

Assignment On Environmental Science

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Topic :

Report on Forest Conservation
in Kohima, district

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Introduction

The state of Nagaland harbours a total forest area of 9222 km² which accounts for 55.62% of the state's geographical area of 16,579 km². Falling in the Indo-Malayan Region, it is located in one of the 35 biodiversity hotspots of the world. The remarkable floral and faunal diversity of the area can be attributed to the wide range in climatic conditions, elevation gradients and vegetation types that are characteristic of the state. Geo-morphologically, the terrain can be broadly grouped into four topographic units - alluvial plains (150 to 200 meters above sea level), low to moderate linear hills (200 to 500 meters above sea level), moderate hills (500 to 800 meters above sea level) and high hills (800 meters and above). The main rivers that flow through the state are the Dhansiri, Doyang, Dikhu, Tizo and Melak.

Much of Nagaland's natural heritage is being rapidly eroded today. Deforestation, degradation of forest resources, change in land-use patterns, hunting and an illegal trade of wild flora and fauna are the major challenges that threaten the fragile ecosystem of this state.

In Nagaland, customary rights are protected under Article 371 A of the Indian Constitution, and the majority of natural habitats are owned and managed by individuals and clans overseen by village councils and other traditional institutions. Hence customary land ownership and management practices characterise forest management in the North-East including Nagaland.

It is correct to say that the survival of man is dependent on the survival of animals and plant life. In the state of Nagaland, where lion's share of forest resources accounting 88.3% approximately is under the control of individuals and private communities and the forest dept. is having very limited regulations and people are hunters since time immemorial, awareness has been created with the sincere efforts of the forest dept. and feeling of belongingness in the minds of the people of the state is increased for forest and wildlife and their protection. Results are coming forward and wildlife protection by the people of Nagaland is being realized both in our country as well as in the world.

Forest Conservation in Kohima district (CCAs)

In Nagaland, traditional conservation practices have helped protect biodiversity, and there are records of Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) being declared in the early 1800s, especially in response to forest degradation and loss of wildlife. In 1998, the Khonoma Village Council declared its intention to protect about 20 km² of forest as the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragepan Sanctuary. Khonoma is probably the only known example in Nagaland where hunting is banned in the entire village through the year.

For the study of Community Conservation Areas, there are five criteria that best fit for the definition of CCAs, as "a Natural Ecosystem (forest, marine, wetlands, grasslands/others), including those with minimum to substantial human influence, containing significant wildlife and biodiversity value, being conserved by communities for cultural, religious, livelihood, or political purposes, using customary laws or other effective means".

Accordingly, five clear cut criteria formed the basis of whether an area was considered to be a CCA, namely:

1. The CCA is managed by local communities;
2. The CCA has been elected by resolution passed in the village council.
3. Various management practices are being stringently enforced such as regulations/bans on hunting, log felling, fishing and jhum cultivation in the CCA.
4. The CCA uses traditional knowledge and practices for the conservation of biological resources and ecosystem services.
5. The CCA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Forest Department for conservation.

Declaration of CCA by Sendenyu Village, Kohima

The wildlife reserve in Sendenyu village was formed as a result of discussions initiated in the village council (VC) by some village members who had studied outside the state and are currently serving as government officials. These members were good hunters themselves, but decreasing wildlife population became a grave concern for them. The village elders immediately understood their concern, as they had themselves witnessed a very sudden decrease in wildlife population within their lifetimes. The discussions, therefore, soon resulted in the creation of about 10 km^2 of wildlife reserve.

The objective was to conserve and protect the rich wildlife heritage of the village and to maintain ecological balance as also to check local extinction of wild animals. The VC selected the land for the reserve based on its low productivity, high gradient and rocky geology. The land belonged to two individual owners and was used for timber and firewood collection. The owners originally objected to the plan but were persuaded by the VC to donate the land for the larger cause. In return, the owners received LPG

Connections from the forest department under Forest Development Authority (FDA) funds. Similar other benefits for the landowners are being considered by the VC. Subsequently, the VC has passed a Sendenya Village Council Wildlife Conservation Act, 2001. The declaration of 'Sendenya Village Wildlife Protected Area' was announced in a written resolution on 1st January 2001, along with a map specifying the boundaries of the protected area (PA).

