

Payong Kaw GPU to formalize ‘plastic free’ status

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NAMCHI, 05 Feb: The Payong Kaw Gram Panchayat Unit has announced that it will work towards making the whole of Payong Kaw GPU a plastic-free zone, a first of its kind on-ground initiative for rural Sikkim they believe.

For this purpose, two wards of the GPU have already been on an under-trial period since December 2009.

Under this new ‘plastic free’ mission; all plastics, ranging from small sweet covers and packets to larger plastic wrappers, are being collected by students by students and children, most of whom are now on winter vacation.

The children can sell collected plastic wastes at a rate of Rs. 10 to Rs. 25 per kilogram, depending on the quality and type of plastic and following this route, the GPU plans to not only become plastic free for the future, but also banish all plastic accumulated over the years in the area.

The Panchayats of the GPU have made it mandatory for all shops in and around the village to buy these plastic wastes brought by the children.

After a large enough amount of plastic is collected, the Gram Panchayat will take custody of them with the help of the fund provided by the government for sanitation. The Panchayat will then segregate the collected plastic wastes into recyclable and non-recyclable sections depending on their quality, after which the former will be sold outside the State, while the latter will be properly discarded by the Panchayats. Whoever collects most plastic waste will be rewarded by the Panchayats, it has been announced.

A Gram Sabha has been called for 11 February to further discuss and analyze the feasibility of a ‘plastic free’ Payong Kaw GPU. As informed by Panchayat President KN Timsinha, the two wards where the trial programme is being carried out are Bhirgaon and Gairigaon of Kaw village, under GPU Secretary Tek Bahadur Basnett.

This initiative is reported to be “60% successful,” and these two wards are almost “swept clean of plastic and plastic wastes.” Now, the programme will gradually move out to the surrounding farmland, as the Panchayats suspect that plastic is being thrown out in the fields where they are likely not to be noticed.