COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREAS IN SOUTH ASIA

Case studies and analyses from
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Editors
Seema Bhatt
Neema Pathak Broome
Ashish Kothari
Tasneem Balasinorwala

KALPAVRIKSH
कल्पवृक्ष

Community Conserved Areas in South Asia

Case studies and analyses from
Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka

Kalpavriksh, Delhi
No. 7, Sector 15A, Noida - 201301
Phone: +91 120 4229767
E-mail: kalpavriksh.delhi@gmail.com

Kalpavriksh, Pune
5, Shree Dutta Krupa Apts.,
908, Deccan Gymkhana, Pune - 411004
Phone/fax: +91 20 25654239
E-mail: kalpavriksh@vsnl.net
www.kalpavriksh.org

Citation: Bhatt, S., N. Pathak Broome., A. Kothari and T. Balasinorwala. 2012. Community Conserved Areas in South Asia. Case Studies and Analyses from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Kalpavriksh, New Delhi.

Cover Photographs:
Community protected Markhor at Torghar, Pakistan. Photo: Tahir Rasheed
Community conserved forest of Brahmankumei village, Odisha. Photo: Ashish Kothari
Researchers meet community at Beganachari, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Photo: Ashish Kothari
Fisherfolk at community conserved coast, Puttalam, Sri Lanka. Photo: Ashish Kothari
Meeting of community conserving Godavari Kunda community forest, Nepal. Photo: Ashish Kothari

External Editor: **Shalini Bhutani**

Designed and Printed at:
Systems Vision, A-199, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-I, New Delhi

Contributory Amount Rs: 200/-

This publication has been supported by SwedBio and the Global Environment Facility, Small Grants Programme.

CONTENTS

CD CONTENTS

- Community Conserved Areas in South Asia : An Overview
- Bangladesh: Abstract and Country Report
- India: Abstract and Country Report
- Nepal: Abstract and Country Report
- Pakistan: Abstract and Country Report
- Sri Lanka: Abstract and Country Report

ACRONYMS / ABBREVIATIONS

AKRSP	Agha Khan Rural Support Program
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAs	Community Conserved Areas
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
CEESP	Commission on Environment, Economic and Social Policy
CFUGs	Community Forest User Groups
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
COP	Conferences of Parties
CWBMP	Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project
ECA	Ecologically Critical Areas
FECOFUN	Community Forest User Groups in Nepal
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HYV	High Yield Variety
ICCAS	Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas and Territories
IIED	International Institute of Environment and Development
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
MACH	Management of Aquatic Resources through Community Husbandry
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NCCW	National Council for the Conservation of Wildlife
PAs	Protected Areas
PoWPA	Programme of Work on Protected Areas
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation

RMO	Resource Management Organisation
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SPARRSO	Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation
STEP	Society for the Environmental Protection
SwedBio	Swedish International Biodiversity Programme
TILCEPA	Strategic Direction on Governance, Communities, Equity and Livelihood Rights in Relation to Protected Areas (Theme on Indigenous and Local Equity and Protected Areas)
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USF	Un-classed State Forest
VCF	Village Common Forest
VCG	Village Conservation Group
WANC	Wildlife Aware Nature Club
WCC	World Conservation Congress
WCMC	World Conservation Monitoring Centre
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WTB	Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh
WWF-P	World Wide Fund for Nature-Pakistan

Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in South Asia: An Overview[1]

Seema Bhatt and Neema Pathak Broome[2]

Introduction

This overview paper draws largely from a one year (2008-09) study that was carried out in South Asia to understand Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). Some of the experiences have also been drawn from previous work in the region related to CCAs. The one year study looked at five South Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). Sporadic surveys in the past had indicated the presence of numerous traditional and new initiatives by local communities towards conservation of specific species and a range of habitats. The reasons for such community efforts ranged from religious sentiments and cultural connections to livelihoods and the conservation of biodiversity. Many of these were and continue to be managed and guided by people's traditional knowledge, community belief systems and local customary laws. Over a period of time such initiatives have however declined in the region and the existing ones are faced with both internal and external threats. The reasons for decline include colonial policies of land and resource management, changes and break down of community structures, heavy market influence because of the rapid process of globalisation and political instability, among others. The objective of the study therefore was to understand the current extent of such initiatives, their role in biodiversity conservation and the challenges that they are currently faced with.

1. Community Conserved Areas: Background

1.1 What are CCAs?

Mainstream conservation professionals generally believe that nature conservation only happens within the confined boundaries of designated Protected Areas (PAs). Additionally, it has been believed that such conservation can only be carried out by government agencies. Contrary to this view of conservation, are thousands of 'unofficial' PAs across the globe, managed and sustained by indigenous, mobile and

[1] Specific national reports prepared by national partners have been used to write this analysis section. Efforts have been made where possible to refer to individual country reports. For details of information pertaining to a specific country please see the respective country report.

[2] Seema is a member of Kalpavriksh and an independent consultant working on biodiversity, ecotourism and climate change issues. Neema is a member of Kalpavriksh and the coordinator (South Asia and China) for the ICCA Consortium.

other local communities. These communities have in fact played a critical role in conserving a wide range of natural habitats and species for millennia. Their purpose for conservation could be economic, cultural, spiritual or simply aesthetic.

These areas, over a decade now called Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) are found world over even today. CCAs are defined by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as *natural and modified ecosystems containing significant biodiversity, ecological services and cultural values–voluntarily conserved by indigenous peoples and other local communities through customary laws or other effective means*[3]. Hundreds of such examples have been documented by a range of agencies, but many more are yet to be brought to light. These include a huge diversity, of efforts: from continued traditional protection of sacred sites, catchment forests, indigenous territories, nesting/feeding/wintering sites of water birds, turtle nesting sites, sustainable fishery sites, and others, to a revived interest and engagement of communities in protecting natural ecosystems and resources, and community attempts at saving natural habitats from the onslaught of destructive commercial and industrial forces. CCAs could be with minimal to substantial human influence. Historical practices of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources embodied in many CCAs are much older than government managed PAs. In fact one of the oldest wildlife sanctuaries in India – the Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, was a CCA before it was officially recognised as such[4]. Such community initiatives are often neglected and seldom recognised within official conservation systems. Consequently, many face real threats to their existence.

Rupataal lake and catchments, conserved by surrounding communities, Nepal. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

International conservation bodies like the IUCN, UNEP-WCMC refer to these areas as Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas and Territories (ICCAs). In the South Asian context these areas are referred to as Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). This is for a number of reasons, including the fact that the term 'indigenous' vis-a-vis communities is not officially accepted in many South Asian countries. Yet there are a number of local communities (not necessarily classified as indigenous) heavily dependent on natural resources and actively engaged in conservation. The term 'CCA' will be used throughout the text here.

Three characteristics which could define CCAs include:

- A community is closely connected to a well defined ecosystem (or to a species and its habitat) culturally and/or because of dependence for life and livelihoods.

---

[3] *Community Conserved Areas, A Bold Frontier for Conservation* http://cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/cca_briefing_note.pdf

[4] *Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary, The oldest bird sanctuary in India* http://www.travellady.com/Issues/May05/1489Vedanthangal.htm

- Community management decisions and efforts lead to the conservation of ecosystems, habitats, species, ecological services and associated cultural values (even when the conscious objective of such management may be different than conservation per se, and be, for instance, related to livelihoods, water security, safeguarding of cultural and spiritual places, etc.).
- The community is the major player in the implementation of management rules related to the site, implying that community institutions have the capacity to enforce regulations; in many situations there may be other stakeholders in collaboration or partnership, but primary decision-making rests with the concerned community[5].

1.2 Why are CCAs Important?

Many CCAs are known to harbour critical ecosystems and biodiversity hotspots and could help protect them. They provide sanctuaries for threatened plant and animal species. Often they also act as corridors and linkages for plant and animal movement between official PAs, or are embedded within such areas providing the historical conditions in which nature has survived there. CCAs can also help in maintaining essential environmental benefits, especially water flows and quality. They often provide the crucial link between agricultural biodiversity and wildlife. CCAs could be considered as crucibles for combining traditional and new knowledge thus embodying and helping sustain sophisticated ecological knowledge systems. CCAs often exemplify indigenous and local communities' resistance to 'destructive' development and offer insights on the integration of customary and statutory laws in conservation systems. As examples of an integrated approach to conservation and livelihoods (an *inclusionary* model), CCAs could provide useful examples for resolving much prevalent conflicts between protected area management and local people.

For communities, CCAs augment long-term livelihood security and opportunities; provide economic benefits from secure ecosystems and their functioning, sustainable harvest and sale of aquatic and forest resources, and sometimes from activities such as ecotourism. These initiatives also spread awareness and empower villagers to gain control over land, water and forests; as well as developmental and other political processes affecting their lives. Many CCAs are intimately connected to the cultural sustenance of communities, and represent 'biocultural' landscapes or territories that are an integral part of their history and lives. Cultures and territories amongst the communities and indigenous peoples are very closely linked and derive sustenance from each other. It was found in some cases in South Asia that asserting rights and responsibilities towards their territories and areas led to greater cohesiveness within the community and hence a more holistic and culturally appropriate development of the community, including in spheres such as education, health and finance (Pathak 2009).

Kheechan villager with wintering Demoiselle cranes, Rajasthan. Photo: Asad Rahmani.

[5] The ICCA Consortium Home Page http://www.iccaforum.org/

1.3 Recognising and Supporting CCAs: The International Context

In the last decade or so there has been an increased interest in community conservation and its significance in the larger conservation endeavours. The Fifth World Parks Congress, organised by the IUCN in September 2003 in Durban, South Africa, was the biggest ever gathering of conservationists (with over 4000 participants). Among its major outputs were the "Durban Accord and Action Plan", the "Message to the Convention on Biological Diversity", and over 30 recommendations on specific topics (including the roles of tourism, governance, spiritual values, gender, poverty, CCAs, and mobile/indigenous people in PAs). All of these outputs strongly stressed the central role of communities in conservation, by respecting their customary and territorial rights, and vesting them with decision-making authority. The biggest breakthrough was the recognition of CCAs as a valid model for conservation[6].

