

Challenges to being Responsible: **Ethics of Conservation**

MoT-ESOI workshop on Practicing
Responsible Tourism, with special focus on
Sustainable Tourism Criteria for India

Nov 28-29, 2018, Gangtok

Usha Lachungpa

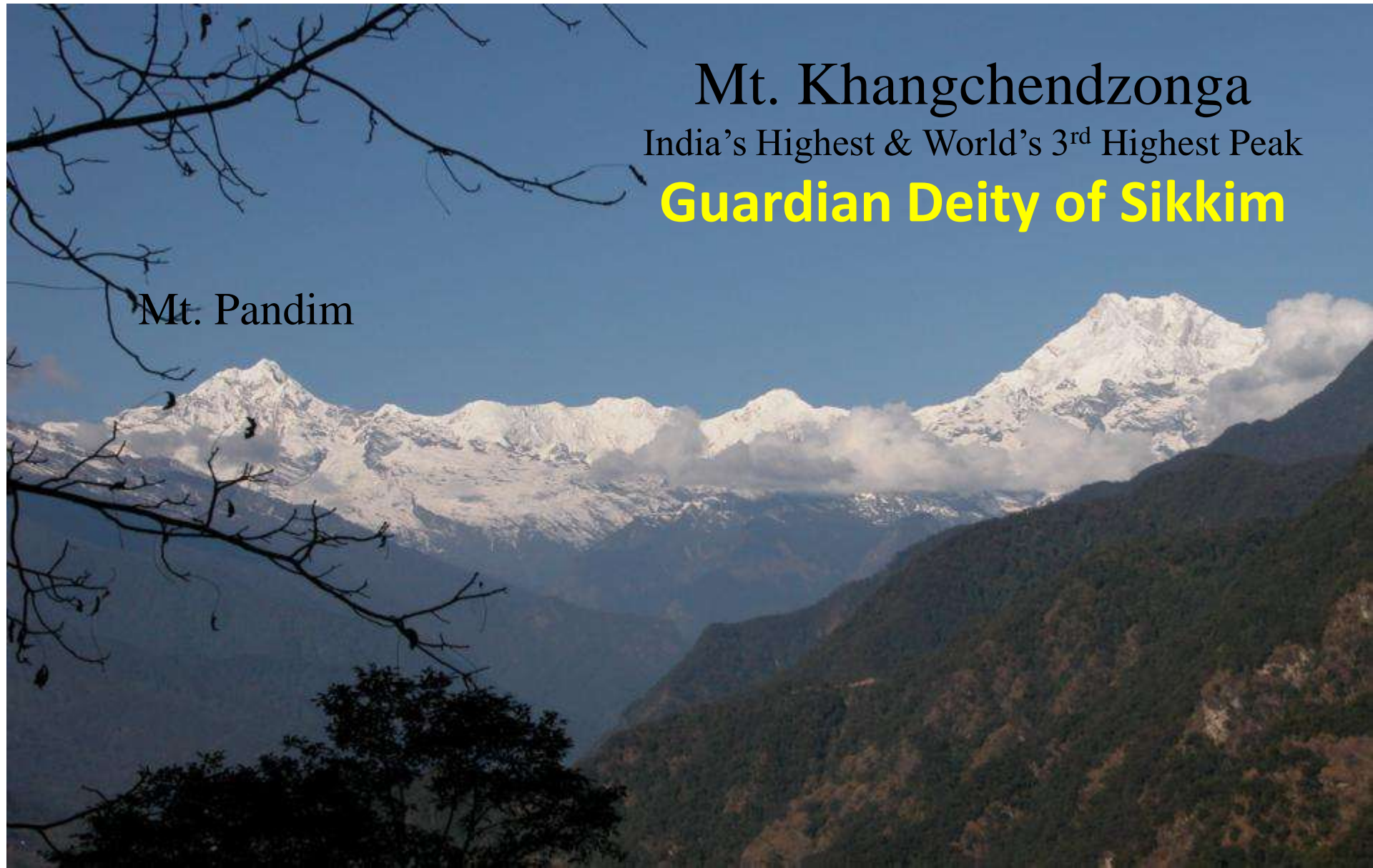
President, Green Circle the Env. Group of Sikkim



SIKKIM: A Sacred Landscape

Mt. Khangchendzonga
India's Highest & World's 3rd Highest Peak
Guardian Deity of Sikkim

Mt. Pandim



Quality / Quantity??



