

Craft Clusters of India: Survival and Sustainance

P.A. Anand

Department of PDP, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, India 248002

Abstract

Traditional conservation methods have enormous potential but are rapidly disappearing due to a lack of attention by conservation managers and planners in many regions of the globe (Barrett and Arcese 1995).

Not everything is lost, however, since the beneficial benefits of ancient resource management approaches (in the form of beliefs, taboos, and practises) may still be traced to the present day despite their suppression by the adoption of novel structures and procedures. To address conservation issues including resource overexploitation, disputes, and a lack of funding for law enforcement, it may be helpful to have a deeper knowledge of indigenous expertise, beliefs, and traditions. While these methods may not be as efficient as they were in the pre-colonial age, they may nonetheless make significant contributions to modern conservation efforts.

Keywords: conservation planners and managers, vanishing practices, traditional, craft, cluster

Introduction

The low human population, large animal population, and hence low demand made certain traditional behaviours possible in the past. Present day, if these methods are allowed to continue, they may eventually deplete supplies. For instance, the Maasai youth (Moran) participate in a traditional activity known as the ceremonial slaughter of lions, which may contribute to the extinction of this species. In a similar vein, sustenance was the primary motivation for hunting, but now the necessity for financial support is a major one (Campbell et al. 2001; Holmern et al. 2002). Permission to conduct out ritual hunting may be used for other ulterior objectives due to the difficulties in determining the genuineness of the hunts and monitoring. As a result of societal and economic changes, it is very improbable that people would return to their former practises of sharing meat and other resources to assure their continued viability.

Conservation managers and planners must not only be aware of, and make use of, these opportunities, but they must also work to remove the barriers that prevent these strategies from being more effective. Empowering local organisations in conservation is essential, but so is addressing the issues of poverty, population increase, and ongoing conflicts. In order to save the environment, conservation organisations need to adjust their mindsets. As a means of establishing a connection between local populations and protected areas and, by extension, incentives for conservation, restrictive rules should be loosened to permit activities that are not detrimental. For instance, restrictions on entering and

visiting protected regions' holy sites may be loosened if there are systems in place to prevent their abuse. Consumptive uses like hunting are acceptable if they do not deplete the resource.

The significance of conservation outside of protected areas, in regions where humans and animals cohabit, is becoming more apparent. A greater knowledge of the types of tolerance and reciprocal accommodation would be helpful for coadaptation towards cohabitation despite the fact that negative human-wildlife encounters provide a significant obstacle. Yet, until recently, studies of human-animal interactions generally were constrained by a primarily quantitative positivist epistemology, which glosses over the many cultural and ecological circumstances that foster tolerance and cohabitation between people and wildlife. Human-wildlife conflict is the biggest problem caused by the coexistence of humans and huge wild animals (Pimm et al., 1995).

One of the greatest obstacles that might prevent people from making use of the traditional techniques to improve conservation is poverty. The elders' councils may have a hard time preventing unlawful hunting if they have to do it in the same communities as the impoverished people who need to hunt for food. "The low number of cattle and the poor crop production due to drought or crop damage by animals are typically cited as causes of increased hunting pressure" (Loibooki 2002; Kideghesho et al. 2005). Being contributing members of society, the elderly may find it difficult to take action against those who choose hunting as a means of relief.

Lack of appreciation of traditional institutions among the conservation planners

Recent years have seen an uptick in the rhetoric of coexistence, which is defined as "a sustainable though dynamic state, where humans and wildlife co-adapt to sharing landscapes and human interactions with wildlife are effectively governed to ensure wildlife populations persist in socially legitimate ways that ensure tolerable risk levels" (Pooley et al., 2021). One of the most prominent trends in the current literature is the question of what constitutes "acceptable risk levels," as well as the many ways in which people's perspectives on wildlife can be gauged and quantified to learn more about how they experience conflict and how they feel about having wildlife in their immediate surroundings (Lute et al., 2016).

"People's beliefs about wildlife population trends, behaviour, and ecology take priority over their actual interactions with the animals and the damage they cause, and people's cultural constructions of coexistence with specific animals affect their tolerance for HWC more than their calculations of the economic costs or benefits of coexistence" (Kansky and Knight, 2014).

HWC research that focuses on indigenous peoples' viewpoints and lifestyles, "which have often developed in situ and in vivo with animals over hundreds or millennia, may provide new light on what it means to cohabit and 'live with' animals."