The Seventh Conference of Parties (COP 7) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in February 2004, had all member governments committing to move towards participatory conservation with the recognition of community rights. One of the main outcomes of COP 7 was a detailed and ambitious Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA), which incorporated provisions on 'Governance, Participation, Equity and Benefit Sharing'. The PoWPA requires all countries to recognise various forms of governance for PAs, including CCAs. Since the CBD is a legally binding instrument for its parties, the PoWPA is of great significance in making countries identify, recognise and support CCAs[7].

As a result of increasing interest in ICCAs globally, several NGOs, and representatives from indigenous and community organisations established the ICCA Consortium at the Fourth World Conservation Congress (WCC) that was held in Barcelona, Spain in October 2008. Consortium members come with years of working experience on ICCA-related issues in policy and practice. A broad programme of work was agreed upon. There was a decision to seek appropriate recognition of ICCAs at national and international levels with the consent of and appropriate support to the indigenous and local communities governing/managing them[8].

Coron Island ancestral domain of Tagbanwa people, the Philippines. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

During the Tenth Conference of Parties (COP) of the CBD held in Nagoya, Japan in October 2010, Target 11 suggested that by 2020 at least 17 per cent of the world fresh water and terrestrial and 10 per cent of the world's marine areas need to come under conservation[9]. Such coverage along with the need for effective management within the areas protected is now being seen as the only way to arrest the fast declining global biological diversity. In this context CCAs gain

[6] http://www.iccaforum.org/images/stories/policy/powpa.pdf

[7] http://www.iucn.org/about/union/commissions/ceesp/topics/governance/icca/

[8] http://www.iccaforum.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=95&Itemid=109

[9] Target 11 of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets under Strategic Goal C: To improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/rationale/target-11/

significant importance in helping to bring a larger area under conservation efforts while highlighting this unique governance category.

2. Community Conserved Areas in South Asia: A Study

The recognition of CCAs in the international arena has emerged from popular movements for acknowledgement of local communities and indigenous peoples' rights in PA management. Peoples have long demanded for recognition of their own traditional knowledge and systems for the conservation of biological diversity. The process of recognition has been relatively more rapid at the international level through international agreements and consensus among the large conservation agencies. The processes at national levels however continue to be slower. Even where such recognition has happened, it has sometimes had adverse impacts, particularly where the attempt has been to view these areas through the conventional paradigm of conservation. There have also been attempts in the domestic space to bring all CCAs under a uniform policy prescription, and in other instances, to replace existing institutions by creating new externally motivated ones.

To better address these and other such issues, there has been a long felt need to document existing CCAs in different parts of the world and try and understand their characteristics. Additionally, there has been a need to better understand the role that CCAs play in the conservation of biodiversity particularly at the landscape level.

Towards this end, Kalpavriksh carried out a study entitled "Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in South Asia: Towards an Understanding of their Conservation and Livelihood Security Values". This study was undertaken in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka through 2008-09 supported by SwedBio[10]. The general objectives of the study were to:

- Deepen the understanding of the CCA phenomenon with respect to the types of CCAs that can still be found in the South Asian region, or are newly emerging, and their status.
- Analyse these initiatives, distil and discuss lessons learned with policy implications.
- Bring together community representatives, government officials, non governmental organisations (NGOs), and individual experts to discuss the case studies and lessons, and work out a national/ regional plan of action towards their support.

To take this work forward, Kalpavriksh was also involved in another project supported by the Global Environment Facility's (GEF), Small Grants Programme (SGP) that built on existing CCA documentation and processes in South Asia through a series of consultations in each of these South Asian countries to arrive at a follow-up plan of action. The latter phase was also used to coordinate a series of legal assessments of national measures for CCA recognition in all these countries.

Both these projects were being seen as a follow up to a similar study undertaken over a decade ago by members of Kalpavriksh along with the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), on community participation in wildlife conservation, which resulted in a series of case studies and an overview (Kothari et al 2000).

---

[10] SwedBio is a joint initiative by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Swedish Biodiversity Centre (CBM), focusing on biodiversity and ecosystem services for local livelihoods and poverty alleviation.

Participants of national workshop on CCAs in Bangladesh, Dhaka, Feb. 2010. Photo: Anon.

2.1 Methodology of the Study

The study was carried out through local partners in each country. All partners met at the beginning of the project for a common understanding of CCAs and mutually agreed methodology. Each partner looked at the legal and policy structure enabling or deterring community conservation; undertook visits to specific sites to document case studies and interacted with key relevant people. Secondary data was collected and reviewed before proceeding for primary data collection. Actors responsible for influencing the strengthening, weakening and management of CCAs were identified prior to the initiation of dialogues/meetings. Series of dialogues and consultations were arranged to further explore the issue in detail. Meetings were held with a range of people that included policy makers, government officials, field managers, local intellectuals, community and representatives of the CCAs with a view to involve relevant stakeholders in the study and to discuss issues, opportunities and suggestions that they may have had regarding the CCA study. Local community members at each site shared legal, institutional, social and economic issues faced by them in managing respective CCAs. Each of the partners compiled an independent country report of the status of CCAs in their respective country. These reports were sent for review to a number of subject experts in South Asia. The country partners with some community members also participated in the final regional consultation to discuss key outcomes of the project and also work out a follow up strategy.

3. South Asia: Setting the Context

The South Asian Region

South Asia (generally understood to consist of the countries of India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and the Maldives) is the world's most populated subcontinent, but also perhaps one of the most culturally and biologically diverse. The region occupying an approximate area of 44, 49060 sq km that is 3.2 per cent of the world's land area accounts for almost 15.6 per cent of the global floral diversity and 12 per cent of faunal diversity. Of the 34 globally recognised 'hotspots' of biodiversity, four lie in this region. These hotspots are: Himalaya, Indo-Burma, together Western Ghats and Sri Lanka and fourthly the Sundaland. The Sundaland hotspot though largely in South East Asia, covering the western half of the Indo-Malayan archipelago and the dominant islands of Borneo and Sumatra, borders the Indo-Burma Hotspot to the northwest and also covers the Nicobar Islands[11].

The biodiversity in the region is severely threatened as a result of a combination of factors. The last two to three centuries have seen large-scale agricultural expansion leading to clearing of forests and grasslands and disappearance of wetlands. The colonial history that most countries in this region share is also responsible for the degradation of considerable biodiversity, particularly forests that were used as a source of raw material and revenue and the opening up of land for alternate crops. The

[11] Biodiversity Hotspots – Sundaland http://www.biodiversityhotspots.org/xp/hotspots/sundaland/Pages/*default*.aspx

post-independence development model that these countries followed was also not very conducive to biodiversity conservation. Development initiatives such as hydroelectric projects and extractive industries such as mining, among others have exacerbated the loss of biodiversity.

South Asia is also rich in its cultural diversity and has been home to many ancient civilisations. Tribal societies flourished here for centuries and many of the world's major organised religions originated here. These include Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Traditional beliefs and practices contributed to the richness of knowledge in the region. Several thousand languages are still in use here but many local dialects are rapidly going extinct (Kothari et al 2000).

Besides the colonial past that these countries share, there is a great commonality in cultural dimensions and the reverence that traditional cultures have towards nature. Along with the respective national legal and policy regimes, it is these shared beliefs relating to respect of nature along with the sacred, cultural and spiritual significance attributed to large landscapes across the region that have supported biodiversity conservation despite its high human density. However, the legacy of the colonial past and its related conservation policies have had a severe negative impact on the local communities and consequently on biodiversity conservation.

Colonial and other rules have essentially defined the legal and policy regime in this region. Most laws and policies here are not conducive to community control and management despite the fact that traditionally natural resources in the region have been under community management and /or ownership. Many traditional systems for the management of these resources have eroded over time or have been subsumed by new laws and policies that may again be more centre or state controlled. Legal spaces do exist within the prevalent legal and policy regime in most countries that could potentially be used to promote and conserve CCAs.

3.1 Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries, with over 160 million people living in an area of 147,570 sq km.[12] The scarcity of land has resulted in severe degradation of the environment. The forest cover has been drastically reduced from 15 per cent to 8 per cent in a matter of a few decades. CCAs in the present day Bangladesh have occupied a significant space as part of the common pool resources. However, both terrestrial as well as aquatic CCAs have been degraded or have disappeared since the mid 70s. Until this time, there were patches of forests (locally known as *ara, jongol, bashjhar, kanda*, etc.) or wetlands (locally known as *beel, doho, kum, baor, gang, baid, dighi, chara*, etc.) in almost every village throughout the country. The local community was very active in the management of these areas. Some of these were even located on government owned land called *khas*, or other estates. However, these areas have been drastically reduced or continue to be threatened as a result of poor governance, corruption and faulty leasing policies. CCAs that do still exist today are those that are maintained by common socio-cultural resource basis. Some CCAs have been established under various natural resource management projects (Islam et al 2009).

Conservers of Beganachari village common forest in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

[12] Bangladesh Demographic Profile 2012 as retrieved from the Index Mundi web site http://www.indexmundi.com/bangladesh/demographics_profile.html

3.2 India

India is home to over a billion people and represents a wide spectrum of biological, cultural and geographic diversity. The confluence of three major biogeographic zones, i.e. the Indo-Malayan, the Eurasian and the Afro-Tropical makes India extremely biodiverse in its genes, species and ecosystems. It is one of the world's 12 mega diversity countries. India contains over 8.1 per cent of the world's biodiversity on 2.4 per cent of the earth's surface. An estimated 47,000 plant species identified represent 11 per cent of the world's flora. India is also considered one of the world's eight centers of origin of cultivated plants (TPCG and Kalpavriksh 2005). India's faunal wealth is equally diverse. A total of 89,450 estimated animal species represent 7 per cent of the world's fauna. The ancient practice of domesticating animals has resulted in India's diverse livestock, poultry and other animal breeds (TPCG and Kalpavriksh 2005). India has an equally varied cultural diversity. The Anthropological Survey of India has identified 91 eco-cultural zones in India inhabited by 4,635 ethnic communities, speaking 325 languages/dialects (Singh 1992). Moreover, 67.7 million of the 220 or so million indigenous-tribal people in the world live in India. This makes India a country with amongst the largest indigenous–tribal population, constituting 8.08 per cent of the country's population, representing 461 tribes (Anon 1998).

