

KOHIMA COLLEGE KOHIMA

PROJECT
ON
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

TOPIC : Write a report on forest
conservation in area / village / district.

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INTRODUCTION

The practice of planning and maintaining forested areas for the benefit and sustainability of future generations is known as forest conservation. It involves the upkeep of the natural resources within a forest that are beneficial to both humans and the ecosystem. Forests are the valuable assets for a country. The forest cover acts as natural sink of carbon as the trees use carbon dioxide during the process of photosynthesis and gives out oxygen to the environment. The forest provides habitat for numerous animals and is a source of livelihood especially for the people in the rural areas. The root network of the trees bind the soil that controls erosion of the top soil. It also retains water for a longer period which ultimately allows maximum recharge of ground water. The protection and conservation of the forest is therefore very important for the maintenance of environmental

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and ecological balance from a local to regional to global levels. Conservation of forest implies the protection of remaining forest covers and efforts to increase forest cover through afforestation of open waste lands and the reforestation of already deforested areas particularly those areas which are not suitable for cultivation of crops. Conservation of forest has become very important for mankind and efforts towards forest conservation from local to the global scenario is needed considering its importance and how humans have destroyed the environment since the dawn of industrialization.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study is primarily based on the information collected from various sources both primary and secondary data. It is mainly descriptive in nature. The present work is an attempt to study the importance of the village community in the conservation of forest. The study will focus on the issues pertaining to the conservation efforts in Minkong forests of Mokokchung district, Nagaland undertaken by the Department of forest and the people of Singratsü, Chuchuyimpang and Lengmisa villages and to examine the benefits of this conservation which can be used as a model of conservation.

RESEARCH AREA

A CASE STUDY OF MINKONG FOREST IN MOKOKCHUNG DISTRICT, NAGALAND

Minkong forest is located 8 Kms away from Mokokchung home town. The forest covers an area of 275.32 hectares (annual administrative report 2007-08, department of environment, forest and climate change, government of Nagaland). The forest is protected under the department of forest and a large area of the hill ranges is under the jurisdiction of Chuchuyim-pang, Singratsii and Lengmisa village. Realizing the importance of forest cover the village council of all these villages have decided to protect Minkong forest and a large tract of the hill ranges have been declared as community reserved forests. Strict laws have been implemented to restrict cutting of trees, hunting and gathering of forest products etc. for which heavy fines is imposed on the violators to control the destruction of the forests.

Under the initiative of the forest department, a large area of the forest has been brought under secondary growth of hallock trees which can be noticed all along the stretch of the National highway 2 which passes through the forest. The upper part of the Minkang comprises of mixed forest that are still natural forest and still untouched, which hosts a variety of tree species and is a home to a number of wild animals and birds. The animals include wild boar, variety of squirrels, birds like green pigeon and wild fowl etc.

FINDINGS

The reserved forest can be divided into two groups based upon land ownership which is the state government reserved forest and the village community reserved forest. The former is controlled and managed by the state government and authority over the management of the autonomous forest rests with the concerned land owners and the community. They are in fact community forest managed and controlled either by clans, individuals, groups or traditional institution according to the prevailing customary laws and practices. The land owners and the community also play a very important role in the management of forest.

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The Minkong forest is protected to conserve the trees from being cut down for timber and other uses, soil and water conservation and for wildlife management. This is also managed for the protection of the catchment of the nearby water sources for the concerned village and also for the neighbouring villages. As a result of the conservation effort on the hill top, the streams do not dry up even during dry season. On the lower part of Minkong forest, the people of Singratsii people have established Yimchaku village which is a growing horticultural village. Yimchaku village has 35 households with a total population of 90 people (2020 census). The main horticultural crops include banana, litchi, jackfruit, lemon, orange, pineapple and in recent years cultivation of vegetables like cabbage, broccoli have been introduced.

While there is a huge market demand for timber in the area, a large tract of dense forest and well protected patches of community and individually owned primary forest have been observed. This conservation is attributed to the healthy conservation practices adopted by the village communities.