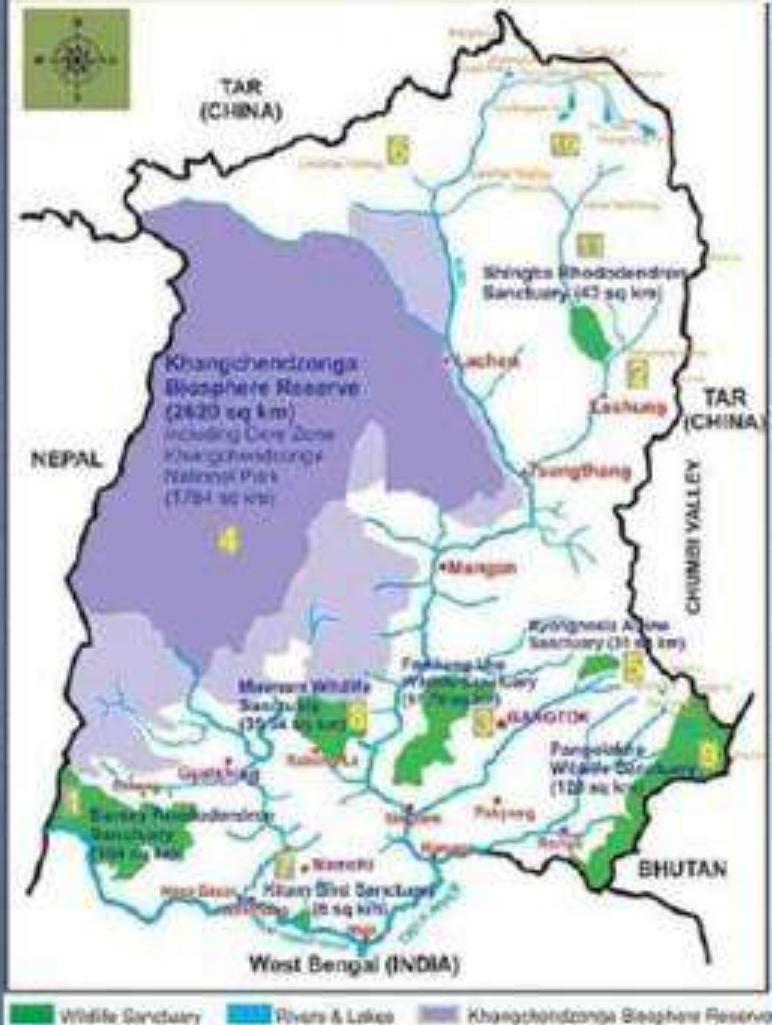
Bio-diversity in Culture & Tradition of Sikkim