India has a rich history of community-based conservation with thousands of small and large areas where traditional forms of conservation exist or new forms of conservation have evolved. The conservation processes at these sites are deeply interlinked with the local culture, lifestyles and needs. Conventionally, conservation is viewed as a formal process within government designated PAs where any form of human intervention is normally considered harmful for the ecosystem/species being conserved. This form of conservation has led to various conflicts between local communities that use natural resources, and government officials/conservationists and designated managers of these sites. The relatively large network of conservation efforts by local people in India has remained largely unrecognised and hence unexplored for its potential as a successful model of conservation (Pathak et al 2009).

3.3 Nepal

The Himalayan country of Nepal with an area of 147,181 sq km has a population of approximately 30 million people[13]. Biodiversity richness and prevalence in Nepal are the result of its unique geographic position and wide altitudinal and diverse climatic conditions. The country is spread over three eco-regions (High mountain, Hills and *Terai* lowland). Nepal hosts nine globally important eco-regions among the 60 eco-regions found in the Himalayan region (MoFSC 2009).

The conventional PA coverage is estimated to be about 20 per cent of the total area with further expansion as a result of three new PAs in 2009. Among all the South Asian countries Nepal (barring perhaps Pakistan) has experimented with some fairly progressive provisions regarding participation of local communities in forest and PA management. These include community management of forests and declaration of Conservation Areas. All these however have their own limitations and have been often criticised by those arguing for effective participation and transparency in conventional PA governance. Beyond the domain of the state PAs, local communities and indigenous peoples have also been conserving biodiversity in important landscapes and ecosystems (forests, wetlands, rangelands, etc.), sometimes even within existing PAs, pre-dating the formal establishment of the latter. However, majority of PAs in Nepal remain under the control of government agencies, with an exception of two co-managed and one

[13] Article on Nepal on the Wikipedia web site http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nepal

Chhomolongma (Everest) range, Khumbu, Nepal. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

community managed PA in the highlands. CCAs as a category are not recognised by state legislation (Jana and Poudel 2010). Community-based forest management regimes including forests managed by local communities in 'Conservation Areas' as well as religious forests across the country constitute 26.95 per cent of the total forest (ForestAction 2009). A very preliminary documentation carried out under this project however indicates that there are still many sacred groves, grazing rangelands, wetlands and forests patches being managed by local people but are not reflected in any state records.

3.4 Pakistan

Pakistan, the home to 160 million people, is a land of different socio-cultural and biological contrasts with an area of over 880,000 sq km. Pakistan has within, a significant number of global ecological regions, including four biomes: the desert biome, temperate grassland biome, tropical seasonal forest biome, and mountain biome. Fauna in Pakistan includes 668 birds, 25 of which are threatened, 198 freshwater fishes with 29 endemic and one threatened, 177 reptiles with 13 endemic and six threatened, and 174 mammals with six endemic and 20 threatened. Approximately 5,700 species of flowering plants have also been documented. 12 per cent of the land is covered by the PA network[14].

There are several areas rich in cultural and biological diversity where at the village level, communities have a long history of participatory decision making. Dialogue and consensus play a key role in mosques and the *Jirga* in Pukhtoons, *Mair* in Baloch, *Mon* in Chitral, *Dane* in Kalashi, *Punchaite* in Punjabi and Sindhi culture. These institutions have for centuries performed a significant task in the development, conservation and protection of natural resources in their areas. In most areas, these institutions still exist and continue to execute their role as in the past, however in certain areas they have been replaced by more formal institutions as a result of changing social norms and values. Although CCAs have existed for centuries, in the present context, they are considered a new phenomenon in the conservation history of Pakistan. The innovative approach of incentive based conservation by the people is being promoted by several donor agencies and large conservation NGOs. One of the successful examples of this is the Markhor Conservation Programme which has received much international recognition and many awards (Rasheed and Ahmed 2009).

3.5 Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, an island nation in the Indian Ocean is part of the globally designated biodiversity 'hotspots'. The country has a total area of 65,610 sq km out of which 64,630 sq km is land and

[14] Country Profile – Pakistan, on the Convention on Biological Diversity web site http://www.cbd.int/countries/profile.shtml?country=pk#status

980 sq km is water[15]. The 2011 figures estimate the population of the country to be approximately 21 million[16]. Sri Lanka is said to have the highest biodiversity per unit area of land among Asian countries in terms of flowering plants and all vertebrate groups except birds. This includes 3,350 species of flowering plants and 314 species of ferns and fern allies.

Vertebrate fauna includes 51 species of fish, 39 species of amphibians, over 125 species of reptiles, over 390 species of birds, 96 species of mammals including 38 species of marine mammals. Sri Lanka lists 550 species as threatened, of which over 50 per cent are endemic. Crop genetic diversity is high particularly for rice species. Diversity is also significant in grains, legumes, vegetables, roots, tubers and spice crops[17].

Community involvement in conservation is not a modern concept in Sri Lanka. In the ancient times there were systems of tenure, and practices, customs, taboos, etc. the outcome of which were rules and regulations that promoted environmental friendly practices. Sri Lanka has seen approximately 450 years of colonisation. Initially the Portuguese and the Dutch exercised some control over the maritime provinces of Sri Lanka. The entire island came under the British by the Convention of 1815. The Kandyan or the mountain provinces were the last to come under this rule, thus preserving traditional tenure. Traditional practices have still survived here to a much greater extent as compared to the Maritime Provinces; despite colonisation (Nanayakkara 2009).

The traditional tenurial systems recognised a multitude of rights to land and to resources. These included *Gabadagam* – royal villages; *Viharagam* – tenurial arrangements for the maintenance of temples; *Devalagam* – tenurial arrangements for the maintenance of *devales; Nindagam* – lands granted to chiefs; *Vidanagam* – lands under a *vidane* for people subject to public service; *Koralagam* – lands belonging to laymen subject to *rajakariya* or service to the king; and *Gallatgam* – lands in the lower part of the four *korales*. Forest areas that abutted the village were viewed as communal property (Tambiah 1968). In the practice of traditional *mulkate chena* the village as a whole had the right to practice *chena* cultivation in a certain area (Codrington 1938). In fishing practices too, certain communities as a whole and not as individuals enjoyed the right to fish in certain waters on certain days. Thus the traditional system of tenure promoted community action and decision making and followed the consensus approach. The non-recognition of CCAs as such in the official documentation may also mean that there are undocumented examples throughout the country (Nanayakkara 2009).

Puttalam community conserved coast, Sri Lanka.
Photo: Ashish Kothari.

[15] Sri Lanka area as retrieved from Index Mundi web site http://www.indexmundi.com/sri_lanka/area.html

[16] Sri Lanka Demographics Profile 2012 as retrieved from Index Mundi web site http://www.indexmundi.com/sri_lanka/demographics_profile.html

[17] Executive Summary of Sri Lanka's First National Report on the Implementation of Article 6 of the Convention on Biological Diversity http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/lk/lk-nr-01-en.pdf

4. Typology of CCAs

CCAs in South Asia constitute small to large land and water bodies which are under a range of community management practices, primarily for use and protection. Rules and regulations that the communities follow for management are based on local objectives. What are today considered 'traditionally' protected CCAs in many South Asian countries would have potentially been areas within larger biocultural landscapes that communities managed for social, economic, subsistence, religious and other purposes. In the current scenario, many traditional systems for managing such landscapes have broken down for a variety of reasons. What remains are fragmented and isolated patches. Many of these sites are now part of government controlled lands and communities more often than not do not have any legal rights over them. In such a scenario some of them continue to have informal community institutions, rules and regulations, running parallel to whatever the state arrangements for their management may be. In some other areas while sentiments of local communities continue to be strongly associated with such sites, community institutions have ceased to exist.

There are also examples where for decades there has been no history of community action or involvement in governance but needs and circumstances have led to the emergence of new informal institutions at the community level. These institutions may or may not have any links with state institutions. Circumstances that give rise to such institutions include, livelihood needs, conservation, cultural revival, strong cultural ties and political mobilisation. In a few cases, state-initiated programmes directly or indirectly have become the very reason for such community mobilisation.

This section attempts to categorise CCAs in South Asia region based on the objectives for which communities protect them. Similar categorisation can be done based on a number of other factors such as the kinds of institutions employed, the time period of operation, the size of the area or territory involved, kinds of ecosystems involved and so on.

4.1 CCAs for Spiritual/Religious Purposes

Across the region, one of the main reasons for the existence of CCAs is religious or spiritual. In India for example, sacred groves and landscapes are found across the country, serving to protect rare and endemic species, as well as critical biodiversity assemblages (Malhotra et al 2007). Such groves also help meet the religious, cultural, political, economic, health and psychological needs of the communities. Local livelihood needs are sometimes met through restricted harvesting of biomass. To illustrate this, one could look at the *Orans* in the desert regions of Rajasthan. *Orans* are traditionally protected sacred grazing ranges (including both grasslands and forests). *Orans* are important components in the recharge of aquifers in the desert. In most *Orans*, particularly in western Rajasthan, one of the dominant trees, *khejari (Prosopis cineraria)*, is worshipped for its immense ecological value, Similar examples of sacred waters, forests, or sacred species are found all over India. There also exist entire landscapes such as Rathong Chu/Khangchendzonga valley in Sikkim that are considered sacred by the local Buddhist community (Pathak et al 2009).

In Bangladesh, the Bayazid Bostami Shrine is a major place of pilgrimage for Muslims. The shrine is named after Bayazid Bostami, a famous saint of Iran, known as Sultan-ul-Arefin Hazrat Byazid Bistami. His name is associated with a famous flourishing *dargah* (buildings have been erected upon the graves of sufis and dervishes) situated on top of a hillock at Nasirabad, Chittagong (a port city in SE Bangladesh). The *dargah* complex consists of the tomb, an old mosque and a tank in front of the tomb. The tank is the abode of about 300 freshwater turtles locally known as *Bostami Kachim/Gazari-*

People feeding turtles at the Bayazid Bostami Shrine. Photo: Md. Abdul Aziz.

