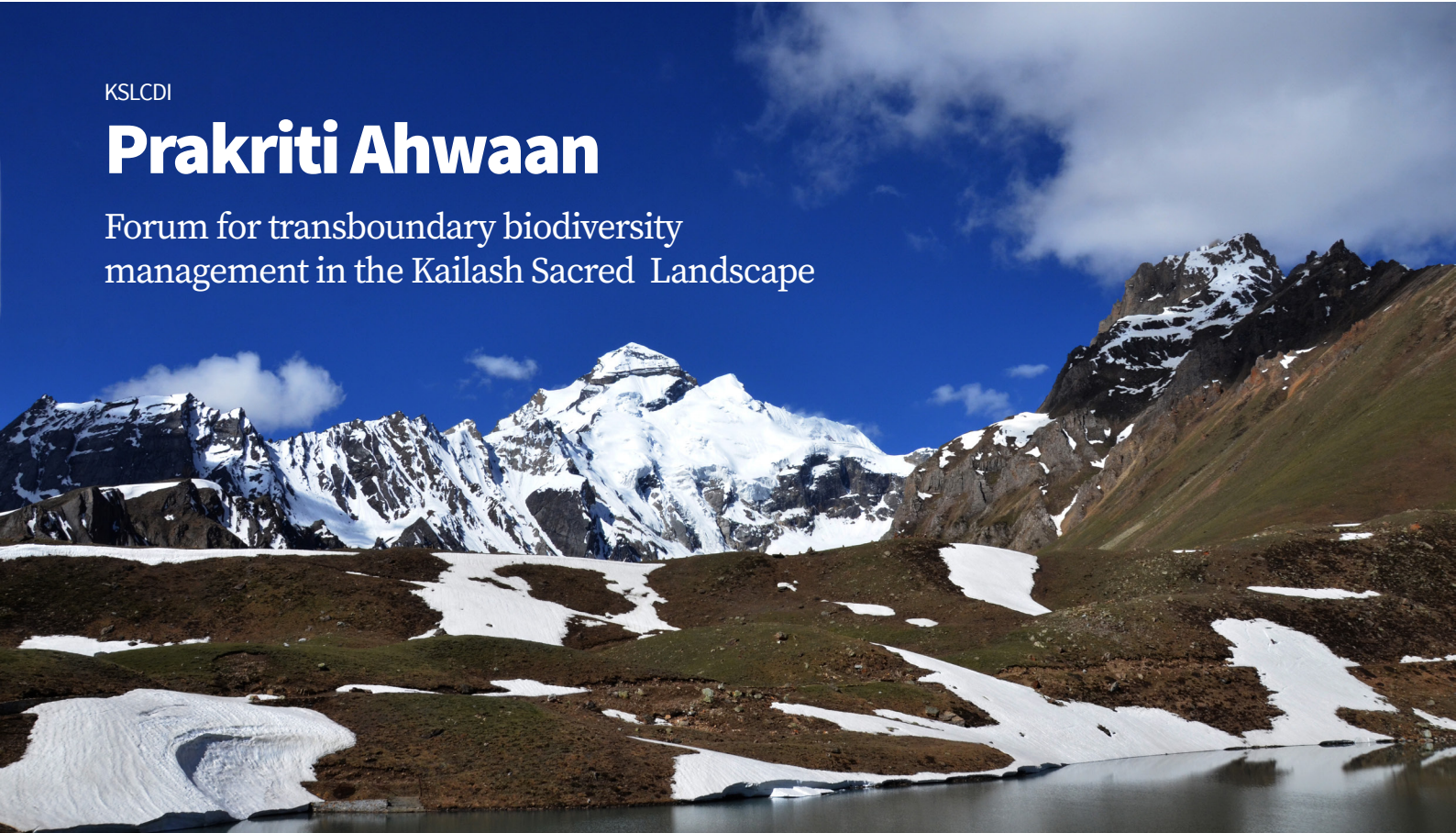


KSLCDI

Prakriti Ahwaan

Forum for transboundary biodiversity management in the Kailash Sacred Landscape



Ajaz Hussain

Background

Nature recognizes no political boundaries. The Indian and Nepali areas on either side of the Mahakali (Kali in India) River share natural resources and ecosystems. They also share several issues relating to resource management – unsustainable harvesting of high-value medicinal plants, human–wildlife conflict, and illegal trade of medicinal plants and wildlife among others.

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a tri-national initiative (China, India, and Nepal) that uses a transboundary landscape approach to address these issues so that ecosystem management can be achieved at scale.



In 2018, the initiative brought together communities and local government representatives from India and Nepal in Khalanga, Darchula District, Nepal, to [discuss issues relating to transboundary biodiversity management](#).

