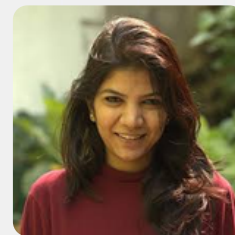


People and Wildlife of the Indian Himalaya



KID: 20240215

My work lies at the intersection of environmental and social sciences, focusing on two key areas. First, I examine the role of pastoral communities—those who depend on livestock for their livelihoods—in biodiversity conservation, particularly in the Indian Himalayan region. Second, I explore the complexities of human-wildlife relations and coexistence in India.

Did you know that close to half of the Earth's surface is composed of rangelands, and the primary inhabitants of these landscapes are pastoralists? These communities, who keep a great variety of animals for their livelihoods, play a crucial role in combating climate change, maintaining ecosystem balance, and keeping CO₂ emissions in check. Given their deep knowledge and adaptive strategies in dealing with all kinds of social-ecological uncertainties, they are true masters of navigating unpredictable environments.

Recognizing their critical role in climate change mitigation, CO₂ regulation, and ensuring future food security, the United Nations declared 2026 as the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralists. Through my research, I challenge the prevailing notion that biodiversity conservation in the Himalayas can only be achieved through exclusionary approaches that restrict indigenous and tribal communities from accessing protected areas. Instead, my work highlights the crucial role of local knowledge, voices, and presence in shaping effective conservation policies and practices.

My recent publication on human-wildlife relations explored the multiple paradoxical relationships between humans and elephants in the Western Ghats. It identified that past memories play a key role in shaping negative human attitudes toward elephants and highlighted the role of simple technologies in reducing human-wildlife conflicts.

Currently, my research focuses on climate variability in the Himalaya and the adaptation strategies employed by pastoral communities in response to broader socio-economic and demographic changes. By examining how pastoralists navigate these shifting conditions, my work contributes to a deeper understanding of resilience and sustainability in mountain ecosystems.



Parallel to my research, I offer courses on Environment and Society, as well as electives on Himalaya; Conservation, and Society and Wildlife; Conservation in contemporary India. Through these courses, I aim to equip students with a critical understanding of environmental governance, conservation challenges, and the dynamic relationships between people and nature and also encourage young engineering minds to find solutions to contemporary Himalayan challenges and contribute to better human-wildlife coexistence



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