Madari (Bostami Turtle/Black Softshell Turtle/ Chittagong Mud Turtle *(Aspideretes nigricans)*, protected because of the sacred sentiments of the Muslim community. Among the Muslims there exists a strong religious belief about these turtles for their attachment with the shrine of the saint. Hundreds of pilgrims visit the area and feed and try to touch the turtles. This has become a unique example of traditional conservation practice, and the Chittagong Endowment Committee looks after the shrine. These turtles are not seen anywhere else in Bangladesh, not even in the wild. These turtles were recorded as an endemic species in Bangladesh until 2002, but recent genetic evidence suggests that the species is not endemic to the Bostami pond (Islam et al 2009).

In several parts of Himalaya are found *Beyuls* or sacred hidden valleys that contain many sacred sites that also play an important role in the conservation of biodiversity. These sites are located where people of Buddhist origin (who deeply respect nature), usually live. They are found in various parts of the Himalayan region, ranging from Arunachal Pradesh in the north east and Jammu and Kashmir in north-west, to the west of Nepal (including Mt. Kailash in Tibet). At least three of Nepal Himalayan national parks (Makalu Barun, Sagarmatha, and Langtang National Park) have been superimposed on existing *beyuls*, along with one of the three conservation areas (Manaslu Conservation Area) (Sherpa 2000). The Khumbu region is considered sacred by Sherpa indigenous peoples with a recorded history of 500 years. The sacred cultural landscape is rich in CCAs sustained due to cultural values of Sherpas. There are also sacred wetlands, lakes and forests in different parts of the country (Jana 2009).

Khumbu sacred landscape, Nepal, rich in cultural and biological diversity. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

An aranya in Sri Lanka. Photo: Seema Bhatt.

An interesting concept in Sri Lanka is setting aside of forest areas for Buddhist monks to practice meditation in forest hermitages. These areas are called *aranyas*. The hermitages are normally established within state forests and leased out for use of the monks. The leases are renewed after an agreed time period. The management of *aranyas* is handled by a committee comprising of prominent individuals from nearby areas or distant cities.

The surrounding forests are not however managed by this committee or by the resident monks. People living around these hermitages respect the need for solitude and thus protection as well as conservation happen by *default*. Forest Department officials monitor these sites to guard against degradation, but no surveys have been carried out to study the biodiversity within these areas (Nanayakkara 2009).

4.2 CCAs for 'Use Value'

A number of CCAs - both traditional and new, have also been established for the objective of ensuring long term security of resources on which lives and livelihoods are dependent. In Bangladesh, self-initiated examples of CCAs for sustainable use of resources have not been very well documented except in the Chittagong Hills situated in south-eastern Bangladesh and bordering India and Mynamar. Here, the efforts of the local indigenous communities at conservation of forests have been recorded. In the rest of the country some sites under projects initiated by either state agencies or donor agencies towards natural resource management (particularly in aquatic ecosystems) can at a stretch, be called CCAs. These initiatives although containing some elements of a CCA, cannot be put under this category as of now. These areas include: the Baikka Beel of Hail Haor, Sreemangal, and Moulvibazar [established with the help of the Management of Aquatic Resources through Community Husbandry (MACH) project][18]. Many such wetlands are typically leased out to influential members of the community who exploit fish and other aquatic resources. This has particularly happened in a number of natural resource management projects that have attempted to give stewardship or ownership to local people, but with limited success (Islam et al 2009).

Conservers of Baikka beel, important waterfowl habitat, Bangladesh. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

In Pakistan, due to strong cultural ties in most of the mountainous areas of the country, communities have for centuries maintained indigenous management systems, to help conserve their natural resources. People as custodians of these resources played a very important role in managing them. In the recent times however, social and political instability has resulted in the degradation of these resources. Strong cultural ties on the other hand have helped in formulation of one of the most successful programmes for conservation and sustainable use through controlled hunting of the Sulaiman Markhor (*Capra falconeri jerdoni*) and Afghan Urial (*Ovis orientalis cycleros*) in the Torghar region of Pakistan. Torghar situated in northeastern Balochistan, was once considered one of the most important wildlife areas of the Qillasaifullah District. But a decline in wildlife took place as a result of unregulated hunting and other factors. Initially as a result of this alarming decrease in animal numbers, the Torghar Hills area

[18] http://www.nishorgo.org/pdf/MACH%20Reports/Community%20Based-Policy%20Solution%20for%20Wetland%20Degradation.pdf

was closed to all hunting. Game guards were selected from the local population and hired to enforce the ban. Surveys of large ungulates were subsequently conducted, and when animal populations had recovered sufficiently, a limited number of permits for Afghan Urial were sold primarily to foreign hunters. Controlled hunting of trophy animals was crucial for two basic reasons. The hunting was necessary to generate revenue for support to the game guard programme. It was also needed to impress upon the game guards and other people from local tribes that their economic well-being was linked to the abundance of Markhor and Urial. It was hoped that this would motivate them to give full protection to these species. The strategy worked and Torghar has emerged as a successful model of biodiversity conservation through sustainable use and is now completely managed by the local community.

Citing the success of Markhor conservation in Torghar, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) Tenth Conference of the Parties (COP 10) in June 1997 subsequently approved a specific quota of Markhor trophies for Pakistan[19]. The money thus generated from hunting as per the quota is used for community development activities. The success of the programme lies mainly in the fact that the seeds of conservation were planted, both, by the local communities and by concerned outsiders. Issues and problems that emerged during the implementation of the programme were recognised and discussed openly by all stakeholders and solutions were a result of consensus amongst all players (Rasheed and Ahmed 2009).

Planning with communities at Torghar, Pakistan.
Photo: Tahir Rasheed.

In Nepal, several CCAs in forest ecosystems (such as community forests in wildlife corridors or community forests conserving wildlife and biodiversity) are often linked with the sustainable use of these resources by local people. Indigenous resource management practices in high mountains (e.g. pasture and rangelands) although under decline over the years have also important conservation and livelihood values. There are also areas that have evoked proactive local participation in conservation initiatives because of their ecotourism values such as Choyatar community forest and Red Panda conservation in eastern Nepal; or direct livelihood benefits such as Rupa wetland and sustainable fish farming in the central hills (Jana 2009).

An interesting concept in Sri Lanka is that of 'Home Gardens'. They are also called Kandyan Home Gardens since they are most prevalent in the Kandy District, (Central Wet Zone). Home gardens border forested areas and are planted with spice, timber and fruit trees, replicating the multi-species, multi layered natural forest structure. These are well documented and function as an effective interface between forested areas and urban environments. Estimates show that a considerable proportion of the timber requirement of the country is met from home gardens and not the natural forest as would be

[19] http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/10/doc/E10-84.pdf

expected. Thus the home garden relieves pressure on the natural forests. Although these home gardens fulfil an important conservation role, their inclusion under CCAs is debated (Nanayakkara 2009).

Van Panchayat (village council forest) of Chaukuta and surrounding villages, Uttarakhand, India. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

In India of all CCAs documented, the largest number have been established and maintained with the objective of sustainable natural resource management. These include about 2000ha of forests being conserved and shared by approximately 80 villages within the Makku *Van Panchayat* in the Himalayan state of Uttarakhand and about 1800ha of forests being conserved and used by the tribal community of Mendha in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra. About 10,000 community forestry sites in the state of Orissa are also excellent examples of large contiguous patches of forests being conserved by clusters of villages for sustainable use. These villages have worked out intricate details of resource sharing and protection regimes (Pathak et al 2009).

4.3 CCAs for Aesthetic/Ethical Reasons

Communities throughout the region have in the past and continue to conserve areas and species because they appeal to them, besides being of use too. In Bangladesh, the Pochamaria Village bamboo grove is one example of such a CCA. Several Hindu and Muslim families of the village own a grove and roosting trees where about 10 Darters (*Anhinga melanogaster*) (classified as "near threatened" as per the IUCN Red List), 200 Asian Openbills (*Anastomus oscitans*) and 50 Large Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) use the grove and nearby large trees as a roosting place in winter. About 50 Black-crowned Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), 30 Little Egrets (*Egretta garzetta*), 20 Little Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax niger*) and 15 Cattle Egrets (*Bubulcus ibis*) use the spot as a breeding area. The local people formed a bird-conservation society nearly ten years ago to save the grove and the trees. This heronry is possibly the largest one in the country outside of government reserved forests. Despite their noise, the people of Pochamaria enjoy having the birds and are proud of their natural heritage (Islam et al 2009). There are several other such community conserved heronries and waterfowl nesting or wintering sites, or sites important for other wildlife populations such as sea turtle nesting sites, in India and Sri Lanka.

4.4 CCAs for Ecosystem Services

There are CCAs across the region that besides addressing other needs also perform important ecosystem services. For example, in Sri Lanka urban water requirements are met by water supplied by the National Water Supply and Drainage Board and the local authorities. The rural sector on the other hand obtains water from wells and other sources where available. Where such pipe borne water or

Godawari community forest, near Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

other sources are unavailable, there are a several community water supply projects that supply water to the rural community. The Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Division of the Ministry of Urban Development, Construction and Public Utilities and the Ministry of Urban Development and Sacred Area Development assists communities in the establishment of community water supply projects. These are partly funded by the communities themselves. Once commissioned, the water supply project is handed over to the communities for operation and maintenance. The villagers have a clear incentive to protect and manage the catchment area for the water source particularly where the water source is dependent on a local surface water body. Communities have organised themselves in order to protect and safeguard these catchment forests primarily from the water retention perspective, wherever the conditions are favourable (Nanayakkara 2009). Similarly several community conserved catchment forests are also found in Nepal and India, and serve important functions for water security, as also wildlife conservation.

4.5 CCAs as Movements against Destructive Projects

The seemingly powerless *Dongria Konds* community (classified as one of the Primitive Tribal Groups in India) is fighting against the Vedanta Corporation, one of the prominent mining companies. Their battle which was supported by numerous national and international groups and took many political twists and turns was to save their sacred mountain and the Niyamgiri forests in the state of Odisha in India. *Konds* are not an isolated population that has fought for its forests. The history of indigenous and local communities in South Asia is dotted with numerous such efforts. Such local struggles and movements have played an important role in safeguarding not only local livelihoods but wildlife that inhabits these areas. Indeed the roots of some CCAs actually lie in such movements where external threats to the habitats and resources led to community organisation to help fight destructive forces. Subsequently even as these movements slowed down, having achieved the objective, communities continued to proactively protect their resources (Pathak 2009).

