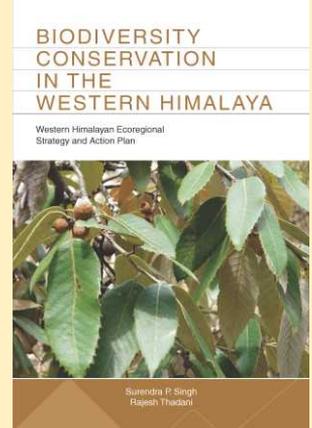


BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYA

Surendra P. Singh, Rajesh Thadani

About the Book

While this book focuses on rich biodiversity of Indian Western Himalayan region, it looks at it from a lens of culture, livelihoods and people. It acknowledges that people cannot be seen as the problem but must be part of the solution. We stress not just on diversity – but on harder to measure and quantify values such as ecosystem services. Putting tangible numbers to these and focussing on the services this region provides is key to conservation. Not only are the Western Himalaya the cradle of many of the major rivers of the Indian subcontinent, but the water, silt and nutrients brought down from the mountains is critical to sustaining the high productivity of the Indo-Gangetic plains. Can we value these myriad ecosystem services into our national accounting? This book also explores the role of people and institutions. The region is home to Van-panchayats (Forest Councils) one of the oldest institutions of common property management in the world. Can these play a role in conserving the various resources of this region? Can we even just look at forests and biodiversity without including economics and equity? A considerable part of this book is focussed on issues and problems that threaten the forests and biota of this diverse landscape. But while flagging issues is important, more essential is to try and find solutions– something that has been attempted in this book. Based on the strategy and action plan document for the Western Himalayan Ecoregion, produced under the aegis of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), this book has been modified and updated to keep it focussed on current problems and their solutions. It has inputs and thoughts from several sources – from experts and academicians to policy makers and mountain farmers.



About the Authors



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The forests of the Western Himalaya - particularly the temperate forests - have been reliably identified as a "biodiversity hotspot", a global priority for the conservation of biodiversity. Machiara National Park, Chitral Gol National Park and Pallas valley lie within the boundary of Western Himalayan Ecoregion. There are a number of wildlife ecologists and biologists who have studied and surveyed these areas at different times and compiled the species data with more or less account of the spatial distribution. In the current study distribution of the key fauna species and habitat maps were de As a result, biodiversity conservation in the HKH has changed along with natural resource management. Participatory models have emerged and been accepted in various sectors, with the region generally adopting the "ecosystem approach" advocated by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). With seven species of *Rhododendron* have been reported in the western Himalaya, with increasing diversity shown towards the Eastern Himalaya (Nepal, Sikkim and Darjeeling in India, Bhutan, and North East India), and the highest number of species in China (Milleville 2002; Pradhan et al. 2003; Singh 2009; Shu 2005). The study not only contributes to an improved understanding of traditional ethno-ecological knowledge amongst the peoples of the Western Himalaya but also identifies priorities at species and habitat level for local and regional plant conservation strategies. Keywords: Biodiversity conservation; Ecosystem services; Medicinal plants; Vegetation. Copyright: Attribution Non-Commercial (BY-NC). The Himalayas are the world's youngest, highest and largest mountain range and support a high plant biodiversity. In this remote mountainous region of the Himalaya, people depend upon local plant resources to supply a range of goods and services, including grazing for livestock and medicinal supplies for themselves.