

**An approach to effective assessments in low data environment:
evidence from Sikkim India**

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Abstract

Program evaluations for conservation interventions have to take into account the complex interrelationships of various components in an ecosystem. Measuring direct impact can be difficult, given that changes are often the result of complex systemic interactions and can take a long time to evolve. Therefore, the focus of the paper is to bring forth the importance of designing an effective program evaluation in low data environments by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach. The paper illustrates this by identifying a framework to evaluate specific measurable ecological and societal outcomes that also assist in reviewing relevance and importance of implemented policy. For this, the paper uses learning's from an ongoing research project on evaluation of grazing exclusion policy in West district of Sikkim. The findings of study would serve as an input to further impact assessment studies on grazing ban. The paper reveals how program impacts can be established by using a mix method approach. It identifies precise measurable environmental outcomes that also assist in reviewing relevance and importance of implemented

Key words: low data environment, conservation policy evaluation, impact assessment, grazing ban, effective assessment