

ISSN: 2230-9926

Available online at http://www.journalijdr.com



International Journal of Development Research Vol. 13, Issue, 05, pp. 62724-62726, May, 2023 https://doi.org/10.37118/ijdr.26706.05.2023



RESEARCH ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

ZANSKAR VALLEY: A BREIEF OVERVIEW ABOUT THE HIDDEN GEM OF LADAKH REGION

*Indrani Karar

Department of Registrar, University of Kalyani, Kalyani, Nadia, West Bengal, India

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 08th March, 2023 Received in revised form 15th April, 2023 Accepted 26th April, 2023 Published online 30th May, 2023

KeyWords:

Great Himalayas, Zanskar Tehsil, General topography.

*Corresponding author: Ahmat Mahamat Assafi

ABSTRACT

Zanskar Valley is situated in the northern flank of Great Himalayas, a semi arid region at an altitude of 13154 ft. Zanskar Tehsil is a remote region due to its rugged topographical configuration, harsh environment and acute cold climatic conditions. The objective of this paper is to depict a brief overview about general topography, climatic conditions and transport & communication facility, religious festival and livelihood of the people of the Zanskar region.

Copyright©2023, Ahmat Mahamat Assafi et al. This is an open access article distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

Citation: Ahmat Mahamat Assafi, Soudy Imar Djibrine, Ngomdé Djasnabaye, Nohya Okondza Delvina, Kodji Laurent, Hassana Mahamat Hassana, Madjimbaye Patcha, Teswe Djonkreo, Ndjekounoudji Serge and Nakour Nargaye. 2023. "Assessment of the nutritional profile of "maralfalfa" (pennisetum sp) associated with molasses". International Journal of Development Research, 13, (05), 62724-62726.

INTRODUCTION

Zanskar Valley is high altitude semi desert situated at the height of 13154 ft. It is a semi-arid region which is nestled in the lap of the northern flank of Great Himalayas. Tandup, C.(2014) has studied the natural environment of the Zanskar region and depicted the utilization of natural resources are constrained by the harsh climatic condition with rugged topography and underdeveloped technology. This paper depicts the topography of the Zanskar Valley, exploring road connectivity to Zanskar valley, focusing on culture and livelihood of the Zanskaries.

Topography of the Zanskar Valley: The mountain ranges of the Zanskar Valley includes the Northern face of the Great Himalayan Range in the south west which create boundary with Lahaul, Spiti and Chamba districts of Himachal Pradesh and district of Doda and Kishtwar of Jammu and Kashmir. The other is the Zanskar Range which is parallel to the Great Himalayan Range. Zanskar is situated along thee the two main branches of the Zanskar river. The first tributary is the Doda River having its origin at the Pensi La pass on the Kargil- padum route. The river flows along the south-east direction of the main valley approaching towards Padum. The second branch is originated by the two tributaries namely Kurgiakh river with

source near the Shinkula La pass and the Trasap Chu River with source near Baralacha La pass. The Kurgiakh river and the Tsarap Chu River meet at the village Purney to form the Lungnak river. This Lungnak river flows in the north-west direction and joins the Doda River to form the Zanakar River. The hydrographic system of the whole Zanskar has its only outlet namely the Zanskar river which consists of steep and narrow Zanskar Gorge flows by the Zanskar range.

Road connectivity to reach Zanskar Valley: Road connectivity to Zanskar Valley includes the following:

Leh – Lamayuru – Mulbekh – Kargil – Sankoo – Panikhar – Rangdum – Padum.

Zanskar Valley consists of mountain ranges namely the Northern face of the Great Himalayan Range and the Zanskar Range. Communication is possible with zanskar valley either through high mountain passes other than winter months or along the Zanskar river during winter months. Zanskar is situated approximate 460 km away from Leh city. Padum is the only town and administrative centre of Zanskar.

The road from Leh to Zanskar Valley via Karigil is Leh – Lamayuru – Mulbekh – Kargil – Sankoo – Panikhar –

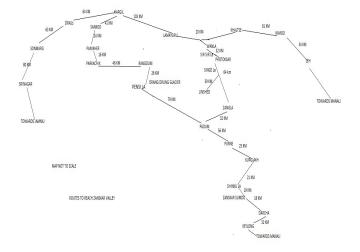
Rangdum – Padum. This is road from Kargil through Suru Valley and Pensi La pass. This route to Zanskar was constructed in year 1979 to join Padum with Kargil. But due to harsh climatic condition during the winter season Padum remains disconnected from rest of the world from November to June. The Kargil-Padum route also remains closed during winters.

