

PROJECT ON EVS

**TOPIC:A Report on Forest Conservation
in Khonoma Village.**

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Introduction

Forest conservation as the name suggests is the preservation and the protection of forests. It is the practice of planting more trees and maintaining the forest areas sustainability for future generations. Forests are an important natural resource and are beneficial to humans in several ways. But due to increasing deforestation activities, it has become essential to conserve forests throughout the world. Deforestation is permanent destruction or loss of forests for the expansion of lands for agriculture, livestock, etc. The process of destructing forests for the expansion of agricultural land is referred to as shifting cultivation. The forest places are preserved by many ways such as putting a permanent ban on cutting trees for the commercial use, because the forests are the source of raw material for the commercial uses due to which trees are cut on a large scale for the commercial use in huge profit which leads to deforestation and also many animals have lost their shelter due to deforestation.

Hence conservation of forest is very important for the biological development of the country. There are many laws stated for the conservation of forest.

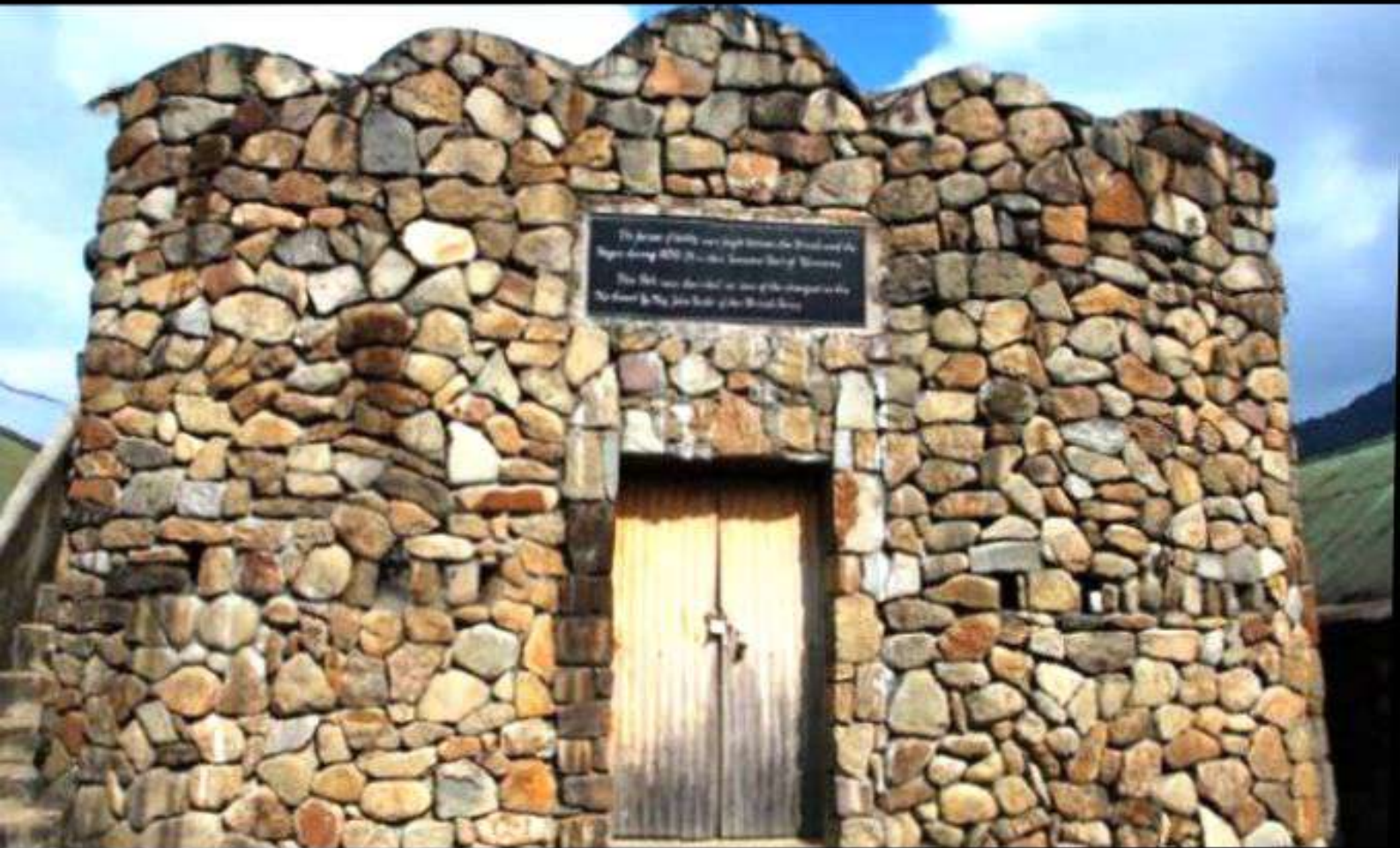


Forest Conservation



A Report on Forest Conservation in Khonoma Village

Twenty years ago, residents of Khonoma, Nagaland, did something that no one else in the country had ever done before. They declared a chunk of their forest as a conservation reserve - the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary. Until then, only government had identified forests worthy of protection. In