



Proceedings of the Webinar
on
**DOCUMENTATION OF
CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF RUNG COMMUNITY**



**G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment
Kosi-Katarmal, Almora (Uttarakhand)**

From DIRECTOR'S DESK



The 5th volume of e-Newsletter published by the institute covers the contents of various events (including webinar) organized for documenting the cultural heritage of Rung community of Pithoragarh district under second phase of Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI).

Cultures, which broadly reflects the way of life, across the globe are undergoing transformative changes, leading towards homogenization. The associated systems/institutions, which were earlier considered as the matter of pride, identity and belongingness, are now losing their characteristic attributes and uniqueness. The sustainability of any individual, or a system depends on their dynamism to perceive the change and subsequently evolve strategies to adapt to changed conditions. The history of human evolution in itself is a testimony of unparalleled chronology of human resilience and adaptations that guaranteed the human survival against the enduring times.

Cultural heritage documentation is, therefore, an important step towards understanding the process of human evolution. In the present endeavor of KSLCDI-II, GBP-NIHE is making an attempt towards the documentation of Rung Cultural Heritage. Rung is the highland culture prevailing across the trans-boundary areas between India and Nepal. This documentation in its preliminary phase attempted to involve community people of Darma, Byans and Chaudas through a series of multilevel stakeholder consultations, wherein the observations were further put into SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threat) analysis to come up with possibilities to explore a pragmatic way forward. I feel the documentation with the inclusion of SWOT will act as an action document to provide the crucial insights for practice, policy and science to act in cohesion towards conservation and long term sustainability of Rung Culture. Your critical comments on the content of this eNewsletter will be very helpful to improve in future.

Dr. R.S. Rawal
Director

1. BACKGROUND

Cultural heritage (CH) of a community is a testimony of human survival, struggle, and resilience capacities that have evolved over time and passed through generations. It maintains not only the physical evidences but also embraces the wisdom and skills of the ancestors scattered/embedded in the form of arts, languages, customs, practices, belief systems, etc. CH, includes tangible culture (i.e. buildings, monuments, books, artwork, artifacts, etc.), intangible culture (i.e. folklores, traditions, language and knowledge, etc.), and natural heritage (such as culturally significant landscapes, biodiversity, etc.). Therefore, cultural heritage provides an apt reflection of long evolutionary process of human skills and adaption towards changing times and events. In simple words, cultural heritage implies a shared past, present and future. It is legacy received from past, experienced in the present, and transmitted to future generation. Being a source of diverse Cultural Ecosystem Services (CES), cultural heritage nurtures a sense of belongingness and gives an identity of uniqueness over rest of others.

However, with the fast changing scenarios of socio-economics, which are mainly attributed to process of globalization and its other pulling factors, many practices of CH are losing charm and relevance. The fear of losing the unique identity raises the concerns and puts the community in a stage of dilemma. Therefore, need for appropriate and adequate information on heritage is being widely recognized. Across the globe, efforts are being set in place to preserve the cultural identities, but what and how to preserve still remains ambiguous. This calls for documentation of such identities so as to enable their monitoring, maintenance, and conservation.

In the above context, the Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL), which extends over 31000 km² area that spans over geographical boundaries of Tibetan Autonomous Region (China), India and Nepal, and recognized with immense spiritual and sacred values, is one amongst the most revered and sacred landscape for millions of people across the globe. It represents a highly complex and diversified system in terms of biological and physical systems, and life support values ranging well beyond its physical boundaries. This landscape is unique in many ways including its cultural heterogeneity.

The Indian part of KSL has a definite flare of uniqueness, which is reflected in extreme heterogeneity of biological, physical and socio cultural forms, in the age-old traditions of unparalleled system of indigenous knowledge and practices, and in its rich ethos of living in harmony with nature through reverence to the extraordinary power of the sacred. Various cultural groups and their knowledge practices have been described and documented from KSL-India. These cultural groups are distributed in five cultural areas of KSL-India i.e. high land (Johar, Darma, Byans, Chaudans), Askot, Sor, Gangoli, and

Seera. Among these cultural groups, the high land communities, especially the 'Rung' community of Byans, Chaudans and Darma stands unique in its cultural heritage perspective.