The village of Sendenya has added an additional area of 5 km² to the existing CCA in order to protect local wildlife like Sambar and barking deer.

SENDENYU VILLAGE IS
COMMUNITY BIODIVERSITY
RESERVE



Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary, Kohima.

Khonoma village forest is very rich in biodiversity. In the recent past, the importance of Khonoma village comes from the initiative of the villagers that led to a ban in logging and hunting in their resource rich forest and institutionalizing this area as Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary. All activities implemented in Khonoma are done by the local community and village institutions joined under the aegis of the village council.

In the early 90s there were extensive logging around the community owned forest and elephants were used to ferry high quality timber from the interior parts of the forest to the road-side. The villagers' lives being intimately linked with forest, they were aware of the direct relation between quality forest and their quality of life. They also understand that this scale logging operation was endangering the loss of all valuable resources from their forest. Thus the Village Council decided to impose a ban on logging in its forest area and the villagers were permitted to cut down

trees only for their basic needs. Hunting, an integral part of the culture of Khonoma people was indiscriminate in the past because of the unique system of land ownership of the village where the land and forest are privately owned and belonged to the community. The drop in the numbers of animals was compounded by the loss of habitat attributed to large-scale logging and hunting in the past. In 1998, the village officially declared a ban on hunting in and around the village. The village Council issued rules and guidelines and imposed a fine of Rs 3000 for hunting any kind of wildlife. The Khonoma Youth Organization has been entrusted to implement these rules and impose the fines wherever necessary.

The community in 1998 established the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary covering a spread of about 70 km². The villager's main concern arose from a local cultural perspective and the villagers found that the Blyth's Tragopan was disappearing at an alarming rate and realized that the survival and security of the future generation depended heavily on its forest.

The forests after being declared a wildlife sanctuary has now become a major hotspot within the birding community. Presently, the villagers have the KNCTS Trust with formal rules and regulations for managing the sanctuary, including penalties for violations. Village youths are selected as wardens to monitor the sanctuary. The KNCTS was registered on September 2002 with no objectives such as; promoting nature conservation and environment protection; establishing a Thagopan Sanctuary in its natural habitat at Khonoma Dzöku area; conserving the flora and fauna and all its biodiversity in the sanctuary.

The responsible people of the Khonoma has led the initiative to ban logging, hunting and destructive methods of resource extraction setting up forest fire and large scale collection of forest products, etc. This venture on nature conservation initiated by the Khonoma people should be adopted by other villages in Nagaland to conserve the rich forest and wildlife.



5,000 tree saplings planted in Jakhama, Kohima

Over 400 villagers participated in yet another plantation drive organised by Jakhama Youth Organisation (JYO) on August 7, 2021 in Jakhama, a village within the Southern Angami region situated about 17 km away from the State Capital.

The plantation drive involved participants from all the eight khels of Jakhama wherein about 600 saplings were planted in each of the respective community forests.

Kemithito Sophie, Kohima senior superintendent of police, while declaring the plantation drive open at Campsite Yedlikha during a brief saplings distribution event, reminded about the threat posed by man-made climate change globally. He cited an example of how temperature has increased in Siberia after wildfire engulfed innumerable acres of forests, which otherwise was a cold place. Sophie, therefore, called upon all concerned in the village to come together and shoulder responsibility towards conserving natural resources for the wellbeing of everyone. He also urged



