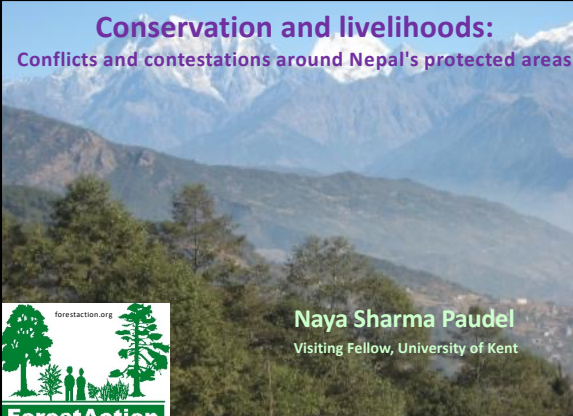



Conservation and livelihoods: Conflicts and contestations around Nepal's protected areas





ForestAction

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Outline

1. The country context
2. Evolution of protected areas
3. Sources of conflicts
4. Contestation and resistance
5. Persistence of injustice
6. Way forward

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Nepal: A country with severe poverty and inequality (OPHI 2024)

- National MPI: 20.1% - below poverty
- Rural poverty: 25% - below poverty
- Additional 20% - vulnerable to poverty
- Top 10% own 57% wealth
- Bottom 40% own 10% wealth (Oxfam 2024)
- 58% landholders own <0.1 ha (NLS 2024)

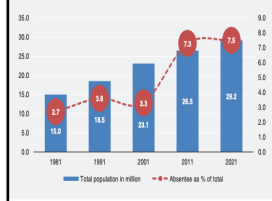




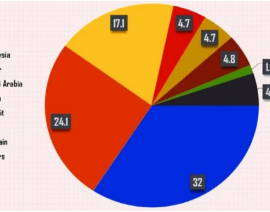

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Unemployment and outmigration

- > 10.7% unemployment (15-64 yrs)
- > 3.5m in overseas labour market
- > 30% GDP from remittance



Year	Total population in million	Absenteeism as % of total
1981	16.0	2.7
1991	18.5	3.8
2001	21.1	3.3
2011	26.5	7.3
2021	28.1	7.8

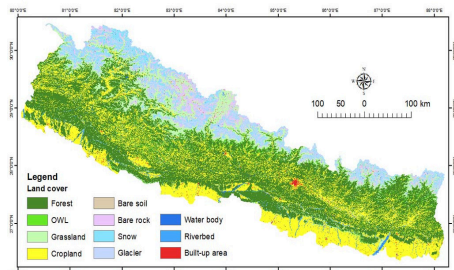


Destination	Percentage
Malaysia	32%
Qatar	17.1%
Saudi Arabia	4.7%
Qatar	4.7%
UAE	4.8%
Bahrain	4.8%
Others	1.8%

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Forests, biodiversity (FRTC, 2022)

Forest: 41.69%; Grassland: 13.27%,
Other wooded land: 3.62%
Covers 0.1% world's area, but
3% of world's flora, 1% fauna



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Biodiversity and livelihoods

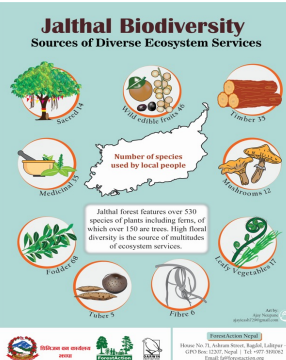
64% rural HHs subsistence farmers

- 37% HHs collect NTFPs
- 34% HHs collect fuelwood
- 22% HH collect grass
- 18% HHs collect food items

(These are national averages, poor people collect more - WB 2025)

Jalihal Biodiversity

Sources of Diverse Ecosystem Services



Number of species used by local people

Jalihal forest features over 530 species of plants including ferns, of which over 130 are trees. High floral diversity is the source of multitudes of ecosystem services.