the same manner as the administration protects such jungles, the village managed its chunk of protected wilderness. Hunting is a cultural practice in some communities of the Northeast, making this endeavour even more remarkable. For centuries, people have killed animals and birds not only for the pot, but also for medicinal concoctions, rituals, ornaments, sale and recreation. When there's no work in the fields, they bored and go for hunting. Much more of the region's forests belong to communities who don't have the same job opportunities as the rest of the country. Although Indian wildlife laws prohibit killing wild animals, the majority aren't aware of it. Families display rows of animal skulls in their homes, and other animal parts decorate their traditional attire. The dense evergreen forests are shorn of wildlife, bemoan many wildlife activities.



The stone building was built during the reign of the
Sultan during 1550 A.D. in the town of Samsat.
The building was built on the site of the old town of
Samsat & the town of the Sultan.

Gun Control

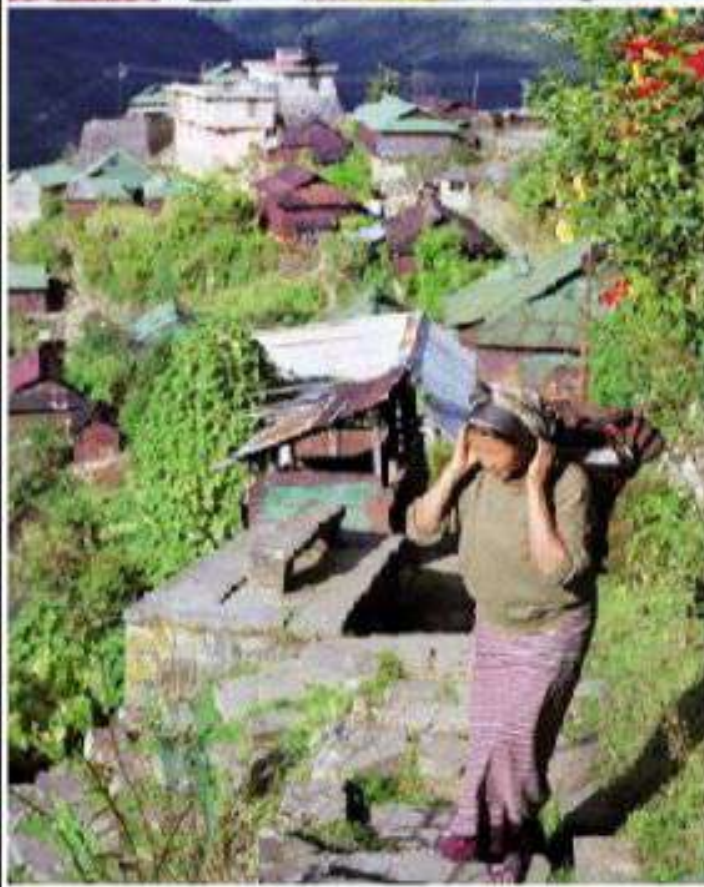
The Angami tribal residents of Khonoma, 20 kilometres from Kohima, decided to buck the trend. Tsilie Sakhrie, a contractor, and a few other villagers learned about conservation from a forest department officers and awareness programmes conducted by the Northeast cell of the Centre for Environment Education. Sakhrie proposed setting aside a part of the village's forest as a sanctuary back in the '80s. Although some of the elders supported him, but the idea didn't fly. After all, the settlement had more than 1,000 guns, according to one publication. The turning point came when the villagers killed 300 pheasant-like Blyth's Tragopan in 1993.

