

Wetland Culture

Meaning, Concept & Application

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1. Meaning & Concept

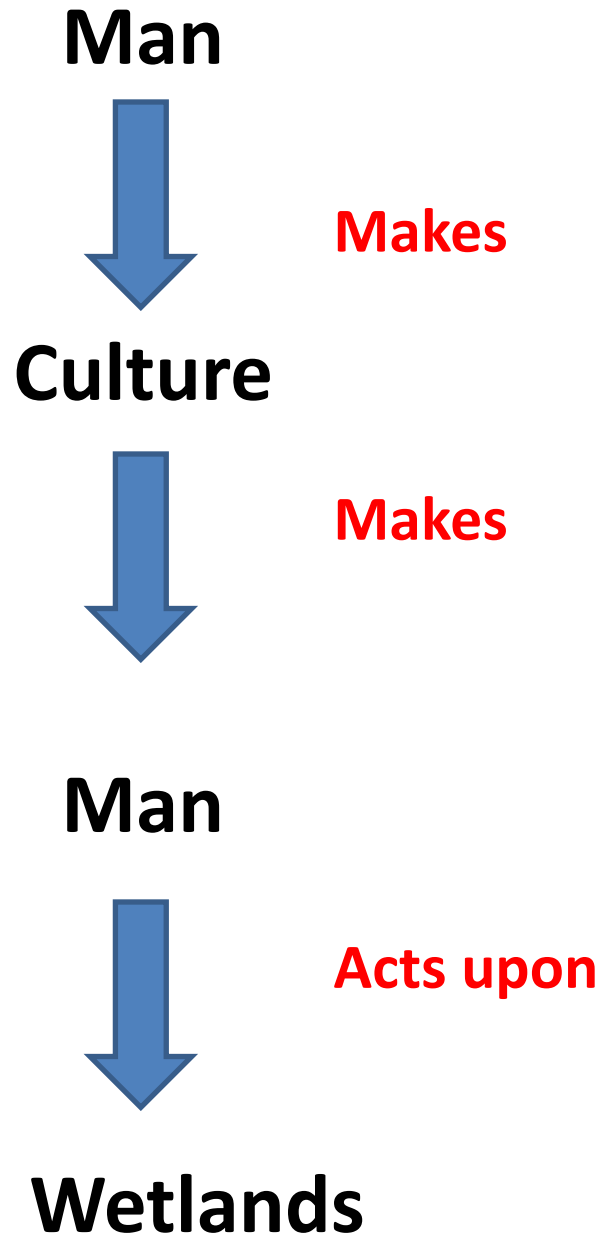
1. Culture has been used frequently & loosely for different purposes at different times & places.