Adivasi protest against big dam in central India, saving forests and cultures. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

5. CCAs: Threats and Challenges[20]

The study carried out in the selected South Asian countries brings out several common challenges and threats that CCAs in the region face. Threats include internal ones that arise from social systems and external ones that are larger issues influencing the society in general and more specifically community conservation. Boundaries between the internal threats and external threats may oft be blurred.

5.1 Traditional Social Inequities

Communities are not homogenous entities and are often stratified into distinct categories. Many decisions for example, are often made by dominant sections of society (men, large landowners, 'upper' castes) without considering their impacts on the less privileged (women, landless, 'lower' castes). Disparities in decision-making could create dissatisfaction and impact long-term sustainability. Conflicts have arisen where the more influential in the community have broken norms and rules while the less privileged have paid fines. Such disputes have resulted in the weakening of community initiatives.

5.2 Demographic and Landscape Changes

While human and livestock populations have grown considerably in several areas, habitats have shrunk as a result of development projects and urban and industrial expansion and other factors. As a result, increased populations of people, livestock and wildlife share resources in shrunk and degraded areas. This is leading to increasing conflict.

5.3 High Cost of Conservation

Communities sometimes find it difficult to invest the time, resources and labour to deal with a number of issues ranging from addressing livelihood needs, raising salaries for village forest guards; conflicts with other communities; human-wildlife conflicts as also dealing with powerful outside offenders. It is for these issues that communities require support, failing which often, these very initiatives come under threat. In Jardhargaon, India for example the increased human wildlife conflict is discouraging the people as they unable to find appropriate solutions for protecting their crops from an increased population of monkeys and wild boar (Pathak et al 2009).

5.4 Erosion of Traditional Institutions and Knowledge Systems

Traditional institutions and knowledge systems have eroded to a great extent because of a number of reasons that include the colonial legacy; centralised administration and politics and the imposition of so called 'modern science'. These factors have led to the weakening of community control and management of its own natural resources. External facilitation could help revive some of these systems. In Thembang, Arunachal Pradesh (India), an NGO helped revive some of the traditional practices. Younger generations, however often find themselves alienated from these practices (Pathak et al 2009).

In Pakistan, the nomadic and transhumance communities of Balochistan, Chitral and Gilgit Baltistan move with their herds between upland pastures and lowland pastures maintaining an old tradition of

[20] This section has partly been drawn from Pathak, N. (ed) 2009. Community Conserved Areas in India – An Overview. In *Community Conserved Areas in India – A Directory.* Kalpavriksh, Pune/Delhi. http://www.kalpavriksh.org/images/CCA/Directory/CCADirectory_Overview.pdf

natural resource management that includes shared household and community systems for shepherding, grazing, and customary ways of managing pastures/rangelands and communal lands. Since these resources remain valuable to mountain communities, the people guard and regard them as an extension of their own life. Erosion of social institutions, cultural changes, outmigration and the modern educational system are few of the reasons for breakdown of these systems (Rasheed and Ahmed 2009). In Nepal many of the indigenous resource management practices have been jeopardized and eroded as a result of state's policy and legislations such as abolishing the *Kipat* system (an indigenous system of land management and ownership). The Pasture Nationalisation Act has also delegitimised customary management of pasturelands at higher altitudes of Nepal. Hence state's policy and legislations can seriously affect local and traditional knowledge and systems within CCAs (Jana 2009).

5.5 Insufficient Inventories and Scattered Unpublished Secondary Data

In majority of CCAs in the region there is insufficient primary and secondary data available in the public domain, particularly relating to anthropogenic aspects, status, genetic richness and habitat conditions in CCAs. Where some information exists it is either not shared or confined to scientists and/or respective CCAs. Published data is also not known to most people except the authors and a few academics. A lot of the information remains on files or as raw data. Documentation of CCAs, although is available much more easily now than was about a decade back, is still inadequate. Such documentation as of now covers a very small fraction of CCAs in South Asia, despite being one of the better documented regions of the world. In general, secondary sources for relevant information are out of date and very limited information exists in terms of the specific numbers, nature or aerial extent of CCAs in the region. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to ascertain the spatial extent of CCAs with precision.

5.6 Lack of Alternate Livelihood Options

The means of livelihoods in most CCAs at present are barely enough to meet day-to-day needs of the local populace. Fulfillment of subsistence requirements is not necessarily enough in current circumstances. Opportunities for being able to earn decent income often is a constraint for many conserving communities because of their remote locations and non availability or not enough knowledge about employment opportunities. Sometimes this results into outmigration in search of employment. In some cases youth from CCAs have requested help in exploring nature-based livelihood options such as ecotourism.

Resource mapping and planning by Akhupadar village, Odisha: important for balancing use and protection.
Photo: Ashish Kothari.

There are also few initiatives to provide assistance to the marginalised segments of society in times of disasters and seasonality. The terms and conditions to pursue financial support from banks in the form of micro-credit etc. are too complicated and expensive. Further, revenue generated through the commercial use of natural resources barely trickles down to the marginalised segment of society. In India some government schemes

such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme attempts to help resolve such situations but has neither been used adequately nor implemented well enough uptil now[21].

In areas where communities are able to extract resources for commercial use maintaining a balance between commercial utilisation and ecological sustainability remains an issue to be constantly tackled. For example, in case of Tau Daha and Bajra Barahai in Nepal, religious forests are grappling with increasing number of domestic visitors to the site; sometimes impacting the local environment. Balancing the conservation goal, ecological integrity and advancing economic opportunities is thus a challenge for many CCAs (Jana 2009). Similar issues are faced by some wetlands and forest ecosystems from where aquatic or forest resources are extracted.

5.7 Lack of Skilled Human Resources

Successful management of CCAs is attributed to many essential factors including the availability of qualified human resources. Community systems of self-regulation have been sufficient for management and sustainable use of many areas. However, with changing times and growing awareness, there are instances where communities would like to formulate management plans for more sustainable extraction, or make inventories of flora and fauna in their region. Often despite good local knowledge, communities do not have the skills to use it in formal management plans and seek help from outside. Similar help is also sometimes sought for addressing legal and administrative issues. CCAs in Pakistan, for example, are not being run optimally mainly due to lack of locally available professional human resources. The day-to-day affairs of community organisations responsible for the management are based mainly on *ad hoc* planning and the need for more professional training and capacity building is being increasingly felt (Rasheed and Ahmed 2009).

5.8 Inappropriate Education System

The present formal education system across the region does not emphasise or even acknowledge the value of local natural resources, culture and traditional knowledge. This results in a disconnect between the youth which are the product of this education system and the village and its life. Little traditional knowledge passes on to the newer generation and their interactions with the surrounding environment end up becoming indifferent or negative. The youth often find local values irrelevant in the face of changing socio-economic scenarios and severe livelihood pressures.

5.9 Lack of Legal Backing and Tenurial Security

There is no comprehensive government policy to support CCAs across the region. Many CCAs are on areas owned by the government, over which the community does not have ownership or recognised access rights. The government can decide to change the use-pattern or lease the area for any other purpose without consulting or even informing communities. In the Indian state of Odisha, for example, 156.81 hectares of reserve and protected forest land was being informally protected by 1500 villagers from four villages for 15 years. The government then decided to grant coal mining and thermal power plant permits in this area. Villagers continue to oppose this without much success till now. In India the

[21] http://www.empowerpoor.org/downloads/Status%20of%20NREGA%20in%20PACS%20states.pdf
http://www.hindu.com/2008/07/19/stories/2008071954741100.htm

Residents of Mendha-Lekha village, Maharashtra, India, have reclaimed full governance over surrounding forests. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

recently formulated Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, provides (to some extent) an opportunity to communities in forest areas to be able to claim their traditionally used and protected territory as their "community forestry resources". Although the process itself is slow and with a number of implementation inadequacies, it is better than in the case of other ecosystems where no such possibility exists. Apart from India, however, no other country has provided a similar space to the communities. Bangladesh has included the provision of CCAs within the Wildlife Protection Act, but the provision does not talk about access rights to communities. In Nepal the government has in the past declared sacred sites as PAs and continues to do so, but with restrictions. In the Khumbu area for example, government policy allows tourists to sites that are sacred and prohibited for local people. Communities do not have any rights to impose their own restrictions. The Khumbu communities are now seeking recognition of the region as a CCA as part of the already existing state declared Sagarmatha National Park (Jana 2009). In Sri Lanka, the current legal framework does not assist the emergence and recognition of CCAs. However, an emerging stronger civil society, and as a result, a more pro-active community has resulted in greater participation in resource management and conservation both at the ground level and at the policy level (Nanayakkara 2009).

5.10 Inappropriate or no Government Support

CCAs are even more vulnerable if they contain valuable resources such as timber, fauna, flora or minerals. They are further threatened and often encroached upon by land grabbers, resource traffickers or even individual community members. Communities are often discouraged by the lack of support or even negative intervention by government agencies or policies.

5.11 External Development Projects and Processes

Detrimental development and market pressures pose a major threat to CCAs. The situation is made worse by the fact that communities may not be legal owners of the resource in question. Mining appears to be one of the major threats to many CCAs in the region. In Nepal, limestone mining in Dhading district has threatened community forests around the vicinity of Chepang indigenous peoples; at the heart of Kathmandu valley, in Chapagaon in Lalitpur

Mining, like this near Godawari community forests, Nepal, is a major threat to CCAs. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

district; there have been conflicts between local Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) and a mining company (Jana 2009).

5.12 Changing Value Systems and Aspirations

Community values are constantly being challenged by both internal and external influences. Besides inherent inequities, there are national and international market forces that have a significant influence on local aspirations and value systems. Dominant religions have also played a part in impacting traditional knowledge systems.

In Dzongu in North Sikkim in India, for example, the basic aspirations and needs of the community have changed as a result of market forces and the subsequent breaking down of traditional systems. Added to this is the lure of destructive yet economically appealing development projects. These changes have caused rifts in the community and reduced number of people who believe in continuing the traditional lifestyles of Dzongu (Pathak et al 2009).