Considering the unique identity, 'Rung' Cultural heritage needs to be properly documented and showcased. Traditionally, the 'Rung' culture spreads across in the watersheds of Dhauliganga and Kali rivers of KSL-India and some parts of Nepal. These highlanders of the region have survived successfully in relatively inhospitable terrains either by aligning their activities with climatic events or by inventing unique practices. Over the centuries, this community has established harmonious linkages with the nature, and its cultural ethos have deep connect with the sacred philosophy of the landscape. However, with changing conditions, especially the improved connectivity and accessibility with the downstream and outside world, the community is struggling with the process of social acculturation and homogenization and members of this cultural group are making efforts to find ways to maintain their cultural identity.

2. NEED OF DOCUMENTATION

In the first phase of Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI), various cultural areas were delineated. Among them, culture of highland communities dominated the discussions while deliberating on cultural heritage of KSL owing to its uniqueness and vibrance. Among highlanders, culture of Rung stands out unique, diverse and colorful. Considering the value of cultural heritage in transferring the wisdom of our ancestors and understanding the transitional changes over the years, it becomes essential to start with documentation of cultures having unique identity. In this context, documentation of the Rung cultural heritage assumes a high priority. In view of this, and considering transboundary connect of Rung community in phase-II of KSLCDI documentation of Rung culture has been taken up as a priority.



3. CULTURAL HERITAGE DOCUMENTATION (APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY)

3.1 Documentation framework

To begin with formal interactions were held with scholarly people of community to draft a framework for the documentation based on the input received, the KSL team had an intensive consultation within and subsequently prepared a draft framework. The draft framework in consensus with the Chairman of RKS Dharchula, Mr. DK Phakliyal was tested for recording first level community reflections during the consultation meet organized at Dharchula on 14th December, 2020.

3.2 Documentation Scheme

For precise and inclusive documentation of Rung culture following four aspects of cultural heritage were delineated for discussion and documentation:

- a) Historical lineage and geographical extent, including cross border connects
- b) Cultural ethos, sacred values and community governance
- c) Indigenous knowledge and practices
- d) Linguistic pluralism

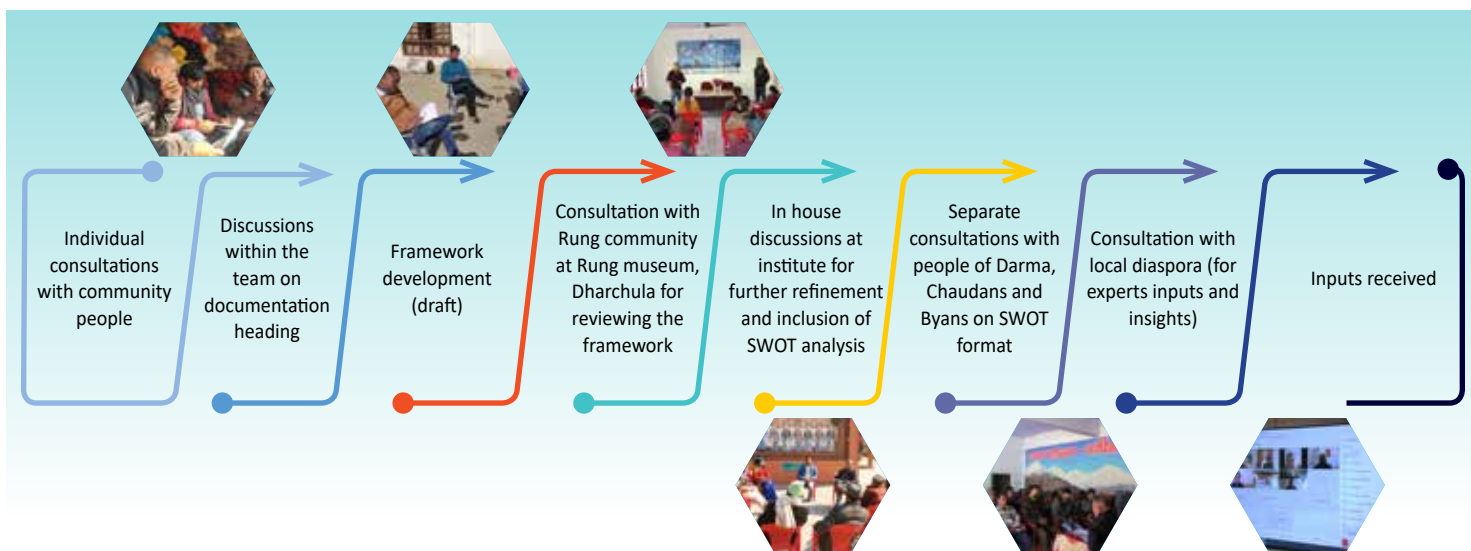
Under each theme, the following parameters have been included for comprehensive documentation of Rung culture:

- (a) Historical lineage and geographical extent: Ancestral lineage, roots, origin, identity and places of radiation from the valley, including cross border connects
- (b) Cultural ethos, sacred values and social governance
 - » Art, Architecture and Attire
 - » Ceremonies, fairs and festivals
 - » Sacred groves, sacred natural sites; spirituality
 - » Food and Beverages
 - » Trade, trans-humance and pastoral practices
 - » Traditional livelihood
 - » Community governance, conservation and management of resources
- (c) Indigenous knowledge and practices (IKP)
 - » Biodiversity conservation and sustainable use
 - » Traditional agriculture
 - » Medicinal plant use and herbal practice
 - » Animal husbandry and pastoral practices
 - » Trade and trans-border linkages.
- (d) Linguistic pluralism
 - » Role of language in integrating community
 - » Unity in diversity

3.3 SWOT assessment

Based on the community reflections and institutional deliberations, the framework was further strengthened and Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of the community response were envisaged. Towards meaningful outcomes from the documentation, further consultations with community groups were organized. In this context, between 27-29th January, 2021 separate consultation was held with people of Chaudans , Darma and Byans.

3.4 Outcomes of consultations



Outcomes of Consultative meets:

- The developed frame work for documentation covers most of the aspects of the cultural heritage
- For better documentation long-term field/village based surveys needs to be conducted in Byans, Chaudans and Darma region.
- Way forward or management plan should come out for taking appropriate measures and transferring the legacy to the upcoming generations

Outcomes of SWOT analysis

Component	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
A. ऐतिहासिक वंशावली और भौगोलिक विस्तार(Historical Lineage and geographical extent)				
पैतृक वंश (Ancestral lineage)	Matter of pride, links with warrior clan, Descendent of Rajput of Maharana Pratap's age	Lack of contemporary documentation regarding origin of the community	Developing the knowledge base on ancestral lineage (Genetic profiling)	Outcomes may be debatable
पहचान और विकिरण (Identity and radiation)	Rich trading community, wide distribution	Not sustainable to meet youth aspirations and contemporary needs	To showcase rich cultural values	May dilute and extinct in process
सीमा पार संबंध (Transboundary relations)	Interdependent linkages; Cross border kinships ('Roti-Beti' relation); opportunity of trans-boundary trade	Unpredictable and changing political scenario	Self-reliant	May inflate the commodity price; difficult access

B. सांस्कृतिक लोकाचार, पवित्र मूल्य और सामाजिक शासन-विधि (Cultural ethos, Sacred values and social governance)				
कला, वास्तुकला और पोशाक (Art, Architecture and Attire)	Symbol of Identity, Uniqueness, pride and valour; Highly durable; climate favorable; eco-friendly and natural	Heavy; Rough; less comfortable; crumbled relation between producer and consumer; use of synthetic fabric	For integrating newer technology; product diversification; improved value chain; livelihood opportunities; revival of traditional practices, etc.	May dilute the essence
समारोह, मेले और त्यौहार (Fair and Festivals)	Exchange of knowledge; place to sell their produce; place to showcase their culture	Entry of contemporary goods and practices; cultural acculturation	For cultural enrichment; learning of contemporary marketing and showcasing techniques	May further homogenize
पवित्र ग्रोव्स, पवित्र प्राकृतिक स्थल; आध्यात्मिकता	Excellent practices of biodiversity conservation and management; source of connectedness with natural heritage; respect and worship natural elements	Migration of community led to the reduced connectedness and respect for such systems; the interaction of migrants with locals	Documentation of the practices can be upscaled for strengthening conservation efforts; Can contribute significantly for WHS nomination	May loose reverence further

