

KOHIMA COLLEGE KOHIMA  
A PROJECT WORK  
ON  
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

TOPIC: A report on forest conservation in Khonoma Village.

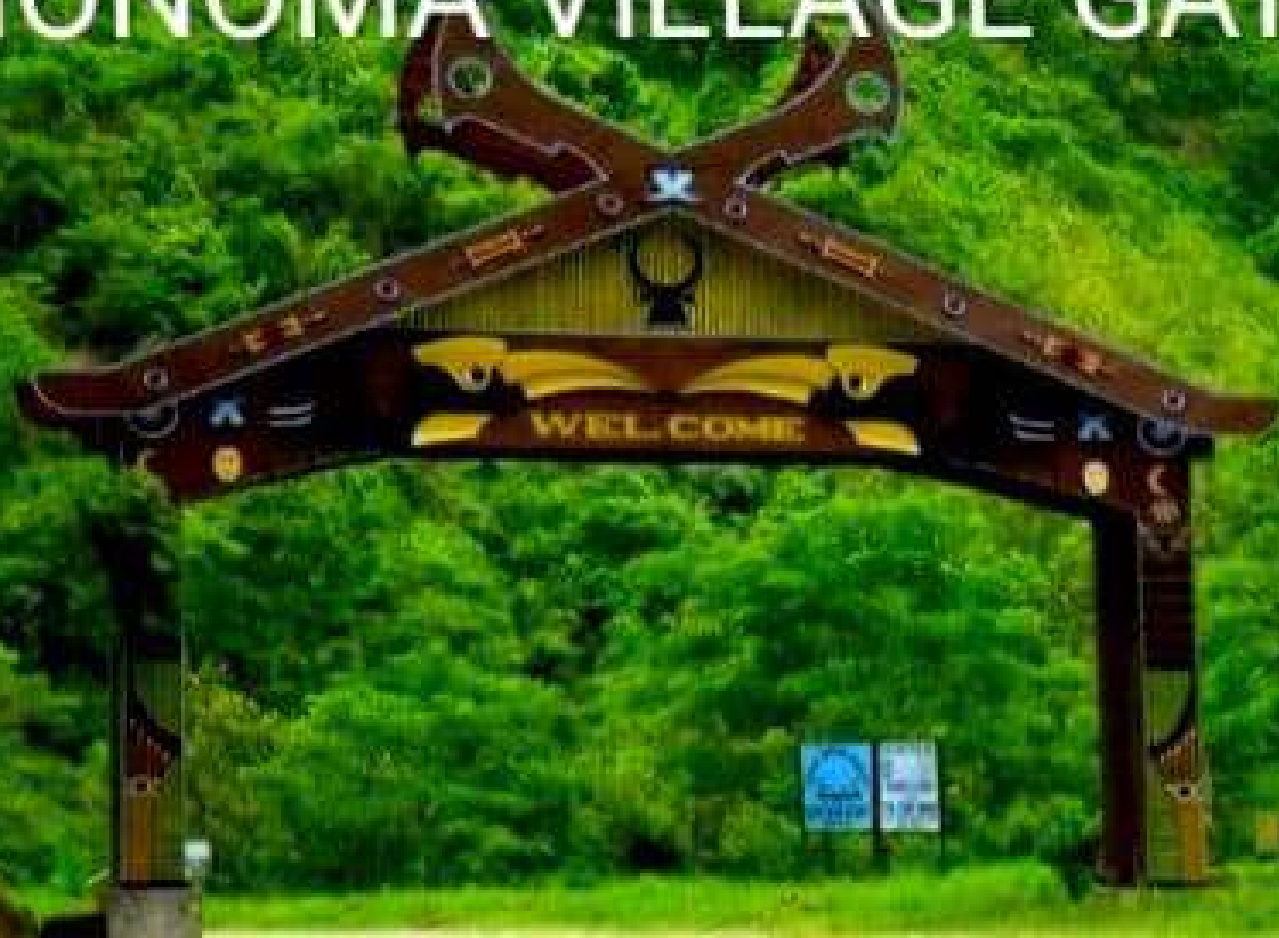
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- \* Some picture of Khonoma forest conservation.

# KHONOMA VILLAGE GATE



## Introduction

Khonoma village is located about 20KM from the state capital, Kohima. The village, referred to as Khunoria named after the Angami term for a local plant, *Glouthera fragrantissima*, is estimated to be around 700 years old and is spread over an area of 123sq. KM. The total population of the village is about 3000, settled in 600 households. Khonoma is famous for its forests and a unique form of agriculture, including some of the oldest terraced cultivation in the region. The hills covered with lush forestland, rich in various species of flora and fauna. The state bird, Blyth's tragopan, a pheasant now nationally endangered, is reportedly found here.