Hunting and fishing are essentially a rural way of life which is closely associated with nature. Instead of having a balanced relationship with nature, man had exerted his power and control over nature. To control excessive hunting and fishing the various village councils has set up committee which keeps an eye over trespassers while the land owners also protect their areas from exploitation and land encroachment. Realizing the importance of conservation of forest additional areas are being brought for tree plantation. The conservation also brings several other benefits such as ground water recharge, reduction of soil erosion,

increased agricultural productivity, prevention of water logging, increased wildlife, good harmony established among the farmers and production of livestock in the village. Even during the lean period water is drawn from the perennial streams to the farms. As a result, the farmers gain confidence to take active part in all developmental programmes.

CONCLUSION

The conservation effort taken up by the government and the active participation of the concerned villages in Minkong forest area to protect the natural heritage forest and promote a sense of awareness of the biodiversity among the people. It prevents the overexploitation of flora and fauna from hunters and poachers, recharges fresh drinking water in the streams, provides priority to maintaining environmental stability and ecological balance, which have been fruitful and can be adopted as a model of conservation in other villages. Almost every village in the state occupy hilly terrain, therefore some of the hill ranges can be identified, protected and conserved.

There is a scope for eco-tourism, to beautify and manage the landscape of the village area ensuring an intelligent use of creative ability without disturbing and

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destroying the sensitive balance of the ecosystem or the natural beauty. There is threat to the conservation of forest in Hinkong as a result of stone quarrying by the local people. Due to population pressure on the land, some of the people from the village have taken up stone quarrying as a means of livelihood in the forest area. It is observed that in three locations along the National Highway 2, they have started extracting stone boulders. It is in high demand as most of the quarries are located on the highway that passes through the middle of the forest. Three stone crushers have also been set up in the vicinity of the stone quarry. These activities pose threat not only to the forest but also to the NH-2 which is an important road connecting Hokitchung and Assam (Amguri). Another threat to the forest is the encroachment where people have started to

Construct houses at certain pockets of the forest; therefore preventive measures should be taken up by the concerned village council.

Active participation by all concerned and supporting conservation projects which imply stewardship, management and change and avoidance of overexploitation is the need of the hour.

