are enduring and

all-pervasive.”

The study’s large and diverse dataset also presented an opportunity to examine the effects of walkability on blood pressure of specific subgroups of people which, Sarkar said could yield valuable insights into how to manage demographic changes.

He singled out the world’s growing urban population, with more than half (54.5%) of the total population currently living in cities. That figure is expected to rise to 60% by 2030, with one in three living in cities with at least half-a-million inhabitants.

In the UK alone more than 7 million people are estimated to be affected by cardiovascular disease, which accounts for nearly 160,000 deaths annually and £19bn in health costs.

Designing and retrofitting cities to promote active lifestyles could therefore have significant repercussions for the health of urban populations and governments’ related expenditure around the globe, said Sarkar. “Well-designed cities of today will be healthy cities of tomorrow.”

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