2. Culture means many things to many people & its meaning varies from place to place.

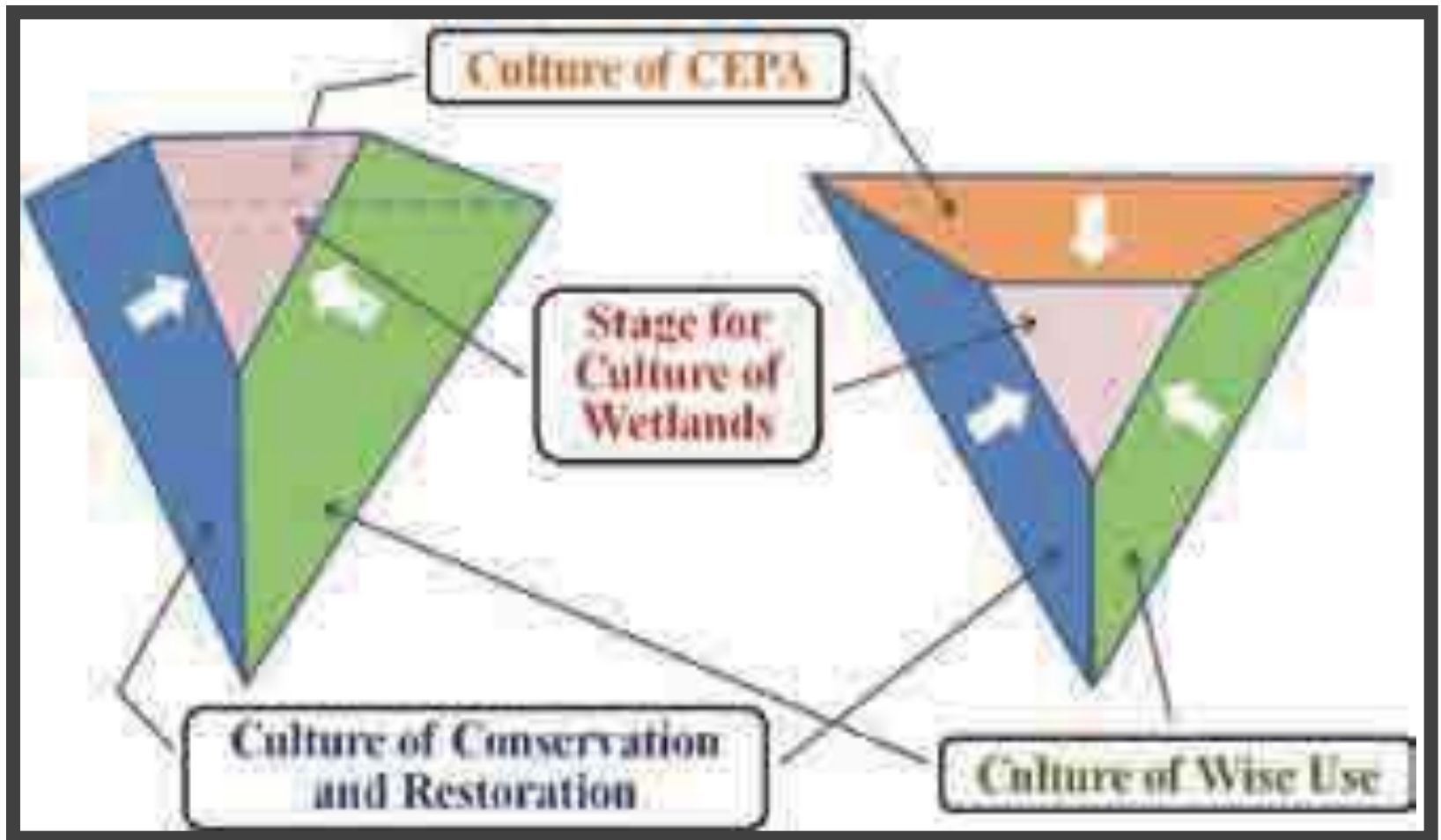
3. Culture is the way of life, lifestyle & livelihoods. Therefore, culture that occurs in a wetland is wetland culture.