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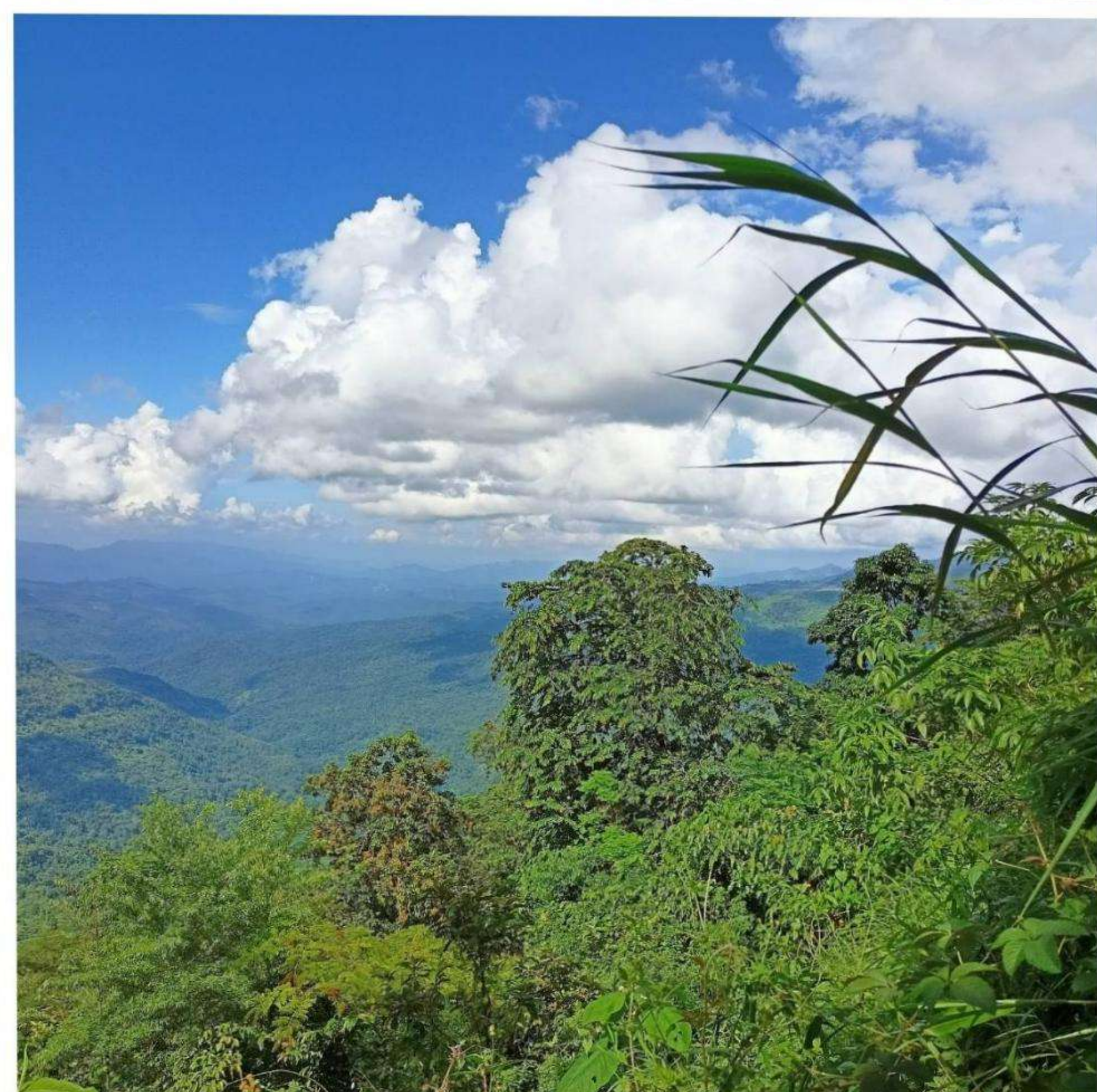