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Early PAs: Ecological and socio-political context

Poverty and disasters induced massive internal migration in the 1950/60s

Heavy loss of forests, biodiversity (especially in Terai - southern plain)

First PA established in 1973 and many others in 1970/80s

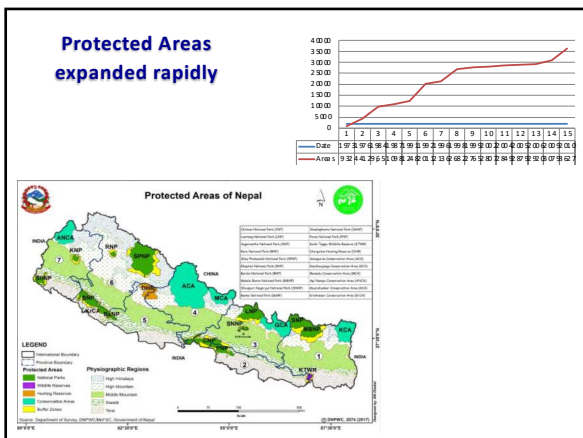
King and royal members realised that their hunting ground was depleting and parks would save it

Western ecologists presented their studies to the King and lobbied for the parks

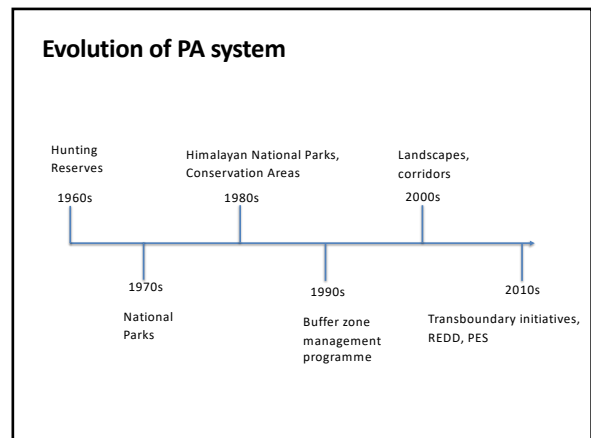
Conservation agencies (WWF, ZSL, UNDP, FAO, ...) offered technical and financial support

A hunting expedition led by King George V in 1911 killed 39 tigers, 18 rhino, 4 bears in Chitwan

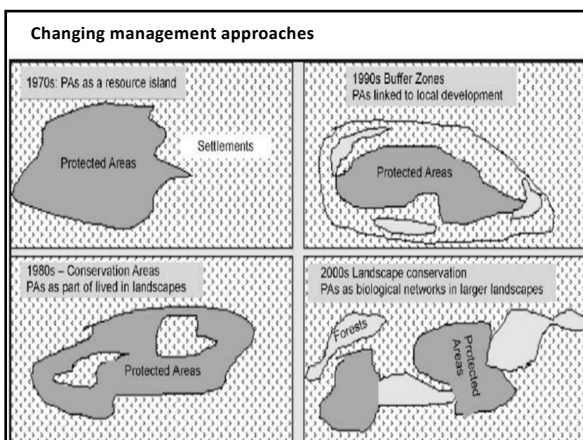
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BZ programme: Expansion of PA jurisdiction

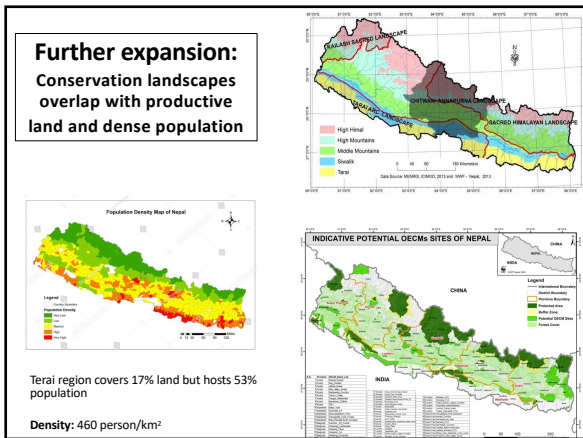
Perceived problems

- Heavy dependency and over extraction of PA resources
- Continued PA-people conflicts
- Threats to PA sustainability

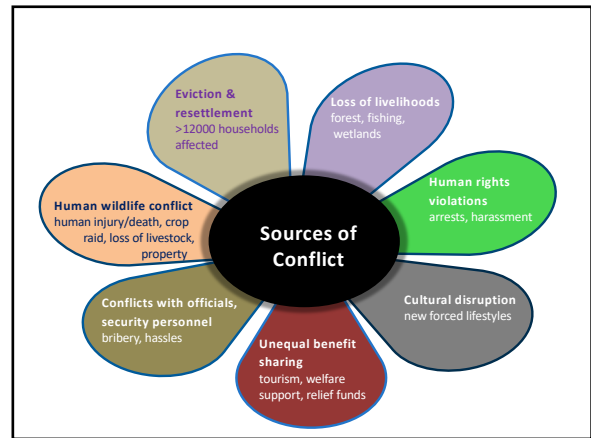
Proposed solutions

- Better management of buffer zone resources to reduce pressure on PA
- Socio-economic development in BZ to reduce dependency on forests
- Sharing of revenue: buy local loyalty