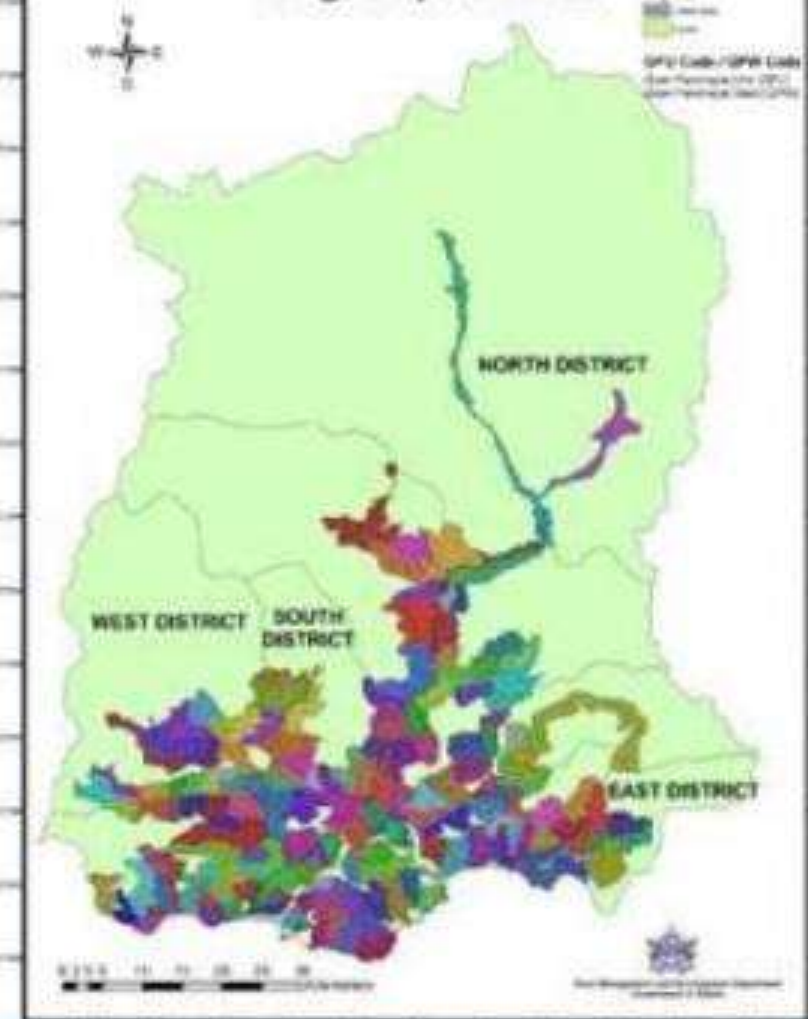
Area of influence of (Eco)Tourism



Wildlife & Forest Protected Areas



Village Map of Sikkim



Key Concerns of STCI for stakeholders

1. **Carrying capacity.**
2. **Anthropogenic character**, applying to all major human impacts on the environment.
3. **Local community** participation, engagement and, benefit.
4. Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India **guidelines**.
5. **Bio-degradable** toilets.
6. **Water** harvesting.
7. **Lessons** from successes and failures, national & international.
8. Institutional **certification** and viewpoints: ISO, BIS, BEE, LEED etc.
9. **Polluter Pays Principle**

Conserving biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes

1. No harvesting, consuming, display, sale or trade of Wildlife species (only fauna?)
2. No captive wildlife
3. Use of endemic native species for landscaping restoration, and to **avoid introduction of Invasive Alien or Exotic Species**
4. Support areas of biodiversity value
5. No disturbance of natural ecosystems
6. Reducing pollution, Conserving resources
7. Conserving Cultural Heritage