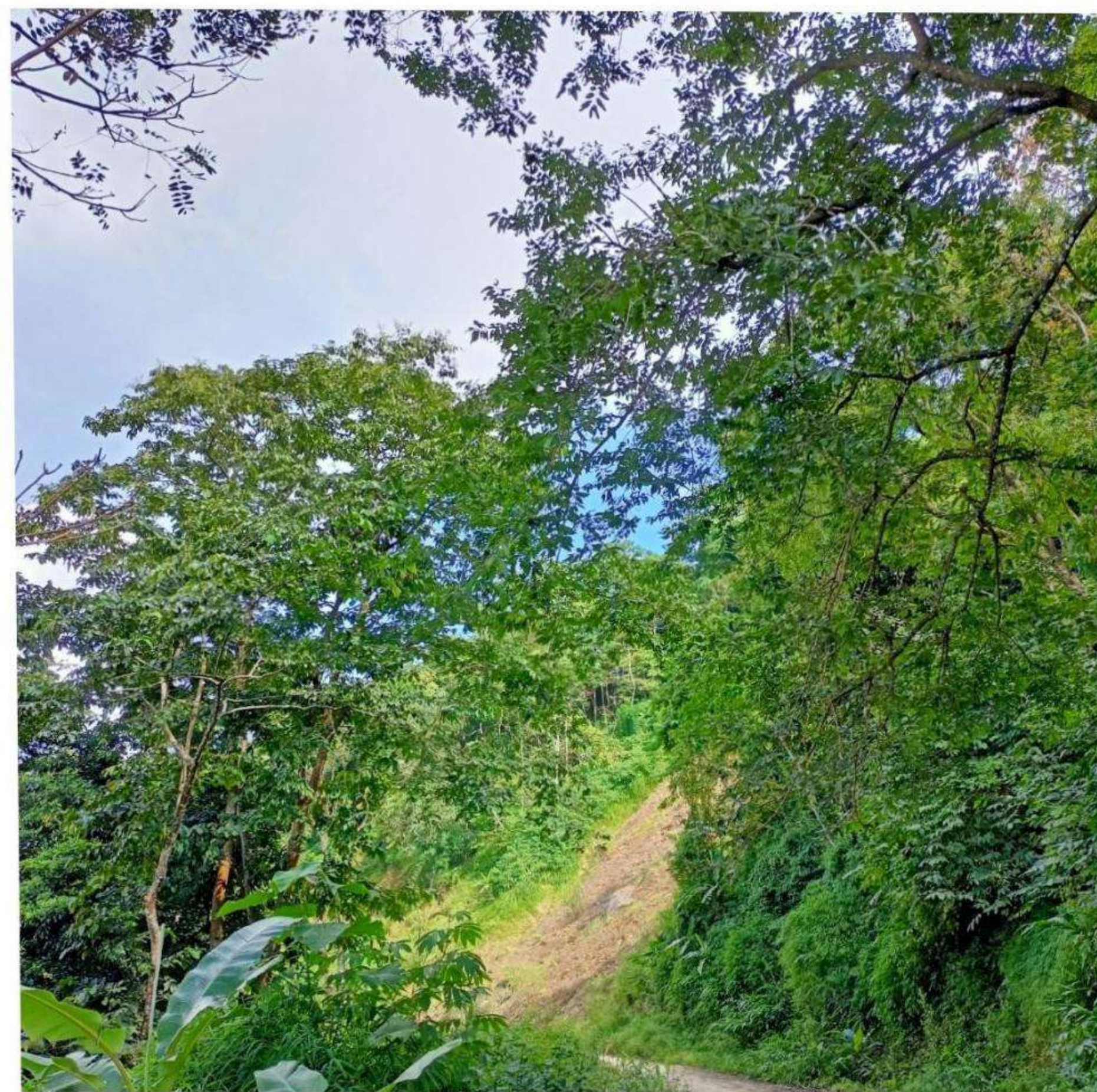
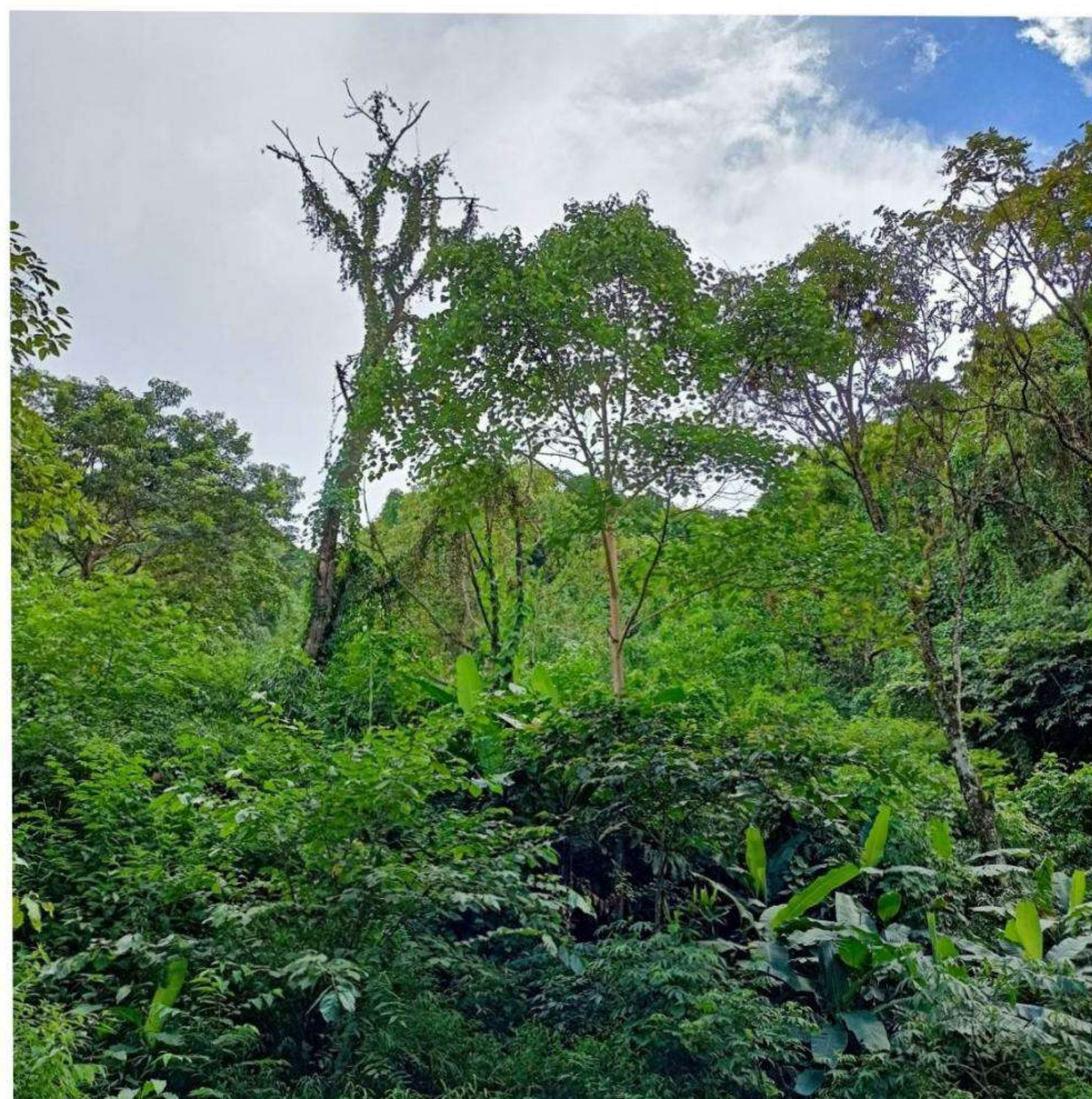
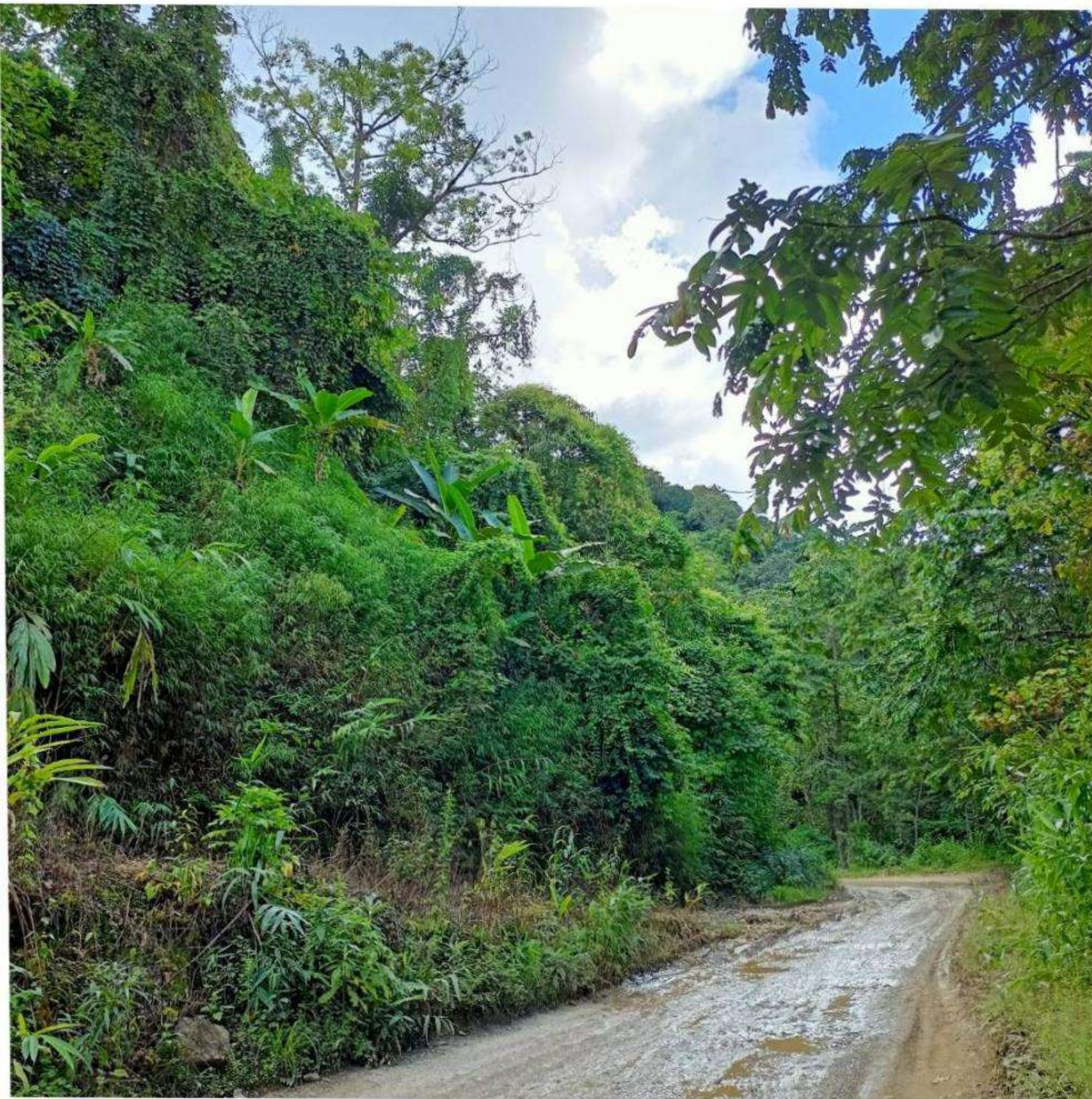
