

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE

Relevant for: Environment & Disaster Management | Topic: Environmental Conservation, Sustainable Development & EIA

Rare sight: A kingfisher wait and watches in Hyderabad. File Photo. | Photo Credit: [Mohammed Yousuf](#)

[India is signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity](#). As four of the 35 biodiversity hotspots are located in India, it is biodiversity-rich. However, climate change and development without consideration for biodiversity are leading to loss of biodiversity.

The animals on my farm: the man-animal conflict around Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary

India's National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) recognises the importance of biodiversity for inclusive development. The Green Agriculture project implemented by the Indian government and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) takes a novel approach to support the NBAP and synergise biodiversity conservation, agriculture production and development. It is being implemented in five landscapes adjoining Protected Areas/Biosphere Reserves: Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. It envisages a transformation in Indian agriculture for global environmental benefits by addressing land degradation, climate change mitigation, sustainable forest management, and biodiversity conservation.

Man-animal conflicts in the fringes of Protected Areas or animal corridors, and conflicts over unsustainable procurement of non-timber forest products (NTFPs) have been contentious, especially in Odisha and Uttarakhand. A participatory and landscape approach can ensure sustainability of conservation efforts. Keeping the focus on initiatives for sustainable NTFP harvest, eradication of invasive alien species, and mitigation of wildlife conflicts is essential.

9 crore to mitigate man-animal conflicts

Biodiversity conservation is a part of traditional wisdom. The landscape approach will aim to restore traditional knowledge systems, such as the conservation of common property resources. Examples include the Orans of Rajasthan and the village safety and supply reserves in Mizoram. Traditional farming systems such as jhum encouraged crop diversity. However, climate change and shortened fallow cycles are undermining jhum cultivation sustainability. Participatory learning tools will encourage farmers to adopt more sustainable indigenous soil conservation.

India gave the world crops such as rice, chickpea, pigeon pea, mango and eggplant. However, with the focus on policies that cater to market demands, its reservoir of indigenous traditional crops has dwindled. Most keepers of these crop genetic diversity are smallholder farmers, including women. The approach will be to strengthen their role as agrodiversity guardians by developing value chains for their indigenous crops such as traditional rice varieties in Odisha.

Environmental concerns are inadequately reflected in the development rhetoric. Thus, projects such as Green Agriculture are essential in equipping decision-makers with the necessary instruments to design effective and informed policies to underpin environmental concerns.

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Last week Ram Kadam, a BJP MLA from Maharashtra, told the men in an audience that if they were interested in women who didn't reciprocate the feeling,

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