



SOUTH ASIA

Regional Impact Report 2024

**The ICCA
Consortium**



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Regional Overview

The South Asia region includes India, Pakistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. As the regional coordinator, Kalpavriksh (India) has, unfortunately, faced challenges in engaging with other countries in the region. Several factors have contributed to this: political climates that restrict cross-border collaboration, the absence of designated national focal points to coordinate activities, legal barriers to the transfer of funds, and the vast and complex realities within India itself. India's immense sociopolitical, economic, and ecological diversity, along with the presence of numerous local communities, demands significant effort and resources to coordinate at the national level—a priority that Kalpavriksh has been focusing on.

Activities and Results

1. SELF-STRENGTHENING OF NAGALAND CCAS



Camera trap training, Gaili CCA, Nagaland

Kalpavriksh, along with local partners Kenono Foundation and Lemsachenlok, and supported by The Nature Conservancy started an on-ground project in Nagaland focused on strengthening the ability of communities and organisations in the state to protect and manage their CCAs.

Spatial boundaries were documented, and a community-led biodiversity monitoring plan was developed and implemented by training local resource persons. Biodiversity surveys using camera traps and interviews, along with community perception studies on human-wildlife conflict were undertaken.



Resource mapping exercise in Choklangan CCA, Nagaland

A social equity analysis informed the integration of equity and gender sensitivity into project activities, supported by regular capacity-building for field staff. Existing CCA management plans were reviewed to better align with conservation and community needs. Funding strategies and financial mechanisms were explored to ensure sustainability.

Technical guidance documents on three key topics were created: CCAs and Community Reserves, Carbon Markets and Community Self-Documentation.

A meeting of around 300 people from various CCAs across the state, along with

government officials and other stakeholders was organised at Mokokchung, Nagaland, to guide future CCA efforts and strengthen long-term commitment to sustainable management.

2. SUPPORT TO NCCAF AND LOCAL DOCUMENTATION WORK

Around 70 villages conserving 28 landscapes have come together to form the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF). Established and registered in 2019 as a member-based platform, NCCAF was created to represent the collective voice of CCAs across the state. While the forum had been relatively inactive in recent years, a renewed vision for revitalisation emerged during a meeting in April 2024, where new office bearers were elected. This was supported by Kalpavriksh. NCCAF now aims to expand its membership and actively support its member communities.

Kalpavriksh is currently supporting one person to coordinate the CCA documentation of member CCAs of NCCAF.

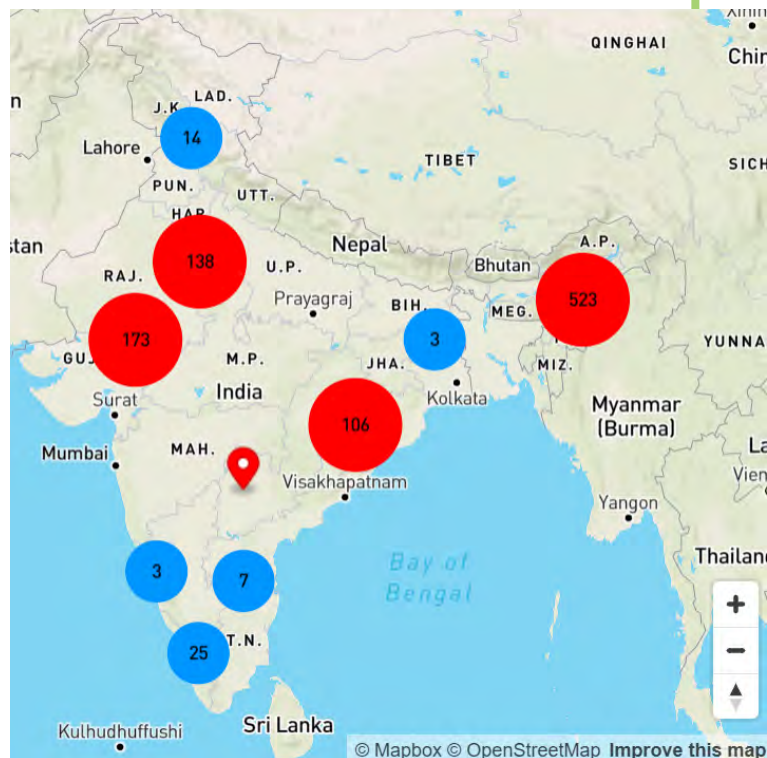


Presenting the CCA portal to NCCAF borad members

3. CCA PORTAL

The CCA Portal is an open-access platform designed to document Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) across India. During this period, the portal was significantly enhanced with new features, including additional data layers, a microsite functionality to showcase clusters of CCAs, a dedicated resources section, and an analytics dashboard—greatly improving data accessibility and visibility.