Cultural & Traditional Strengths safeguard Sikkim's **Biodiversity**

Indigenous People live in Harmony with Nature



**Giant
Rhubarb
is threatened
by illegal
collection by
Non-native
People**

Social/Community Bonding using Natural Resources

Pang Lhabsol & Biodiversity Festival



Values & Ethics reinforce
social, cultural pride in
younger generations



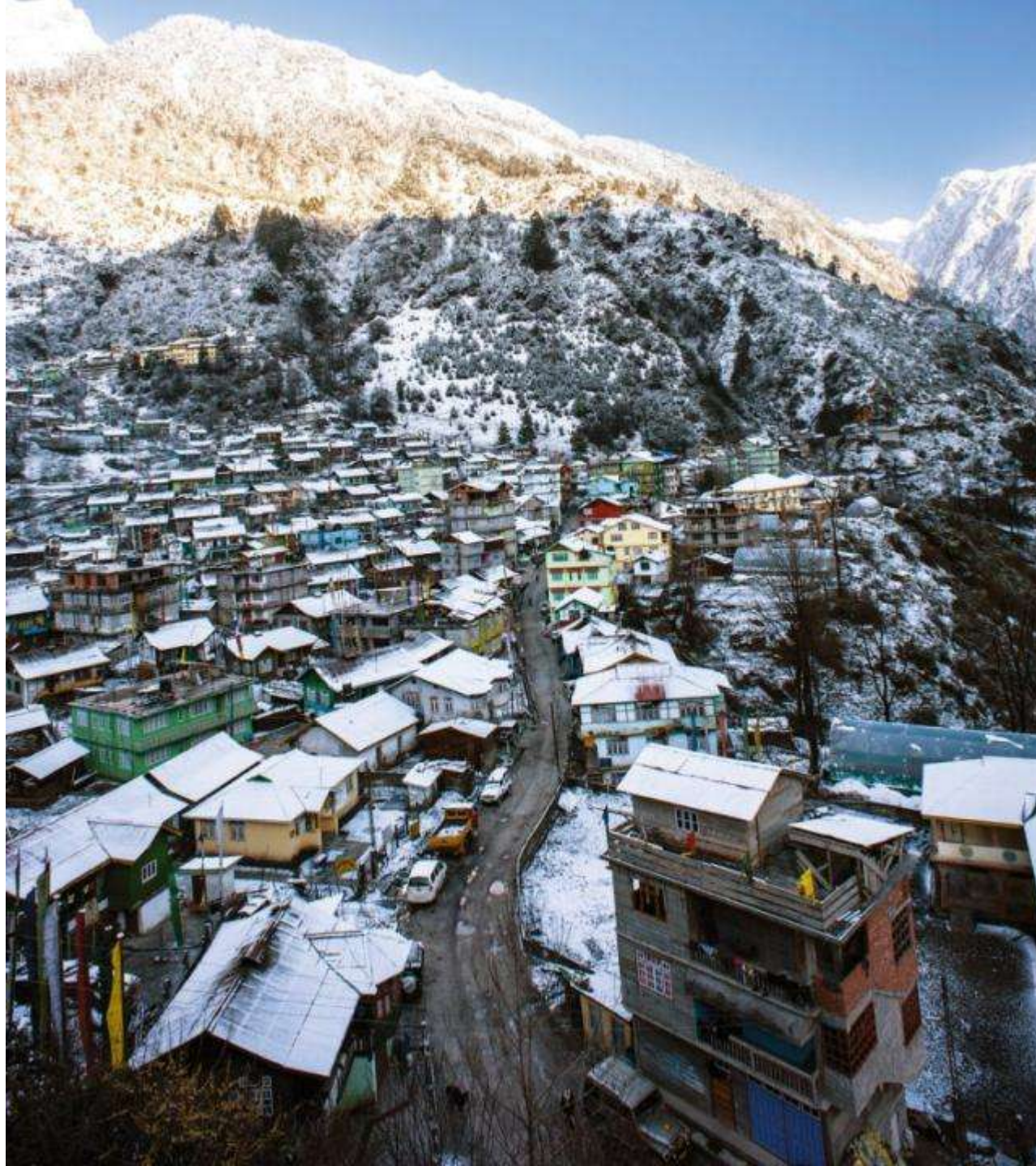
Roads in fragile landscapes without adequate geological mapping.
Seen at Lugnak La, with 3 partial roads, and no effort at restoration.
Eventually going to Muguthang, North Sikkim





All development on road itself. Need for Urban planning





- **Ribbon development through hearts of Lachen, Lachung Villages**

- **Already resulting in blockages and lack of public spaces**

- **Making slums of the prettiest valleys and a highly sophisticated culture.**

<https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/explore/story/52223/sikkim-lachen>

Yumthang slum: Ruining forest areas; Bhutan would do better



Finally, no thought to **carrying capacity** and **scale**.

Donkia la will open up. 300x2 cars already.

How much can the **roads** and **sewage treatment** handle?

Does anyone know?

Is there any thought to **seasonal closure** in Aug and Dec.?

