The Architectural Reflection of

Shared Cultural Heritage of Transhumance Routes in Pithoragarh

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Interface between humans ("culture") and the non-human world ("nature") at a range of scales and across a variety of terrains.

Defined by socially recognized markers and boundaries inhabited and understood through layers of meaning produced by people's engagements with their environments.

Source: https://www.grida.no
The Concept of Cultural Routes

**Tracks**
- For finding food & fodder
- Frequent use

**Pathways**
- Growing need of Communication & Commerce

**Well defined Routes**
- Various Socio-economic Cultural needs

**Complex web of Route network over land & water**

**A cultural route** is a route of historical importance that might have been created (as a planned project) for a specific purpose or a route that might have taken advantage (fully or partially) of pre-existing roads and evolved over a long period through collective intervention by different cultural groups for a common purpose.

**Time**
- Expansionist urge

**Usage in history**
- Heritage of Relationships-capacity to connect and create interrelationships
- Reflects cross-fertilization of cultures

**Wholeness**
- Crossing borders – cultural, ecological, political

**Multi-dimensional**
- Shared roots and influences

**Element**
- Transportation Infrastructure
- Places of Exchange
- Influences

**Type**
- Pilgrimage Routes
- Administrative Routes
- Exchange routes
- Military Routes
- Transhumance Routes
- Passenger Routes
- Pillagers’ raiding Routes
- Postal Routes
- Settlers’ migration routes
- Signals routes
- Tribute routes etc.
Leading International Organizations that played significant roles in the development of the concept

The “Sites along the Uttarapath, Badshahi Sadak, Sadak-e-Azam, Grand Trunk Road” is the only Indian route submitted to the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites
TRADE ROUTES OF ANCIENT INDIA

HIMALAYAN ROUTES

UTTARAPATH

DAKSHINAPATH

APARANTAPATH

PUBBANTAPATH

TRADE ROUTES OF ANCIENT INDIA

ROUTES OF PITHORAGARH

Source: Author
Based on various archival maps and map of uttarakhand available at www.pahar.in
The Routes and Movement

The Routes and the associated Valleys

The Routes and Movement Pattern

Source: Author
Based on various archival maps and map of Uttarakhand available at www.pahar.in
Study Area & Method

Objectives
1. Preliminary assessment of the routes within the framework of Cultural routes
2. Finding out key areas of investigation for further research and establishment of significance.

Methods: This study is based upon field research conducted in the month of June and December of 2019 as well as an evaluation of primary and secondary material related to the four high mountain valleys of Pithoragarh. Data assessment included participant observation and semi-structured interviews with village communities, academicians and government authorities.
The Negotiated Landscape and the Routes

**Situation:**
1. Valley Settlements
2. Midland Settlements
3. Ridge Settlements

**Land use System:**
Traditional land use system is characterized by animal husbandry, crop cultivation & forest use in different altitudinal belts, all of which are interdependently linked through seasonal migrations & energy flows.

**Shape:**
- a. Loosely arranged around Open spaces following the terrain joined by tracks.
- b. Densely built clusters of houses. These clusters are called Haaru.

**Function:**
Agro-pastoralism, trading (past)
Many people have migrated to the plains for better Opportunities.

**Area:** 100-600 Ha

**Population:** 100 - 1000
The Negotiated Landscape and the Routes

Earthquake Resistant Construction

Eco-sensitive built environment

Place making

Decorative art & Craftsmanship

Traditional Water management

Food storage techniques
The institution of Sacred Forests called Dev Van, the institution of Shingul are prominent mechanisms of biodiversity conservation at the community level.

As the people inhabiting these areas are agro-pastoralist-trader society, whose livelihood depends on the forest, pastures, people attach sacred values to the natural environment for their conservation and optimum use of resources.

‘A reserved space, established by a community, a group of people or an individual, following the conventions based on specific phenomena and requiring the respect of engagements taken at this place; in order to satisfy the spiritual, cultural and socio-political needs while focusing on the harmony and wellbeing of the native community, as well as of the whole humanity (Kamga-Kamdem, 2008)
• The **Jauljibi fair** is held in November every year at Jauljibi, the confluence of the rivers Kali and Gori. This is a meeting place of three cultures – the Shauka, the Kumauni and the Nepali.

• The **Thal Fair**, celebrated in the month of April again is a festival where cross-border gathering happens.

• The **Kandali** festival, held by the Rung sub-tribes in Chaudans valley, happens once in every twelve years, the festival, to some extent, takes care of checking the spread of the invasive species through community action.

• **Nabu Samo** is performed during the main agricultural season to mainly collect harmful insects from the fields and destroy them after elaborate rituals.