Two microsities were developed and launched: one highlighting CCAs in Nagaland and another focusing on Orans, the sacred groves of Rajasthan. Documentation work continues with almost a thousand CCAs from India currently documented on the portal.



CCA Portal showing almost 1000 documented CCAs in India

4. PASTORALIST ASSEMBLY AND FORMATION OF IPCN



Pastoralist Youth Alliance

The Pastoralist Women Alliance, Van Gujjar Yuva Tribal Sangathan, and Kalpavriksh, with support from the ICCA Consortium, organised a national meeting of pastoralist groups from eight Indian states in July 2024, at New Delhi. The gathering aimed to create a shared platform for community organisations and groups engaged with pastoralist issues. Key sessions included: Introduction and Context Setting; Gender, Youth and Pastoralism; Conservation, Policy and Pastoralism; and a group discussion focused on forming a national-level Sanghatna (alliance) for pastoralists.

This alliance was named Indian Pastoral Communities Network and the gathering of their core group was held in November

2024. Participants included representatives of pastoral communities, grassroots organisations working on pastoralism and civil society groups from six states. The discussions helped establish key goals and objectives for the network, such as strengthening local pastoral leadership at the grassroots level, advocating on pastoral issues, supporting the formation and growth of sangathans (community-based organisations), and building alliances of these sangathans at local, state, and national levels. The group also expressed a commitment to engage with the International Year of Rangelands and Pastoralism in 2026. It was agreed that the network would remain a voluntary, member-based platform. An annual action plan was developed, along with a discussion on the need for resources to implement the proposed activities. Members are also working to expand the network, with a focus on reaching under-represented groups.

5. LADAKH-NAGALAND EXCHANGE VISIT



Community fishery pond, Nagaland

In November 2024, Tar became the first village in Ladakh to formally declare a Community Conserved Area (CCA). As part of a capacity-building initiative, representatives from three Ladakhi villages—Tar, Saspoche, and Nyaraks—along with members from Snow Leopard Conservancy and Kalpavriksh, undertook an exchange visit to Nagaland to learn from long-established CCAs in the region. The visit included interactions with CCA communities in Longleng, Noklak, Sendenyu, and Khonoma, and participation in a regional workshop hosted by Choklangan village that brought together nearly 50 villages.

Key learnings included processes for CCA declaration, community governance, rule-making, and sustainable livelihoods. Ladakhi participants observed integrated farming systems, cultural conservation practices, biodiversity protection efforts, and equitable eco-tourism models. They also engaged in dialogue on hunting regulations, farming practices, and the role of youth, women, and elders in CCA management. In turn, the Ladakhi group shared their experiences with emerging challenges such as unregulated tourism and rapid development.

The group also met with the Nagaland Community Conserved Areas Forum (NCCAF) to discuss policy gaps and legal limitations affecting CCAs in both regions. Despite differing contexts, the exchange highlighted shared challenges and aspirations in balancing traditional knowledge with contemporary pressures.

6. EASTERN NAGALAND CCAS MEET

A three-day assembly of Eastern Nagaland CCAs was held in November 2024 at Choklangan village, bringing together over 570 participants from 50 villages. Organised by LEMSACHENLOK in collaboration with the Department of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (Nagaland), Foundation for Ecological Security, Kalpavriksh, and the ICCA Consortium South Asia, the event focused on fostering inter-community connections to create Biodiversity Peace Corridors in Eastern Nagaland.

The workshop provided a platform for CCA representatives to share experiences and challenges in biodiversity conservation, emphasizing community-led approaches rooted in traditional knowledge.

Sessions explored policy frameworks, biodiversity registers, sustainable livelihoods, gender and youth inclusion, and collaborative conservation. Key highlights included the launch of AlijoCademia (a traditional learning initiative) in four villages and the inauguration of a community fishery pond in Choklangan.

Speakers such as Neema Pathak Broome (Kalpavriksh), Dr. Tsewang Namgail (SLC-IT), T. Imlitoshi Walling, Dr. Temjensangla Pongener, and Mr. Mongngoi Phom stressed the need for ecological balance, inclusive development, and integration of cultural values in conservation. The Ladakhi CCA team from Tar village shared their experiences, reinforcing the importance of eco-tourism and community-led biodiversity protection.

The workshop culminated in a vision for a larger landscape-level conservation effort and the formation of Eastern and Trans-Border Biodiversity Peace Corridors. Cultural performances and local product exhibitions showcased the region's rich heritage. The event concluded with messages of solidarity and a collective commitment to expanding and strengthening the CCA movement in Eastern Nagaland.



Eastern Nagaland Community Conserved Areas' Meet, Choklangan

7. NATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON ICCAS

A National Working Group on Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) was constituted in 2022 to develop and implement a strategic plan for the recognition and support of CCAs in India. The group has recently been restructured to include individuals who have been more actively engaged in CCA-related work and also within the collective, while removing those who have not remained in touch. A meeting of the reconstituted group is planned for early May 2025 to take this agenda forward.

8. FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Through the ICCA Consortium, Kalpavriksh is supporting fellows in three key regions, each focused on empowering grassroots governance, ecological protection, and community-led advocacy:

A. Indian Pastoral Communities Network (IPCN)

The network, established in July 2024, brings together pastoral leaders and grassroots organisations to advocate for land rights, biodiversity conservation, and the inclusion of youth and women in decision-making. Three fellows from IPCN are being supported by Kalpavriksh. The network has facilitated consultations to discuss pastoral challenges and policies, mobilisation of youth and women around pastoral livelihoods and conservation, resource mobilization, livestock census engagement, and advocacy efforts and led action plan development during the second network meeting in November 2024.

B. Nagaland Community Conserved Area Forum (NCCAF)

The NCCAF serves as a state-wide platform for CCAs to exchange knowledge, build capacity, and gain visibility in national and international forums. Kalpavriksh supports three fellows who coordinate activities among affiliated CCAs, provide support in policy advocacy, skill development, and community representation, and support the forum to strengthen the collective voice of Nagaland's CCAs in governance and conservation dialogues.



Opening of NCCAF office

C. Gram Sabha Self-Strengthening – Korchi, Maharashtra

One fellow is facilitating deep engagement with Gram Sabhas in the Korchi region, focused on strengthening democratic processes and community forest rights. Key responsibilities include organising cluster-level trainings on forest rights, biodiversity laws, employment schemes (MGNREGA), and record-keeping, supporting the formation of biodiversity committees

and People's Biodiversity Registers, assisting in the filing and follow-up of CFR and IFR claims, documenting efforts on climate change adaptation, sustainable livelihoods, and forest governance, promoting gender equity by increasing women's participation in decision-making and economic activities, such as tendu patta collection and local planning.

9. SUPPORT TO ICCA CONSORTIUM AS REGIONAL SECRETARIAT

Kalpavriksh actively participated in and contributed to the organisational change process of the ICCA Consortium, and offered inputs during the in-person Secretariat meeting to help shape the Consortium's strategy for CBD COP16 in Cali, Colombia. It also facilitated Asia-Pacific regional meetings to develop strategic approaches for ICCAs in the region.

10. CONTRIBUTIONS AT CBD COP16

Kalpavriksh participated in CoP16 of the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Cali in October 2024, to track discussions on international policy agendas, particularly the development of the monitoring framework for the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and mechanisms for resource mobilisation to support its implementation. Kalpavriksh also presented the Community Conserved Areas (CCA) Portal at a side event on Women, Citizen Science and Biodiversity Conservation, highlighting the critical role of local communities and gender-inclusive approaches in achieving biodiversity targets.

11. LEGAL & POLICY COORDINATION

Kalpavriksh has initiated support for a Legal and Policy Coordinator to lead legal and advocacy efforts focused on rights-based conservation. Key responsibilities include drafting a policy paper on land and forest governance in Arunachal Pradesh in relation to the Forest Rights Act (FRA), conducting awareness and training sessions for local communities, and organising state-level workshops on legal safeguards for CCAs in light of recent amendments to the Forest Conservation Act—particularly



Kalpavriksh members involved in ICCA Consortium organisational change process



Presenting CCA documentation work at a side event on Women, Citizen Science and Biodiversity Conservation at CoP 16, Cali

in Arunachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. The coordinator will also provide legal support to Adivasi and Indigenous communities for filing and following up on FRA claims, while contributing to legal opinion pieces and engaging in regional and global policy discussions through the ICCA Consortium.

12. ICCA NETWORK NEPAL

In 2025, ICCA Network Nepal achieved several key milestones. The network was formally registered on February 5, followed by obtaining a PAN certificate, affiliation with the Social Welfare Council, and opening of an official bank account. The sixth National Gathering of ICCAs, held on March 8–9, also served as the First General Assembly of the newly registered network. During the Assembly, seven Executive Committee members were nominated, and both local and national action plans were developed. On March 28, a roundtable discussion was organized with Indigenous Peoples' federations, networks, and organizations to engage in Nepal's NBSAP revision process. Additionally, seven youth participants undertook self-documentation of eight ICCA cases across the country, which are scheduled to be presented at a Youth Conference planned for August–September 2025.

Way Forward

In the coming year, we aim to continue providing on-ground support to communities across India—covering legal, policy, technical, and financial aspects. We will further enhance the CCA portal and expand documentation efforts, including biodiversity documentation through citizen science platforms like iNaturalist. We also plan to strengthen regional engagement, beginning with deeper collaborations in Nepal and Bangladesh, and work towards organising a national or regional assembly in 2026.

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