6. CCAs South Asia: The Way Forward

A number of issues, opportunities, constraints and threats faced by CCAs in South Asia have emerged from the documentation of national case studies and the six consultations (one South Asia regional level, two Indian sub regional level and three at national level in Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, respectively). As seen in the previous section, many of the threats and issues are common across the region. However, there are also some unique opportunities available to support CCAs. Specific country-wise follow up actions are mentioned in the respective country reports. This section highlights follow up action points that are common for the region and those that can be considered at the South Asia regional level.

6.1 Research, Documentation and Mapping

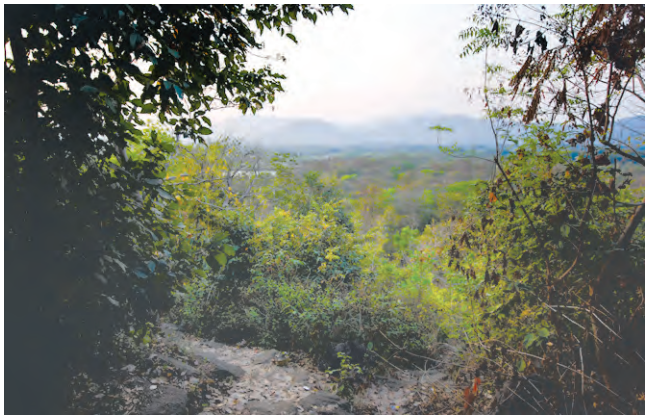
In last few years some level of documentation of CCAs has taken place in all the South Asian countries (with the exception of Bhutan) through this project and others. However, stakeholders in all the countries felt that very little information still exists about the exact geographical extent, type, nature and status of existing CCAs. Mapping exercises in CCAs have been few and far between. Documentation and mapping is seen as an important step towards being able to understand the needs, threats, constraints and opportunities for CCAs. This would help further to develop a strategy and action plan for support of CCAs. Documentation, research and mapping, however needs to be done with full prior informed consent of the local communities and where possible, communities need to be supported to carry out this work themselves.

3-D map of community forest and surrounds, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

6.2 Creating Awareness and Integration into Larger Landscape Policies (including PAs)

There is little awareness among policy makers and the general population in the region about CCAs and their ecological, economic and social significance. Since their value is not understood they remain disaggregated from larger landscape planning. Many CCAs are located in and around officially declared PAs and despite that, PA managers remains indifferent and unaware of the existence of these areas. CCAs therefore need to be publicised through various available means. There needs to be a regional process to advocate for CCA interests and concerns into national and local conservation, economic and social programmes and schemes. CCA governance needs to be better linked and integrated into the surrounding landscape and governance processes. A study such as this could facilitate landscape level planning for areas with different government regimes and land uses.

6.3 Connectivity across the Landscape Level



Forested landscape conserved by several federated villages, Ranpur, Odisha. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

In most countries in the region CCAs exist but remain largely disconnected. Connectivity of community forests, could have a significant impact for conservation at the landscape level. The concept of connectivity among Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) in Nepal for example, is emerging and significant here is the emergence of the Federation of Community Forest Users Groups in Nepal (FECOFUN) to help support the concept. There are however, CFUGs willing to connect to their nearby community forests but lack technical assistance to understand and operationalise the concept.

6.4 Appropriate Legal and Policy Environment

The study indicates that there is a lack of an appropriate legal and policy environment to support CCAs across the region. There is a change in the legal environment in most of the South Asian countries and this has impacted CCAs in different ways. Self initiated and yet undocumented CCAs continue to face threats, such as the Khumbu area in Nepal. Some attempts at recognising CCAs, have caused more harm where new structures and systems have been imposed upon existing ones. In Nepal and Pakistan, policies have enabled support for many CCAs that have been in the limelight. There is a need for policy dialogue between CCA representatives and policy makers at the regional level to be able to learn from and also understand the concerns of the communities. It is important to understand that a legal and policy framework should provide a conducive environment for CCAs rather than imposing 'top down' provisions[22]. There needs to be a review of existing laws to see what would best support traditional systems of governance and address conservation as well as livelihood needs of the local communities. Tenurial security is important for the sustainability of CCAs. This becomes particularly significant since

[22] For more details, please see IUCN/CEESP Briefing Note No.10 , May 2010 Strengthening what works – recognising and supporting the conservation achievements of indigenous peoples and local communities http://www.iccaforum.org/images/stories/pdf/briefing%20note%2010%20in%20english-%20resolution%20150%20dpi.pdf

many CCAs are on government land. This is also relevant particularly for pastoralists and mobile communities in the region.

Under its obligation to the PoWPA of the CBD each country is required to bring about legal and policy changes for recognition and support to CCAs (see Annexe 1 for details). An assessment of national laws in the respective countries of the region is thus required for a better understanding of the extent of integration of the CBD requirements in national laws. Such an assessment could then be used to lobby for appropriate change in the legal and policy framework of respective countries.

Participants of workshop on CCAs in South Asia, visiting Rupataal CCA, Nepal. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

6.5 Networking of CCA Communities across the Region

The study has significantly brought to the fore the need for better networking, facilitation and information exchange of CCA communities across the region. Some specific strategies are:

Exchange Visits and Regional Consultations

Learning from neighbouring countries and organising regional and national consultations with all relevant stakeholders has emerged as a significant need. Community exchanges among different countries in the region would be extremely useful to learn from each other.

Regular Consultations and Creation of a Common Platform

Constant dialogues with concerned communities and other relevant players is one way to ensure support to CCAs. A common platform to share information and create a support network will be relevant for further support of CCAs. Almost all CCA representatives consulted felt a need for a multi-sectoral institution at the sub-national and national level that could facilitate communities from CCAs in information sharing and exchange, ecological/social/governance-related evaluation, and one that will provide regular feedback to all relevant bodies. Such a platform could also help in maintaining a 'watchdog' function to monitor against external threats and adequately raise alarm.

Local/National/Regional Networks for CCAs

Regional, national and local networks for CCAs would be an important strategy to showcase these initiatives and encourage dialogue. Such networks should include representatives from relevant CCAs, government bodies, civil society organisations, and representatives from political parties at various levels.

6.6 External Support

Formal and informal support from state and non-state actors has been important for CCAs in the region. External support can be extremely useful for developing relevant skills required for the management of CCAs. Such skills could include mapping and documentation, ecological assessment, training to draft management plans etc. Non-government agencies, academic and research institutions could play

Non-timber forest produce is a livelihood source for hundreds of millions of people, like this woman in Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh. Photo: Ashish Kothari.

an important role in being information hubs, facilitating neutral monitoring and evaluation processes and so on. They can also play pivotal role in providing inputs for strengthening laws and policies.

6.7 Livelihood Security and Benefits

Providing livelihood security particularly for local people is an integral aspect CCAs in South Asia. The emergence and sustainability of many CCAs is linked to its significance in addressing local livelihood needs. At many sites youth struggling to sustain livelihoods have had to abandon their efforts and move on due to lack of livelihood opportunities. The contradictions and tension between commercialisation; economic opportunities verses ecological sustainability is becoming a serious issue. For example, if ecotourism is a source of income, then the question is how to balance ecological security with increase in tourist numbers and consequently rising incomes. If resources are being extracted, then the question arises how to ensure that the community gets sufficient benefits from regulated extraction. Communities often need help to address issues such as these. It would be useful to look at various national and international schemes and mechanisms (such as payment for ecosystem services, down-stream benefits and others) to ensure better benefits to the local communities and to generate more sources of income for local communities in CCAs.

7. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Available documentation so far reveals that there continues to be a vast diversity of traditional and new CCAs in South Asia. However aspirations of national governments in the region of faster growth rates have resulted in a number of economic and industrial processes that are directly in conflict with objectives of CCAs. Economic factors are strong enough to destabilise long standing CCAs. Majority of CCAs in the region continue to remain unrecognised and not integrated into national, regional and local planning processes. There has been little effort towards legal recognition of these and conservation policies in most countries continue to be 'top down'. A comparison of a study conducted by Kalpavriksh in the late 1990s (Kothari et al 2000), to the outcomes of the consultations and documentation carried out in 2009-10 indicates that apart from a slightly greater awareness about the terminology of CCAs and the term finding a place in policy discourses, not much had changed on ground in the last decade. Interactions during the documentation process and national consultations also revealed that there remains a lack of clarity in understanding exactly what CCAs mean to different stakeholders. It is often believed that CCAs are a new kind of protected area as opposed to looking at them as initiatives where communities are interacting with their environment to use and protect biodiversity. So far efforts at documentation, lobbying and support have been sporadic and short term depending on availability of funds. There is a need for planning at both the local and national level for long term sustained support of CCAs. It would also be important for civil society representatives and state level actors to could come together at the regional level for support to CCAs across the region.

LITERATURE CITED

Anon. 1998. Adivasi/ Indigenous Peoples in India – A Brief Situationer. South Asia Regions, New Delhi.

Codrington, H. W. 1938. Ancient Land Tenure and Revenue in Ceylon. Ceylon Government Press, Colombo.

ForestAction Nepal. 2009. Citizen Unequal Rights: Differentiated Forest Tenure across the Ecological Zones in Nepal. Unpublished.

Islam, A., M. H. Khan., G. Wahidunnessa Chowdhury., S. Chakma., M. Jahan., R. Akter., S. Mohsanin and E. Tennant. 2009. Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in Bangladesh. Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh. Dhaka, Bangladesh. (In this Publication CD).

Jana, S. and N.S. Poudel. 2010. Rediscovering Indigenous Peoples' and Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) in Nepal. ForestAction Nepal, Kathmandu.

Jana, S. 2009. Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in Nepal National Study Report. (In this Publication CD).

Kothari, A., N. Pathak., F. Vania. 2000. Where Communities Care. Community-based Wildlife and Ecosystem Management in South Asia. Kalpavriksh and International Institute for Environment and Development, Pune.

Malhotra, K. C., Y. Gokhale., S. Chatterjee, and S. Srivastava. 2007. Sacred Groves in India. Aryan Books International, New Delhi.

