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Welcome to the second issue of 'People in Conservation'. It is impossible to escape the bad news that has been pouring in from all parts of the country. The Asiatic Lions in Gir, the one-horned rhinos in Assam's Kaziranga park and elephants from Orissa are all under threat. The partial tiger count conducted by the Wildlife Institute of India and the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) indicates that the number of tigers in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan may have gone down by 50%. News about agrarian and other traditional communities is not reassuring either with thousands of farmers in the country committing suicide and whole communities being displaced from their homelands due to SEZ and other mega-projects coming up on their land against their will.

But as we put this newsletter together, we see an alternative world emerge. A world where ex-poachers, ex-insurgents, tribal women, farmers, researchers, forest department officials, fishermen, local institutions, state government officials and NGOs from all over the country are doing their bit everyday to save India's forests, water, flora and fauna and renewing our faith in the fact that there is indeed a silent mass in the country which is working towards a way of life that is more sustainable both from the point of view of biodiversity conservation and generation of livelihoods. The broad gamut of people involved also points to the fact that 'everybody' has a role to play in conserving the biodiversity of this land. The faster this fact is built into our law and policy and all other aspects of governance (along with inbuilt checks against misuse) the better it is for the twin objectives of biodiversity conservation and livelihood security.

The passing of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 by the Indian Parliament is an important first step in this direction and is in keeping with the emerging inclusive world view on conservation and human rights. But we live in complicated times, where just well-intentioned laws and courageous initiatives by themselves are not enough. The Act by itself is far from perfect and in its current state is open to misuse and misinterpretation

which will work to the detriment of both wildlife and equity. Hope again lies in the fact that different groups and civil society have come together to form networks and work out ways and means to make this Act more meaningful.

Each of us has a bit of the jigsaw puzzle that will build up the holistic picture where people and the rest of biodiversity live together and flourish in harmony, and as we put in our pieces of this jigsaw puzzle the larger picture cannot but emerge.

Law and Policy



The Human Face of the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006

In our last issue we talked of the two new categories that had been included in the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act, 2003 namely Community Reserves and Conservation Reserves and how on closer inspection the names though encouraging did not really do much to provide the much needed support to most of the community based conservation efforts in the country.

The Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 has gone through another amendment in 2006, and though the amendment deals mainly with tiger reserves, it holds hope for an inclusive and participatory model of conservation in all sanctuaries and national parks. The disappearance of tigers in Sariska, prompted the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh to set up the Tiger Task Force (TTF) in 2005, with a mandate to review the state of tiger conservation efforts and suggest ways to stop the loss of tigers in the country.

In the past, some of those who have given shape to the official conservation program of the country have been painfully aware of the fact that in India, humans share habitats with tigers and that efforts to conserve the tiger should take this fact into account. But invariably when push came to shove, the official conservation programmes rededicated themselves to the guns-and-walls non-inclusive mode of protection.

The Tiger Task Force (TTF) took cognisance of this big drawback within the official conservation programme which impoverished forest communities, made them thieves in their own homes and enemies of the conservation programme which they saw as the root cause of their misery. The report of the TTF clearly stated, *"The protection of the tiger is inseparable from the protection of the forests it roams in. But the protection of these forests is itself inseparable from the fortunes of people who in India, inhabit forested areas. Thus, any regulatory or enforcement regime that wishes to throw a protective ring around the tiger must take cognisance that apart from the tiger the protection equation contains two other variables: The forest and the people that live around it."*

Given below are some of the recommendations of the TTF report that tries to safeguard the tigers by involving local communities in the conservation effort and sharing the benefits of conservation with them.

- *'People will continue to live in protected areas: policy must accept this. It is not possible to settle the rights and relocate all families living in the reserves. The facts are clear: in the last 30 years less than 10% of these families in tiger reserves have been relocated.'*
- *'...the selective interpretations of the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 which curtails the use of resources by people without taking into account the safeguards has only led to greater unrest around our protected areas and has been detrimental to conservation.'*
- *'Strategies for joint-collaborative-inclusive management of our protected areas are then essential, so that this 'illegal' use is made legal and regulated.'*

In a clear effort to officially bridge the gap between local people's livelihood needs and the requirements of conservation, the TTF report recommended that:

- *'Further recruitment of staff – foresters as well as guards – should be reserved for local villagers. The criterion for recruitment should be amended so that it relaxes the formal educational qualifications needed for these positions and instead values skills in jungle craft. In addition there should be provision for in-service training for locally recruited staff.'*
- *'Identify the major hunting tribes and communities in proximity to, or operating in, a reserve. Each park authority must work to develop plans to use the expertise of these hunters for protection as well as gathering basic ecological information.'*
- *'... if the park management does not have the capacities to manage tourism efforts must be made to involve local communities and staff welfare associations to the running of affairs...'*
- *'The areas adjacent to the park – its fringes and high impact zone – must be reserved for homestead-based tourism run on a small scale by local communities...'*
- *'The reserve must ensure that all possible avenues of engaging local communities are exhausted before it resorts to using other resources as guides and for other employment and work opportunities.'*
- *'...The benefits of the pilgrimage activity must accrue to local communities.'*
- *'The Project Tiger directorate must take urgent initiative to begin a definite and time bound programme of payment for ecological services to stakeholders. It must work with the tiger reserves to carry out an evaluation of the ecosystem services that accrue to the nation from the reserves, and must formulate the mechanism for charging the city/area/districts that get water from the watersheds secured by this reserve. The revenue so earned can be shared between the reserve authorities and the people in and around the reserve in an equitable fashion.'*

The report did create much debate and discussion, some of which came from a genuine concern, that the opening up of tiger reserves to a wider constituency would dilute the little control that the authorities have over these areas and lead to the wiping out of what remains of the forests and its wildlife, the tiger included. It is this fear that has single-mindedly directed the conservation system in the past and made it blind to the related social concerns that continue to be thrown up as a direct result of the system of conservation.

In 2006, as a result of the recommendations of the TTF, the WLPA, 1972 was amended and the WLPA, 2006 came into being. The main changes in the Act are the Sections IVB and IVC added to constitute the National Tiger Conservation Authority and a Tiger and Other Endangered Species Crime Control Bureau respectively.

The amended Act, though not as explicit in its support of the wider constituency of the tiger and wildlife protection gives some indication that official Wildlife Protection has taken into consideration the concerns raised by the TTF.

Section 38(V)(5) of the Act seems to indicate that before any relocation takes place, the following criteria will have to be satisfied:

- The process of recognition and determination of rights and acquisition of land or forest rights of the Scheduled Tribes and such other forest dwelling persons is completed.
- The authorities have to consult an ecological scientist and a social scientist, both of whom are familiar with the tiger reserve area under question and it should be established that the activities of the local forest dwellers will cause irreversible damage to, and threaten the existence of tigers and their habitat.
- The authorities must also have come to the conclusion that there is no other reasonable options for coexistence.
- The authorities must also have the informed consent of the Gram Sabha and the persons who will be affected by relocation.

This is a welcome change from the days when reserve areas were set up sans rigorous studies and

justification and where no informed consent of those who would be affected was required before relocation.

It is hoped that the guidelines will strengthen the participatory and inclusive nature of the Act as well as take care of the genuine concerns that have been expressed with regard to the shift in paradigm. This will go a long way in widening the support base of tiger conservation in the country. A good start has been made in the tiger reserves of the country; it is time that a similar shift in paradigm is made in the rest of the national parks and sanctuaries as well.

Source: The Report of The Tiger Task Force, Joining The Dots, The Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006

Contact: Erica Taraporevala at the editorial address

Case Study

Mangaljodi – The Turnaround from Poaching to Conservation



Chilka Lake, the country's largest brackish water-body situated in the state of Orissa is a natural haven for resident as well as migratory birds. Among the birds spotted here are the Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax niger*), Indian Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax fuscicollis*), Grey Heron (*Ardea cinerea*), Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*), Intermediate Egret (*Mesophoyx intermedia*), Cinnamon Bittern (*Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*), Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Asian Openbill (*Anastomus oscitans*), Lesser Whistling Teal (*Dendrocygna javanica*), White-breasted Waterhen (*Amauromis phoenicurus*) and the Brown Crake (*Amauromis akool*). The lake is

surrounded by villages and in most of them a number of villagers have been involved in some form of hunting or poaching in order to earn a livelihood. Before the turn of the last century, Mangaljodi was one such village.

In the year 1996-97, Wild Orissa, an environment group was constituted by a number of residents from around the Chilka Lake. These residents were concerned about the ongoing bird hunting and poaching and its impact on the bird population. Those who initiated and registered the group hoped that involvement with the activities of this NGO would encourage others to stop their poaching activities. Starting up the process was difficult but slowly through their sustained sincere presence and sharing in the lives of the local people, Wild Orissa and the cause of bird conservation gained friends in Mangaljodi village. An invitation to Wild Orissa by the Forest Department to help in waterfowl conservation in Chilka Lake gave further impetus to the movement and in the same year the Sri Mahavir Pakshi Surakshya Samiti, a bird protection committee was formed in Mangaljodi.

Activities of Wild Orissa and Sri Mahavir Pakshi Surakshya Samiti include monitoring the waters, patrolling during odd hours against poaching of bird eggs, taking school children out on boat excursions to bird breeding habitats and conducting other activities with them in order to raise their awareness of the special status of the area. Besides this, the members of the NGO and the committee also hold meetings with various officials and seek the interventions of the Chief Wildlife Warden, the Irrigation Department and the Chilka Development Authority on the more fragile waterfowl breeding habitats, work closely with visiting scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society, helping them identify previously unknown nesting and breeding sites.