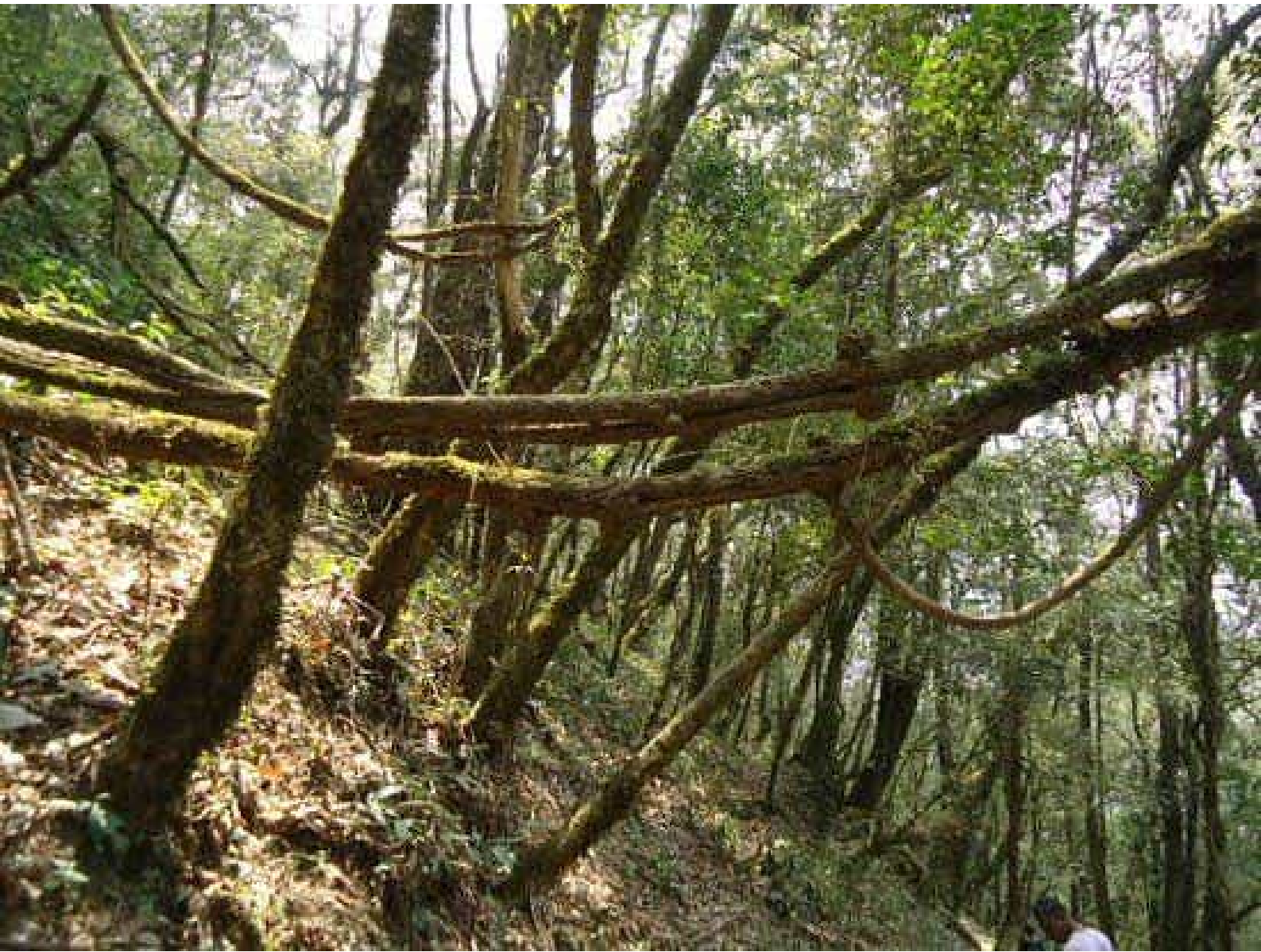
to plant more trees to develop an ecological balance while banning hunting and killing of animals and birds and restricting removal of rocks from the rivers.

Pulie Badze Wildlife Sanctuary, Kohima

Pulie Badze Wildlife Sanctuary with an area of 9 km^2 is an important catchment area of Kohima Town. Pulie Badze forests and the adjoining Dziku Valley are the habitat of some rare and endangered Avifaunal species like Blyth's Tragopan and Dark Rumped Swift (*Apus acuticauda*).

Being close to the State Capital, Pulie Badze is witness to extensive anthropogenic pressure in the form of land grabbing, grazing cattle, firewood collection and hunting.

Nevertheless the Sotsoma Conserved Forest Area with rich bio-resources provide invaluable environmental and ecological services for the people living downstream especially with spring water supply to the Capital City, Kohima.



Conclusion

Diverse benefits are envisaged by the communities as deriving from CCAs such as livelihood security, ecological benefits such as control of soil erosion and increased availability of water, community empowerment and social recognition, among others. The major outcome of conservation were the prevention of further deterioration and also the increased awareness and support for conservation from communities.

Today the rich natural resources of Nagaland, which were once under the communities are fast becoming commercialized. For a sustainable forest resource in the face of market economy and globalization, decentralization of power to the village level is an important factor in the case of Nagaland.

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