Outcomes of SWOT analysis

Component	Strength	Weakness	Opportunity	Threat
B. सांस्कृतिक लोकाचार, पवित्र मूल्य और सामाजिक शासन-विधि (Cultural ethos, Sacred values and social governance)				
खाद्य और पेय पदार्थ (Food and Beverages)	Diversity; Natural and healthy; essential ingredient in all rituals; easy to prepare; climate favorable; contemporary in nature	fast depleting knowledge base; Lack of packaging and showcasing; looks primitive	Product diversification; packaging; marketing; value chain development; livelihood; may contribute in reviving other cultural practices	Traditional dishes may further decline; originality of food/ beverages may decline
व्यापार, चारागाही प्रथा (Trade, Transhumance and pastoral practices)	International traders; traditional livelihood; contributes in nutrient cycling; rich ethno-biological knowledge base	Disputes in ownership of grazing rights; Tussels with government; Risky; not appear attractive; demands continuous monitoring and involvement; land use and climate change; conflict with locals; intensive soil trampling and loss of biodiversity elements	Opening of trade routes; Development of policy prescriptions for resolving issues of grazing rights; revival of sheep rearing to support cottage and handloom industry	Geo-political sensitivity; increasing impact of changing climate; May hamper biodiversity conservation efforts
पारंपरिक आजीविका (Traditional livelihood)	Time tested; diversified; contributes to physical well being and connectedness with the nature	Not sufficient to meet contemporary needs; labour intensive; non conducive environment; small landholding due to successive divisions	Scope of diversification and value addition	May contribute to the loss of traditional crop varieties/practices
संस्कृति, संरक्षण और प्रबंधन (Culture, conservation and management)	Rich; diverse; Unique; resilient; tested and environment friendly	Look odd and minuscule in contemporary scenario; Demands time and efforts	Showcase, promotion, documentation, marketing, upscaling and mainstreaming	Dilution in traditional nature
C. पारंपरिक ज्ञान और व्यवहार (Traditional knowledge and practices)	Rich knowledge base; eco friendly; tested; contributes to resilience	Time consuming; may not be able to address contemporary aspirations and needs	To make it relevant, simple, appealing, and pragmatic by being flexible	Actual practices may disappear from practice

D. भाषाई अनेकवाद (Linguistic pluralism)	Rich (numerous dialects); diverse (full of synonyms, unique way of delivery, throw, pause and expression); identity symbol	Not scripted; Not a frequent medium of working, conversation and interaction as it is confined to small geographical area	Showcasing through interactive audio-visual; promotion; curriculum development; inclusion in primary education	Intermixing with other languages may threaten the originality
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Consultative workshops at Rung museum Dharchula for getting cultural reflections, and undertaking SWOT analysis

4. PROCEEDINGS OF THE WEBINAR

The Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL) in Indian part exhibits diversity in cultural groups. Among 5 distinct cultural areas one major area pertains to highlands, and within this area one major cultural group is Rung; which is truly transboundary in its geographic distribution and cultural linkages. In phase II of Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) attempt is being made to document Rung cultural heritage. Towards strengthening the contents of the document, based on reflections and inputs of Rung representatives and other scholars, a webinar was organized on 6th February, 2021.

4.1 Inaugural session

The convener of the webinar, Dr. I.D. Bhatt, Head- CBCM (GBP-NIHE), welcomed the participants and introduced them with the objectives and purpose of the webinar. Welcoming the participants from Rung Kalyan Sanstha (RKS), ICIMOD, Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Central Himalayan Environment Association (CHEA), Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC), GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (GBP-NIHE) and the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) project, he briefed about the project and the progress made during the first phase.