The **Yangang - Bhaleydunga ropeway** and then **road** eats into forest land. Why should tourists not walk? Why should Sikkim ruin its forests to pander to the lowest form of entertainment among insensitive tourists? This is like making zoos. This ropeway and road are an abomination. Will damage Maenam Sanctuary. Seriously, Sikkim needs to ask what kind of tourism it wants. Ladakh is not doing this. Neither is Bhutan. This is like creating a freak show out of its natural heritage.

Waste is being handled for now. But there are few disposal sites in Sikkim; it seems everyone is burning plastic and disposables. Not smart.

Threat of dams has receded with major ones already built but Dzongu has a challenge coming up. Large dams with storage only after post-environmental assessment done by third party

MANTAM BEACH



August 2016 Landslide at Mantam, Dzongu, North Sikkim



Sun. Dec 31. 2017



Stray dog invasion into pristine, sacred habitats



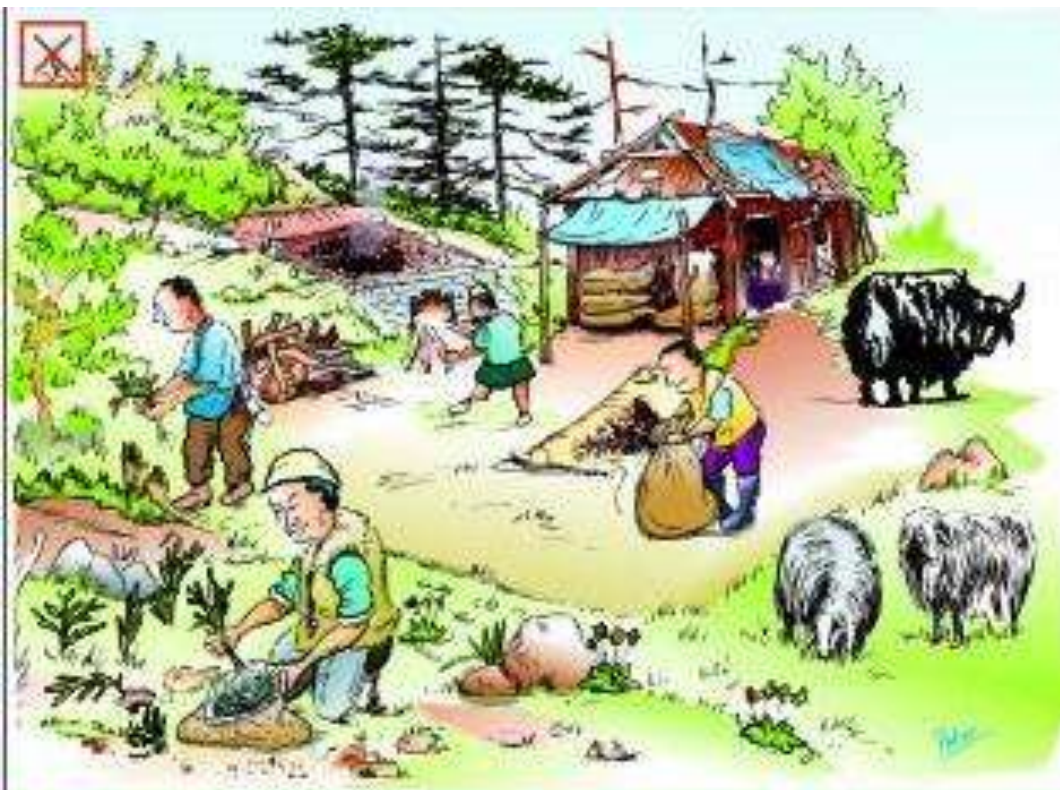
Challenges to being Responsible

- Visitors & Attitudes:
 - College excursions from neighbouring state
 - Call Play-back (Birders) and Baiting wildlife
 - Plucking flowers / breaking branches, leaves
 - Throwing stones at nests, vandalism
 - Documenting Traditional Knowledge without permission
 - Flagrant violation of civic sense (HZIP, Plant Conservatory)
- Timings: No closed season for (eco)tourism