4. Man makes culture & culture makes a man.



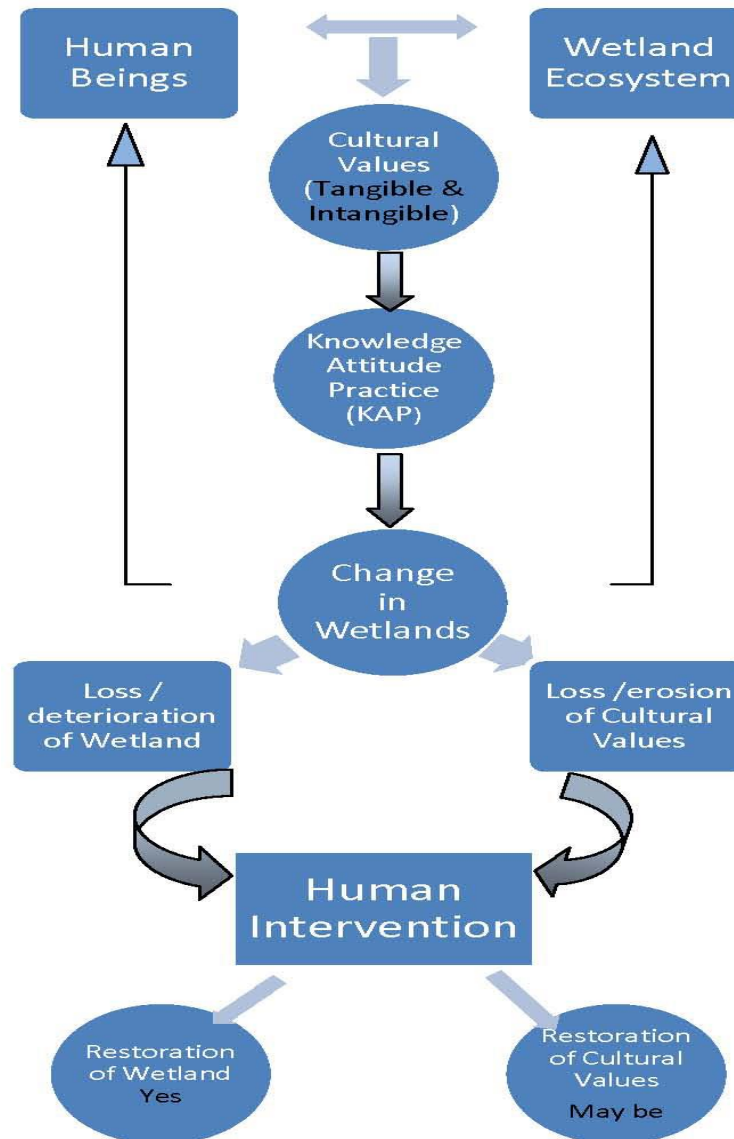
Makes or breaks or indifference

5. The lifestyles transmitted & developed by the people in a specific wetland area is called wetland culture.



Source: Wetland Culture in East Asia by Sasagawa et. al (2015). Wetlands International.

6. Links between Human Action, Culture & Wetland Loss



7. Reasons to Use Wetlands Wisely

- Creates **socio-spiritual energy & enthusiasm** **in** local communities
- Strengthens the **identity** of the communities
- Enhances the **community ownership** and their responsibilities

2. Cultural Attributes

2.1. Urban Wetland (Gahana Pokhari Kathmandu, Nepal)

1. An urban pond
2. One of the oldest ponds used for domestic use, animals and fire protection
3. Cultural festival: carrying the Chariot of Goddess Tuladevi for the search of the lost jewelry.

Have religious swim

1. Festival is held on 12 April every year.
2. Protected it only for this reason. Otherwise, it would have succumbed to encroachment, road widening & others.
3. Many such examples



2.2. Rural Wetland

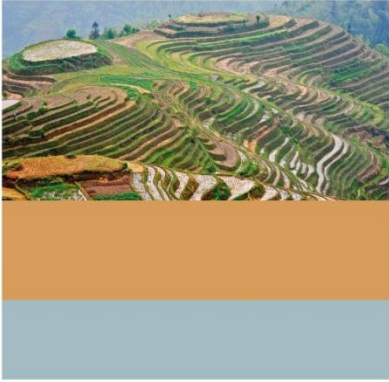


1. Many such wetlands
2. Many uses: domestic uses, personal sanitation, fire extinguishing, irrigation & fisheries
3. Collective fishing
4. Community clean, remove invasive plants, fix its boundaries, water area, when water dries.
5. Many places deities worshipped.
6. Protection from encroachment, solid waste & worship as the water deity.

2.3. High Altitude Lake (Gosainkunda)



- High altitude at 4381 m.
- Almost 40,000 pilgrims thong there to take sacred bath.
- Cleaning the lake immediately by youth
- Place designated for temporary shelter.
- Protected only for its sacredness.
- Now known for breeding ground of the Bar-headed goose & habitat for the Red Panda, an endangered species.



3. Culture of Wise Use

3.1. Tagal System of Fisheries, Sabah (Malaysia)



1. Plenty of fish harvest



2. Swimming with fishes



3. Body message with fishes

3.2 Examples from Myanmar



Cultural Trait in Indawgyi Lake

Intha & Floating Garden inInle Lake



Stilt Fishing In Sri Lanka



4. Confluence of Superstition & Conservation

4.1. Kukurmara in Assam is the safe heaven for Dolphin.



4.2. Old trees are the abode of evil spirits.



Never cut and its houses 400 species of insects.

5. Injudicious Use

5.1. Non-judicious Use



After the Toxic spill in Vietnam in 2016



Fish for Drying in Bangladesh



Overfishing is worse than we thought

6. Issues & Conclusion

- **Value First and then Conservation** (Gahana Pokhari and Gosainkunda).
- **Knowledge First and then Conservation** (Concerned with cultural values not the culture to popularize the wetlands)
- Promote every thing **even superstition** to conserve wetland.

**In the end,
We will conserve only what we love,
We will love only what we understand, and
We will understand only what we are taught.**

**-- (Baba Dioum, Senegalese Forestry Engineer
at IUCN General Assembly 1968, New Delhi)**