Forest provide goods and services indispensable for human wellbeing, maintain life support systems and enhance the quality of life by playing important roles in ecological, economic and socio-cultural sustainability. These life support systems include tangible benefits like provision of food fodder, fuel wood, timber and a wide range of other Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and intangible benefits such as maintenance of biodiversity,—



repository of genetic wealth, formation, maintenance and protection of soil, effective retention, filtration and protection of forested watershed, carbon sink, nutrient cycling, climate regulation, recreation, ecotourism, employment opportunities, etc. which are of great importance at the local, regional and global levels.

The forest ~~also~~ also are sources for self discovery, public education and a place of spiritual renewal. From the view point of capital assets and future potentialities of development, forest is regarded as the biggest sector that has the maximum potential for generating a self-sustained economic mechanism especially for the rural poor.

Khonoma village forest is very rich in biodiversity. The biodiversity includes over 70 species plants used for medicinal purposes, 84 species of wild fruits, 116 species of wild vegetables, 9 species of mushrooms, 5 different species of natural dyes, 204 species of trees, 45 species of orchids, 11 species of cane and 19 species of bamboo, 25 species of snakes, 6 species of lizards, 11 species of amphibians, 196 species of birds and 72 species of wild animals (KTDB, 2004).

## People's Participation in Conservation:

All activities implemented in Khonoma are done by the local community and village institution formed under the aegis of the Village Council such as the Khonoma Nature Conservation and Tragopan Sanctuary (K.NCTS) and Khonoma Tourism Development Board (KTOB). Youth bodies like, the Khonoma Students Union (KSU) and Khonoma Youth Organization also played active role in facilitating this movement.

Since the declaration of the Khonoma village as a wildlife Sanctuary, the community has been actively participating in all the programmes organized by the managing bodies. Awareness programmes were conducted for several years by the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) and the Darwin Project supervised by a British NGO.

Majority of the activities taken up by the people towards conservation have been funded by the community themselves and connections to various community organizations, NGOs, and conservation networks further reinforced the conservation initiative. The Village Council also sought the counsel of the people of Khonoma residing outside the village and included them in taking key decisions—

A green rectangular sign is mounted on a tree trunk. The sign has white text and a small graphic. The background of the image is a dense forest with various shades of green foliage.

Believe you can  
and you're  
halfway  
there

K.S.U



in this venture. This also brought new ideas and resources and helped the village in this conservation venture.

Being a community initiative is the reason enough to justify the success of this conservation programme. The efforts of the villagers and the nonresident people of Khonoma towards the conservation of the community owned village forest have been discussed under the following.

### Banning of Logging:

In the early 90s some rebellious local youth were involved in 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 are aware of the direct relation between quality of 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.

By 1994 a vast area of forest was cleared by these illegal loggers who even began to disrupt community meetings called to address illegal logging. Community meetings were called and the villagers confronted this problem by focusing on reconciliation and negotiation to address the problem or division between the three khels and its relationship with neighbouring —





villages besides illegal logging. Due to the collective insecurity resulting from the large scale logging that the villagers felt, which threatened the future of the resource base of timber requirement of the village, the community came together and created social pressure on the loggers, to discontinue the large-scale logging.

After 2 years of persuading the loggers and attempts of reconciliation, by April 1996, the loggers conceded to obey the village leadership's resolution. The village council decided to impose a ban on logging that the villagers felt, which threatened the future in its forest area and the villagers were permitted to cut down trees only for their basic needs, like firewood for cooking and heating, and material for construction of shelter. But selling timber to saw mills has been completely banned. As a result, significant improvement in the quality of the forest is visible in the area.

### Conclusion :

In the past, Khonoma village was well known for taking up brave new ventures and leading its fellow Nagas in many fronts. The responsible people of the Khonoma has led the initiative to ban logging and destructive methods of resource extraction like setting -



up forest fire and large scale collection of forest products, etc. in their natural resources-rich forest areas by participating in bringing out, setting up forest fire and large scale collection of forest products, etc. and backing up traditional system of natural resource management, in nationally settling the conflicts that they faced during these years, in managing the administration of the village and in its development front.

Participation and appreciation of the youth towards the conservation initiative and the value of forest has to be ensured as they are the immediate successors and the ablest human available to further the cause of this initiative.

### References

#### Secondary Sources :

- 1.) <https://www.researchgate.net/3034...>
- 2.) <https://www.keybiodiversityareas.org/...>