

**From Survival to Development:  
Understanding Himalayan Traditional Knowledge Systems in  
Socio-Historical Perspective**

(A Two Days National Seminar, 22-23 March, 2012)

*Traditional knowledge or local knowledge is a record of human achievements in comprehending the complexities of life and survival in often unfriendly environment. Traditional knowledge, which may be technical, social, organisational or cultural, was obtained as part of the great human experiment of survival and development.*

-The United Nations University Proposal



In the past couple of years, with the failure of the grand theories of development, there appears significant change in social sciences research to think about the theories that are site-and time-specific. This paradigm shift has also gained the momentum in exploring the interrelationship of agency of the subaltern actors and the Traditional Knowledge systems in present day context.

With the changing scenario of development, it has now become essential to understand not just how the poor and the marginalized were / are subjected to development, but also the manner in which they are to withstand and re-appropriate external interventions creatively.

Looking at development discourse from historical perspective, it appears that, urbanisation, led elite to codify and systematize the oral traditions. However the elite treatises seldom acknowledged such knowledge. On the other hand the Eurocentric science approach of looking at knowledge had always sidelined the traditional wisdom of the Orient.

The development discourse that emerged after the World War II, focussed on economic growth, growth with equity, basic needs, participatory development and, now the sustainable development more prominently. Hence till the second half of 20th century Traditional Knowledge

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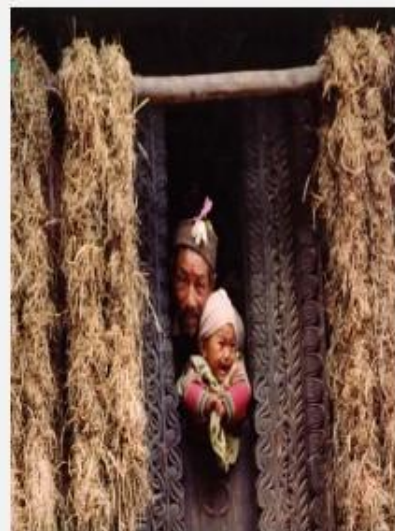
was seen as inefficient, inferior, and treated as an obstacle to the development by the theorists of modern development.

The recent economic and ecological crisis had also changed this perception. The development practitioners as well as the theorists have therefore started looking at Local or Traditional Knowledge that communities have gained in thousands of years, as the best strategy in their struggle against social problems. The 2009 Nobel Prize winner for Economics, Elinor Oström through her case studies (some of which were from Himalayan region) had brought similar argument in the development discourse. Oström negated the popular ‘rational-choice theory’ and established the fact that ‘humans have a more complex motivational structure and more capability to solve social dilemmas’.

### **The Himalayan Context**

As we know India with its multicultural diversity, is the repository of Traditional Knowledge (TK) Systems. Through centuries, communities living in different ecological zones in our country in general and Himalaya in particular have developed their own treasure of knowledge interacting with nature and other cultures.

If we look at the existing practices of TKS in the Himalayan region, they are not only rich, but varied in forms. Be it practices of environmental protection, management and conservation of natural resources, animal husbandry and veterinary practices, agriculture, horticulture, forestry, architecture and housing, health science and practices, metallurgy, craft, textiles, performing arts, fine arts etc. In spite of its wide spread prevalence and utility, not enough attention has been paid to TKS from an academic research or development policy perspective. The policies adopted in the Himalayan region in the name of modernisation in colonial and in post colonial India demonstrate that such practices which form significant part of cultural life of the Himalayan people were either ignored or sidelined.



The growing concern for sustainability has now made people realise that TKS has vital role to play in sustainable development of the region. Even in academic discourse it is vaguely discussed. Many attributes of TKSs are still not considered. The seminar proposes to focus on all such vital issues that are of relevance and importance to understand and bring to light the treasure of Himalayan Traditional Knowledge Systems. Through this academic interaction it aims:

- to evolve a theoretical framework to situate TKS in socio-scientific perspective.
- to understand the historical forces that played role to negate people's knowledge in these far flung areas and thus add new knowledge for the construction of cultural economic history and history of science in the Himalayan region.
- to identify the important TKSs for the documentation and archiving of these rapidly diminishing knowledge base of the Himalayan communities.
- to prepare action plan with the help of experts for documentation and conservation of these systems. The seminar will also make efforts to suggest ways to integrate culture as a prerequisite and basis for development project design and mutually agreed strategy for sustainable development.

Let us get together and thrash out these issues so that we reach a consensus to chalk out future strategies for development and preservation and documentation of this precious heritage of folk culture and Traditional Knowledge Systems.

The seminar is planned to have discussion under following broad sub-themes, however you may suggest more themes in you would like sessions to be organised:

- Theorising TKSs: The debate on scientific vs non scientific
- History and TKS
- TKS in the Himalayan region
- TKS and Development: The Himalayan perspective
- The road map for TKS studies and conservation

We hope this seminar will provide a unique opportunity to the historians, social scientists and scientists to come together on one platform to share mutually the knowledge of their academic achievements.