In 2019, the second cross-border forum was held in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, India, under the title “[Prakriti Ahwaan](#)”. Representatives from communities and local governments shared their experiences and lessons learned from implementing the agreed-upon actions from 2018. In addition, participants discussed pressing issues concerning biodiversity management and collectively identified strategies to address them. This flyer presents key discussion points from Prakriti Ahwaan 2019, including a roadmap for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management.

This tri-national initiative uses a transboundary landscape approach to address shared issues so that ecosystem management can be achieved at scale.



Key issues for biodiversity management in the landscape

- Human–wildlife conflict is a major issue in the landscape. Policy aspects relating to compensation and relief, crop and livestock insurance, and public awareness must be prioritized.
- Cross-border trade and transportation of yartsa gunbu and other medicinal plants across the Mahakali need further discussions at both national and transboundary levels.
- There is an opportunity to revive age-old cross-border trade of livestock.
- Illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife parts, along with medicinal plants and other natural resources, is a threat to biodiversity in the landscape.
- There is scant research regarding lesser known non-timber forest products and medicinal plants in the landscape. Filling this research gap and sharing the findings is important for assessing their conservation status and ensuring their sustainable use and management.

- Changes in socioeconomic status, migration, and improved accessibility have resulted in the decline of traditional livelihood practices such as livestock rearing. Strategies to make traditional livelihoods and agriculture more attractive and sustainable must be developed, especially to retain youth in villages.

Gender and social inclusion in natural resource planning

Women and marginalized groups are primary users of natural resources, yet their inputs are rarely sought when plans are prepared to manage these resources. Gender and social inclusion (GESI) is important to ensure equity in the planning, management, and use of natural resources. This can be achieved through sensitization programmes and capacity building on GESI-integrated planning for natural resources management.



A roadmap for biodiversity conservation and sustainable management

PRIORITY AREA 1

Management of yartsa gunbu and other medicinal and aromatic plants (*jadibuti*)

Actions (with time frame):

- Set rules for collection where absent: Time period, permit system, campsite management, collection site management (1–2 years)
- Raise awareness on yartsa gunbu's life cycle and medicinal values (1–2 years)
- Assess the process for cross-border trade of yartsa gunbu and other nature products (1–2 years)
- Promote cultivation of high-value nature products and medicinal plants (1–2 years)

Stakeholders: Local governments, government line agencies including Divisional Forest Offices (DFOs) and the Api Nampa Conservation Area (ANCA), Van Panchayats, collectors, traders, and research institutes

An exercise in social inclusion: The “dot” game

The facilitators explained the rules of the game and requested participants to stand in a large circle and close their eyes. Then, the facilitators placed a tika (mark) on the forehead of each participant. These tikas were of four colours – red tikas were put on 50% of the participants, green tikas on 30%, pink tikas on 15%, and a blue tika on only one participant. After the tikas were placed, the participants were allowed to open their eyes. Next, those who had tikas of the same colour on their foreheads were asked to group together. As each participant could see the tika of other participants but not their own, they were allowed to communicate only through gestures – speaking was not permitted.

“ I saw other participants with three different coloured tikas but I did not know mine. I also expected my tika to match with the others, so I tried to join their groups, but they kept signalling me to get out of their groups. I felt ostracized by the other groups. ”

– Janak Padhya
(Only individual with the blue tika)

“ Like the others, I did not know the colour of my tika. Using facial expressions, I helped others to find their groups and they helped me. It was a bit difficult to find my group because only a few of us had the same coloured tika. We felt intimidated seeing the other larger groups. ”

– Bishan Budhathoki



PRIORITY AREA 2

Rangeland (and livestock) management

Actions (with time frame):

- Nepal: Include issues of rangeland/pasture management in the ANCA Management Plan currently under preparation (1 year)
- Develop livestock fodder production systems (1–2 years)
- Develop, diversify, and link livestock products with markets (1–3 years)
- Improve livestock production systems by, for instance, introducing high-yielding livestock breeds (1–3 years)

Stakeholders: Local governments; government line agencies including ANCA and forest, agriculture, and livestock divisions; civil society groups; private sector; research institutes

PRIORITY AREA 3

Human–wildlife conflict management

Actions (with time frame):

- Control wildlife crime: Conduct awareness raising programs, build capacity of local communities and frontline government line agencies in wildlife crime control (1–3 years)
- Mitigate damage from wildlife: Conduct awareness raising programs, pilot compensation/relief and insurance schemes, pilot plantation of wildlife-resistant cash crops and trees (1–3 years)

Stakeholders: South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), local governments, government line agencies including wildlife and forest divisions, civil society organizations, NGOs, private sector, research institutes



For further information

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