The efforts won early recognition. In 2001 Sri Mahavir Pakshi Surakshya Samiti of Mangaljodi received the Pakshi Bandhu Award from the Chief Minister of the State. The same year the movement found another ally in the Chilka Development Authority (CDA). The CDA has given funds towards the construction of a bird interpretation centre, watch towers, nature trails, benches and jettys for visitors. It has also initiated a dredging operation to deepen the channel connecting

Mangalajodi with the main Chilka Lake so as to enable the easy movement of boats. An eco-tourist project was started in 2002 at Mangalajodi, and the village has received a good number of visitors since then. The Directorate of Tourism Orissa is also doing its bit to enable increased earnings from eco-tourism and has taken on the responsibility of imparting eco-guide training to about 50 persons from Mangalajodi and the nearby Sundarpur village. Wild Orissa continues to support and work closely with the Samiti. Amongst other things it has procured small wooden boats which are used for patrolling and monitoring of the bird area. The locals who are part of the conservation team also use these boats for sustainable fishing. Villagers along with members of Wild Orissa, have identified an area, locally called Mangalajodi Ghera, which is a 1.5 square kilometer area of Chilka Lake adjacent to the village, that has been enclosed by an earthen embankment built around it. This area retains water for much of the year and the protection activities of the villagers has ensured that this site is safe for birds. Wild Orissa and the bird protection committee are negotiating with the State Wildlife Wing as well as the Irrigation Department, to ensure that water after the rains is retained inside this closed embankment at least till the month of March every year. The local bird protection committee, Wild Orissa, and the Orissa Forest Department are now trying to see if this initiative could spread to neighbouring villages, which would help spread a ring of protection around Chilka.

All this is good news, but there are challenges ahead that have to be met to make this effort sustainable. Mangalajodi is extremely sensitive to external disturbances and increased human movement due to its popularity may lead to the birds abandoning the area. The Bird Protection Committee and Wild Orissa are aware of this and have put in place rules and regulations that ensure that bird sites are not over used by any of the stakeholders. The effectiveness of these rules and their execution in protecting bird sites will have to be constantly monitored and changes made as and when necessary in the interest of conservation. The groups have to ensure that there continues to be a sustainable income for the ex-hunters turned conservationists, without which it would be impossible for these key players to be involved in the water fowl conservation effort. Both Wild Orissa and the bird protection committee face financial constraints and many schemes and

programmes are not able to take off due to this constraint and lack of equipments like boats, binoculars and documentation equipment. It is also important that some legal protection is offered to this area, however the legal support would need to take into account the fact that birds in Mangalajodi would not be safe but for the efforts of local villagers and any decision that is taken about the area should be with the consent of the local villagers.

What could have motivated ex-poachers who earned a relatively princely sum before through their hunting and poaching activities to turn into protectors of birds even though they earn a pittance in their new role? Two ex-poachers turned protectors explained that it was an interplay of many forces; these included the rejuvenation of a long lost tradition whereby villagers were respectful of their activities in the lake and propitiated the Chilka lake deity, Maa Kalijai, pride and joy in being able to harbour such a spectacular assemblage of birds and a very real hope that visiting birdwatchers would bring some income their way. The satisfaction of these motivational forces need to be kept in view at all times in the conservation efforts for these to have lasting effect.

Source: Directory on Community Conserved Areas in India being put together by Kalpavriksh

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News From Indian States

Arunachal Pradesh

The Bugun and the Bugun Liocichla

Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary, situated in Arunachal Pradesh, with its tropical, subtropical and temperate forests is extremely rich in biodiversity. Four hundred species of birds have been recorded in this area. Dr. Ramana Athreya and his team who have been working in the area for many years have also documented many rare frogs and reptiles. In 2006 Athreya discovered a new bird species in the area

and named it Bugun Liocichla in appreciation of the help and support rendered by members of the close knit Bugun Tribe who live in the vicinity of the sanctuary.

The forest cover of this sanctuary has remained largely intact because of the earlier low population density of the area. However in the past decade the population has grown and this has taken a toll on the forest. Witnessing the changes in their environs some leading Buguns have started working proactively to preserve the forest, which happens to be a catchment area and the site where the Bugun Liocichla was found.



There is also an ongoing attempt to put in place a legal and formal institution, run predominantly by Buguns, that will conserve the area as well as regulate tourism in Eaglenest. The idea is to benefit the forest, independent entrepreneurs and the Bugun community as a whole. The main initiators of the process are Indi Glow, a respected member of the Bugun community and Ramana Athreya, the discoverer of Bugun Liocichla.

The formal entity seeks to be beneficial to the community as a whole, by providing training and encouraging their employment at all levels in the organisational hierarchy, encouraging local businesses, making it mandatory for all visitors to pay a conservation fee (just like a forest department entry fee) in explicit recognition that communities as a whole, have a right to benefit from resources in their backyard.

