

Jigmet Takpa

Jigmet Takpa, an officer of the Indian Forest Service (IFS) from Jammu & Kashmir Cadre and presently serving as Joint Secretary and heading the Desertification Cell in the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. He is also National Focal Point of UNCCD for India.

Takpa pioneered biodiversity conservation, rural development and renewable energy in Ladakh and established a benchmark in the Himalaya. His initiatives to address the development and conservation challenges facing Ladakh's fragile ecosystem include establishing flagship projects in identifying, devising and adapting suitable technologies for efficiently managing the natural resources of the high-altitude Himalayan regions. He conceptualised the livelihood improvement programmes for the Ladakh region and adopted a landscape-level approach to biodiversity conservation. His efforts resulted in a rapid growth in the populations of key flagship species such as the snow leopard, bar-headed goose, black-necked crane, wild yaks, Asiatic ibex and the Tibetan antelope.

With the success of project on Snow Leopard, is the brain child of Takpa that turned Ladakh into the snow leopard capital of the world. The Ladakh Ecotourism Project has directly benefited the community. The Ladakh Renewable Energy Initiative vastly alleviated the longstanding problem of energy shortage in the region and reduced the tremendous expenditure of the Government of India in sustaining the energy sector.

Takpa has been conferred various prestigious awards – the Environmental Hero Award, the State Award for Meritorious Public Service, J&K, the Indira Priyadarshini Vriksha Mitra Award, the Renewtech Award for Best Nodal Agency, and the Gyalwang Drukpa Award. He also figures in the Book of Guinness World Records for the most trees planted simultaneously (2011).