



Indian Regional Association for Landscape Ecology

# PANORAMA

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## Landscape Vision

RAMESH KRISHNAMURTHY | WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA

Nature is an integrated system. Human, though being a tiny part of the earth, tends to monopolize the natural resources. Even conservation agendas largely remain utilitarian and have human welfare perspectives. Therefore, there has been plethora of approaches to conserve nature and to benefit societies across the globe. Though nature including human is multi-dimensional, the best approach still is area based, setting aside designated areas for specific objectives. It has certainly offered the framework and measurable targets to ensure the nature is preserved for posterity. However, there is a definitive divide between designated Protected Areas and other Natural Areas in terms of the perception and therefore the importance. On the other hand, the dichotomy of 'wildlife-first policy' and 'people-first policy' has placed conservation and human development as opposing viewpoints.

Landscape vision offers conceptual models and framework to negate contradictions towards a unified approach. Aply, the India's National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-31) has brought in 'Landscape Approach for Conservation'. However, a clear operational strategy is needed. This requires multidisciplinary inputs and implementation of working models. In the short-term, spatially explicit National Landscapes Perspective Plan (NLPP) would be required and in the long-term, the management instruments need to synchronize under the natural resources to implement actions on ground. Clearly, the solutions to everything including the Pandemic that we are experiencing today will be nature-based. However, our culture and lifestyle need to align to the realization that much of the nature is exploited and that sustainable development of nature and people is the only viable option. Indian Regional Association for Landscape Ecology (IRALE) will work towards this Landscape Vision and Integrated Development, which can integrate both Nature and Culture-based solutions.

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## How will IALE India shape Landscape Ecology?

FELIX KIENAST

PRESIDENT IALE INTERNATIONAL (2011-2015), SWITZERLAND

Landscape ecology thrives on interdisciplinarity. This was Toll's vision back in the 1930s, and since then we have seen many new stimuli in landscape ecology that have moved the field forward. To name a few, "patterns and processes" played and still plays a prominent role in identifying corridors and barriers; new technologies like remote sensing help identifying all kinds of important landscape features; or the insight that landscapes are more than a collection of physical objects, which led to recognizing landscapes as social constructs. However, landscape ecology thrives not only on other disciplines, but also on the fact that the field is interpreted in fundamentally similar, yet regionally specific ways in various regions of the world. For example, landscape ecology in the United States is still strongly influenced by the patterns-and-processes paradigm, while in China a very strong urban ecology has developed. And what is the contribution of India in the family of IALE chapters? Will Indian landscape ecologists succeed in stimulating the field in a new and different way? It is to be hoped. When I, as the then President of IALE International, together with Dr. Ramesh Krishnamurthy, started to think and realize IALE India (IRALE), I did not have these disciplinary thoughts, because the formal establishment of the IALE Chapter was the primary goal and for this achievement, I sincerely thank Dr. Ramesh Krishnamurthy and his colleagues in India and also my successor, Christine Fürst, the President of IALE International from 2015-2019, who supported the idea of founding IALE India.

Now all members of IRALE are challenged! You have to give your chapter a challenging profile. Will it be a very ecologically oriented landscape ecology - or one that focuses on technical achievements? Or something that is India-specific, that the rest of the world has never seen before? Time will tell! I look forward to reading much about your activities in your Bulletin (Newsletter) and wish you much success again.





## Landscape and Health

PARABITA BASU | EKJUT

'Health' is described as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being (WHO 2017) and 'public health' emphasizes the health and wellbeing of the whole populations. Access to natural environments play an **important role** in public health, such as better handling of pollutions, healthy lifestyle and mental health (WHO, 2016). Further, health protection refers to preventing potential health risks and diseases and health promotion refers to maintaining health, strengthening health resources and safeguarding health-promoting environments. Due to increasing urbanization and fragmentation of natural habitats, less number of people could stay close to natural places (Sullivan & Chang, 2017). Hence, we need to understand how the landscapes we design and inhabit impact our health and wellbeing. There is growing consensus for health in planning, design and management of all landscapes. It is important, therefore, to voice for the need of an interdisciplinary cooperation between **landscape planning and the health** sector as the healthy environment have larger impacts.

Role of landscape professionals has now become imperative to ensure implementation of 'One Health Approach', which focuses on environment health and public health as linked concept. We can carry this forward by (a) working on strategies and policies with other professionals, agencies and other line departments, (b) valuing health and aesthetics into masterplans and designs for any developmental activities, whether for housing, schools, public realm or commercial projects, (c) leading meaningful discussions with the ones' community and other stakeholders using the participatory learning and action approach that reconcile the competing demands of stakeholders, resulting in informed planning and design solutions, and (d) engaging in the restoration and plantation activities or creative endeavors with the people suffering from physical and mental illness in order to support the healing process and provide an improved quality of life.