Source: Swarna V. and S. Ramakrishnan, 'Magical Eaglenest', The Hindu, Online edition, 01/04/2007 and email exchange with Dr. Ramana Athreya, June 2007

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Assam

Changes in the Heart of the Manas Biosphere Reserve

The Manas Biosphere Reserve is home to at least 55 mammals, 50 reptiles and 3 amphibians. Of these 21 species are on India's Schedule I Mammals List and at least 33 species are listed as threatened. Several of the species found here are endemic. The Tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Assam Roofed Turtle (*Kachuga sylhetensis*), Golden Langur (*Trachypithecus geei*), Hispid Hare (*Caprolagus hispidus*), Pygmy Hog (*Sus salvanius*) and the only pure strain of Asiatic Wild Buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*) are among the many species found here. 380 species of birds have been recorded in the area, the Great Hornbill (*Buceros bicornis*) being one of them. It is also home to the largest population of the endangered Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*).

The political unrest in Assam since the 1980s had taken its toll on the Manas Biosphere Reserve. The presence of insurgents, timber smugglers and poachers in the reserve had rendered the forest officials ineffective in their task of protecting the reserve. Things started looking up for the reserve after 2003 when the Bodoland Territorial Council was formed and later in 2006, when the Bodoland Forest Protection Force (BFPF) was formed. BFPF is a partnership between the democratically elected Bodoland Terrestrial Council (BTC), the Assam Forest Department and members of the Bodo tribe living in the forest villages of the biosphere reserve.

Rajen Islari, a local himself, co-ordinates the efforts of over 100 locals who are part of the BFPF to protect the western forests of Assam. The BFPF has confiscated piles of items from smugglers and poachers. These include rifles, bullock carts and timber amongst other things.



The Bodos have chosen ecotourism as a sustainable way to earn their livelihood even as they conserve their forests. In 2003, they formed the Manas Maozegendri Ecotourism Society. This society patrols the Tiger Reserve Area to combat poachers and timber smugglers. The society has also undertaken conservation awareness programmes, and improved local management of the grassland to reduce disturbance to the Bengal Florican (*Houbaropsis bengalensis*).

Besides this the society has established a comfortable tourist facility at Kaklabari in Manas, to view Floricans and provides transport and guide services to tourists. The factors that have played a role in this peaceful transformation are many and the inter-linkages are complicated. Detailed studies are required as there are valuable lessons to be learnt from the process that is unfolding in the heart of the bioreserve.

Source: Anuradha Sharma Lakhota, 'Manas Poachers Turn Protectors - Bodos Give Up the Gun to Conserve and Promote Wildlife Sanctuary', The Telegraph, 10/03/2005

'Indian Villagers Take Back the Forest', www.communityconservation.org, CC Update, Winter 2007, Volume 18, Number 1

Sumit K. Sen, 'Manas National Park', www.kolkatabirds.com, November 2005

Do Customary Laws Matter?

The Gene Campaign recently undertook a study of the customary laws followed by the Tiwa Tribe who live in Pamakuchi Village in Karbi Anglong District in Assam, to understand the relevance of customary laws in the current context of indigenous knowledge protection.

The study found that the Tiwas revere all life forms as sacred and believe that the *jiu* (soul) resides in all animate and inanimate objects in their immediate surrounding. Thus local birds, fish, insects and trees as well as water, rocks, hills and forests and the spirits that dwell within them are manifestations of this *jiu*. This belief brings in an element of respect and control in the way the Tiwas interact with the environment around them. For example the belief that *Kharine*, a spirit that dwells in the hill stream, has great powers and can bring ill health and bad luck to anyone who defiles the stream with loud noises or by polluting it, may be linked to customary laws that among other things prohibits defiling or polluting the water stream; the belief that *Phitris*, the powerful spirit that lives near the bamboo groves has to be respected may have led to the regulated use of bamboo and other animate and inanimate objects that are found in and around the groves. There are also many sacred patches of forest called *thans* (sacred groves) that dot the village, where the use of resources is also strictly regulated.

Over generations, this belief system and regulated use of resources have evolved into strict taboos and social sanctions. These sanctions have obtained the status of customary law as they are accepted by the

community and are enforced strictly by the most representative village institution, the Gaon Sabha.



The positive role that such laws play in ecological conservation cannot be overstated. However the importance of these customary laws has weakened over time since they are not recognized by the formal legal system. Customary laws need to be recognized by state and central level judicial bodies, so that they can continue playing the positive role that they have played for generations in conserving biodiversity and associated indigenous knowledge and livelihoods.

Source: Suman Sahai and Indrani Barpujari, 'Tiwa Law Versus State Law', Civil Society, February 2007

Gujarat

Born Free on Farms

The entire global population of approximately 350 wild Asiatic Lions (*Panthera leo*) is found only in the tiny Gir Forest, situated in Gujarat. Due to space constraints, lions often wander into agricultural areas and this has led to obvious man-animal conflict and other problems. Incidents like lions falling down open wells and dying or injuring themselves are also quite common. The story below, about Babarividi, does

much to break the stereotype of this man-animal conflict.

