

Cultures and values as factors responding to climate change – Indian perspective

This article has been downloaded from IOPscience. Please scroll down to see the full text article.

2009 IOP Conf. Ser.: Earth Environ. Sci. 6 572033

(<http://iopscience.iop.org/1755-1315/6/57/572033>)

View [the table of contents for this issue](#), or go to the [journal homepage](#) for more

Download details:

IP Address: 38.107.179.214

The article was downloaded on 14/02/2012 at 17:43

Please note that [terms and conditions apply](#).

P57.16**Cultures and values as factors responding to climate change - Indian perspective***Narashima Nelemav**University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Department of Agricultural Extension, Bangalore, India*

Ancient Indian texts quote culture and values as two important elements contributing development of human beings and society at large. One of the references states culture as an acquired behavior shared by the members, for the benefit of the society. Hepple says "Culture includes all of the material and non material traits in our environment which are man made or modified by man and transmitted from one generation to another by the process of learning. However culture cannot be passed on entirely from one generation to other without dynamics (with some exceptions). Culture changes constantly but changes are slow enough that the basic features remain constant for at least to a generation and considerably longer period". Each society has some distinguishing cultural characteristics which differentiate it from one another as given by Ralph Linton (Fig:1). Culture is the way of doing things and pattern of relationship among the people. Like Attitude they foster the beliefs and values in the society. Values are the elements of culture which helps in moulding the human behavior and the society at large which are said to be the set behavior pattern of a society. Honoring these values will pay the rewards and violation leads to punishments leading an individual towards societal good. This is evident in the context of Indian culture which insists on conservation of nature and the environment. The Rig Veda describes Rudra (Shiva) as Vanaspathi Vaidya and Forest goddess as the mother of Flora and Fauna. Similarly Yajur Veda describes Rudra Pashupathi as the Lord of trees, gardens, animals and medicinal plants. Indian Vedic tradition insists nature worshipping with clear evidence for the benefit of mankind. Further it says we need clear Air to breath, clear water to drink, fire to cook and keep warmth, space and land to rest. To quote an example, Vedavysa in his Garudapurana Saroddhara, *Professors, Department of Agril. Extension, University of Agricultural Sciences, GKVK, Bangalore-560065, India Ph:91-080-23330153 ext.367, Mobile:9449801215, E-mail:nnarasimha2001@yahoo.co.in Chapter four, explains the punishments for cutting the trees, stopping the water meant for public use, encroaching the common grazing lands and not worshipping the Mother Earth. He also explains the rewards for those who protect the Mother Earth and the Nature. With respect to management of forest resources (Nature) three types of institutions and management system could be observed in India, specially in Western Ghats of Karnataka, Peninsular India. 1) State institutions which have control over the management of the forest area 2) Social institutions which work with state institutions for the management of forests e.g. the joint forest management with usufruct rights as in Soppinabetta-Areca cultivation in North Canara District of Karnataka state 3) Village institution which have control over the management of forest resources e.g. The Sacred Groves or Devara Kadu. In order to bring in and protect rights of future generation, each one of the above three can be suitably modified to suit 'eminent domain'. In this background Sacred groves are the best examples. Even today one can find total protection by the society it self without any governments initiative or support in almost every village in the Western Ghats of Peninsular India, Karnataka state. These Sacred groves as they exist today are the vegetation Islands of centuries old Biodiversity playing vital role in ecological conservation. These sacred groves are worshiped at least once a year on a particular day of the month with special rituals inviting relatives and friends as a festivity. The specialty of these groves is that entry is permitted only on a particular day of worship. On that day even if something is left behind by a family/person, it will be collected only on the same day of worship but the next year. If by chance the grazing animals enter the groves on other days, the owner of that animal has to call the animal back from outside and roll one or two coconuts inside the grove as a mark of penalty, for breaking the social rule. These sacred groves are the hot spot of Biodiversity with abundant flora and fauna. The size of the groves varies from an acre to 100 acre (1/2 hectare to 40 hectares) (Table:1) and named after the chief Deity worshiped for centuries. There are evidences of more than one sacred groves maintained in villages and lush green virgin sample forest with flowing streams from groves can be witnessed even in hot summer months. This type of cultures and values contributing for the benefit of society are most important factors in conservation and maintenance of natural resources from a regional, national and global perspective. In any country, these Sacred groves support both micro and macroclimate changes apart from harboring number of living beings, thereby stabilizing and regulating the ecology of a region.