All isn't well with these resplendent birds. Hydroelectric projects and logging along the foothills of the eastern Himalaya and the other border areas between India and Myanmar destroyed their habitat.

Kindling Conservation Efforts

Sakhrie, Mor and like-minded elders of the village began a campaign to curb the large-scale destruction of nature and natural resources. They mobilized people and held extensive discussion with the youth, village council, tribal leaders and women. Some villagers did raise objections since their livelihoods depends on the forest. For the traditional hunters, it meant not only an end to their professional but a loss of their dignity and identity.

When Sakhrie became a member of the village council, he pushed a new proposal to create a sanctuary, and again found little support. This time he persisted, advocating the idea to other residents of the village. Despite the odds, he succeeded beyond anyone's imagination. The Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary Trust was formed in 1998. The village set aside the forest as a sanctuary and created a trust headed by Sakhrie to manage it, they have 12 members, three representatives from each colony and three women representatives in the committee.



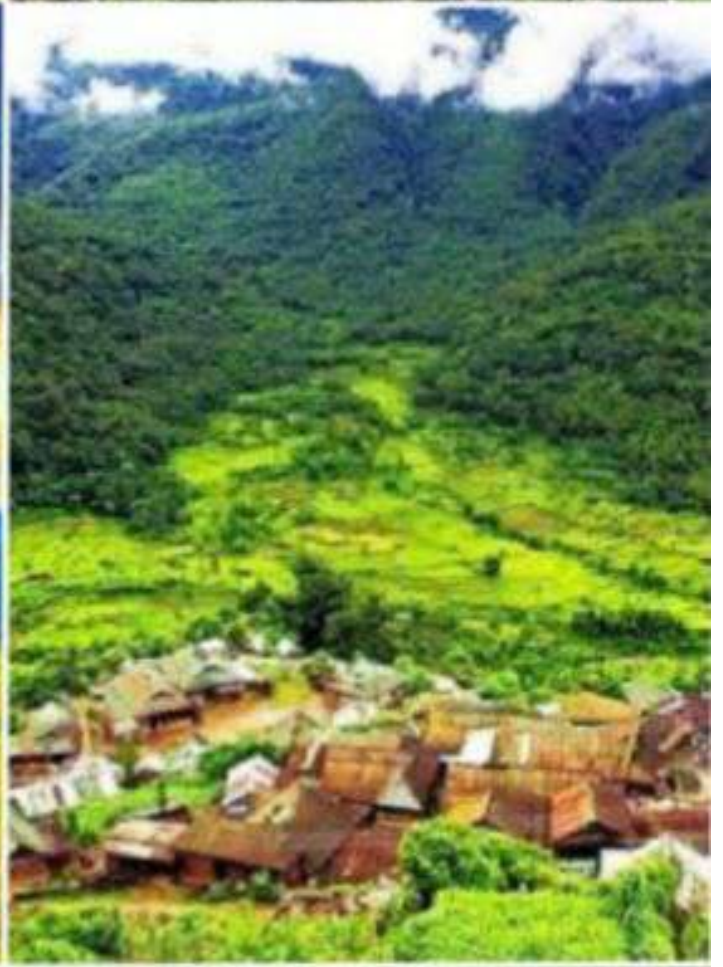
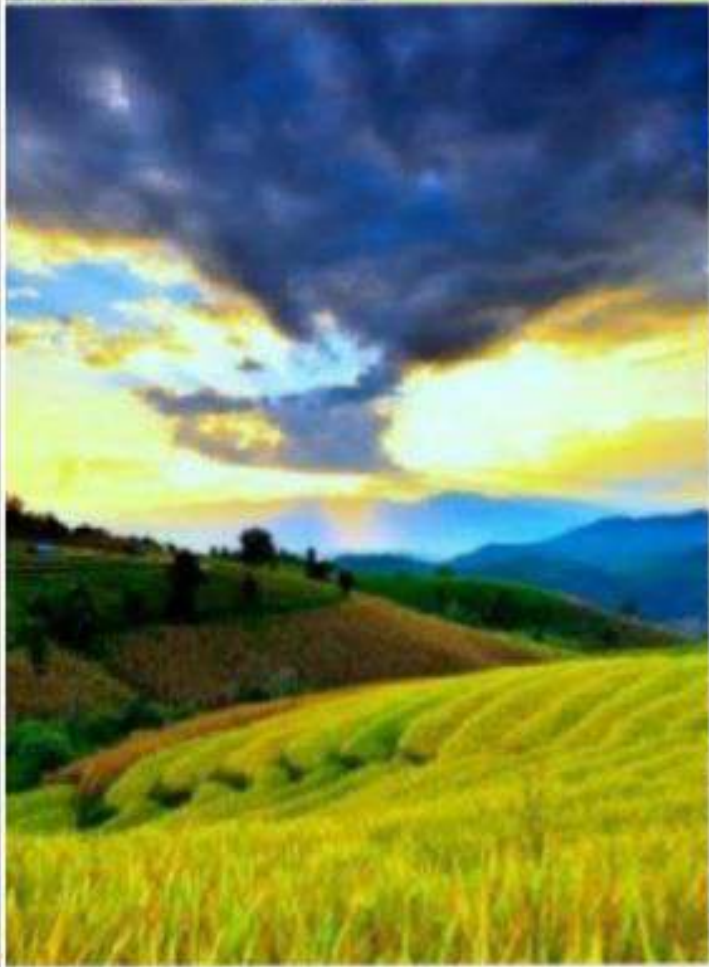
Angami Tribe of Khonoma village

Background