MoFSC. 2009. Fourth National Report to Convention on Biological Diversity. Government of Nepal, Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation (MoFSC), Singha Durbar, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Nanayakkara, A. 2009. Community Conserved Areas in Asia-Sri Lanka. (In this Publication CD).

Pathak, N. (ed). 2009. Community Conserved Areas in India – An Overview in Community Conserved Areas in India – A Directory. Kalpavriksh, Pune/Delhi.

Pathak, N., P. Taraporewala., M. Fareedi., S. Chatterjee., S. Ghosh., J. Sarma., S. Barik., B. Tewari and K. Das. 2009. Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) in South Asia. Understanding Conservation and Livelihood Security Values, India. A Status Report. (In this Publication CD).

Rasheed, T., and H. Ahmed. 2009. Country Report – Pakistan on Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). (In this Publication CD).

Sherpa, N. L. 2000. Sacred Hidden Valleys and Ecosystem Conservation in Himalayas. Paper presented at the International Symposium on Conservation Cultural and Biological Diversity: *The Role of Sacred Natural Sites and Cultural Landscapes*. Tokyo, Japan, 30 May- 2 June, 2005.

Singh, K.S. 1992. People of India: An Introduction. Anthropological Survey of India, and Laurens and Co.,Calcutta.

Tambiah, H. W. 1968. Sinhala Laws and Customs. Lake House Investments Limited, Colombo.

TPCG and Kalpavriksh. 2005. Securing India's Future: Final Technical Report of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan. Prepared by the NBSAP Technical and Policy Core Group, Kalpavriksh, Delhi/ Pune.

ANNEXE - 1

Goals, Targets and Actions under PoWPA towards Governance of PAs

Goal 2.1: To promote equity and benefit-sharing

Target: Establish by 2008 mechanisms for the equitable sharing of both costs and benefits arising from the establishment and management of protected areas.

Suggested activities of the Parties

2.1.1.

- Assess the economic and socio-cultural costs, benefits and impacts arising from the establishment
- and maintenance of protected areas, particularly for indigenous and local communities
- Adjust policies to avoid and mitigate negative impacts,
- And where appropriate compensate costs and equitably share benefits in accordance with the national legislation.

2.1.2.

- Recognize and promote a broad set of protected area governance types, which may include areas conserved by indigenous and local communities and private nature reserves.
- The promotion of these areas should be by legal and/or policy, financial and community mechanisms.

2.1.3.

Establish policies and institutional mechanisms with full participation of indigenous and local communities to facilitate the legal recognition and effective management of indigenous and local community conserved areas:

- in a manner consistent with the goals of conserving both biodiversity
- and the knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities.

2.1.4.

- Use social and economic benefits generated by protected areas for poverty reduction, consistent with protected-area management objectives.

2.1.5.

- Engage indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in participatory planning and governance, recalling the principles of the ecosystem approach.

2.1.6.

- Establish or strengthen national policies to deal with access to genetic resources within protected areas
- Towards equitable sharing of benefits arising from their utilization, drawing upon the Bonn Guidelines on Access to Genetic Resources
- And Fair and Equitable Sharing of the Benefits Arising out of their Utilization as appropriate.

Goal 2.2: To enhance and secure involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders

Target: Full and effective participation by 2008, of indigenous and local communities, in full respect of their rights and recognition of their responsibilities, consistent with national law and applicable international obligations, and the participation of relevant stakeholders, in the management of existing, and the establishment and management of new, protected areas

Suggested activities of the Parties

2.2.1. Carry out participatory national reviews of the status, needs and context-specific mechanisms for involving stakeholders, ensuring gender and social equity:

- in protected areas policy and management,
- at the level of national policy,
- protected area systems
- and individual sites.

2.2.2 Implement specific plans and initiatives to effectively involve indigenous and local communities, with respect for their rights consistent with national legislation and applicable international obligations, and stakeholders at all levels of:

- protected areas planning,
- establishment,
- governance and management,

This should be done with particular emphasis on identifying and removing barriers preventing adequate participation.

2.2.3

- Support participatory assessment exercises among stakeholders to identify and harness the wealth of knowledge, skills, resources and institutions of importance for conservation that are available in society.

2.2.4

- Promote an enabling environment (legislation, policies, capacities, and resources) for the involvement of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders in decision making,
- Promote and enable the development of their capacities and opportunities to establish and manage protected areas, including community-conserved and private protected areas.

2.2.5

- Ensure that any resettlement of indigenous communities as a consequence of the establishment or management of protected areas will only take place with their prior informed consent that may be given according to national legislation and applicable international obligations.

In Addition, the other three elements relate to the following:

Element 1: Protected Area Networks

Element 2: Policy Institutional and Socio-Economic Environment

Element 3: Management Effectiveness and Best Practices

These elements also include actions for the Parties pertaining to the governance of PAs, e.g.

1.1.4: By 2006, conduct, with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities and relevant stakeholders, national-level reviews of existing and potential forms of conservation, and their suitability for achieving biodiversity conservation goals, including innovative types of governance for protected areas that need to be recognized and promoted through legal, policy, financial institutional and community mechanisms, such as protected areas run by Government agencies at various levels, co-managed protected areas, private protected areas, indigenous and local community conserved areas.

1.1.7: Encourage the establishment of protected areas that benefit indigenous and local communities, including by respecting, preserving, and maintaining their traditional knowledge in accordance with article 8(j) and related provisions.

1.3.3: Establish, where appropriate, new Trans-boundary PAs with adjacent Parties and countries and strengthen effective collaborative management of existing TBPAs.

1.5.6: Develop policies, improve governance, and ensure enforcement of urgent measures that can halt the illegal exploitation of resources from protected areas, and strengthen international and regional cooperation to eliminate illegal trade in such resources taking into account sustainable customary resource use of indigenous and local communities in accordance with article 10(c) of the Convention.

3.1.4: Consider governance principles, such as the rule of law, decentralization, participatory decision making mechanisms for accountability and equitable dispute resolution institutions and procedures.

3.1.8: Develop national incentive mechanisms and institutions and legislative frameworks to support the establishment of the full range of protected areas that achieve biodiversity conservation objectives including on private lands and private reserves where appropriate.

3.5.4: Develop mechanisms for constructive dialogue and exchange of information and experiences among protected-area managers, and between protected area managers and indigenous and local communities and their organisations and other environment educators and actors.

4.4.4 Encourage collaborative research between scientists and indigenous and local communities in accordance with Article 8(j) in connection with the establishment and the effective management of protected areas

Source: The future of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas
cmsdata.iucn.org/downloads/the_future_of_the_powpa_final_10_9_09.doc
(This is a draft paper.)

GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

- Ara: Small patch of forest usually owned by the community
- Aranyas: Green and bountiful forest
- Aranya vasi: A monk who resides in a forest hermitage
- Asheng Khoshi: Sacred Forest
- Asthami Jatra: Religious festivity
- Astana: Sitting place associated with the name of the great saint
- Baid: Seasonally inundated plane land
- Baor: Oxbow lake, detached (as a result of clogging) loop of meandering river
- Ban Suraksa Samiti: A committee of the villagers for the management and protection of the forest
- Bashjhar: Patch of forest dominated by different species of bamboo
- Beel: Perennial water body which are geomorphologically depressed areas
- Beyul: Sacred hidden valleys
- Bongthing: Lepcha shaman
- Bum Nat: Spirit which is considered as the owner of the hills by the Singphos. He is also the guardian of the fields
- Ca' Nat: Spirit of water
- Chaitra Purney: Full moon during the month of April
- Chara: Small streams in the hills
- Chena: Slash and Burn Cultivation
- Cithúng Nat: Spirit of Earth in Meghalaya
- Dane: Conservation System in Kalashi Culture
- Dargah: Grave or shrine of saint
- Dayaka sabhava: Patrons that act as a management committee
- Devalagam: tenurial arrangements for the maintenance of devales
- Devales: Places of religious worship
- Dighi: Big size pond
- Doho: Synonymous to beel; in some cases it may contain a number of water bodies and some higher land in between

- Fun Nat: Spirit that resides in trees
- Gabadagam: royal villages
- Gang: Small river
- Gaonbura: Village elder
- Gallatgam: lands in the lower part of the four korales
- Gordawars: Sikh Temples
- Gram Sabha:
- Guzaras: Forests managed by the forest department with extensive rights of the communities to meet their needs accordingly
- Haor: Marshy wetland ecosystem in the north eastern part of Bangladesh physically in the shape of a bowl or saucer depression that looks like inland seas during the monsoon floods
- Hima: A territorial and political unit of several villages in the Khasi hills
- Hujjati and Perhteik: Deferred Grazing system
- Jal: Water
- Jal kumbhi: Aquatic weeds
- Jameen: Land
- Jeevan: Life
- Jhum: Shifting cultivation
- Jirga: Tribal councils in Pushtoons to decide inter and intra conflicts
- Jongol: Patch of forest
- Jowar: Sorghum
- Kanda: Accreted land specially in the influence areas of braided and meandering rivers
- Kandyan: Belonging to the Hill Country; the last areas to fall under British Rule
- Karbari: Traditional village level leader
- Karkotak Nagraj: Serpent King
- Katas: A Hindu Temple in Chakwal
- Khas: Government land
- Khloo Blai: Sacred forests
- Kipat: An indigenous system of land management and ownership
- Koralagam: lands belonging to laymen subject to rajakariya or service to the king
- Korale: A sub-division of a district or a county
- Kum: The deeper part in the water bodies that contain perennial water retention
- Kyak shing: A form of customary practice of village forest conservation by Khumbu Sherpa
- Law adong: Sacred forest
- Law Kyntang: Sacred forest