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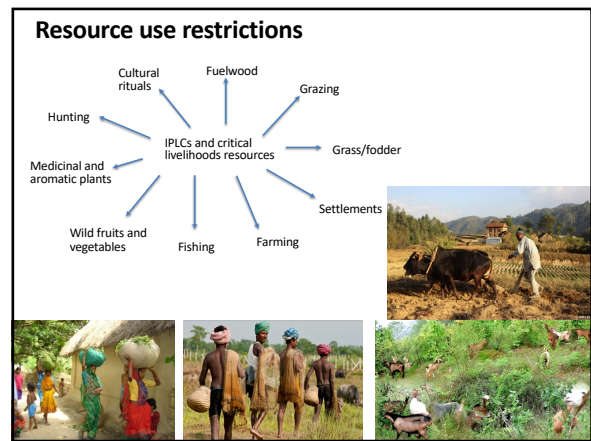
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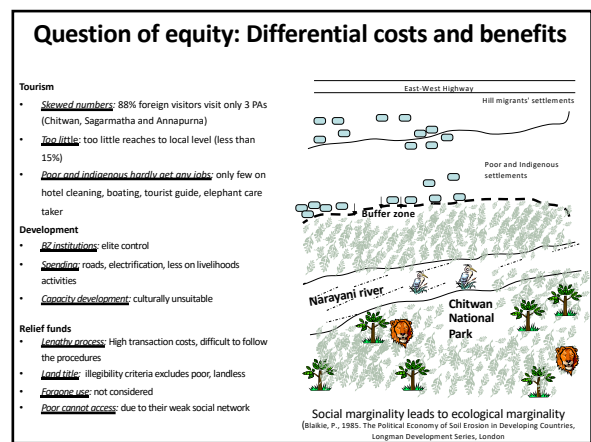


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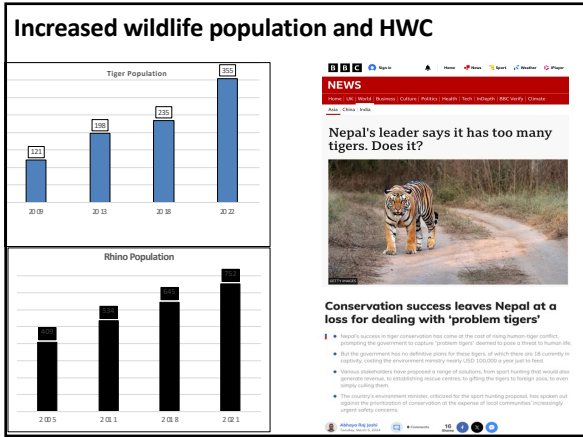


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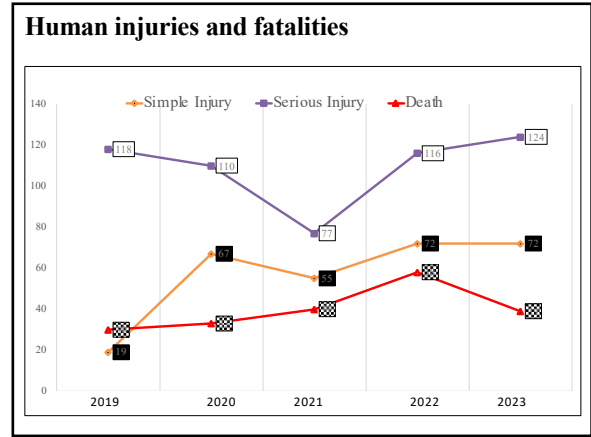
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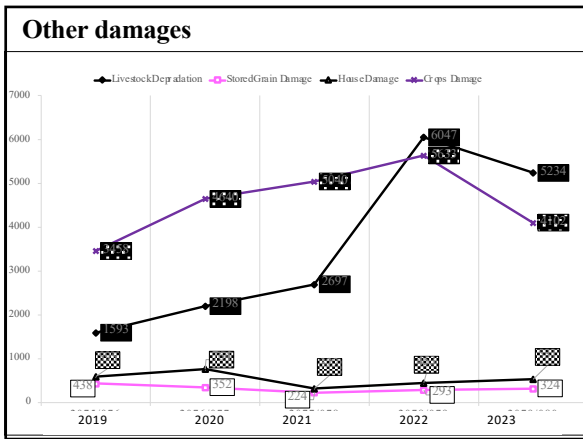
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Major problematic animals

