

IPSI Case Study Summary Sheet

Basic Information

Title of case study			
India: Sacred Forests			
Submitting IPSI member organization(s)			
United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS)			
Other contributing organization(s) <i>(IPSI members and/or non-members)</i>			
Japan Wildlife Research Center (JWRC)			
Author(s) and affiliation(s)			
Japan Wildlife Research Center (JWRC); Kaoru Ichikawa (UNU-IAS), ed.			
Format of case study <i>(manuscript or audiovisual)</i>	Manuscript	Language	English
Keywords			
Sacred forests, traditional forestry, indigenous knowledge			
Date of submission <i>(or update, if this is an update of an existing case study)</i>		March 2012	
Web link <i>(of the case study or lead organization if available for more information)</i>	http://collections.unu.edu/eserv/UNU:5448/SEPL_in_Asia_report_2nd_Printing.web.pdf		

Geographical Information

Country <i>(where site(s) or activities described in the case study are located – can be multiple, or even “global”)</i>									
India									
Location(s) <i>(within the country or countries – leave blank if specific location(s) cannot be identified)</i>									
Longitude/latitude or Google Maps link <i>(if location is identified)</i>									
https://www.google.com/maps/@20.7506364,73.7313934,5z									
Ecosystem(s)									
Forest	x	Grassland		Agricultural		In-land water		Coastal	
Dryland		Mountain		Urban/peri-urban		Other <i>(Please specify)</i>			
Socioeconomic and environmental characteristics of the area									
Indian society has a multiethnic makeup, including the Aryans, the Dravidians, the Mongoloids, as well as over 40,000 ethnic minority groups. In India, the forest coverage is about 20.8% of the land area. Despite the recent global trend towards a decline in the area of forests, Indian forest coverage is on the rise.									
Description of human-nature interactions in the area									
“Sacred Forests” in India refers to the small patches of forest that indigenous peoples or ethnic minorities have protected and conserved to devote them to their own Gods/spirits or to their ancestral spirits. Major threats to the Indian forest ecosystem include the conversion of forests to agricultural land associated with the growth of the population, inappropriate patterns of shifting cultivation and illegal encroachment.									

Contents

Status (<i>"ongoing" or "completed"</i>)	Completed	Period (<i>MM/YY to MM/YY</i>)	03/2012
Rationale (<i>why activities or policies described, or information shared in the case study are needed</i>)			
This study was commissioned to be included in the publication "Socio-ecological Production Landscapes in Asia".			
Objectives (<i>goals of activities or policies described, or of producing the case study</i>)			
This chapter provides an overview of sacred forests and their management throughout India.			
Activities and/or practices employed			
Literature review, field observation.			
Results			
A large proportion of sacred forests are remnants of primary forests that have remained almost intact. The management systems and methods in terms of the maintenance and protection of these sacred forests vary, including the implementation of rites and feasts related to the forests, the resolution of conflicts and disputes, and biomass harvesting.			
Lessons learned (<i>factors in success or failure, challenges and opportunities</i>)			
The compliance with the management and conservation of the forest and with the controlled use of these resources depends largely on the faith handed down through the generations as well as on the belief that the loss of forest resources will lead to misfortune (illness, a poor harvest of agricultural products, etc.).			
Key messages			
In recent years, sacred forests have been facing several social, cultural and economic challenges that directly or indirectly undermine their relevant traditional functions of resource management. Owing to such issues, the traditional methods for the conservation and management of the sacred forests have been impaired, causing the loss, reduction, and fragmentation of these forests and in turn, the loss of biological and cultural diversity as well as of the benefits provided by them.			
Relationship to other IPSI activities (<i>if the case study is related to any other IPSI collaborative activities, case studies, etc.</i>)			
This case study originally appeared in the publication "Socio-ecological Production Landscapes in Asia". *This Summary Sheet was produced by UNU-IAS alone.			
Funding (<i>any relevant information about funding of activities or projects described in the case study</i>)			
This study was commissioned by UNU-IAS.			

Contributions to Global Agendas

CBD Aichi Biodiversity Targets (<https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the CBD’s Aichi Biodiversity Targets respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

Strategic Goal A				Strategic Goal B					
●	■			■					
Strategic Goal C			Strategic Goal D			Strategic Goal E			
■							■		

UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs>)

The table below shows based on the self-evaluation by author(s). ● and ■ indicates the “direct” or “indirect” contributions to the SDGs respectively to which the work described in this case study contributes to.

		■			■	■		