Key Messages

- ▣ The Rung culture has unique identity among various cultural groups of Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL), India. This culture is having truly transboundary connects as Rung community people inhabiting both KSL-India and KSL-Nepal part, and sharing their cultural heritage.
- ▣ Many of the past documentations on this cultural group have brought in issues of distortions and misinterpretations. Therefore, this documentation on Rung cultural heritage must keep originality as the prime focus.
- ▣ Towards making it authentic and original, documentation must be given adequate time, which enables the research team to have more intensive consultations within the landscape. The consultations must be done separately for Darma, Byans, and Chaudans Valleys. Also, team needs to participate in some of the community events to have immersive experience of Rung culture.
- ▣ The SWOT analysis provides strength to the documentation process; however, the opportunity and threat components of SWOT needs to be

linked with long-term sustainability of the culture. The SWOT analysis is essentially required to reflect future prospects and prescriptions for preservation and conservation of Rung cultural heritage.

- ▣ The documentation should appropriately highlight the alternate livelihood opportunities based on cultural heritage components, including possibilities of adventure/cultural/eco-tourism, etc.
- ▣ Before making it public, the final document needs to be seen by the community people, especially members of Rung Kalyan Sanstha (RKS), Dehradun.

Director, GBP-NIHE, **Dr. R.S. Rawal** extended warm welcome to all the participants in the webinar, especially the professionals from ICIMOD, representatives of Rung Kalyan Sanstha, scholars, such as Dr. G.S. Rawat, representatives of partner institutions and team of researchers from the institute. Dr. Rawal informed the house that KSLCDI in phase-I has prepared initial documentation on Kailash Sacred Landscape- India part. This included delineation of five major cultural areas in the landscape.



He further mentioned, the cultural heritage of highland communities often attracts attention of those who are interested on knowing about cultures. He further stressed among highlanders of the landscape, Rung cultural group, that inhabits Darma, Byans, and Chaudans valleys, is important on account of its unique cultural ethos and transboundary linkages. Therefore, this cultural group has been identified for detailed heritage documentation. Dr. Rawal informed, the documentation process has got delayed due to COVID 19 pandemic, but the research team at GBP-NIHE, through various consultative meetings, has come up with a framework and preliminary information for the documentation. Now is the time when this team seeks inputs from the community representatives and other scholars to realize meaningful outcomes of the documentation of Rung cultural heritage. He emphasized that this type of documentation demands deeper field level investigations, therefore he urged the coordinator of KSLCDI, Dr. Janita Gurung, at ICIMOD to consider resource provisioning for this component in 2021 as well.



Dr. Vikram S. Negi, Nodal officer, KSLCDI-II, GBP-NIHE, introduced the programme and shared (i) framework for documentation, (ii) the outcomes of the consultative meets held at various places in Dharchula during November, 2020 to January, 2021. He further shared the components of documentation, including SWOT assessment with the participant, on which suggestions and inputs are requested. He urged the community representatives to provide their valuable suggestions so as to strengthen the

contents of the documentation.

Dr. Janita Gurung, Programme coordinator, KSLCDI (ICIMOD), expressed her happiness and congratulated the organizers of the webinar. She appreciated the efforts of KSLCDI-India team for putting in efforts for this cultural heritage documentation despite constraints of COVID-19. Dr. Gurung shared her personal experiences with the participants about the close linkages of Rung community with nature and culture. She said that the webinar is of special interest to her as the Rung community has transboundary dwellings both in India and Nepal. Therefore, the cultural heritage documentation of Rung community would require efforts in both parts. Quoting 'Nature and culture has no boundary' she said the trans-boundary linkages of the Rung community would have larger implications/scope in addressing cross border issues and joint management. She agreed that the cultural heritage documentation of Rung community would require more intensive field level consultations and documentation, for which provisioning during 2021 will be considered.



Dr. Ravindra K Joshi, Project coordinator, KSLCDI-II, GBP-NIHE, through a power point presentation shared the field experiences of the research team during interactions and consultative meetings. He emphasized on the role of cultural heritage as an important part of cultural ecosystem services. Dr. Joshi deliberated on the approach adopted for framework development for Rung cultural heritage documentation, which included (i) literature review, (ii) interviews with the community representatives at Dharchula and surroundings, (iii) consultative meetings in the area (common for entire community and independent for each valley), and (iv) present webinar to authenticate the process and inputs to strengthen contents. He shared early observations from the field and the recommendations from various consultative meets organized in Dharchula area of KSL-India. Details of presentation that included documentation framework, approach followed and outcomes of consultations

are included (Annexure-1). While deliberating on SWOT analysis, Dr. Joshi opened the webinar for discussions to have inputs and insights from the members of Rung Kalyan Sanstha and scholars from KSL-India and Nepal.