Mahatma Gandhi's dream comes true through the village of 'Khonoma' India's first green village, where villagers never cut trees and preserve the forest. The village got its name from 'Khwuno', a small plant that is found in abundance around the village. Angami tribes are the main inhabitants of the village, the total population of the village is about 3000, settled in 600 household. Over a hundred year ago, advancing British troops found themselves facing a determined warriors tribe in the highlands of Nagaland. They are known for their bravery and martial skills. The village is also known for its master craftsman's in the art of weaving with bamboo and cane. Khonoma is located in approx 20 kms west of Kohima, the capital of Nagaland. Khonoma is a hilly area at an altitude of 5300 feet above means sea level and spread over the 123 sq.kms area. The village is situated in the beautiful mountains in mysterious ways so that one cannot see the village until they cross the ceremonial giant gateway, which welcomes the visitors. The village is almost at the base of mountains and shielded by mountains on all

sides,also known as 'hidden village'.A big monolithic stone, engraved with the details of Green Village has been installed at the entryway to village.Towards one side of the village were green hills whose peaks were covered in clouds and on the other hand side the terraced paddy fields could be seen.To promote the green village concept and increase the eco-tourism,Tourism Department Govt. of Nagaland and Union Ministry of Tourism and Culture has launched the Khonoma Green Village Project on 25th October 2005, inaugurated by the Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio.