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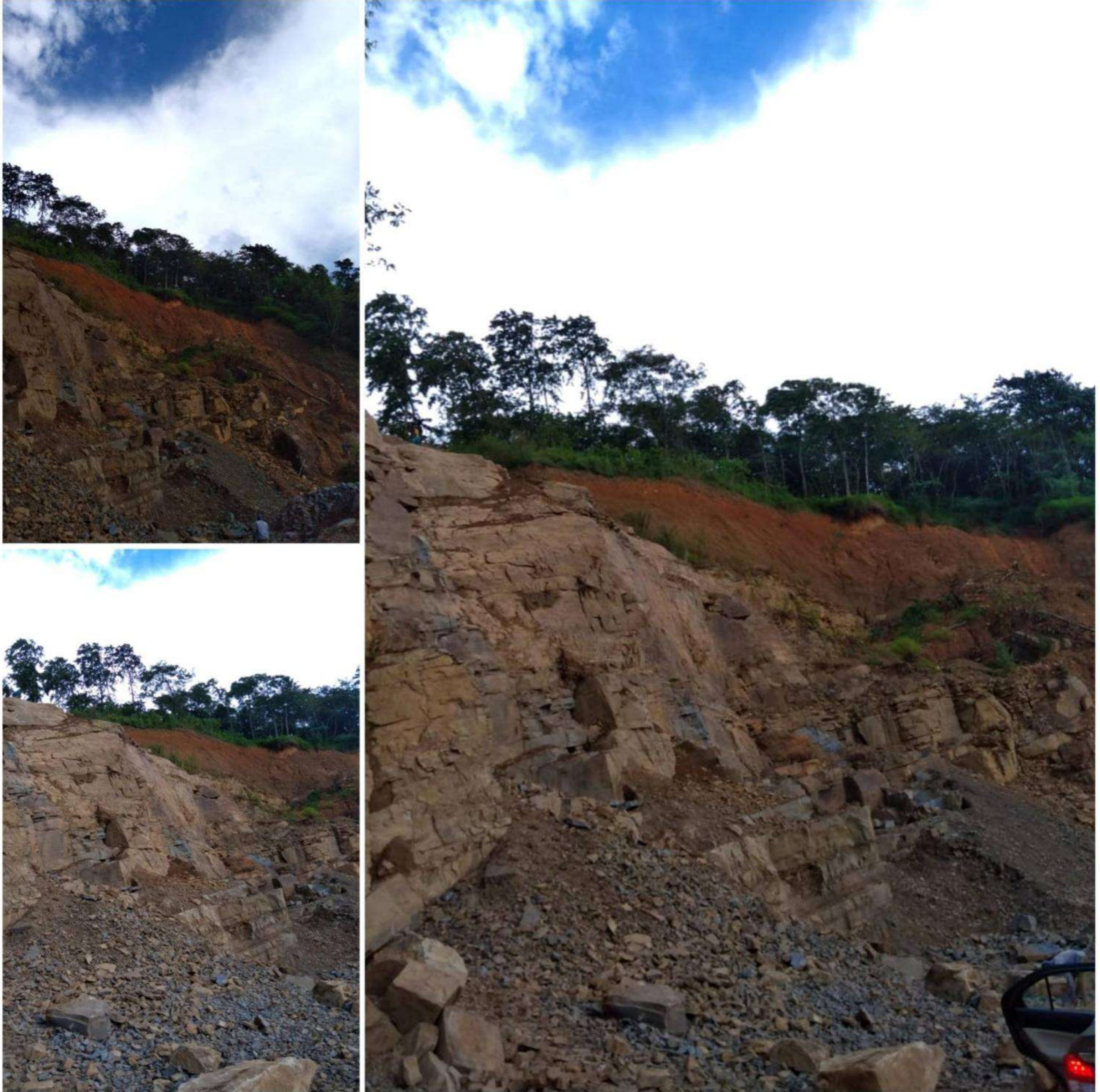
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Stone Quarrying at the foothill of Minkong Forest