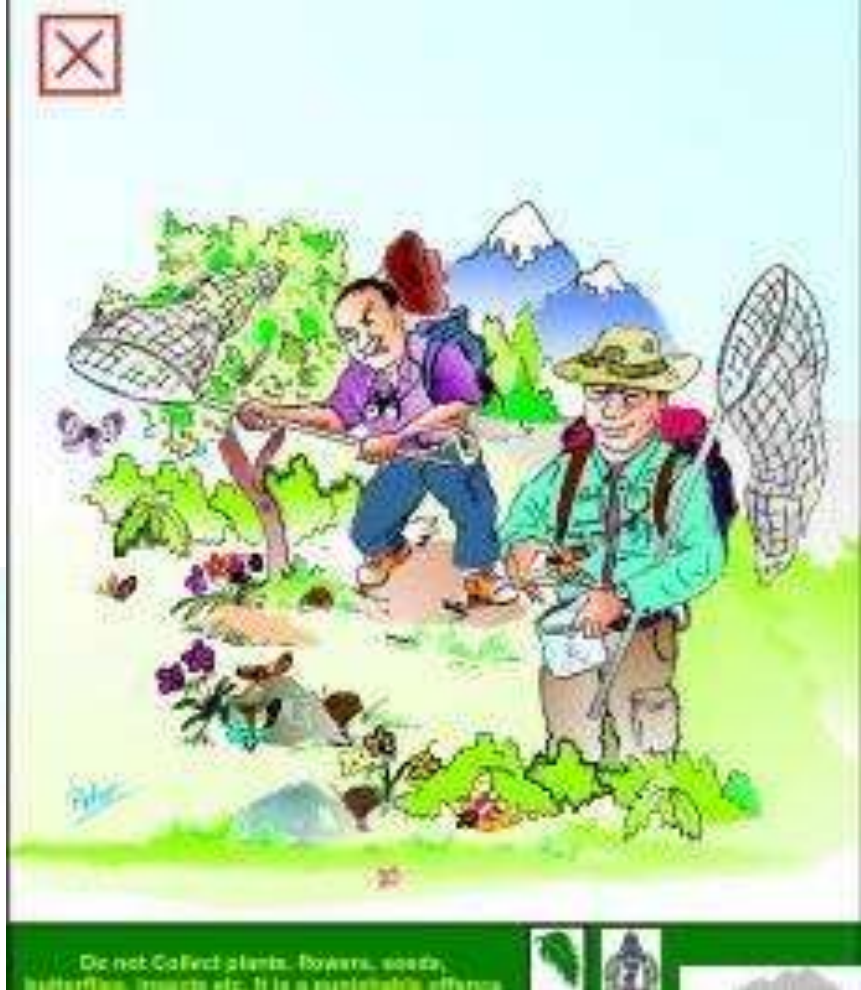
Wildlife Crime



BIO-PIRACY



Collecting medicinal plants for trade is a punishable offence



Do not Collect plants, flowers, seeds, butterflies, insects etc. It is a punishable offence

French 'Student' Visitors **JULY** 2007



Illegally collected Himalayan plant seeds sold in UK

By Navin Singh Khadka
Environment reporter, BBC World Service

🕒 2 March 2016 | Science & Environment



Seeds of exotic plants illegally collected in the Himalayas are being sold in the UK, the BBC has found.

National Himalayan authorities say no permission was obtained to gather and export the plant material.

The activity harms the environment and deprives local people of benefits from the

<http://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-35699297>



Dependra Dewan Gorkha

Manoj Chettri

Parth Koley

 Sonam Pintso Sherpa

 Nangpha Rajashree


Dependra Dewan G

 Shefali Vaidya Maribavi Inchi Sushil Kandel

 Lexette Charlene Lutz

 Krishna Garg

GROUP CONVERSATIONS

 Sonal, Aruna, Shobhana

Q Search

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 1. Mutual Friend[Photos of Tim](#) [Tim's Photos](#) [Albums](#)