- Monkey
- Wild Boar
- Bluebull
- Elephant
- Bear
- Tiger
- Leopard
- Rhino

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Public debate around HWC

Roundtable on Human-Monkey Conflict Management in Nepal

Organized by: [Logos of various organizations]

In Association with: [Logos of various organizations]

Large number of parliamentarians, govt employees visiting India to study measures addressing monkey menace

KATHMANDU, Feb 2: A large number of parliamentarians and government employees are visiting India in mid-February in the name of studying the measures taken to control and manage monkey menace. The team is scheduled to stay in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh, India for about a week, according to sources at the Ministry of Forest.

Farmers take out rally demanding control in monkey menace

Parliamentarians demand to control elephant terror

MP Shrestha complained that the Forest and Parks Department staff were uninterested in controlling the elephant menace, claiming that elephants destroy local people's homes, destroy crops, and make students afraid to go to school.

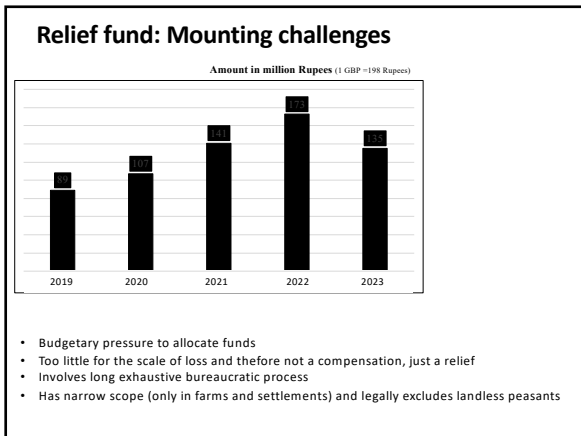
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Diverse options are piloted but with little success

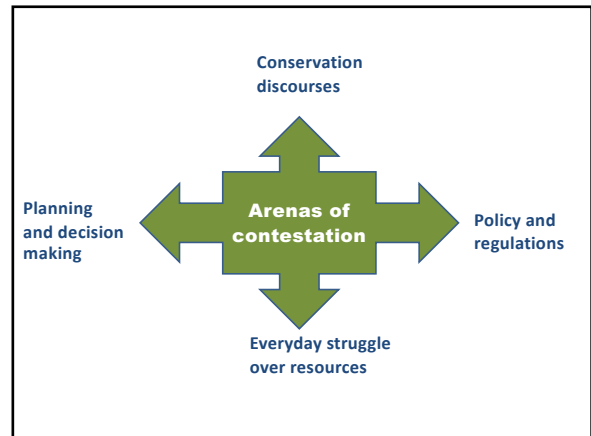
- Guarding Cropland
- Using Stones and Slingshot
- Exploding Firecrackers
- Using Tin Cans and Drums to Make Loud noises
- Keeping Guard Dog
- Constructing Scarecrows
- Lights and Torches
- Chilli Ropes

Shuklaphanta National Park constructs wall to prevent human-animal conflicts

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Key debate around PA management

Argument for status quo	Argument against status quo
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing subsistence use of resources within PAs may lead to overharvest; Officials cannot be administrator, monitor Deployment of army is crucial to protect the PAs PAs are part of our international commitment; federal government should meet these commitments Ecosystem degradation, loss of habitat and has resulted in increased HWC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allowing subsistence use does not necessarily threaten sustainability of PAs Many PAs are doing well without army, alternative approach works Sub-national governments and other local institutions should have roles in PA management Increased wildlife population and poor management of PAs have induced HWC

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Contestation around fishing restrictions – Chitwan National Park

Overfishing has resulted in decreased fish and crocodile population.
 • Fishing disturbs visitors
 • Poaching is associated with fishing

