

YOUTH 4 RIGHTS INFOBRIEF

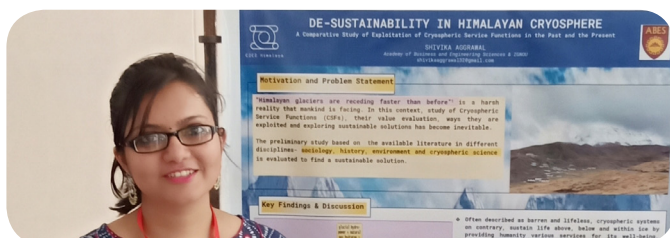
The Youth 4 Rights Infobrief, published by the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) and the Youth in Landscapes Initiative, is the first such publication highlighting youth leadership on rights. It is meant to put a spotlight on some of the remarkable work being done by young people around the world on land tenure, community rights, gender equality, on the intersection of traditional knowledge and development, and many other topics related to rights and landscapes.

INTERSECTION OF TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Bio

I am Shivika Aggrawal, a young researcher, social worker and youth activist.

As a civil engineer, I learnt the art to construct buildings but realized that I will be constructing concrete jungles that possibly displace many people, devoiding them of their basic rights to a home. I chose to become a responsible socio-engineer and enrolled in the Master of Arts (Sociology) and Post Graduate Diploma in Environment and Sustainable Development. As a representative for those who can't raise their voice especially in the upper echelons of academia and power, I started advocating for reviving and reinventing ancient traditional practices of local water management.



Introduction

Living in harmony with nature has been an integral part of Indian society. This is explicitly evident in the way people used to manage natural resources, especially water, around which ancient civilizations developed. There are evidences of “sustainable” ancient traditional water management systems (ATWMSs) pan India that existed centuries ago but are now on the verge of disappearance due to systematic negligence.

Kuls, Naula, Khatri, Kuhls, Baudi, Nawn, Chhrudu, etc. of Himachal Pradesh, for instance, are indigenous irrigation technologies that have evolved from an understanding of the particular agro-climatic conditions of the region. ATWMS utilize glacial melt, rain-water, or both, which otherwise would be wasted as surface run-off. They almost got defunct all over India during the British rule, a situation that did not improve after independence. With numerous benefits, ATWMSs provide a promising approach to conserve freshwater, while offering sustainable development benefits to agricultural workers.

Project outline

The geographic area of the project:

India, Asia-Pacific

Year of Development\Duration

Proposal stage

Target people

Indigenous communities, Village Water and Sanitation Committees, Local self-government, NGOs, Policy makers, Researchers and Academicians

Main theme

Reviving & Reinventing Ancient Traditional Water Management Systems

Contact person

Shivika Aggrawal

shivikaaggrawal32@gmail.com

Project Description

My research project is about reviving and reinventing such ancient traditional practices for achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) within local communities. Specifically, I investigate ATWMSs regarding their social and economic role for agricultural workers, especially as relates to SDG 6: clean water and sanitation.

My study seeks to find out whether and how ATWMSs could be a solution to water-scarcity under different conditions in a diverse country like India while contributing to the livelihood and well-being of farmers and agricultural workers at the local level.

My project¹ “Reviving Natural Springs and Reinventing Ancient Traditional Water Management Systems in Mandi District of Himachal Pradesh” is in the proposal phase. The project aims to develop living models in the district. ATWMSs based on the principles of equitable sharing, collective benefit, and sustainable livelihood

1 The project builds on an awarded poster presentation at the International Workshop on Climate Change and Extreme Events in Himalayan Region, 18-20 April 2019, IIT Mandi <http://www.c2e2himalaya.iitmandi.ac.in/>

appear to play an important social role by bringing people together irrespective of their class, gender, religion or caste and therefore, contributes to achieving socially-fair landscapes. It seems “rejuvenating these structures” will allow for more participation of agricultural workers by transforming regions around ATWMSs into self-sustainable units of economic activity.

Upscaling possibilities

Similar projects that build on and help to revive traditional knowledge about ATWMSs are likely to be upscaled across all 29 states and 9 Union territories of India. In principle, ATWMSs can be found all across the globe and offer great potential to be fused with modern technologies and approaches in the water sector. This way local efforts may lead to transformative global change.

Challenges

The main challenge I found is to mobilize people and to make them “feel” the cause of “extinction” of ATWMSs. Those who could actually do something owing to their financial and networking capabilities remain unmoved; those who experience the problems, are often deprived of even basic resources. Other is unexplored potential of Cryospheric Service Functions in the Himalayan region owing to scant multi-disciplinary research and development.

What is your tip for the young people developing their own project?’

My tip for young people developing their own project is to hold A.D.V.O.C.A.C.Y. at its core as it helps to-

- Attract attention of stakeholders at various levels- local, regional, national and global to “walk the talk” with
- Dedication and
- Vision to address
- Opportunities,
- Challenges and
- Adversities with
- Conviction to create a beautiful world where
- Yin & yang balance out each other such that sustainable socio-economic equilibrium exist.

Global Landscapes Forum

The Global Landscapes Forum (GLF) is the world’s largest knowledge-led platform on integrated land use, dedicated to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Paris Climate Agreement. The Forum takes a holistic approach to create sustainable landscapes that are productive, prosperous, equitable and resilient and considers five cohesive themes of food and livelihood initiatives, landscape restoration, rights, finance and measuring progress. It is led by the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), in collaboration with its co-founders UN Environment and the World Bank and Charter Members.

Charter Members: CIRAD, CIFOR, Climate Focus, Conservation International, Ecoagriculture Partners, EFI, Evergreen Agriculture, FSC, GEF, IPMG, CIAT, ICIMOD, IFOAM - Organics International, INBAR, IUFRO, Rainforest Alliance, Rare, RRI, UN Environment, Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation, part of Wageningen Research, World Agroforestry, WRI, WWF Germany, Youth in Landscapes Initiative, World Bank Group

Funding partners

