

## INTRODUCTION

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# BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN PAKISTAN: APPROACHES OF IUCN PAKISTAN

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## IUCN/Pakistan

Conservation of biodiversity in Pakistan has been a priority since the 1980s. The Environmental Protection Ordinance of 1983, which was promulgated, is focused on industrial pollution, whereas the draft and envisaged measures to protect the natural resource base in its entirety. A wildlife committee was set up in 1968 which drafted conservation legislation, later adopted through various provincial (wildlife) acts and ordinances. These statutes provide for the creation and management of various categories of protected areas, i.e., national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, game reserves and private game reserves.

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## INTRODUCTION

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## LEGISLATION AND POLICY

Conservation of biodiversity is a new idea which engaged the attention of natural resource managers in Pakistan during the 1980s, and, as such, no specific policy or legislation existed till then. Issues concerning conservation of natural resources were superficially covered under the national forest policies issued from time to time in the past. There were/are some laws that cover matters such as forestry, wildlife protection, canal irrigation, control of goat grazing, discharge of effluents, soil conservation, and pesticide use. The first piece of legislation to consider the environment as a whole was the Environmental Protection Ordinance of 1983. However, the scope of the Ordinance, as promulgated, is focussed on industrial pollution, whereas the draft had envisaged measures to protect the natural resource base in its entirety. A wildlife committee was set up in 1968 which drafted conservation legislation, later adopted through various provincial (wildlife) acts and ordinances. These statutes provide for the creation and management of various categories of protected areas, i.e., national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, game reserves, and private game reserves.

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in 1991. The NCS secretariat was succeeded by a government-staffed NCS Unit at the federal level.

### **IUCN Pakistan**

IUCN first started work in Pakistan in 1982. The office was formally set up in 1985. In the beginning, IUCN and other NGOs worked in isolation, as there was no platform functional on a national level to encourage partnership for a conservation campaign. IUCN realised the need to bring together state, government agencies, and a diverse range of non-government organisations in a unique partnership. The first uphill task was the formulation of Pakistan's National Conservation Strategy. IUCN, in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan, played a lead role in producing the NCS document in 1991. It was approved by the Federal Cabinet in March 1992, although implementation had started even before this with the development of the Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy in the North West Frontier Province. Some experiences of IUCN(P) have come from being a partner in the NCS process.

### **IUCN(P) Approaches for Biodiversity Conservation**

- Through NCS: The National Conservation Strategy provides a broad framework for addressing environmental concerns in the country and highlights IUCN(P) approaches for biodiversity conservation. It recommends action in 14 core programme areas and 'conservation of biodiversity' was enlisted as one programme area.
- Through Provincial Conservation Strategies: Out of Pakistan's four provinces, the North West Frontier Province took the lead in producing their conservation strategy entitled 'Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy'. The assignment was completed due to the dedicated efforts of IUCN(P). The document was approved by the provincial government of the NWFP during 1995. It recommends programme areas concerning conservation of natural resources in the province with special emphasis on biodiversity conservation. This ongoing process will go down to the district level.

IUCN(P) is making efforts to assist in producing the provincial conservation strategies for the Sind, Balochistan, and Punjab provinces of Pakistan. The proposals for conservation strategies in these provinces are in the pipeline.

- Through Projects: Other approaches of IUCN(P) for the conservation of Biodiversity are being processed through projects. The project entitled 'Maintaining Biodiversity in Pakistan with Rural Community Development' is described below.

## About the Project

The project is funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Ministry of Environment, Urban Affairs, Forestry and Wildlife are responsible for the execution of the Project. The project has a three-year pilot phase launched in April 1995. The project covers the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), mainly Chitral district, and the Northern Areas (NAs). In the NWFP, the project is being implemented by the NWFP Wildlife Department while, in the NAs, IUCN is the implementing agency. In addition, IUCN is also responsible for overall management of the project and for providing technical assistance to both the NWFP and the NAs' field units. The total cost of the pilot phase is US \$2.5 million. If the pilot project experience is successful, the scope of the project will be extended to the other provinces of Pakistan.

The project is being implemented with the active participation of local communities, the community-based organisations, the district administration, and NGOs like the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP).

## Biodiversity

The word 'biodiversity' expresses all the varieties of life forms and implies three components: diversity of habitat, diversity of species, and genetic variation. Community development and biodiversity conservation are complementary concepts which consider that development without biodiversity conservation and biodiversity conservation without development are inappropriate processes. This project combines community development approaches with biodiversity conservation objectives.

## Design of Approach

The project is following a process approach rather than a blueprint approach. The decision-making process is decentralised and ideas originate at the village level. The approach used is an evolving one in which local people are involved at all stages of the project. Participatory action is encouraged by enabling, supporting, and empowering the people.

## I. Background

Until the beginning of the 1980s, environmental issues were of interest primarily to conservation groups. The methodology of these groups was based more on dealing with the technical issues of the environment. The social issues, especially the role of local people in conservation efforts, were completely missing from the agenda. These traditional conservation measures have not proved

to be very effective: plant and animal species continue to become extinct, landscapes continue to be destroyed or degraded, and biological diversity continues to be lost.