Babaravidi is a reserved forest area, located at about 15 km from the Gir Sanctuary. It is 1,500 hectares of plain grassland, and provides a suitable habitat for the big cats to live and breed in. Moreover the farming villages of Babara, Pankawa, Chuladi, Pithiya, Dharampur, Juner, Vandervad and Itali, that are located on the periphery of the reserved forest, are populated by farmers who have been actively involved in the conservation of these majestic animals. Besides letting the lions reside on their farms and protecting them from poachers, the villagers have dug water holes to provide drinking water for them. When lions fall into open wells, the local youth lend a helping hand and release the trapped animal back into the wild.



The Babara village *sarpanch* (head) Kalabhai Pithiya, whose family has been engaged in agriculture in this area says that a group of lions came into his village about five years back, and have made it their home ever since. In addition to the permanent residents, lionesses come here and give birth to and raise their cubs. He also says that in the recent past, when lion poaching incidents surfaced, people from the eight neighbouring villages, formed protection groups to ensure the safety and security of the lions in the region.

An elder of the same village compares the breeding lionesses to married daughters who come back to

their maternal home to deliver their young ones. He insists that the villagers treat them with the same consideration as they would their own daughters.

According to Kishor Kotecha, a conservationist particularly interested in Asiatic Lions in the wild as well as in Indian Zoos, this phenomenon of villagers protecting the Asiatic Lion is not new. He says that this is a continuation and rejuvenation of a traditional practice that has been going on since 1850 AD in this area, when the area was ruled by Nawabs.

Source: 'Babaravidi, a maternity home for lionesses', Indian Express, 12/05/2007

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Kerala

Where Women Defend Tigers

The Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the most successful conservation programmes of the India Eco Development Project (IEDP) initiated by the World Bank. The programme, which lasted from 1998 to 2004, aimed at reducing a number of problems like people-park conflicts and biotic pressures on the forest, by providing conservation-linked livelihoods. This alternative answer was developed as a response to the growing realization that the earlier models of non-inclusive forest conservation were ineffective.

The tribal communities of Mannas, Paniyans, Ooralis, Malamandarans and Mala Arayans live in the periphery of the reserve. 90 women from these communities have formed a group called the Vasanthsena (spring army) and they take time out from their busy lives as casual labourers, small scale manufacturers, wives, mothers and daughters-in-laws to save the forest. Groups of 6 women, each headed by a leader, patrol the forest unarmed from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. everyday and make sure that all is well with the tiger and its home.

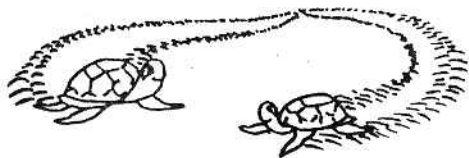


Ex-poachers too have turned into protectors as they act as tourist guides, enthralling tourists with their vast knowledge of the local flora and fauna, and the forest topography. They also earn a living by renting out leech proof socks and binoculars to visitors. All their earnings are pooled into a Community Development Fund from which all members receive a monthly salary.

In 2004, when the IEDP in Periyar came to an end, the Periyar Foundation was formed by officials and citizens to carry on the work. Other than forest regeneration, these efforts have led to an overall increase in wildlife, income generation for locals and a sense of pride and social security amongst members. The encouraging results of this effort have made this project a model for other Protected Areas in Kerala.

Source: Susheela Nair, 'Women, Ex-poachers Shield Tiger', Best of Civil Society, 3rd Anniversary Issue

More Support for the Olive Ridley Turtle



Inspired by the turtle egg protection measures taken by volunteers in Kozhikode and Kasaragod Districts of Kerala, a turtle egg hatchery has been set up in Muzhappilangad in the November of 2006. Muzhappilangad is a small coastal village in Kannur district in Kerala. This is a joint initiative of the Muzhappilangad Gram Panchayat, the Adventure Academy (an undertaking of the Kerala State Youth Welfare Board) and a local voluntary group called the Theera Sena, to protect the Olive Ridley Turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) and their hatchlings.

In their first attempt to conserve Olive Ridley Turtle eggs, 80 sea turtle eggs from the beach were collected and kept in the hatchery in the month of December. Nearly two months later, 60 hatchlings emerged from the hatchery and made their way to the sea. District Collector Ishita Roy, Panchayat president V.Prabhakara and a few tourists from Sweden and France were among the 300-odd people who turned out at the drive-in beach, a major tourist destination in the region, to see the event for the first time on the Muzhappilangad beach.