Khonoma has been identified for the Green Village project,due to its advantages over other villages such as location, flora-fauna, forest conservation,ban on hunting,jhum cultivation, construction techniques, social infrastructure and great history KGP was the first project on its kind and Khonoma a model village for villages in Nagaland and other states for eco-tourism. The project has gained widespread attention in India.Though the government has come forward to help and funded the project ,but it was initiated by the local peoples.



Forest and Paddy Fields of
Khonoma Village

Monkey



Reptile



Jungle Cat



Barking Deer



Khonomaians celebrates 1st September is as the village's 'birthday'. To celebrate it, they come from far and wide. The KNCTS is not a legal government however, the the Village Council Act Nagaland gives the Village Council authority to devise mechanism for management of forest resources. Therefore the Village Council and the entire community under prevalent customary recognize KNCTS as a legal. Khonoma is also well-known in agricultural circles for its sophisticate cultivation techniques. Farmers use a form of shifting cultivation, in which they change the land for farming for two years and use Napal alder trees interspersed with the crops and cut their branches occasionally. By cutting smaller branches and leaving only the bigger branches they have succeeded in farming without cutting trees. These trees return nitrogen to the soil, thereby helping the land to rapidly regain fertility when farmers abandon it to move on to the next plot. The village has developed the terraced fields for cultivation since ages, primarily used for rice cultivation. For farming they don't use any



Birds found in Khonoma Village

chemical pesticides fertilizers instead the villagers use sewage and tree as organic manure. Khonoma is a home to over sixty varieties of rice, and a diversity of millets, maize, job's tears, a tall grain-bearing tropical plants, citrus fruits and other crops. The village is rich in biodiversity a large number of birds, primates, reptiles, amphibians, orchids and medical plants and many rare flora and fauna have been inventoried as part of the Green Village initiative. The state bird, 'Blyth's Tragopan', a pheasant now traditionally endangered, is reportedly found here. Villagers have taken resolutions to conserve the biodiversity and wildlife in the village. Village Council has made it mandatory for every household to have dustbins. Once in a month, sanitation drive is carried out. Open Defecation has been stopped. School children are trained to keep their village and houses clean. Students union of Khonoma take care of the cleanliness and solid management.



Varieties of Orchids found
in Khonoma Village

Steps for the Conservation of the Khonoma Village

In 2005, the state forest department initiated a proposal for this area to be declared a Community Reserve under the Indian Wildlife Act as amended in 2001. To protect the sanctuary rules were laid down for the management.

- Khonoma villagers have formed rules and regulations and developed a collective way of sustaining the conservation by being a member of the village council, student union, youth association, or the women's union.
- Each unit has a responsibility, carried out on a voluntary basis. The youth serve as forest guards and sentries. Village council ensures that the rules are adhered to women's and students' ensure cleanliness.
- There is a financial fine from 300 to 3000 depending on the seriousness of the violation. But

more than monetary punishment ,the family's loss of face was a more effective deterrent.

- The community extended the ban on hunting to the village, protecting a total area of about 123 square kilometres.
- The restriction not only applied to hunting but also logging and commercial harvest of any forest produce.For domestic use,villagers could gather medicinal plants and leaf litter for mulch.
- At every junction of the village a garbage bin has been placed and maintained by the student union.

Importance of Forests

Forests are of great importance to mankind.We are basically dependent on forests for our survival. And so their conservation is of essential importance. Following are some points illustrating the importance of forests:

1. Forests help in maintaining the water cycle on earth. Plants absorb water from the soil through their roots. The process of releasing excess water by plants into the atmosphere in the form of water vapour is known as transpiration.
2. Forests help in maintaining the temperature and oxygen level of the atmosphere. Plants release oxygen during photosynthesis and consume carbon dioxide.
3. Forests help in preventing global warming. The increased amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere results in the greenhouse effect and thus causes global warming.
4. Forests prevent soil erosion. Trees in the forests hold the soil particles strongly with their roots and prevent them from erosion.



