As rapidly industrializing countries like India emit more greenhouse gases, tree plantations will continue to be an important forest management tool for policy makers. The Indian government is committed to achieving 33% forest cover under its National Forest Policy, and one of the key methods being employed to achieve this goal is through plantations. This paper focuses on plantation projects that have been implemented in Kangra district, Himachal Pradesh in Northern India. The landscape in the district was historically a mosaic of land use types including forests, grazing land and agricultural farms. Oral history and semi-structured interview methods is employed with a heterogeneous group of villagers to gauge the longitudinal perception of the remaking of landscapes and the change of tree composition of forests. In addition, the differential impact of characteristic growth patterns of tree species on rural communities is also investigated. Focusing on a mixed agro-pastoral rural community, this paper also discusses how plantations are intersecting with other socio-economic factors to impact livelihood patterns of rural households.

A diachronic approach is undertaken to delineate the growth history of plantations and how they are embedded in the life history memories of people. GIS data of plantations is also collected and analyzed to supplement oral histories with the spatial history of the location, and understand how plantation boundaries were formed and the land-covers that were replaced. The paper also takes an in depth look at key mediating factors, including institutional/ administrative structures and local power matrices that intersect with plantations to impact rural livelihoods. The study finds that plantations have differentially and unevenly impacted different socio-economic groups of people and caste-identified communities. Plantations are impacting communities across the globe in a variety of manners. While there is substantive quantitative data that unpacks the impact of plantations on rural livelihoods, there is a lack of qualitative understanding of how plantations influence individual livelihoods at a deep level. Through an analysis of plantations in Kangra, this paper presents how plantations are intermingled with people's lives in material and abstract ways.