Source: Staff Reporter. 'Turtle Hatchlings Emerge from Hatchery'; The Hindu, 12/02/ 2007

Contact: National Adventure Academy, Muzhappilangadu, Muzhappilangadu Beach, Kannur (Dist), Kerala

Nagaland

The Sendenyu Village Community Biodiversity Reserve

Sendenyu Village in Kohima district of Nagaland, with its tropical climate, was once rich in flora and fauna. However, the advent of extensive *jhum* (slash and burn) cultivation, unrestrained logging and hunting in the recent past has resulted in immense losses in terms of wildlife and biodiversity.

Older members of the village recount the existence of species that are no longer found here like the Hoolock Gibbons (*Hylobates hoolock*) and Great Hornbills (*Buceros bicornis*). All is not lost yet and one can still



find populations of Barking Deer (*Muntiacus muntjak*), Himalayan Blackbear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*), Sambar (*Cervus unicolor*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) and many species of birds.

In 2001, the Sendenyu Village Council reserved about 8 square kilometres of land and declared it the "Sendenyu Village Wild Life Protected Area" or "Sendenyu Thyu Tehen Kentsen Lojvu". This protected area was formed as a result of discussions initiated by some residents of the village (who also

happened to be government officials) with the village elders. The village elders immediately understood the concern for the dwindling wildlife in the area as they themselves had witnessed the sudden decrease in the wildlife population in recent years.

Later, a buffer zone of 4 square kilometers, adjacent to the protected area, was designated as a wildlife reserve and renamed as the "Sendenyu Village Community Biodiversity Reserve". The land selected for the reserve belonged to individual owners and was used by them for timber and firewood collection. The owners had objected to the plan but were persuaded by the Village Council to donate the land for the larger cause. In return, the Forest Department used money from the Forest Development Authority Funds and made LPG connections available to those who had lost access to firewood as a result of this initiative.

A committee set up to manage the area looks after the affairs of the reserve. The core is maintained as an inviolate area. Agricultural activities are allowed in the buffer zone, but logging, hunting, fishing and trapping are banned here. Moreover, the committee has banned hunting in the entire village during breeding season that is from March to September every year. There is also a year round ban on the hunting of the Teshon Stag, which is almost extinct.

The committee has set up boards demarcating the reserve from the rest of the village, planted trees that are endemic to the area and dug natural water holes for wild animals. It also enforces prohibitory orders, organizes seminars on wildlife conservation within the village and liaises with neighbouring villages for wild life protection

Source: Directory on Community Conserved Areas in India being put together by Kalpavriksh

Communication from Gwasinlo Thong, March 2007

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Orissa

Mangrove Regeneration in Kendrapara

Residents of the seaside villages on the fringe of Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary in Orissa's Kendrapara District have for long been fighting a battle with powerful shrimp cultivators, to regain rights over their community land. These shrimp cultivators had moved into the area from outside and decimated the local mangroves for short-term profits. Unlike the locals, the shrimp cultivators have no stake in the long-term ecological or social sustainability of the area; they view it merely as means to mega profits. The 1999 super cyclone and other recurring cyclones in the area have made it savagely clear to the local residents that mangroves are an absolute necessity not only as a biodiversity rich area that sustains wildlife as well as local community needs but to minimize the devastating impacts of recurring cyclones and stop the sea from washing away huge chunks of land. This has prompted the locals to proactively regenerate the mangroves. They have also approached the Forest Department for cooperation to do the same, offering to work in conjunction with the Forest Department on 500 hectares of their land to regenerate mangroves.

The State Government recently received Rs. 750 crores from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to regenerate forests and they have readily agreed to help in the mangrove regeneration of the area, and have created an Eco Development Plan for this. However the participation of the locals in this plan might be reduced to handing over their ancestral land to the Forest Department. This land may then be made human interference free – a far cry from the actual intent of the villagers, who have been playing an active role in regenerating the mangroves for a long time and hope to continue doing so, with long term sustainable livelihood and ecological benefits accruing to them in the process.

The Orissa Protected Area Network, which works closely with local communities across Orissa met on 11th and 12th May 2007, to seek clarity on the Eco Development Programme vis-a-vis the long-term role of the locals in the regeneration programme and the long-term benefits to the locals. It is an important step, for the programme needs to satisfy the

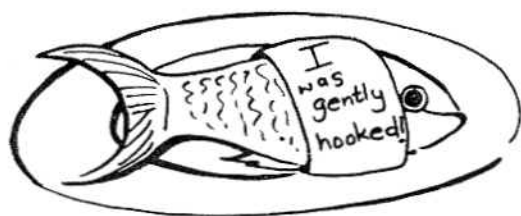
traditional livelihood needs of the people, who are the primary initiators of the process and it would be a shame, if this conservation initiated by locals resulted in the loss of access to their ancestral land.

