

PRESS RELEASE

“CANE COULD BE THE NEXT ALTERNATIVE CASH CROPS FOR SIKKIMESE PEOPLE”

As directed by Secretary, Shri M.L.Arrawatia (IFS), a research survey on Cane/ Rattan is being initiated by the Department of science & Technology and Climate Change under the project entitled “Cane/ Rattan propagation and its value addition in the Dzongu tribal Reserve Area, North Sikkim” funded by SEEDS Division, DST, Govt. of India. The present research study is a part of the pilot research project on sustainable use of cane for the livelihood and to create alternative source of income in the region as it is apparent that the large cardamom a major crop of rural people is dying out due to several causes. Shri S.R. Lepcha ASO cum Principal Investigator of the project informed that the population of the cane in Sikkim is reduced dramatically, therefore, the present studies is particularly focussed on development of the propagation technique on local cane species. The 1st phase of the project is being initiated with the mapping and other allied research study Shri Nagen Tamang and Shri Rupak Raj Karki under the supervision of Shri Lepcha from 24th April – till 3rd May at lower Dzongu. Shri lepcha also informed that similar studies will be extended to upper Dzongu and also assured for its beneficial to the affected farmers of large cardamom in the region. Secondly, such study will also provide a better insight into cane population in Sikkim and its chosen future conservation policy making.

Rattans are climbing plants belonging to Palmaceae family. Worldwide, there are around 600 different species of Rattan belonging to 13 genera. Many species, including some of commercial importance have restricted natural ranges. They are commercially important NTFPs (Non Timber Forest Products) as a source of furniture, mats, kitchen and agricultural utensils and also food: their shoots are a delicacy. Apart from conventional uses, they have beneficial medicinal uses as well. Canes are multipurpose, cheap, durable and flexible materials used in people’s daily lives in both developing and developed countries.

During the survey, the mapping and quantitative assessment of some rare local species including *Daemonorops jenkinsianus* , *Plectcomia himalayana* , *Calamus flagellum*, *C. acanthospathus* has been successfully done. These species has a potential for cultivation and commercialization in near future. According to the research team, such study could provide bare minimum understanding of the *Rattan’s* ecology and its potential threats, in Sikkim.

While taking up the studies on cane a separate study on traditional method for livestock treatment of the area has also been done. As reported by the team led by Shri Lepcha & Shri Laxuman Chhetri (JRF), Dzongu has been identified as one of important resource field for extensive studies on traditional method and its formulations for the treatment of major cattle's diseases such as *Lomutay*, *Khoret*, *Bhagutey* etc.. According to the local people, the traditional herbal medication on animals is practically accessible, cheap and equally effective to modern allopathic treatment. Such studies will also be extended to other parts of state for conservation of traditional methodology for the improvement of rearing livestock .



Photo:1 Pinanga Gracilis recorded at Dzongu



Photo: 2 Researcher observing Kur's clump at Kuchur



Photo: 3 *Daemonorops* sp./Rim recorded at Kuchar



Photo: 4 shoot tip of *Calamus* sp.