Updated about a month ago 📅

Botanical trip to the Sikkimese Himalayas

Tao  Manoj Chettri

exited Sikkim? How do we find out who helped with his visit? Most of the Sikkim contacts are no longer on his FB page. Dr. Bharat Pradhan his FB friend unfortunately alerted him earlier.

madam i tried looking for his fb page but i am not getting the right person can u please send me the profile of him so that i can try to trace out something

2010 January 20



1

<https://www.facebook.com/sushant.dhyani.779/posts/1097133856308032>

Timothy Atkinson.jpg

Vanished (?) Tibetan Mastiff Livestock Guardian



Stray / Free-ranging Dogs





SEROW predated by Feral Dogs at Dzuluk,
East Sikkim, photographed by Dibyendu
Ash www.goingwild.in





**Feeding BEARS
is illegal**







Monkeys = Menace?

**FEEDING
Monkeys,
disposing food
along roads, etc.
is **ILLEGAL****



Not In My Backyard







होडे कोइली
Common Green Magpie
Cissa chinensis



सहजोरे
Crested Serpent Eagle
Spilornis cheela



कालो चिल
Black Eagle
Icthyophaga malayensis



सानी घरे
Long-tailed Minivet
Pericrocotus ethologus



बुरे चिल
Rufous-bellied Eagle
Hieraaetus kienerii



चेसाग
Common Kestrel
Falco tinnunculus



चेरिया
Bronzed Drongo
Dicrurus aeneus



लमेवा
Snow partridge
Lerwa lerwa



गोमा
Sikkim Snowcock
Tetraogallus tibetanus aquilanifer

Dr. Heleen Plaisier
Leiden University,
Netherlands
– Lepcha Expert,
Knows 300 Lepcha
Bird Names!!!



Mikania micrantha



Lissachatina fulica



Lantana camara



Ageratum conyzoides



Chromolaena odorata



Tithonia diversifolia



© Laktsheden Theengh/WWF-India





States' & Citizens' Constitutional Responsibility as of 26 Jan 1950 (68 yrs ago), (43 yrs ago in Sikkim)

- **Article 48-A:** (Directive Principle of State Policy) "The State shall endeavour to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forests and wildlife of the country".
- **Article 51-A (f),(g):** (Fundamental Duty) "It shall be the duty of every citizen of India
 - (f) to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite cultures,
 - (g) to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife, and to have compassion for all living creatures.

Some Env. Legislations: 1927 – 2006: 90 years

- 1. Indian Forest Act 1927** **1927**
- 2. Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972** **1972**
- 3. Forest Conservation Act 1980** **1980**
- 4. Environment Protection Act 1986** **1986**
- 5. Sikkim Forests, Water Courses and Road Reserves (Preservation and Protection) Act 1988** **1988**
- 6. Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act (PPVFRA)** **2001**
- 7. BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT 2002** **2002**
- 8. Forest Rights Act 2006** **2006**
- 9. National Environment Policy** **2006**

National Environment Policy of 2006 creates a direct link between livelihood creation and environment protection

- It states that there has been a “**recognition of the vital role natural resources play in creating livelihoods, and securing life-support ecological services**”.
- Policy acknowledges a broad-based consensus:
 - 1) *human beings should be able to enjoy a decent standard of life;*
 - 2) *humanity should become capable of respecting the finiteness of the biosphere;*
 - 3) *neither the aspiration for a good life nor the recognition of biophysical limits should preclude the search for greater justice in the world.*

- But we seem to lack understanding of
 - benefits from biodiversity and
 - Importance of ecological processes
- Perhaps no single consistent conservation ethic in India due to
 - colonial conservation policies, and
 - knee-jerk reactions to problems of biodiversity conservation
- Tho' respect for non-human beings is part of the heritage of human thought
- Only in recent time Humans have proved to be incapable of living in harmony with nature.

CBD Objectives

Conservation

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graph TD; A[Conservation] --> B[Sustainable use]; B --> C[Fair and equitable sharing of benefits]; C --> A;
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**Fair and equitable
sharing of benefits**

Sustainable use