

AREYLUNGCHOK

Areylungchok Dzungri Trek



Labdang or the “hidden village” is located in the western catchment of the Relli River, 16 km from Tashiding. This village located south of the Areylungchok ridge. It is inhabited solely by the Gurung community, who still preserve their unique natural and cultural heritage. Hence Labdang is the ideal Gurung Heritage Village. The main tourist attractions around Labdang include the Nag Dhunga, Shankha Dhunga and Paire Khola falls.

The villagers had organized an integrated meeting covering conservation and tourism involving Panchayats, villagers and NGOs on 4th Jan, 2006 at Labdang. During this meeting it was unanimously decided to promote the Areylungchok – Dzungri trek as a community based ecotourism initiative, and consequently the Areylungchok Ecotourism Committee (AEC) was also formed. As a follow up of this a reki survey was also conducted, based on which the itinerary and map of the Areylungchok – Dzungri Trek was prepared. This 8 days trek starts from Labdang and passes through Kasturi Urar, Khola Urar and then joins the Yuksam Dzungri trek at Thangsing. This is an existing trek route, already visited by domestic and

foreign trekkers, but needs to be given special focus, publicity and promotion in order to attract tourists here.



Lampokhri Lake: Medicinal Plants Hotspot

The area MLA of Tashiding Hon'ble Speaker Mr. D. N. Thakarpa has been the main driving force behind this initiative. With his vast knowledge about medicinal plants, wildlife and tourism and his constant interactions with the public, he has ensured the right kind of public awareness, which is a must before such kind of initiative can take shape. He is also the chief advisor and chief patron of the AEC.

This trek falls within the Khangchendzonga National Park in West Sikkim and the highlight of this trek is rich wildlife specially *Ghoral*, *Jharal* (Himalayan Tahr) and *Ban Bheda* (Blue Sheep) medicinal plants.

The area is rich in medicinal plants like *Sharmaguru*, *Mykopila*, *Bikhma*, *Jatamanshi*, *Bhutkesh*, *Pakhanbhed*, *Dandu* and *Khokim* were also abundantly available. Tussock forming grasses like *Bhalu buki* and *sun buki* forms large meadows. Availability of other fodder plants like *Ganar*, *Cheeru*, *Suire*, *Teeure*, *Khokim* and *Dandu* further enrich the value of these meadows.

Hence the AEC requests for the following conservation regulations:



Aconitum spicatum (Bikh)

1. Kasturi Urar and Khola Urar / Chamrey should be the only designated campsites. Camping should not be permitted at Chonrigang which is fire prone.
2. Lighting fire or cooking food should be permitted only at the designated campsites.
3. Pack animals (horses, dzos and yaks) should not be permitted on this trek since they damage the regeneration of the valuable medicinal plants. Only porters should be permitted.
4. Only one way trek should be permitted starting from Labdang and ending at Yuksam.
5. Request to forest department to make arrangements for collecting revenue and giving KNP entry permits at Labdang or Tashiding.

The AEC also plans to give first priority to ex-herders, ex-hunters and ex-medicinal plant collectors who have intimate knowledge about the area and its resource, as porters and assistant guides. With this new livelihood, hopefully these people will be gainfully employed in the tourism sector, resulting in direct conservation benefits. For more details logon to www.tmi-india.org or email us at labdang@tmi-india.org or telephone Mr. C.B.Gurung, General Secretary, AEC at 09733092826 / 227942

We would also like to provide quality service to all travel agents and request them to please contact us in advance. We will be grateful to make all logistic arrangements for the visitors / trekkers.

Itinerary of the Areylungchok – Dzungri Trek

| Day | Details | Distance / Hours | Altitude |
|--------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Day 1 | Reach Labdang - Gurung Heritage Village | | 2110 m |
| Day 2 | Labdang to Kasturi Urar | 16 km / 6 hours | 3550 m |
| Day 3 | Kasturi Urar to Khola Urar / Chamrey | 16 km / 6 hours | 4245 m |
| Day 4 | Khola Urar to Thangsing | 10 km / 5 hours | 3936 m |
| Day 5 | Thangsing to Lamune | 5 km / 3 hours | 4164 m |
| Day 6 | Lamune – Teen Kune Pokhri – Thangsing | 8 km / 7 hours | 3936 m |
| Day 7 | Thangsing to Tshoka | 12 km / 5 hours | 2828 m |
| Day 8 | Tshoka to Yuksam | 16 km / 6 hours | 1560 m |

Map of Arelungchok Dzongri Trek