4.2 Reflection session



Mr. Nrip S. Napalchyal, Patron, Rung Kalyan Sanstha (RKS) and former Chief Secretary, Uttarakhand, welcomed the idea of consultation with the representatives of Rung community for the documentation process. Describing the extent of Rung landscape, Mr. Napalchyal gave the details of villages from KSL-India and Nepal, where Rung culture exists. Also, he informed that the villages like Pangla, Gala, Talkul and Jibti being non-Rung villages need to be excluded from Rung cultural heritage documentation. He added 4 villages (Dullu, Bajang, Sitola, Rapla in KSL-Nepal and 1 village in Munsiyari block of KSL-India i.e. Ralam-Paton) to the list of villages which form Rung cultural landscape. Mr. Napalchyal further suggested that Rung language (Rung-lwo) has three different dialects in three valleys of Rung landscape (i.e. Chaudansi: Bamba-lwo; Darmi: Darma-lwo and Byansi: Byankho-lwo). Same should be represented in the linguistic pluralism section of the document. He added that the language of Ralam-Paton is similar to Darma-lwo. Citing importance of fairs, festivals and ceremonies, he said that the cultural rituals of the community have contributed in sustaining connectedness amongst members.



Mr. Napalchyal said SWOT assessment will give strength to the documentation process and provide a futuristic perspective as well. He further stressed that the field consultation process needs to be undertaken in Darma, Byans, and Chaudans, separately and intensively to make the document original and authentic. Cautioning the team of researchers, Mr. Napalchyal underlined the need of maintaining originality and avoiding any distortions in documenting the heritage of Rung culture.

Mr. B S Bonal, President, RKS and former Additional DG (Project Tiger) MOEF Govt. of India and introduced the participants with the genesis and objectives of RKS. He thanked Dr Rawal for inviting his attention to the project and conceding with a request to involve the RKS from the beginning so that no distortion unlike previous documents from the actual facts reflected in the documentation which would become a referral document for Rung culture or for that any matter related to this land scape named as Darma, Byans, Chaundas (DBC) landscape under SECURE Himalaya project. He said that all the members of the RKS were very keen to participate in the webinar, when the same was shared with them. He suggested that summer dwellings/ winter dwellings terminology should be used while describing the geographical extent and radiation of Rung people. Mr. Bonal further said that being a sole representative body of Rung people, RKS needs to be consulted and involved in the documentation process. He further stressed that the use of terminologies and its spelling etc., related to Rung culture and community should be given special attention to avoid any distortion and miss-interpretation.



He said linguistic details and history part are sensitive matter, therefore selection of the resource person for information gathering is of utmost importance as well selection of site for discussion and assuring involvement of all section of society of the landscape, thus one should be careful. Elaborating on some efforts of RKS, he mentioned that it is only in the recent past with efforts of RKS the community got recognition as a unique highland cultural entity and it is a matter of great honor for all of us. Therefore, one should be cautious and careful, while documenting on this culture. The document thus prepared should help in further recognition of the Rung community. Commenting on fair, festivals and ceremonies section, Mr. Bonal said there is a need to look into this aspect more intensively for all three valleys separately. Stating the great traditional practices of Rungs towards conservation and sustainable utilization of bio-resources, he shared that in Bon village of Darma a forest patch has been proposed as a community reserve. Patches of forests in Son-Dugtu area and Baling (Lama jala) area are also of great value. These forests also need to be highlighted as a contribution of community to biodiversity conservation and management. He indicated inclusion of SWOT in document is good. However, it should help in projecting right picture in right perspective. Therefore, in-depth information on the Rung culture and its original essence needs to be reflected in the document. He further emphasized that Rung Kalyan Sanstha (RKS) would be more than happy to be associated with institution as a stakeholder in any project related to the DBC landscape. He also requested to undertake publication of Brochure of RKS, which the Director agreed to.

He also advised to procure books written by late Shri Dungan Singh Dhakariyal, late Shri Ratan Singh Ryapa etc. and AMTIKAR a biannual publication of RKS. At the end, he assured of all the possible help of RKS as President to the GBP institution.