Indigenous peoples in Africa and Asia have been at the centre of much of the discussion around a definition of indigenous peoples. Some indigenous peoples in Africa are referred to as "pastoralists," "vulnerable groups," or "hunter-gatherers," while in the Asian context, the term "indigenous peoples" is generally understood to refer to distinct cultural groups like "Adivasis," "tribal peoples," "hill tribes," or "scheduled tribes" (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2013, p.7).

Indigenous Practices and Craftsmanship

In general, the following qualities, present in varied degrees, are indicative of the existence of indigenous peoples:

- (i) Strong ties to one's homeland and the natural treasures it contains
- (ii) Membership in a cultural group, both self-identified and externally recognised;
- (iii) A language spoken by native people, distinct from the official language of the country;
- (iv) Existence of conventional social and political structures;

“Convention for Indigenous and Tribe Peoples in Independent Countries (No.169) of the International Labour Organization (ILO)” outlines the following distinctions between tribal and indigenous peoples, emphasising the need of self-identification (OHCHR, 2013, p.2): 1.

- (a) Independent nations home to tribal populations whose habits, culture, and economy set them apart from the rest of the national society and whose position is governed, in whole or in part, by tribal laws;
- (b) Indigenous peoples are the original “inhabitants of a country or part of a country at the time of conquest, colonisation, or the institution of present State boundaries, and who, regardless of their legal status, continue to practise their traditional ways of life and maintain their own social, economic, cultural, and political institutions.”
- (c) For the purposes of identifying whether communities are covered by this Agreement, self-identification as indigenous or tribal will be considered a basic criteria.

Indigenous and local groups' knowledge, inventions, and traditions are expressions of their cultures. To preserve a people's culture is to ensure that the circumstances necessary for that culture to flourish and grow are preserved.

World-wide Initiatives on Locally Specific Systems

The Four Directions Council (1996), an organisation of North American indigenous peoples, claims that “indigenous peoples have their own locally-specific systems of jurisprudence regarding the categorization of various kinds of information, procedures for obtaining and sharing of knowledge, and the obligations and rights which attach to possessing knowledge.”

“Indigenous peoples have the right to own, develop, control, and use the lands and territories (including the full environment of land, air, waters, coastal seas, sea-ice, flora, fauna, and other resources) that they have traditionally occupied or used, as stated in Article 26 of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, 1994. Indigenous people have the right to have their own legal and political systems, land tenure systems, and organizations for the development and management of resources” fully recognised and protected by the state (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights [UNHCHR]). “Article 27 further notes in this regard that indigenous peoples have the right to the restitution of the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned or otherwise occupied or used or damage without their free and informed consent. Where this is not possible, they have the right to just and fair compensation. Unless otherwise freely agreed upon by the peoples

concerned, compensation shall take the form of lands, territories and resources equal in quality, size and legal status (ibid).”

Traditional Knowledge and Tribes in India

It has been known for aeons that tribal people all around the globe, not only in India, have their own distinct cultures. There is a strong cultural and economic value placed on trees and plants by these people, and they live in close proximity to these valuable resources. The whole population of tribal India places religious and medical significance on certain trees and plants. Because of how crucial they are to daily life and subsistence, biological resources are the ones that indigenous people are most concerned with preserving. Yet, it has been claimed that, particularly in the country's north-eastern parts, tribal people are abusing nature by continuing to practise the time-honored practise of shifting agriculture. Most tribal peoples' traditional knowledge (TK) is in danger of being lost, or, put another way, the economic advantages of TK are mostly going to those from outside tribal communities.

There is a symbiotic link between the tribal people and the ecological resources of the land, and studies by Roy (1915, 1917, 1925), Vidyarthi (1963), and Ratha and Behera (1985) have greatly contributed to our knowledge of this relationship. Primitive humans may have used many medicinal plants to treat illness, as suggested by references to them in ancient medical writings from India and elsewhere. Over three thousand years ago, indigenous People employed a plant called 'snake root' (*Rauwolfia serpentina*) to heal anything from mental illness to sleeplessness to snake bite. Poppy juice (*Papaver somniferum*) was also employed for its analgesic and calming effects (Gene Campaign, 2000).

Many needs may be met by a single plant. It's possible to treat many ailments with a single herb, such as *Wrightia tinctoria* is used to cure mumps and as a lactagogue, “whereas *Calotropis gigantea* is employed as a vermicide and for chest discomfort. *Centella asiatica* is used for gynaecological disorders and for jaundice. *Albizia lebbek*, *Cassia fistula*, and *Euphorbia hirta* are all used to treat urinary disorders”, although in certain circumstances, the therapy requires a mixture of more than one plant.