Indo-Nepal border dam affects fish movement and breeding.
 • Cement factory and urban sewage has polluted the river
 • Visitors love watching fishing
 • Poachers chose quiet areas usually away from fishermen

Dam in Narayani river *Hetauda cement factory*

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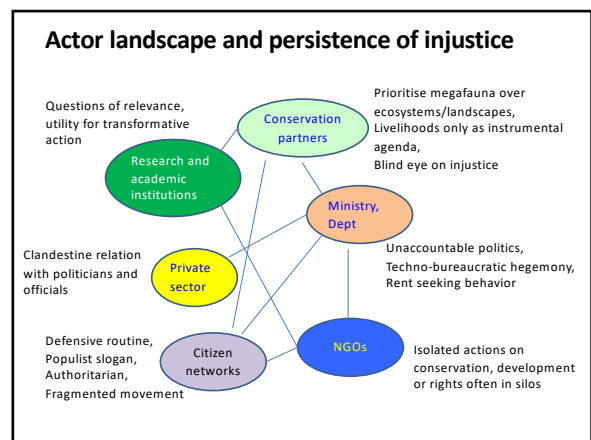
Struggle of indigenous people and local communities

EnviroLink
The environmental news site since 1991

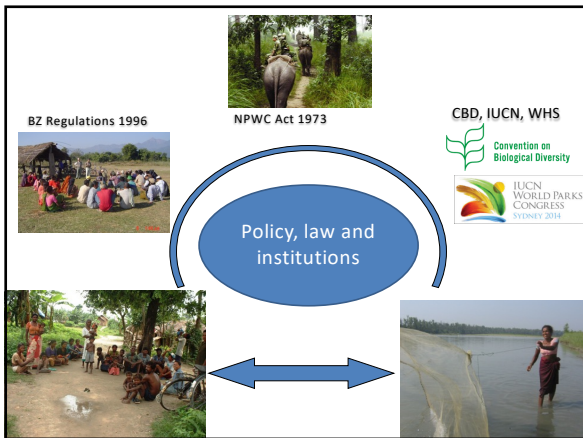
Nepal's Buffer Zone Communities Boycott Elections Over Wildlife Conflicts and Conservation Inequities

- Organised campaigns:** delegation to authorities, protest rallies
- Weapons of the weak:** everyday resistance, non-cooperation, retaliatory killing of wildlife (54% elephant killing (2000-2010) and 65% leopard killing (2006-2013)).
- Symbolic action:** No vote during last parliamentary election

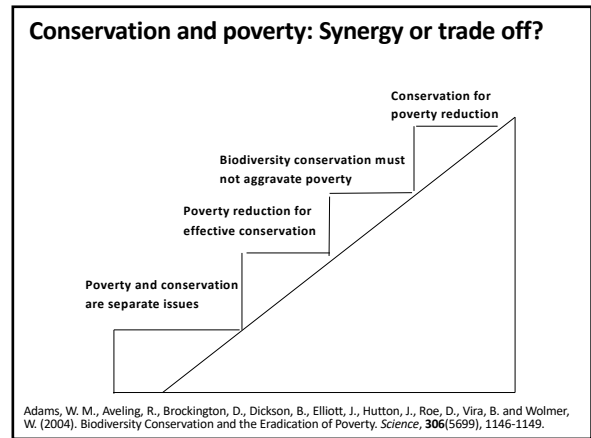
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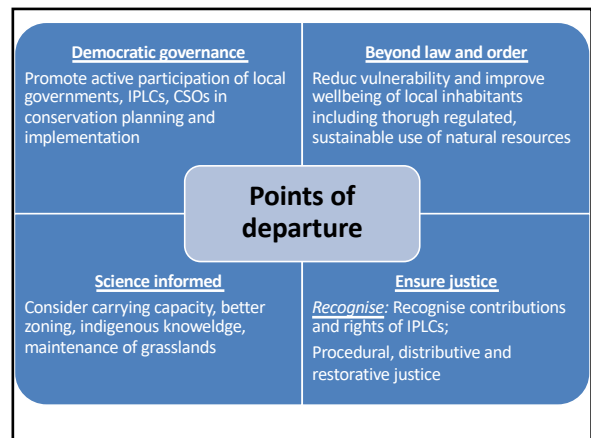
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Thank you for your time.

Any comments, questions?

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