Source: Email communication with Y. Giri Rao, June 2007

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International News

Line to Plate Traceability



Marine biodiversity, global fish stock and the livelihood of traditional fisher folk have all been negatively impacted world wide due to unsustainable fishing practices like deep sea trawling. Growing awareness of the effects of such practices has made consumers in the European Union wary of the fish that is put on their plates. Discerning customers are rejecting fish caught by large trawlers with their destructive by-catch of dolphins and porpoises and are demanding 'line to plate traceability' which ensures that the fish on their plate has been caught with minimum damage to ecology and wildlife.

Andrew Pascoe is from a traditional Newlyn fishing family in West Cornwall in Britain, and part of a community that understands the need for sustainable fishing and the importance of conserving fish stocks. These fisher folk use the traditional handline fishing

method which is one of the most sustainable ways of fishing for Mackerel, Pollack and Sea Bass. Different types of lines and hooks are used according to the species. There is no by-catch as the fish are caught live and all undersized ones are immediately released into the water. This method of fishing is mainly practiced by small inshore boats and fishing is done only during the time when there is daylight and not more than a mile from the coast, thus the environmental impact is kept to a bare minimum. The monthly tidal patterns also make it virtually impossible to fish in these small boats for two weeks in the month; this also limits the catch for this traditional fishing community. All these practices result in lower catch and fish caught by this community has sustainability written all over it.

Till recently however, this was not apparent to the discerning consumer as there was no way to distinguish the environment friendly catch of the traditional fisherfolk from that of the deep sea trawlers. In order to make this distinction, Andrew Pascoe and Nathan de Razareix devised a tagging scheme that gives a 'line to plate traceability' and assures the customer that what they are eating has been fished ethically with minimum environmental impact. The tag shows the number of the traditional boat that caught the fish and guarantees that it has been caught by a member of the South West Handline Fishermen's Association (SWHFA).

SWHFA is an organization that was set up 20 years ago to support its 50 members who handline a variety of fish. The tagging scheme was set up in 2005 and initially 10 small boat skippers signed up with the tagging project. Today over 40 boat skippers are part of the tagging scheme.

This combination of traditional environmentally sustainable fishing methods with modern tagging methods has proved to be a boon to members of SWHFA. Where once these fishermen were price takers, at the mercy of merchants and buyers, now buyers are clamouring for the line-caught fish, and are willing to pay premium prices for fish caught by members SWHFA. Today more than 90 per cent of Cornish line-caught bass is tagged, prices in 2006 were 10 to 20 per cent higher than in 2005 and fishermen in Devon and Dorset are interested in joining the scheme. Tagged Cornish Sea Bass and Pollack are increasingly sought after by top chefs in

Cornwall, London and across the UK and many of the best fish processors and fishmongers now sell only the tagged fish.

Source: Carol Trewin, 'Local Hero: Andrew Pascoe', *Ecologist*, February 2007

The Masais Walk Tall in Amboseli Again

Before 1974 Amboseli in Kenya was a primary resource base for the Masai people. In 1974, the rich wildlife found in this area prompted the Kenyan Government to turn it into a National Park. Over the next 30 years the area became an icon of affluence and luxury dotted with five star hotels, airstrips and safari vehicles, generating US\$ 3.5 millions annually. The cost of all this was borne by the already impoverished Masai people whose main resource base was now off limits to them as well as neighbouring community owned ranches that had to bear the brunt of the wildlife damaging their crops and killing their livestock. The rift between the government and locals and the inherent inequity of the situation led to spearing of lions, rhinos and elephants by the Masai. The ongoing decline in wildlife sent a clear message to authorities that effective conservation can only be achieved with the support of local people. In 2005 the Kenyan President took the decision to change the status of Amboseli from a National Park to a National Reserve, transferring control over the area from the Central Government to the local County Council and the Masai people.

Needless to say that this transfer of authority led to a very heated debate with opponents claiming that this move would undermine the biodiversity and wildlife of the area, and the proponents claiming that this was a logical and necessary move in a new era of recognizing the rights of, and involvement of local communities and indigenous people.



John Waithaka, states that under the right social, political and legal environment returning Amboseli to the Masai has the potential to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, contribute to poverty alleviation and create positive support for conservation. He also adds that there is a long list of challenges that need to be addressed before Amboseli can claim to be well conserved and well managed for the benefit of all involved. These include appropriate land use policies, sustainable resource use, human wildlife conflict management, mechanism for equitable benefit sharing, democratic and accountable governance, well defined roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders. He also includes in his list, increasing institutional capacity, business expertise, management skills and recognizing ethnic and clan realities.

The structures and systems put in place should provide security to people, wildlife, investors and tourists while encouraging conservation. The author also points to the need for careful assessment of the outcome of this initiative in order to make it a real success as measured in terms of the benefits accrued to wildlife conservation and the local Masais.