Mr. P.S. Selal, Member, RKS, deliberated on the issues of distortions in facts made by earlier researchers while writing about Rung community. Praising the framework for present documentation, he appreciated the research team for the systematic approach and efforts. Describing about the linguistic diversity he said there could be 5 dialects, 3 as discussed by earlier speakers and 2 as for Kuti and Tinker. However, due to its simplicity and richness 'Darma-lwo' the dialect of Darma, could be considered equivalent to Sanskrit of all 5 Rung dialects. Further, elaborating about 'Kuncha' he revealed, Sobla as a transit and Mandi for migrating Rungs (Shaukas) is historically important place that needs special attention. Summarizing his talk, he said, scope of new livelihood avenues like tourism and adventure sports, need due consideration for future actions and planning of Rung landscape. Various personalities such as Ms. Chandra Prabha Aitwal, Ms. Suman Kutiyal Datal, Mr. Yogesh Garbyal from Rung community have earned global name and fame. Such personalities may also be appropriately included in the document. Appreciating the SWOT assessment, he emphasized on linking the opportunities with sustainability of people and culture.

Mr. Arvind Hyanki, member, RKS and Kumaon Commissioner said, to make the document authentic, there is need to give adequate time to the documentation process. Deliberating on the documentation framework, he said although the framework is robust and comprehensive, yet the researchers should primarily focus on two components, viz. Cultural ethos, sacred values and social governance, and Traditional Knowledge and practices, which have seen considerable change and alteration after the Sino-India conflict in 1962. He said to get the actual picture and visualization of Rung culture, annual events need to be covered and documented when they actually are performed in the landscape, respectively through video documentation and writing. He further stated, the document should aim to rectify distortions and vague interpretations of early historians/researchers, which might have surfaced, possibly due to lack of accessibility to the region and superficial exposure to the Rung cultural practices. He emphasized on following scientific approach for documentation, and this opportunity should be exclusively used to work for the correct and exact terminology of Rung dialects for restoring the facts. Appreciating the approach of SWOT analysis he said it is a good exercise and



essential for projecting future prospects and prescription for preservation and conservation of the original cultural heritage. He suggested that the research based writing should be supported with video documentation. Expressing concern over disappearing some of the cultural practices like 'Kuncha', he said, video documentation through recreation of events could also be considered that would not only add value but also a great way of showcasing the rich and unique cultural heritage of Rung people. Mr. Hyanki, suggested to consult the book on Rung culture by Mr. Ratan Singh Raypa and have more extensive field consultations and documentation.



Dr. G.S. Rawat, Former Dean, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, said that the suggestions given by the members of RKS are very valuable and valid. He congratulated the team KSL-India for taking a good start on documentation. He suggested that the document should be developed to maintain originality, include appreciation of physical hardship, versatility, adaptability, and resilience of the Rung community. He also stressed that SWOT is an initial step but in order to conduct an in-depth analysis of Cultural Ecosystem Services a rigorous scientific methodology should be developed. He said for documenting traditional livelihood the mention of 'Kuncha', the seasonal migration practice especially of Darma and Byans people needs to be given special focus. He emphasized on different forms of agricultural practices, food preservation practices, traditional fast food, and practices that have conserved biodiversity and contributed to revival of biodiversity in Rung landscape. He assured his assistance in the best possible way towards to documentation process.

Dr. Anu Kumari Lama, Tourism specialist-livelihoods, ICIMOD, emphasized on the role of culture as an important entry point for addressing larger goals of sustainable development. She stated that economic interface should also be included in the knowledge base of the community and the document should contribute towards dimensions of Policy and practice. To make the documentation relevant and inclusive she emphasized on the need to have a long-term association with the community. Amazed by the wealth of knowledge of Rung community, she said that the return of local diaspora could be valuable for preserving this cultural heritage. Further, sharing her experiences and learnings in the mountainous landscape, she quoted 'Mountains are university of learnings' and emphasized the need of development of tourism research, training packages and modules for local communities with joint collaboration of local community and researchers. Ending on an optimistic note, she said that there is a long journey to go and that the momentum should be continued.