As mentioned above, the weakness with most of the conservation programmes is that, in their efforts to conserve the environment, the active participation of the local population is not sought. Therefore, the local population, which could play a very effective role in terms of cost and efficiency, is excluded. The income that is generated from these resources is seldom diverted back for the conservation of these resources, resulting in an unsustainable arrangement of resource management and use. The exclusion of relevant interest groups from conservation efforts has also contributed to inequitable distribution of benefits among different interest groups.

Agenda 21 of UNCED 1992 recognises that, in order to achieve the long-term objectives of biodiversity conservation, scientific results have to be implemented with a wider social, economic, and political perspective. Sustainable development requires that members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities in such a way as to enable them to manage and mobilise resources for the improvement of the quality of life consistent with their aspirations. It is a process of economic and social development achieved through participatory efforts.

The project was conceptualised in 1991 and predates UNCED 1992. Its aim is to link conservation with social and economic development and to build the capacity of the rural communities to manage their natural resources on a sustainable use basis.

## **II. Objectives**

The principal aims of the project are to test a new approach to the conservation of biodiversity through community development; to manage the natural resources through enhanced community skills (gained from capacity-building); and to demonstrate economic benefits through sustainable use of wild resources (e.g. trophy-hunting, eco-tourism, and marketing of herbs/species and so on).

## **III. Demonstration**

The project will test the new approach on seven sites in the NAs and eight in the NWFP in the next three years. The pilot sites are selected through criteria developed in consultation with the local communities, government departments, and the NGOs. The commitment of the villagers to conserve and make sustainable use of natural resources in their valleys is given primary consideration. The villagers are taught simple tools to assess the exact state of their resources, identify the causes for their

degradation, and suggest corrective measures to improve the situation.

Based on these diagnostic exercises, the villagers are then encouraged to prepare the Village Management Plans (VMPs). The VMPs are submitted to the Project Management Committee for approval, after which its implementation starts. The progress of the VMPs is monitored with predetermined impact indicators.

#### **IV. Post Project Implications**

- Community empowerment to plan, implement, and evaluate will trigger concrete reversals in roles and working culture. People will no more behave as a silent majority.
- This will encourage a sense of ownership of project objectives among communities and will support the communities' claim to make use of natural resources.
- The project will provide a launching pad for working partners (e.g. the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme [AKRSP], Chitral Area Development Project [CADP], and Sarhad Rural Support Corporation [SRSC]) to initiate an integrated natural resource management programme through their respective organisations.
- It will help communities to press the local government authorities to adopt simple, as opposed to complicated, departmental procedures involved in the area development projects.

#### **V. Criteria for Selection of Valleys for the Biodiversity Conservation Project**

1. Biodiversity
  - Important Wildlife Species - As indicators of fauna and habitat
  - Condition of Natural Resources
    - i) Wildlife numbers (High, Adequate, Low)
    - ii) Habitat condition (Good, Average, Poor)
2. Social Organisation
  - Number of villages/WOs/VOs
  - Institutional maturity of W/VOs
  - Ethnicity
  - Major conflict, if any
  - Any community initiative to conserve natural resources
3. Eco-Tourism
  - Tourist attractions

- Current situation
  - Potential for development
4. *Economic Plants*
    - Species found with distribution (Rich, Average, Poor)
    - Exploitation (Collected/Cultivated)
  5. *Hunting Control*
    - Access to valley (number of entry points and level of difficulty in monitoring outside poachers)
    - Local poaching situation and level of difficulty in halting it through peer pressure
  6. *Demonstration Value* (High, Medium, Low)
  7. *Chances of Success*

## **VI. Rehabilitation of Mangrove Forests**

The work involves developing an awareness of the importance of mangroves among the coastal fisheries' communities. The project stresses the need for rehabilitation of mangroves through coastal community participation.

## **VII. Participatory Approaches**

There is a growing realisation that the objectives of forest conservation cannot be achieved without community participation. Through its partnership with the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in Northern Pakistan, and through its work with other participatory projects in the country, IUCN(P) has developed strong expertise in participatory approaches for conserving natural resources .

## **VIII. Biodiversity Strategy and Protected Areas' Management Project, Pakistan**

Pakistan has a fledgling national park system which consists of several small parks, as well as a wide variety of wildlife sanctuaries and game reserves. Most of the parks are too small to adequately protect the biodiversity of the region. In spite of these shortcomings, there is a strong desire to improve the situation, and there are individuals who are well motivated towards implementing a System Plan. IUCN, Pakistan, in collaboration with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Pakistan and other government agencies, has prepared a Biodiversity Action Plan for the entire country. This plan will address issues of individual protected areas regarding biodiversity conservation and will suggest appropriate management measures. Institutional strengthening initiatives are to be the backbone of the Biodiversity Action Plan. In preparing the investment project, a national

biodiversity strategy and action plan will be prepared which will outline a comprehensive programme of action to better conserve the country's biodiversity. The investment project will be a key component of this.

The Biodiversity Strategy and Protected Areas' Management Project will include:

- the definition of priority institutional, policy, legal, and technical actions needed to effectively manage the country's biological resources and
- identification of priority actions and projects for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity

IUCN(P) is performing a more visible role to conserve biodiversity through various ongoing and proposed projects.

### **Literature Cited**

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