

REPORT  
on  
Field Trip  
to  
**Umtong Village, Mawkynrew Block,  
East Khasi Hills**  
on  
**December 9 & 10, 2016**

**ORGANISED BY:**

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRADITIONAL ECOSYSTEMS, MLCU

*In collaboration with:*

**NSS UNIT, MARTIN LUTHER CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**



## **Introduction :**

**The Department of Environment & Traditional Ecosystems, MLCU in collaboration with NSS Unit, MLCU** conducted a field trip to Umtong village which included an awareness programme and a basic profiling of the village. The main objective of the programme is to give field exposure to the students on the rural settings and identifying the environmental issues with possible solutions to help the community people.

## **Aims and Objectives:**

1. To introduce students to the rural settings
2. To document the basic profile of the village for short and long term interventions
3. To enable students to develop confidence and skills in conducting and organizing awareness programme through experiential learning
4. To sensitize the community by creating awareness about different environmental issues and to instill a sense of ecological consciousness

Number of NSS Volunteers, MLCU Unit : **25**

No. of female : 15

No. of male : 10

**All volunteers are scheduled tribe (ST)**

## **Trip briefing:**

The Department of Environment and traditional Ecosystems left for a two-day programme at Umtong village on the 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2016 with the above objectives. A total of 25 students accompanied by 4 teachers were present.

## **Major activities :**

### **DAY 1 (9<sup>th</sup> December, 2016)**

On reaching the village, after settling down, the students were engaged in a transect walk. The objective of the transect walk is for students to get a clear view and understanding of the features of the village such as the topography, resources available, type of activities the people are engaged in, the types of flora found in the village and so on. In doing so, the



students were able to gather key basic information about the village.

After tea, the students assembled at Riwar Mihngi Presbyterian School Umtong where they were able to get ready for other activities in the evening.



As evening approached and once the community people started gathering at the main school hall the students were able to engaged the people in key PRA tools with the objectives of gathering more information from the local people along with their participation. The following PRA tools were utilized:-



**Social Mapping**- the social mapping tool was used to derive necessary information from the people. It was effectively used where a rough outline map of Umtong village was drawn in a chart paper. Then the members of the community were asked to pin point the key features of the village such as household patterns, location of agricultural lands, community forest, sacred groves, schools church etc. through this practice and with the effective participation of the community people key information on the physical characteristics of the village was derived.



**Seasonality Diagram** – another tool that was initiated by the students was a seasonality diagram. The objective of this exercise was to gather information on the various types of activities that happens in the different seasons of the year.

Through this activity the students by encouraging maximum participation from the local people were able to collect key information such as agricultural activities, diseases, migration for employment festivals and so on.



**Time line**- time line is a simple tool used to trace the history of the village. This was initiated where a few elderly people from the group were chosen and they were asked to narrate about the history of the village such as early settlers, key events or activities.



*A Focus group discussion* was also held where all the participants were engaged in interactions and discussions on the various issues prevalent at the village. From the discussions it was observed that the main problem that the village faced was water shortage during the winter season.

After these practices a cultural programme was held where Students from 1<sup>st</sup> semester DETE performed a cultural Mizo dance which was greatly appreciated by the people. After this, other performances such as songs and dance were performed by the students all for the entertainment of the local people. A few performances by the local people were also witnessed



### **Day 2 (10<sup>th</sup> December) :**

Early the next morning students and teachers were gathered at the center of the locality to get ready for an awareness programme. After all arrangements were made and a good number of people have gathered the programme went under way with presentations on the importance of waste management, ill effects of plastics and on water harvesting.



A role play was also performed by the students. Through the role play, the students were able to sensitize the community people about their actions to nature and their consequences. It was a

simple role play with the different elements of nature enacted by our students in Khasi and this in a way could instill a sense of consciousness about the environment on their minds.



After the role play a speech was given by the headman who showed his appreciation and he also stressed on the importance of sanitation and keeping the surroundings clean. A memento was also given to the headman by our Head of Department.



The people were then again entertained by the cultural dance before the programme was ended with a concluding speech by the headman.

After the programme the headman invited all students and teachers for sightseeing to the different sites of the village and to the different view spots that have high potential for tourism. This was followed by lunch.

The trip concluded and the group returned back to Shillong.

From the trip the students were able to build rapport and integration with community members which will prove essential for future interventions. Students were also able to develop skills in conducting awareness programme and other activities like FGDs and data collection. The field visits also motivated students to build up their confidence level in participating and also contributing in small ways to communities which will in turn bring a larger overall positive change. Students also instilled in the minds of the community people a sense of concern towards their natural environment and the services it provides.