Dr. Gajendra S Rawat, Scientist at Uttarakhand Space Application Centre (USAC), Dehradun, said that all deliberations were very informative and important. We need to go in depth on many headings related to cultural knowledge, with special focus on cross border culture. Landscape champions can be identified and their contribution needs to be described. Highlighting the challenges of finding right and accurate bibliography on Rung people and their culture, he said chronological bibliography of the Rung community needs proper documentation for accessing the knowledge on the landscape. He thanked all the participants for providing their inputs and enriching the knowledge related to Rung cultural heritage.

Mr. Pradyumna Rana and Mr. Prashant Thapaliya from ICIMOD, Nepal stressed on the need to include transitional and transformational change within Rung community during the documentation process. They also appreciated the initiative and efforts of KSL-India for systematically documenting the Rung cultural heritage.

4.3 Way Forward Session

As way forward, Dr. R.S. Rawal, Director, GBP-NIHE, mentioned the following

- » All the inputs from the deliberations will serve as a way forward; we need to go deep and reflect the originality of the culture.
- » Rung cultural landscape has a trans-border extent, therefore, documentation process must go beyond the political peripheries of KSL-India and include the part of KSL-Nepal. ICIMOD with KSL-Nepal partners may consider initiating similar process in Nepal part.
- » The institute will put its best efforts to make the document authentic, robust and reflecting; for this, the guidance and involvement of RKS will be the key.
- » Through SWOT analysis, document foresees to have a comprehensive future planning and management strategy for sustainability of the Rung culture. More emphasis may be paid to this section.
- » The draft document, once prepared, will be shared with all participants especially the members of RKS. Institute proposes that the document is owned equally, by both, GBP-NIHE and RKS.

Mr. B. S. Bonal, President, RKS, provided following way forward:

- » KSL- India team is welcomed to visit village Bon in Darma for 'Syangse and Chyuti Gabla pooja' during 20-24th June, 2021 for getting immersive experience of Rung culture and to have empathetic visualization.
- » For getting right information on Rung people and their culture, some books of Rung scholars viz. Shauka by late Shri Ratan S Raypa, Rituals of Darma by late Shri Pushkar S. Selal, Dictionary on Darma language by Shri Mohan S Bangyal, and three volumes of books on culture by late Shri Dungar Singh Dhakariyal urf "Himaraj", need to be rehearsed /consulted prior to documentation.
- » Scope of promoting new livelihood avenues like adventure tourism, including winter sports should also become part of documentation.
- » The changes over the long evolution of Rung culture must be mentioned in the document. The change in socio-cultural practices and responsible factors needs to be incorporated in the documentation. If time and resources permit, video documentation could be taken up as a part of documentation process.
- » A project report based on information provided by RKS for "Kailash route landscape" as World Heritage site submitted to WII Dehradun, can get a flier developed for Rung culture.

Mr. N S Nepalchyal, Patron of RKS, stressed on the following as way forward:

- » Collaboration of RKS with ICIMOD through GBP-NIHE on tourism training and research would be an appreciable initiative.
- » Certain cultural aspects of the community are presented in the newsletter 'Amtikar' of the community that could be made available to the KSL-India for reference.
- » Conserving biodiversity through delineating areas has been an important cultural aspect of Rung people, therefore, a directory of such delineated areas, usually those having sacred values, is suggested.

At the end of webinar Dr. I.D. Bhatt thanked all the participants for sparing their valuable time and contributing immensely through providing critical inputs and insights for documentation of the Rung cultural heritage. Concluding the webinar, Dr. Bhatt assured all the participants that the draft document will again be shared with them for review and improvement, before final submission.



About the Project

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) is a transboundary collaborative programme among three neighboring nations, i.e. China, India, and Nepal, facilitated by International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). It aims to achieve long-term conservation of ecosystems, habitats, and biodiversity while encouraging sustainable development, enhancing the resilience of communities in the landscape, and safeguarding the cultural linkages between local populations.

About the Institute

G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment was established in 1988–89 as an Autonomous Institute of the Ministry of Environment Forest & Climate Change (MoEF&CC), Government of India. The Institute has been identified as focal agency to advance scientific knowledge, evolve integrated management strategies, demonstrate their efficacy or conservation of natural resources, and ensure environmentally sound management in the entire Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

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