



National Research Project On

**HIMALAYAN BORDER VILLAGES:
IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF VIBRANT
VILLAGE PROGRAMME WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT**

Anthropological Survey of India
Ministry of Culture; Government of India



About Anthropological Survey of India

The Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) is a premier organization for Anthropological research under the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, which was established in 1945. Ever since its establishment, AnSI has been engaged in research relating to all three important branches, i.e. Palaeoanthropology, Biological Anthropology and Cultural anthropology with special focus on Indian ethnic communities, including tribes. With the Head Quarter at Kolkata, it has eight (08) Research Centres at Port Blair, Shillong, Nagpur, Mysuru, Kolkata, Udaipur, Dehradun and Jagdalpur to undertake National studies and also region-specific research. With an initial research mandate of identifying the biological and cultural markers of the Indian ethnic groups and then subsequently shifting the focus to study wide range of topics, especially those falling in the domain of applied anthropology through anthropological lens, AnSI has made significant contributions to the field of

anthropology through field studies and surveys.

Background of the current study

HIMALAYAN BORDER VILLAGES: IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF VIBRANT VILLAGE PROGRAMME WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

India's strategic location in Asia has created a complex border dynamic with five neighbouring countries - Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan, Myanmar and China sharing its extensive territorial boundaries. The border regions being crucial for national security and geopolitical stability require stringent regulations to govern activities within these sensitive areas. Notably, the Indo-China border represents a critical interface between two Asian giants, marked by a centuries-long history of cooperation and competition. This intricate border dynamic is influenced by various factors including geographical diversity, cultural differences and historical



disputes, highlighting the need for thoughtful regulation, diplomatic engagement and regional cooperation to ensure stability and facilitate mutually beneficial exchange.

The Government of India has committed itself to enhancing the quality of life of people in the border areas by providing various infrastructural facilities and opportunities for growth. A cumulative total of 2,967 villages, distributed across 46 blocks within 19 districts, situated along the northern border in the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh, as well as the Union Territory of Ladakh, have been designated for holistic development under the the flagship programme of 'Vibrant Villages Programme' (VVP). Under the VVP, a multidisciplinary approach will address the complex interplay of factors influencing the quality of life, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability in these border regions. Some of the prime objectives of the VVP are: Infrastructure development (roads, housing, village infrastructure), Livelihood generation (agriculture, horticulture, tourism, skill development), Cultural preservation (promotion of local culture, heritage, and traditions), Social empowerment (education, healthcare, women's empowerment) and Economic growth (entrepreneurship, cooperative societies, financial inclusion). This programme was formally announced in





the Finance Minister's Budget Speech for the financial year 2022-2023. In accordance with the approved budgetary allocations, the Central Government shall contribute a total sum of ₹4,800 crores towards the implementation of VVP during the period spanning 2022-23 to 2025-26.

Further, the Tourism Department has prioritized the inaugural phase of this initiative, focusing on the comprehensive development of 17 villages situated in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. Through this strategic initiative, the Government aims to harness the tourism potential of these border villages, thereby stimulating local economic growth, showcasing cultural heritage, and enhancing the overall quality of life for residents.

It is in this context of the VVP, the Anthropological Survey of India (AnSI) is pursuing a comprehensive study of the above mentioned 17 'Vibrant' villages situated along the India-China border through the lens of established anthropological concepts and theories. Specifically, the investigation will focus on the emic perceptions of 'border', unique life experiences of people in border villages, issues of identity, social contacts and relationships with 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the village communities. The study will inform on social and economic impacts of developmental initiatives, dynamics of cultural continuity and change, as well as the role of community participation in development initiatives. Furthermore, the study aims to elucidate the complex patterns of development and sustainability with special reference to tourism, culture and human resources. The study will facilitate evidence-based policy decisions and understanding issues of sustainable development.

Objectives of the study:

Provide the inventory of the communities in the border villages along with brief ethnographic account of each



of the ethnic communities with special reference to migration histories, current livelihoods, social and cultural institutions, and village-based organizations,

Examine the emic perceptions of border, unique experiences of life in border villages, issues of identity, social contacts and relationships with 'insiders' and 'outsiders' of the village communities.

Assess the impact of Vibrant Village Programme in terms of socio-economic and demographic transformations, empowerment of women, cultural preservation and social development, human resource development, and effects on environmental sustainability.

Understand cultural ethos, cultural sensitivity, community perceptions and participation in the developmental initiatives in general and tourism development projects in particular.

Coverage and sample

As mentioned above, the Department of Tourism has specially highlighted 17 villages for more focused attention in terms of the development of tourism, culture and human resources out of the 2967 villages on the Himalayan border. Hence, the present study aims to cover these 17 selected villages as identified by the Tourism Ministry.



Due to the sparse population and dispersed settlement pattern of Himalayan Border villages and owing to the limitations of time and other resources, only a representative sample is proposed to be selected at the level of hamlets and households. Thus, a sample of 150 households in each village is proposed to be covered for certain basic details relating to the objectives and where necessary a stratified sampling procedure will be adopted to cover these 150 households.

The study villages

Arunachal Pradesh: 1. Zemithang; 2. Tuting; 3. Taksing; 4. Chayangtajo; 5. Kibithoo

Sikkim: 1. Lachen; 2. Lachung; 3. Gnathang

Uttarakhand: 1. Niti; 2. Mana; 3. Malari; 4. Gunji

Himachal Pradesh: 1. Gipu; 2. Lalung; 3. Charang Khas

Ladakh: 1. Chushul; 2. Korzok

Implementation Strategy

Synergistic partnerships have been established with state government departments, local universities and research institutes to obtain a holistic perspective of the Himalayan Border Village dynamics. Field camps to be established within or near the village to optimize data collection from dawn to dusk with an intensive fieldwork period of approximately forty days. A mixed method strategy will be adopted with an emphasis on qualitative data through Focused Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews, Transact walks, case Studies, Observation schedules and other Participatory Research Appraisal methods.

Collaborative Partners

National Security Council
Secretariate, Govt. of India, New
Delhi

Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India, New Delhi

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