Trees and plants classified as part of a holy grove are off limits to regular human meddling among the tribal groups of Andhra Pradesh, as Prakash (2005) notes. This is because the grove is considered to be the dwelling place of the spirits and deities who inhabit the area (p.61). The PaudiBhuyan of Orissa follow a national custom when they worship the bel (*Aegle marmelos*) and aswath (*Ficus religiosa*), as described by Ratha (2006). (p.4). During the Dasahara celebration, the simili (*Combax ceiba*) tree is revered because it represents Goddess Durga. Goddess Basari is said to reside on the Kusum tree (*Haldina cordifolia*, also known as *Adina cordifolia*). Sal (*Shorearobusta*) represents the village's patron god. The large sal trees that stand in the middle of most communities serve as a symbol of the peaceful coexistence of humans and other forms of life.

Rothermund (1978) conducted research in several regions of the nation and found that the advantages of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) were disproportionately flowing to non-tribals. Vyasulu (1984) has made a pointed observation on the dismal state of things regarding tribals' ownership of their own products (p.65). While discussing the sal seed (*Shorearobusta*), he explains that the indigenous people only see 5% of the profit “(per kilogramme of seed, the collector received Rs.1, the contractor Rs.12,

and the multinational Rs. 20). It is also pointed out that for every rupee sent into tribal communities for development and welfare, at least four (and maybe more) are pulled out.”

Some indigenous communities rely on tourism while others rely on agriculture. For subsistence, people not only farm, but also hunt wild animals and collect edible plant roots. Traditional cultures are cognizant of the fact that killing animals puts biodiversity at risk, and therefore they have developed other means of subsistence in addition to hunting. In the case of several Native American reservations in the United States, this is absolutely correct. Being avid hunters, the Onges have perfected a method to prevent overharvesting of wild pigs (*Sus scrofa andamanensis*) in any one area. When an Onge butchered a pig, he would break off a chunk of the nearest tree. A indication to all nearby Onges that a pig had just been slaughtered was the limb hanging from the tree, partially broken. If that happened, nobody would stay to hunt a pig there, opting instead to go elsewhere. Time would pass, the branch would dry up and break off, and the region would once again be accessible for hunting. Intriguingly, the tribe members feel a deep connection to their homeland.

Traditional Knowledge under Indian Laws

There are a number of international treaties and conventions in place to safeguard the rights of indigenous peoples, and many governments have signed on as participants. Only when the terms of such agreements and agreements are implemented into national law can they give rise to legal rights and remedies. The following is a summary of some of the international accords, treaties, and initiatives that aim to help indigenous peoples. The path that legislation has taken to preserve indigenous people's local traditions and rights is a relatively new one. In this respect, many nations have their unique traditions.

The Draft National Tribal Policy makes a strong case for the value of indigenous knowledge systems. In 2006, the groundwork for this strategy was laid. “The wisdom of indigenous or tribal people related to their expertise in the field of Traditional Knowledge (TK) is known all over the world. Their wisdom is reflected in:

- (a) Water harvesting techniques, indigenously developed agricultural practices and irrigation systems
- (b) Construction of cane bridges in hills
- (c) Adaptation to desert life
- (d) Utilization of forest species like herbs and plants for medicinal purposes
- (e) Meteorological assessment.”

Conclusions

This priceless information is in danger of being destroyed due to so-called "modernization" and the passage of time if adequate documentation and preservation are not undertaken. There has previously been a battle over patenting of neem, turmeric, and basmati rice in India. The ancient bioresources are at danger from the outside world, particularly the wealthy countries. the Meetei people of India's Manipur and Assam states are also well-known for their dedication to protecting the environment. Umang Lais () in the Meetei language refer to sacred groves that are fundamental to the Manipuri religion and culture of nature worship. These groves provide shelter not just for birds and animals, but also for a variety of plant species. Such examples include the teak tree, several citrus trees, the

eucalyptus plant, the ginger plant, and the bamboo plant. Meetei cuisine heavily features fish, ducks, and other aquatic creatures like snails and insects. “In many cases, however, consumption of these creatures is restricted during certain times of the year, presumably for the sake of sustainable hunting and animal conservation. Hence, in this scenario, certain religious beliefs and activities aid in the preservation of natural resources and biodiversity” (Chhibber, 2008).

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