Chader Trek/Frozen River Trek: During the severe cold winter months the region remains covered in the thick blanket of snow, movement of the people within in the region is a complete impasse and no activity is feasible during these months. The temperature ranges between -2 degree to -35 degree Centigrade. During the winter months the Zanskar River freezes and provides a route to Leh District. This route is known as the Chadar Route or r Frozen River Trek. During the month of December to the first week of February, the people of Zanskar region track on this route to reach Leh City. This trail has become popular among the adventure tourists. The best time for Chadar Trek is from January to February when the temperature lies betwwn -25 degree to -35 degree centigrade. The trail initiates from the Chilling Village and continues upto the Nerak, the frozen waterfall through the narrow and steep Zanskar River Gorge. Other trekker also organizes this trail upto the Linshed.

Manali- Darcha-Shinkula-Padum-Nimu-Leh: Recently BRO will construct the highest tunnel of the world at Shinku La pass at an altitude of 16580ft. This will connect Himachal Pradesh with Zanskar Valley in Ladakh. The economy of Zanskar Valley will get changed due to the construction of this tunnel and will be completed by 2025. This is thethird alternative highway to connect Ladakh with Himachal Pradesh via Manali- Darcha-Shinkula-Padum-Nimu-Leh. This road will facilitate military movement even during winter months as Manali-Sarchu-Leh and Srinagar-Zojila-Leh highways remains blocked due to heavy snowfall for five to seven months in a year. The length of the Shinku La Tunnel is expected to be 4.25 km long. The distance between the Darcha-Shinkula pass - Padum-Nimu highway will be 297 KM. Strategically, the 297-km-long Darcha-Shinku La-Padum-Nimmu road will add advantages over other two highways which consists of many mountain passes and takes a much longer time to travel. This road far from both Chinese and Pakistan borders and facilitate safe and fast movement to the military convoys. This highway will become the main lifeline for military supply for future and will be reply of India to China which is advancing its infrastructure at border.

Another new route from Leh to Zanskar Valley has been constructed which has reduced the distance by 160 km and thus the travel time in one day. However, this road is under construction and thre are places with no roads at all. This is basically an off-roading experience for adventure lovers. The route can be completed in one day and covers the following places:

Leh – Khaltse – Wanla – Hanupatta – Sir Sir La – Photoksar – Singe La - Linshed – Zangla -- Padum



Some important Monasteries of the Zanskar valley

Phugtal Monastery: Phugtal Monastery is one of the most jaw dropping Buddhist cave monastery in the Lungnak Valley of the Zanskar region came into existence around 2500 years ago. The monastery has been built around a cave with complete isolation over years. The name Phugtal means Phug = cave, tal = liberation. It is one of the oldest and most remote monasteries in the world. This monastery is abode to nearly hundred lamas (monks). The monastery has eastablished the Phuktal Monastic School to disseminate education to the students of the Lungnak Valley of the Zanskar region. Guided by the instruction of Geshe Lharampa Nagri Choszed the school has been established in 1993. The course curriculum and learning consist of traditional learning and modern curriculum. Education is imparted to the students free of cost and the expenditure in terms of room, board and study material are beard by the monastery with help from sponsors. Students are mostly from extremely poor family and hardy with any educational background. They are basically from the Lungnak Valley and belong to farming families. The Phuktal Monastic School offers quality education to these students completely free of cost.

Mt. Gombo Rangjon: Mt. Gonbo Rangjon is the sacred and holy mountain of the Zanskari who practice Tibetian Buddhism located at a distance of 16 km away from Kurgiak Village in the Lungnak Valley of the Zanskar Region. It lies along the Darcha – Padum route via Shinku La pass. Its elevation is 17450ft.

Dzonkhul Monastery: Dzongkhul Monastary is another cave monastery with a majestic and mysterious outlook located in the Zanskar region. It is situated in the Stod Valley of the Zanskar and at a distance 32 km from padum. The monastery is dedicated to Buddhist Yougi or saint Mahasiddha Naropa and believed to have meditated in this monastery. The wide valley lies at some distance from the monastery gives the picturesque view of the pristine Omasi La Pass which connects the Zanskar Valley with the Kishtwar region of Jammu & Kashmir. The cave wals consist of frescoes designed about 300 years ago by a famous painter and scholar named Zahdpa Dorje. This monastery is a place of absolute peace and solitude with its profound vast emptiness and remoteness.