### **Research paper**

The last date for submission of abstract is **20th February, 2012**. Please submit the full text of your paper in soft copy (word.doc) by **15th March, 2012**.

### **Registration Fee**

To make arrangement smooth and comfortable we have fixed registration fee in two levels

**Early birdbefore 1st March, 2012Rs. 1000/**

**st**

**Regularafter 1 March 2012Rs. 1500/**

**On-site (cash only)Rs.1800/**

**School of Social Sciences, Uttarakhand Open University**

Please send your payment through DD / PO / MO in favour of Convener Seminar, **Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani**

The registration fee includes accommodation for 3 nights (21--23 March), breakfast, lunch and dinner during the conference days and a conference kit.

### **Venue**

The University, which is located in the foothills of the Himalaya in Haldwani, an old colonial trade-mart and gateway for Kaumon region, is the venue for this seminar, however we are proposing to make arrangements in nearby hill town of Bhimtal / Nainital or Mukteshwar to hold this seminar, so that participants understand the nature and circumstances in which various forms of people's knowledge were developed by the communities.

### **Travel Facilities**

There are direct luxury buses and trains from Delhi, Lucknow and Kolkata to Haldwani. Some important trains which originates from Delhi to Kathgodam / Haldwani are –

- **15035 Sampark Kranti** : Delhi- Haldwani- Delhi
- **15013 Ranikhet Express**: Old Delhi- Haldwani- Old Delhi
- **14012 Anand Vihar AC Express**: Delhi (Anand Vihar terminal)-Haldwani–Delhi( Sun, Wed.& Fri)
- **13019 Bagh Express**: Howrah-Haldwani- Howrah

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Organiser

**School of Social Sciences**

Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani  
22th-23th March, 2012

**Registration Form**

Name.....

Male / Female.....Age.....Veg. / Non.Veg.....

Address.....

.....

Ph: ..... Mobile ..... email.....

Date and Time of Arrival at Haldwani.....,

Mode of Transport: Bus / Train/ Car.....

Program of Departure.....Date.....Time.....

Delegate fee till **29th February, 2012Rs. 1000/**

**st**

From **1 March, 2012.Rs. 1500/**

On site payment:**Rs. 1800/**

Fee may be paid by P.O / DD / Cheque in favour of Convener, Seminar, Uttarakhand Open University, payable at Haldwani.

**(Signature)**

**Please send this duly filled form at the earliest to ensure comfortable accommodation and arrangements. You may also submit this form by email to following id [gpande@uou.ac.in](mailto:gpande@uou.ac.in)**

**Contact Numbers - 9412924858, 9412906869**

**School of Social Sciences, Uttarakhand Open University**

### Style sheet for referencing

#### References:

The reference list should contain only the ones cited in the text. They should be typed after the text. All references should be arranged alphabetically and chronologically. If there is more than one publication by the same author in a single year is being cited, then a, b, c and so on should be added immediately after the year and in the list of references, e.g. 1982a, 1982b and so on. All books and journals should be listed in full with no abbreviations.

Within the text, all references should be mentioned in parentheses with only the surname of the author and the year of publication, and/ or the page number; as follows; e.g. (Lal 1956: 282). There is no comma after the surname and no initials are to be given here.

Only in case there are authors with the same name and year of publication, then both – initials and name, and year of publication: page – should be given.

For two authors, both surnames must be listed, e.g. (Rendell and Dennell 1985). In the case of more than two authors, it should be as (Hegde *et al.* 1990).

*Et al.* is always in italics

If the citation is from a web page, full URL should be listed.

#### Some examples:

IAR: *Indian Archaeology - A Review*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.

Lal, B.B. 1956. Palaeoliths from the Beas and Banganga Valleys, Punjab, *Ancient India* 1: 258-292.

De Terra, H. and T.T. Paterson 1939. *Studies on the Ice Age in India and Associated Human Cultures*. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution.

Joshi, M.N. 1992. Environmental and civilisational processes in India: their global relevance. In *Nature and Humankind in the Period of Environmental Crisis* (Eds.) S. Ito and Y. Yoshida, Kyoto: International Centre for Japanese Studies. Pp. 45-55.

**No underlining** in the text. The use of **bold is to be avoided**. Those figures mentioned from other references will be in regular script.

**Italics:** Use italics for all non-English words (like *Upanishada*, *Tola* et cetera) as well as for names of books, reports and other documents quoted. The usage of other Indian names/terms should be in regular script.

**Quotations:** Single quotation marks should be used. The beginning and end of all quotations should be clearly marked.

**Figures and Tables:** Line drawings, maps, graphs and photographs are all considered 'figures'. They should not exceed 20 x 16 cm in size. Each figure must be cited in the text and numbered accordingly.