Source: John Waithaka, 'Who Should Manage Paradise'; *The Magazine of the World Conservation Union*, January 2007

Books and Publications

How Much Should A Person Consume? Thinking Through the Environment

Author: Ramchandra Guha

Publisher: Permanent Black, Delhi in 2006

This book presents a comparative history of environmentalism in two large ecologically and culturally diverse democracies, India and the United States. Citing the external similarities and the underlying difference in cases like the Stanislaus and Narmada Movements, the author illustrates the fundamental difference between the two types of environmentalism. While the United State works towards the protection of pristine un-spoilt nature the Indian movement raises questions of production and distribution of resources within human society. In conclusion he proposes an integrative, inclusive and theoretical framework of analyses that goes beyond the partisan and partial ideologies of these two nations. A scholarly yet immensely readable book which is a generous sharing of an understanding gained through twenty years of research done by the author.

India's Wildlife History

Author: Mahesh Rangarajan.

Publisher: Permanent Black in association with The Ranthambore Foundation.

In this book the author fills another wholesome bit of the big gap that exists in our knowledge of the wildlife history of India. The book leads the reader through an exciting historical journey that has brought the country to its present day position on wildlife, focusing on those times which seem to be the most relevant to the current state of wildlife in our country. It engages with ancient times when an inherent fear and respect for the wild prompted people's interactions with all of untamed nature. This is followed by an exploration of the wildlife history in the Mughal and British period. The book then moves on to the conservation ethos that emerged imperceptibly from the 1950s among a section of the country's elite and the important role of a few pioneers like Salim Ali, E.P. Gee and M. Krishnan in this changed perspective of wildlife. Further the book focuses on the passing of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the start of projects like Project Tiger in 1973. 'India's Wildlife History' also

speaks of a parallel ongoing symbiotic relationship since time immemorial that communities have with the wild as primary protectors of their surroundings even as they rely on these very surroundings for their sustenance. Thus it speaks of the various forces that have shaped the current protection regime and points to the fact that while it did do a lot to protect the fast dwindling wildlife of India it failed to achieve its full intended impact on wildlife because it ignored the concerns of a large section of the population whose sustenance was and continues to be threatened by this exclusionist conservation regime. He points to possible solutions inclusive in nature where wildlife conservation dovetails with wider strategies of land and water use. He ends on an optimistic note saying that India today has a vibrant democracy, an aware citizenry, a vast pool of knowledge both traditional and modern and the willingness to look ahead. A must read for all interested in understanding the forces that have shaped our current wildlife law and policy, and associated practices as well as those who want to be part of the future of wildlife conservation in the country.

Waterscapes

Editor: Amita Baviskar

Publisher: Permanent Black, Delhi, in 2007

As a resource central to life and livelihood, water has always been at the centre of intense social action. As editor, Amita Baviskar has brought together original ethnographic and archival research of leading scholars of anthropology, history and sociology to discuss the politics of water. The book is divided into three parts. The first Section deals with the connection between regional ecology, demography and agrarian technology that forms the framework around which water politics has built and rebuilt itself through various times, creating and addressing the scarcity of water and eternally perpetuating differential access to water. The second Section takes a critical look at the emerging alternatives to water privatization. The essays in this section refrain from unabashedly celebrating community action around water; rather these take a nuanced look at the different types of activities and changes that are taking place under the umbrella of decentralized water management. The last section examines the transformation of water projects and technologies by

conditions that these projects encounter on the ground.

This volume fills a huge lacuna in the empirical scope of studies on the politics of water and is a must read for all those interested not only in the politics and management of water in particular but also by those interested in understanding the politics of environment and development in general.

Ecological Journeys: The Science and Politics of Conservation in India

Author: Madhav Gadgil

Publisher: Permanent Black, Delhi in 2005

This collection of essays, written in an engaging and sometimes even playful manner by Madhav Gadgil forces us to sit up and give serious thought to the inherent wisdom of the natural world and the way our activities impinge on it. In the section devoted to ecology, he speaks of the need to move away from the current approach to conservation and to move towards a more rational approach in wildlife management, where conservation will not only serve the purpose of amusing the elite but also meet traditional local requirements, bring economic benefits to the country, keep alive natural gene banks of the rich biodiversity of our country and serve as a research base for the scientific community. In the same section he speaks of man's growing obsession with artifacts and the negative impact it has had on the natural world around us. In the third section he speaks on the current model of development, which ensures the one way flow of energy, water and raw materials towards rich rural farmers, urban elite and first world countries at the cost of the majority of Indians who live under increasingly difficult situations in rural India as their resource base continues to diminish rapidly. Finally in the fourth section through numerous examples he proves that the only way to save the country's natural resources is to recognize that the bureaucratic managers of India's natural resources have neither the knowledge-base nor the motivation to take care of the country's heritage and the obvious protectors of this natural abundance that the country has been blessed with, are the people who have for generations lived in close contact with the natural world and have inherited the accumulated knowledge of their forefathers that enables them to live in a sustainable manner with their surroundings.

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