Stongdey Monastery: Stongdey Monastery is the second largest Buddhist monastery of the Zanskar Valley situated at distance nearly 18 km north of Padum on the way to Zangla. It is an abode of approximately 60 monks and consists of seven temples. The temple of Tshogs-khang is major attraction for its magnificent work of art of paintings made on black background and bordered with gold. Stondey monastery is famous for its Gustor festival which is celebrated annually on the 28th and 29th day of the eleventh month of the Tibetan calendar.

Karsha Monastery: Karsha is the largest monastery of the Zanskar valley situated in the Karsha village at a distance of approximately 14 km from Padum. The monastery is the residence for 100 monks and consist of exquisite cloth paintings with gold outline and colourful threads. The Chorten in the monastery has the mummified body of Rinchen Zangpo who is believed to be an incarnate lama. Gustor festival is the important festival of the monastery which is celebrated between the 26th and 29th day of the sixth month of the Tibetan calendar. During this festival the famous cham dance are performed. This is lively masked and costumed dance accompanied by traditional Tibetan musical instruments played by the monks. The river rafting in Zanskar river is available in the Karsha village. The rafting takes place through the narrow gorge of freezing Zanskar river which is known as the 'Grand Canyon' of Asia. The rafting initiates from Remala and completes at Karsha.

Sani Monastery: Sani Monastery is located in the Sani Village where the Stod Valley expands into the central plain of Zanskar Valley. The monastery is situated at a distance of 6km north west of Padum. This monastery is believed to be the oldest religious site of the Zanskar valley and the only monastery of the Drukpa order which has nuns.

The Nungnes festival celebrated in the month of July and the Sani Naro-Nasjal is celebrated during August with the blooming of the 'Guru Neropa Flower'.

Livelihood of the people of the Zanskar Valley: Majority of the inhabitants of the Zanskar Valley practice Tibetan Buddhism and a small portion of the population are Sunni Muslims. The Zanskaris are mixed of Tibetans and Indo-European origins; mainly Changpa, Dard and Mon. Villages of the Zanskar Valley are situated along the two main tributaries. The remoteness of the villages tend Zanskari people to adapt self-sufficiency. Rearing of the cattle and land farming are the main occupations of the Zanskari people. There is a scarcity of fertile cultivation land at an elevation of 4000 meters. Such harsh climatic conditions have enable the Zanskaries to develop intensive arable system of agriculture and complex irrigation system to generate adequate food and sustainable living. The practice of polyandrous marriage has enabled the Zanskaris an effective birth control system. Also the mortality rate of infants are considerably high which add to population stability. The transhumance system are practiced where the women and children from the villages of Zanskar stay far away from their residence to tend to the live stock during summer season.

CONCLUSIONS

Zanskar is a high altitude region with land of high mountain passes, remoteness due to rugged and barren topography followed by tough livelihood of the Zanskaries because of harsh climatic condition of the region.

The region of Zanskar is limited to resources in terms of inadequate agricultural land, fuels and mineral resources and scarcity of water. This paper depicts that Zanskar will no more be an isolated region during winter as this region will have different road connectivity and thus will be reachable throughout the year. The new routes to Zanskar will improve the socio-economic status of the Zanskaries through promoting tourism, hiking and trekking among the mountain lovers for exploring the different regions of Zanskar.

REFERENCES

- 1. https://www.ijsrp.org/research-paper-0814/ijsrp-p3270.pdf
- https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/zanskarthe-hidden-gem-of-ladakh/photostory/85176496.cms
- 3. https://discoverlehladakh.in/shinku-la-tunnel.htm
- https://www.taleof2backpackers.com/how-to-reach-zanskar-valley/
- https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/explore/story/714 70/phugtal-monastery-the-2500-year-old-cave-of-liberation
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gumbok_Ranganhttps://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gumbok Rangan
- 7. https://www.taleof2backpackers.com/dzongkhul-monastery/
- https://www.tourmyindia.com/states/ladakh/stongdeymonastery.html
- 9. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kursha Monastery
- 10. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sani_Monastery