Khonoma Student's Union

Positive Impact on Biodiversity

Nevertheless, the effort has paid off. According to the villagers, the number of birds has increased. For a long period, they don't see birds near their houses, but now they do. These birds feed on harmful pest, helping the villagers to get a good yield. Rats that destroyed their crops have also decreased in numbers. The conservation efforts have also resulted in the wild fruit trees being left undisturbed. Women are able to collect gooseberry, wild apples, apricots, and whatnot.

Benefits

Khonoma village is also known as the green village of India. A green village is a human settlement that enables its residents to live a good quality of life while using maximum natural resources. The green village adopt a holistic approach to sustainable which would result in multi fold benefits, both tangible and intangible. The most tangible benefits are the reduction in water and energy demand and better handling of solid waste in the village. The intangible

benefits of green village include access to safe drinking water and sanitation and basic facilities like healthcare, schools, transport and recreation. Green village is a process that can keep a village attaining sustainable development. Its habitat where one can live in pleasant environment. They also practice the rain water harvesting system, re-use of water and underground water recharge through pond and well. The Naga families practice to cook food in the centre of house so that the fumes and smokes kill the insects and the wooden structure could remain intact for years.



Varieties of Fruits



Medicinal Plants

Khonoma Community-Based Conservation Initiative Wins Biodiversity Award 2021

Khonoma Nature Conservation & Tragopan Sanctuary has won the prestigious Indian Awards 2021 under the category "Sustainable Use of Biological Resources." The winners were announced on Saturday at the virtual celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity. The Indian Biodiversity Awards is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, National Biodiversity Authority and the United Nations Development Programme.

On receiving the award, KNCTS Chairperson Kezhaseria Meyase told The Morung Express that the community-based initiative involves everyone and represents the entire community. He also highlighted the strategic location of Khonoma, which, he believed is also one of the areas that attracted the jury. The village is at the base, surrounded by paddy fields and in the middle

are jhum fields and reserved forest in the upper part,he said.

Another important aspect is the "practices which our forefathers have handed down to us."Khonoma is known for its unique and sustainable alder-based jhum cultivation which has been practiced since time immemorial.The village has successfully been conserving it's forest and sustainably using its resources for the last two decades.

Meyase further noted that "today we are proud to say that the journey of 20 years has assured us that we have contributed something to humanity and to nature".

It may be added here that Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary is a non-traditional institution, which was established on December 11,1998 and has been greatly instrumental in organizing, monitoring, conserving and preserving the biodiversity in Khonoma area, which is also home to many endemic and vulnerable species of flora and fauna.

The KNCTS has also expressed its profound gratitude and acknowledged all the stakeholders involved, particularly the Department of Forest, Environment & Climate Change, Nagaland State Biodiversity Board and National Biodiversity Authority, Government of India.



Save Forest And Save Earth

Conclusion

Forest conservation support life on earth. Forests are important global resources that provide a wide range of environmental, economic and social benefits. So it is very important to protect the forest from harm. It would be a dream for many people to have such a beautiful, pleasant and eco-friendly environment like the Khonoma village. Although the village is very small but the proper signages has been used for one way traffic, bus stands etc. Fresh air, good food, simple life style and sports are the key, which makes the Khonoma people healthy.

India is taking a lead role to develop it's village in a sustainable model. Khonoma is successful example of such initiatives and became the first green village of India. The village has been placed on the tourism map of the country and attracted the many wildlife enthusiasm, conservationists, researchers and tourists. The green village initiative was firstly taken by the indigenous inhabitants of Khonoma and further supported by the government. The soul of India lies in its villages. If the villages are green and the villagers are happy then the smell of pesticides in the food could be avoided and the environment could be healthy.

References

Primary Data sources

1. Interviewed with my neighbours who also reside in Khonoma Village.

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