A preliminary Study on the

Cultural Landscape of Darma Valley
unfolding the linkages and synergies

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To be cultural-to have a culture- is to inhabit a place sufficiently intensive to cultivate it.

“a portion of land that the eye can conceive in a single view; vista, prospect”

Otto Schlüter  Franz Boas  Carl Sauer

A natural landscape is a landscape where nature has been able to create a relatively stable situation without the intervention of man, regardless of the fact that may be in a far or not so far past, humans had been very instrumental in shaping that landscape.

A Cultural Landscape, on the other hand, is a landscape where nature is guided by human action, both attempting to arrive at an equilibrium.
Approaches to understand

Cultural-ness and natural-ness are intertwined in all landscape, yet most disciplines and assessment methods have usually range themselves on one or other side of the nature/culture barrier, which’s gradually been understood as unsustainable way of understanding any cultural landscape.

- ‘Natural’ values of landscapes
  - Landscape as a spatial entity
  - Landscape as a mental entity
  - Landscape as a temporal dimension
  - Landscape as a nexus of nature and culture
  - Landscape as a complex system involving physical, biological and mental components

- ‘Cultural’ values of landscapes

Methodology Adopted in the study

To understand nature and range of values expressed by a community about its landscape

GETTING THE INSIDER’S VIEW
SURFACE VALUES + EMBEDDED VALUES

Bärbel and Gunther Tress (2001)
Daroma Valley, 
Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, India
Situating the study area through archival records

A gateway to the geopolitically and economically significant centers in Tibet and Central Asia.
Darma: an Overview

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<th>Summer Settlements</th>
<th>Winter Settlements</th>
<th>People</th>
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Source: Author
D arma: a shared sacred landscape

Darma Valley

Sacred Realm of Kailas

Kaplas Kailas
Manimahesh Kailas
Sri Kailas
Panchachuli
Mount Kailas
Adi Kailas
Mansarovar
Kinnaur Kailas

Towards Bugyals
Towards Tibet via Bidang and Dawe

Temples and Sacred forests

Sacred Realm of Kailas

RITUAL PARTICIPATION | SENSE OF COMMUNITY | SOCIO-ECONOMICAL WELL-BEING

Source: Author

Gabla dev
divine ruler and
protector of the
Darma Valley
Darma: an adaptive ecological network

The cyclical movement
an excellent example of natural resource management, and the traditional ecological knowledge that indigenous societies have learned over ages by living in harmony with nature.

Forest
Farmland
Settlement
River

A settlement’s position within the terrain influenced by the natural elements: Forest, Cultivable land, Water source and Sun

Protection needs
Cultivation needs
Financial needs
Spiritual needs

cumulative body of ecological knowledge
knowledge associated with building construction and settlement planning
Knowledge of Medicinal herbs, Food preservation and seed conservation techniques
Craftsmanship (wood, wool)
Religious practices, ceremonies to safeguard natural resources

Source: Bergmann, Christoph & Gerwin, Martin & Sax, William & Nüsser, Marcus. (2011).

Source: Author
Darma: an integrated landscape of Ecology & Economy

Barter trade for sustenance flourished in to lucrative transborder trade the economic system was well-linked with the management of pastureland and forest areas

Control over local resources and making the best use of them

Salt
Wool
Grain
Sugar

Highland
Lowland
Darma: Tangible and Intangible Components

- Aesthetic value
- Spiritual value
- Ecological value
- Architectural value
- Historic value
- Economic value
- Associational value
- Technological Value
Past and Present || Changes and Continuity

Cultural Landscape of Darma Valley: Society and economy imbedded within the ecological sphere resulting in a high-value sustainable system with sacred faith acting as the regulatory mechanism

Identity || Spirituality || Sustenance
Conclusion

Organically Evolved Landscapes

- Darma valley through its **physical composition** and its **sacred dimension**, meets important social, cultural and economical needs.

- The **traditional knowledge system** includes: ecological knowledge and resource management techniques, sustainable building techniques and settlement planning, knowledge of medicinal herbs, food preservation and seed conservation techniques, wood and wool craftsmanship.

- Appeasing diverse deities of water, rain, and forest, officiating ceremonies of agricultural activities, and conveying the knowledge and tradition of resource management through **rituals are fundamental aspect** of the cultural landscape.

- Due to changes in socio-economic dynamics and ecological changes, the **relationship between society, ecology, and economy is rapidly becoming unsustainable**.

**WAY FORWARD**

1. The recognition and conservation of values in landscapes is vital to sustaining distinctive cultures.
2. To have a holistic understanding, research is required to determine the following: Valued relationships, Valued events, practices and processes, Valued landscape forms and how all the tangible and intangible features are interrelated.
3. Effective ways of dissemination needs to be in place which could benefit both the insiders and outsiders.
THANK YOU!!