• **Nanda Astami**, a festival to collect the sacred flowers of *Brahma Kamal*

• The **Hill Jatra** is a festival of pastoralists and agriculturists, which expresses the linkages of agro-pastoralist communities with nature.

• The concept of **kathbhuria**, the hillside Goddess, ensures effective conservation on the hill tops and facilitates natural regeneration.

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**The Kandali festival**

The seasonal migration (Transhumance) facilitated intensive trade relations with Tibetan Highland and Nepal. After 1962, agriculture and the use of forest and grassland products became even more important for their livelihood security. The Pilgrimage to Kailas Mansarovar brought in people from the plains and their knowledge and ideas.
These routes crossing the tightly bounded mountain settings connect with the larger trade routes, influence the long standing ties between highland and plains for many centuries. In spite of harsh living conditions, inaccessibility of terrain and geographic isolation, the routes helped in the evolution of a system of interdependence, also facilitated unique trans-border connectivity between the larger landscape inhabitants. The flourishing period of the cross-border trade was 17th century.

Different layers of function—

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<th>Usage in history</th>
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<th>Wholeness</th>
<th>Crossing and connecting borders – cultural, ecological, political</th>
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| Agrarian societies, nomadic and sedentary Cultures | The routes as a whole along with their various tangible and intangible heritage could showcase the co-existence of nomadic and settled cultures and the adaptation of different mechanisms to live in harmony with nature. Environmental ethics and methods of biodiversity conservation, sensible disaster resistant built environment, dynamics of resource management are the key aspects exhibited by the places crossed and connected by the routes. | Located at the “Interface between two main ecological and subsistence zones” Connects Tibetan and Indic cultures and it is a part of the long-distance trade silk roads at a cross-continental scale. The routes not just traverse through the high altitude areas but connects to other cultural regions of Pithoragarh: Sor, Seera, Askot, Gangoli. At the regional level it further gets connected to Almora, from their to hardwar, Rishikesh and with the Ganges plain through the pilgrimage routes of Kailash Mansarover and Chardham yatra. | Chhangru and Tinkar, Rapla, Syangkang and Dumling these Nepali villages have age-old relationships with the Rangs of Chaudans and Byans valley. They follow similar social and religious customs. Marriages between the members of these villages with those in the Rang valleys are extremely common. The knowledge of wool processing and shawl wool, carpet making came from Tibet, where as the knowledge related to cotton and spices etc passed onto Tibet and Nepal | Being situated in the intermediate zone between Tibetan and Indic culture, the routes helped in facilitating cross-cultural exchanges. As a result many micro-cultures and societies do exist within this landscape originating from the Kol-Munds, Kirat-Mongols-Huns, Khasas, Shakas, and Dravidians | Linguistic diversity created through cross-fertilization between exchange Tibet-Burman language and the Indo-Aryan Kumaoni hill dialect. Many of the religious practice, ceremonies and rules that the Bhotiyas observe seems to have Rajput origin, influenced by the Immigrants of the Rajputs of the plains. Tibetan marts in Gartok, Gyanima, Taklakot or Tholing, Indian marts in Gunji, Dharchula, Jauljibi are considered as the major places for exchanges | Many mythological association: Lord hanuman had come to Chhilyalekh to gather the magical herb- Sanjivani that could bring the dead back to life. A small stream called Nyungtang-Ti falling in the route to Budi from Lamari also appears in several myths since Nyungtang is the goddess of water and prosperity and is worshipped in all the villages of the valley. Rituals associated with many of the Gods personifying natural forces: Hya Thima Namjyang, Chhainto Guru, Vyas Dev, Karjiang Gungka, Hya Gabla, Layar Kuti, Laraung-Kakaung, etc |}

The thermal responsive, earthquake resistant built fabric of high lands of Tibet and India has many similarities in terms of materials, construction techniques, form and aesthetics. Music and musical instruments is another shared heritage that has influences of Tibet, Nepal...
The “Shared Heritage” of KSL

- In an historic sense, cultures and societies have commonly shared cultural practices, ways of doing, and viewpoints. (except for when it’s forced upon or closely guarded, thus not shared)

- The connected past – connections with different cultural groups that have left traces of rich cultural heritage

- The relationships between cultures or cultural groups and their collective responsibility for the care and safeguarding of the significant attributes, meanings, and values of heritage of KSL.
Way Forward

Key Tasks and areas of Investigation

1. Tracing the original routes and the evolving network
2. Mapping the anchor settlements in KSL and list the tangible and intangible heritage
3. Defining Extent and Boundaries of the influence zone
4. Comprehensive research methodology for the identification of Intangible heritage
5. Semiotic study of Kailash Sacred Landscape to find out the shared heritage.

Proposed Methodology

Proposed inventory format for Mapping of Intangible Heritage through attributes and their manifestation
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THANK YOU.