

## ABSTRACT

### Transmission of local ecological knowledge in South India

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Article 8j from the Convention on Biological Diversity specifically acknowledges the role played by the local ecological knowledge in the sustainable management of natural resources. New policies based on that principle affect how this knowledge is turned into actions and how it is shaped in return. Anthropological theory predicts the transmission of this knowledge through social learning will affect how it is passed down and also shape its future composition. This project aims to understand how individuals acquire ecological knowledge under a context of new public policies and how development and exclusion from the forest might affect the transfer of this ecological knowledge and thus its composition within the local communities.

The study area is located in Kodagu, on the Western Ghats, where the *Jenu Kuruba* (Jenu means honey, Kuruba is the name of a tribe) community is traditionally associated to the forests and the collection of non-timber forest products. As restrictions on harvesting resources in the forest increase, the Jenu Kuruba supplement subsistence on forest products with wage labor as skilled workers. They are the ones called to climb the trees and prune them in the adjacent coffee estates.

Together with other groups, they are the target of Joint Forest Management Schemes aiming to improve natural resources management and develop their livelihood. Katie Demps will study their practices and ecological knowledge in this new political context, focusing on the transmission of this knowledge about the forest and the harvesting of non-timber forest products, especially honey collection.

Focusing on the taluk of Virajpet, she will look at how local ecological knowledge is transmitted between individuals and how corresponding factors such as development, conservation management, or removal from the forest affect the depth and breadth of that knowledge.