- Law Niam: Sacred forest
- Law Lyngdoh: Sacred forest
- Law shanon: Forest for fuelwood
- Lok abhyaranya: People's wildlife sanctuary
- Mair: Group of tribal elders/elates in Baloch tribe to settle the disputes
- Mareng: Village known by its place name as well as by the clan-name of the founder
- Matāi Nat: Spirit of the forest in Meghalaya
- Matāitu: A spirit which is viewed as the lord of the forest by the Singphos
- Mayel yang: Hidden paradise from which every Lepcha is believed to have originated
- Mehrd: Tribal councils in Balochs to decide inter and intra conflicts
- Mirdom: Ruler family of Gilgit Baltistan
- Mulkate: A type of Chena where the land is divided in the shape of a pie chart
- Mon: Compulsory community duties
- Mutanchi rongkup: Children of the snowy peak or children of the gods
- Mouza: Land demarcation between villages
- Mun: The female counterpart of the Lepcha shaman
- Nag Panchami: Festival of Snakes
- Nagrani: Queen serpents
- Nani Mander: Hindu Temple in Hinglaj area
- Nats: Spirits in the forest
- Nawa: A village appointed representative to regulate use of natural resources
- Nindagam: Lands granted to chiefs
- Panchayat: A South Asian political system at the local level, literally means assembly of five (elders)
- Panguwas: A holding of a tenant
- Pardoom: leopard
- Pargure: Traditional Conservation System in Pushtoon areas
- Pechheik: Penalty on the misuse of range resources in Chitral
- Peng arnem: A ritual for the deity in the CCA of Parmusor
- Phalap: Consumption of tea as beverage
- Pradeshiya Sabhas: Regional councils
- Puja: Prayers
- Punchaite: Traditional Village Councils in Punjab and Sindh provinces
- Qalangi: Collection of grazing charges/revenue
- Rajakariya: Service to the king

- Rajguru: Prophet
- Rakh: Traditional Conservation System
- Rani ban: Forest of a queen conserved by villagers
- Rong arnem: A ritual for the deity in the CCA of Parmusor
- Sakerai: see Sarak Puja
- Saq: Traditional Conservation System in Chitral
- Sarak puja: A ritual for the deity in the CCA of Parmusor
- Shahpir: Wolf
- Shamilat: Communal land
- Shinggi nawa: Village appointed local representative to regulate use and conservation of village forests
- Shramadana: The giving of one's time, energy or skills usually in villages for the benefit of others without any personal gain or benefit
- Simal kadha: An aquatic weed
- Sufis: Religious Personalities
- Tole: Hamlet
- Upazilas: Subdivision of a district
- Van Panchayats: Forest councils
- Veddah: Indigenous forest dwellers
- Vel vidana: Irrigation headmen
- Vevalketiya: An ancient slab inscription
- Viharagam: Tenurial arrangements for the maintenance of temples
- Vidanagam: Lands under a vidane for people subject to public service
- Vidane: A local chief
- Waqf: A property especially land donated for religious purpose

ABSTRACTS

Community Conserved Areas: South Asia Country Reports

Bangladesh

Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh

Authors: **Md. Anwarul Islam, Mamunul Hoque Khan, Gawsia Wahidunnessa Chowdhury, Suprio Chakma, Mayeen Uddin, Md. Abdul Aziz, Sayam U Chowdhury, Dibendu Chakma, Maung Hla Myant, Abdur Rashid, Israt Jahan, Rezvin Akter, Samiul Mohsanin, Samia Saif, Elizabeth Tennant**

The idea of Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) is not well conceptualised in Bangladesh. However, many communities since long maintain some common resource pool in relation to their culture or religion in different parts of the country. Up until 1970, there was a patch of forest or wetlands in almost every village in the country. Considering the level of community engagement in conserving and utilising these areas, conceptually these could have been termed CCAs. These areas were located usually on *khas* (government-owned land, or other estates) lands. Consequently, because of faulty leasing policies and poor governance, many of such areas exist either in a very poor condition or have been lost. Those CCAs, which are still in existence and maintain a significant level of community ownership, are principally socio-cultural common resource bases containing biodiversity significance. Although some CCAs have been established and nurtured under natural resource management projects through government-community approach, most of them are yet to be accepted through legal or policy measures.

No comprehensive and systematic studies have been carried out to either document existing CCAs or to explore their overall status in Bangladesh. In general, secondary sources for relevant information are out of date and very limited information exists in terms nature and scale of CCAs in the country. Against this backdrop, this initial effort taken by the Wildlife Trust of Bangladesh provides some basic information about CCAs in Bangladesh. It portrays the significance of CCAs and the necessity of enabling policies and programmatic actions. Further detailed studies on CCAs are also imperative. It is our sincere hope that this document will raise awareness about CCAs and generate intellectual and policy debates in support of the sustainability of CCAs in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Bangladesh, Chittagong Hill Tracts, Community, Conserve, Village Common Forests, bird, coast

India

Authors: **Neema Pathak Broome and Persis Taraporevala with Mashqura Fareedi, Sudipto Chatterjee, Sonali Ghosh, Jayanta Sarma, S.K Barik, B.K Tewari and Kulen Chandra Das**

This report is based on research and analysis undertaken with the objective of deepening the understanding of CCAs in India, primarily to achieve two goals. Firstly, to bring to light the unknown conservation efforts undertaken in India and secondly, to attempt an action plan that would cater to the individual and overall needs of these areas. This report is based on research in nineteen sites across six Indian states, studied over a year. The wealth of knowledge of CCAs available through a decade of research in India provided the lens through which the data, from the nineteen sites, was analysed.

This report attempts to deepen the discussion by (re)defining CCAs and establishing, what appear to be, their core characteristics. The report continues to identify overarching threats and challenges faced by CCAs within the Indian context. The effects that these spaces create within the ecological, cultural and political spheres of the CCAs in question are also documented herein. In recent years, the view that conservation is a purely technocratic activity is changing. This allows for more spaces for community participation in conservation. The report is organised in two parts. It gives a brief analysis of the various laws and policies that have been and can been applied to support and strengthen CCAs. It also takes the reader through some case studies from different parts of India. In conclusion, the report attempts the ambitious task of weaving together the stories of conservation to synthesise the many experiences into a document that can be used to both further the discussion on these spaces and further practice within these such a category pf conservation.

Keywords: India, forest, environment, wildlife, tribe, panchayat, sacred, reserve, regulate, law, north east, case study

Nepal

Authors: **Sudeep Jana, ForestAction, Nepal with comments from Stan Stevens**

The report captures the evolving learning on CCAs as well as findings of a micro scale studies carried out by the author in Nepal. Although the understanding, discussions, deliberation and debates surrounding CCAs in Nepal - now increasingly under the discourse of Indigenous Peoples and Local Community Conserved Areas (ICCAs) - have significantly progressed, heightened and deepened since the time of the study (2008-09); the report can be considered pioneer work from the lens of CCAs in Nepal.

While Nepal offers vital lessons and experiences of conservation (both old and new), the study pitches the inquiry with the emerging discourse and expanding knowledge of CCAs internationally. The study presents five case studies (hill forests conservation by Chepang indigenous peoples in hill tracts of Chitwan; a sacred wetland and sacred forest the heart of Kathmandu valley; Rupa lake conservation and fisheries management under the local stewardship in the popular Pokhara valley; an exemplary community forests significantly contributing biodiversity on the edge of Kathmandu valley) and their related analyses. The report traces and discusses the diversity and richness of existing and potential CCAs in Nepal.

Rather than a comprehensive study, this work should be treated as a snapshot contributing to the emerging and evolving discussion and knowledge on CCAs in Nepal. Though the study is based on early works of CCAs in Nepal. The report is forward-looking and also seeks to provide future directions towards more comprehensive work on CCAs for both enhanced conservation and people's stewardship in Nepal.

Keywords: Nepal, conservation, forest, wetland, community, indigenous, lake, bird, fish, legislation

Pakistan

Authors: **Tahir Rasheed and Hameed Ahmed and the Sustainable Use Specialist Group–Central Asia (SUSG-CASIA)**

South Asian region is the home of thousands of years' old civilisation. A range of indigenous natural resource management systems evolved in the region in relation to diverse social, cultural and ecological realities of local communities. Pakistan is no exception to that. Its community conservation initiatives are the outcome of time-tested approaches and values that have proven as effective in addressing natural resource issues as any other 'developed' conservation model of the world. Though, due to a number of reasons, this entire heritage is at risk. However there are still certain pockets where indigenous principles and practices are intact and play a key role in the conservation and protection of natural resources. Centuries old participatory natural resource models have never been an alien phenomenon to the people of Pakistan. This report seeks to highlight these. It attempts to negate the perception that conservation is the legacy of modern day Protected Area (PA) systems. After the failure of modern PAs to meet their objectives, the policy makers and the conservation pundits in Pakistan decided to shift from traditional "top down" approach to a "bottom up" approach by involving the stakeholders in planning, implementation, monitoring and recognising Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) as legal entities. The main thrust of this policy shift was to link biodiversity conservation with local socio-economic development and provides communities with viable alternatives.

This report briefly analyses the present extent and status of these CCAs in Pakistan. It also looks at relevant institutional, legal and procedural issues, and provides suggestions on how to strengthen CCAs in this part of the region. The report is an outcome of a participatory process and brings together the experience of experts and managers of CCAs in the country. The data gathered for the report was carefully analysed through peer review and detailed in-house discussions within the Sustainable Specialist Group – Central Asia (SUSG-CAsia). The study also suggests remedial measures and makes recommendations for new and existing CCAs.

Keywords: Pakistan, protected areas, community, conservation, forest, game, hunting, law, women

Sri Lanka

Authors: **Anandalal Nanayakkara**

Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) are areas that contribute to conservation through community action outside the official government protection regimes. Whilst CCAs focus on their conservation potential, local communities within may have reasons of their own sometimes unrelated to conservation for their actions.

These CCAs usually remain unrecognised in official documents other than perhaps in the tabulation of overall country statistics such as 'forest cover'. As a result many of these areas and the systems that foster them are in danger of being lost forever. The report traces the history of CCAs from the past to the present.

In Sri Lanka, the main influential factors are the large land holding of the State and limited opportunity in the law for community intervention. Thus many of the traditional systems of CCAs visible in the literature cannot be traced on the ground.

However, particularly where the law has recognised community initiatives, CCAs continue to exist over a variety of ecosystems. This is very much visible where resource dependence still exists. This country report seeks to highlight the different types of CCAs in Sri Lanka. An interesting model that Sri Lanka presents is the home garden model practiced on private land but contributing to conservation in a significant manner.

Keywords: Sri Lanka, forest, home garden, fishery, tradition, Constitution, community, Ordinance