"Over and over again we must stress that a healthy ecology is the basis for a healthy economy"  
– Claudine Schneider



## In Focus: The Trans-Himalayas

AMRITA NEELAKANTAN | NETWORK FOR CONSERVING CENTRAL INDIA

**Introduction:** On the roof of the world, in the rain-shadow of the main Himalayan range, lie barren mountains, cold deserts and arid areas beyond the famous Nanda Devi and Kanchenjunga mountain ranges. This is the [Trans-Himalayas](#) - an area spanning over ~1,84,823 sq. km where myths are alive alongside astounding biodiversity.

**Biodiversity:** Biodiversity in the landscape is well suited to the arid cold climes with many large mammals calling the Trans-Himalayas home, notably, to the snow leopard and the kiang (wild ass) are amongst the iconic species in the landscape. The Trans-Himalayas also showcase natural geographic beauty that is unparalleled – some calling it a moonscape for its rugged terrain. High-altitude wetlands and lakes provide vital resource spaces for species that are endemic to the region as well as those that migrate over the Himalayan mountains (for more on the fauna of the Trans-Himalayas [click here](#) and for patterns of distribution of flora [click here](#)). The Trans-Himalayas include many national parks in India that serve as refuges for elusive fauna and the last stands of wild flora ([India's national parks list](#)). Hemis National Park is globally recognized for the snow leopard as well as mountain ungulates and lies in the heart of this biogeographic region as the largest protected area in India. High-altitude ungulates and domestic livestock provide food for the snow-leopards and with many local communities, gompas (religious sites – buddhist) including the 400 year old Hemis monastery still functioning within it – Hemis reflects its past as an important node along the ancient silk route.





Armita Neelakantan

**People:** In the valleys forged by rivers such as the Shyok, Nubra, Indus and Zaskar, live the agriculturists and nomadic herders. These lands provide sustenance to the sparsely populated region with hardy varieties of barley and increasingly modern agriculture allowing for more bountiful food baskets. People began living in the region much earlier than previously conceived. The earliest human occupation of the Tibetan plateau (at nearly 4600 meters above sea level) was as **30 or even 40 thousand years back!** The region was a gateway for trade with central Asia along the silk route and continues to be the stronghold of Buddhism. The stories of the Trans-Himalayas are filled with demons and deities, dragons and animist spirits.

**Nature-People Interface:** With such a long history of people and wildlife surviving in the harsh expanses of the Trans-Himalayas, the region boasts of many enduring relationships between people and wildlife that continue to foster co-existence. Conflict arises between pastoralists and snow-leopards but conservationists have worked to ensure that people's needs are acknowledged in their attempts to mitigate human-wildlife conflict losses. Innovative hides and sheds form the basis of such mitigation strategies. Pastoralists' herds also compete with native ungulates for vital food stores. Finally, even on the roof of the world, local communities and wildlife face the marching in of invasive species – woody vegetation that is not from the region, harms the agriculturalists as well as limits existing natural habitats for wildlife. The Trans-Himalayas look daunting but the influence of humans is ever increasing and presents many opportunities for conservation to align with people as stewards of the natural world.



Ramesh Krishnamurthy

## 1st Annual Symposium

3-5 OCTOBER 2021  
SARISKA, RAJASTHAN

We look forward to the first annual symposium of IRALE, as scheduled in the hybrid (physical/online) mode. As the Covid-19 pandemic continues with devastating impacts across India, the situation will be re-assessed in July, with a possibility to have the symposium in online mode.

## Members' Page

### Membership

You can [register](https://www.irale.org/registration.php) to become a member of [Indian Regional Association for Landscape Ecology](https://www.irale.org/) (IRALE) at <https://www.irale.org/registration.php> and will then automatically become a member of the International Association of Landscape Ecology (IALE) (<https://landscape-ecology.org/>). Being a member of IRALE, one can avail the benefits/opportunities such as newsletters, access to landscape ecology journal, participation in conferences, resource materials and updates on recent developments in the science and application of landscape ecology.

Members can also join and lead Working Groups on various themes. These Working Groups are designed to enable a platform for focused interaction and collaborations. IRALE member can join any of the Working Groups while registering/renewing/updating the Membership. Although these are initially limited to three preferences, one can contribute in other Working Groups too and also form a new Working Group if required by contacting IRALE. Thematic champions and leaders are expected to be outcome of these Working Groups. Small grants may be available to support Working Group activities.

### Working Groups

