



### **Highlights of our work in 2014-15**

- Organised a total of 278 film shows on nature and wildlife conservation. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these film shows was over 18000
- 480 visits to village schools to educate students about nature and wildlife and need for conservation. Including repeat s, total attendance at these lectures was over 16,000
- Organised a total of 338 medical camps to give free treatment and medicines to villagers. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these camps was 10,517
- In livelihood support activities, we assisted 36 unemployed youths in getting jobs and organised skill-development programmes which equipped 106 people with vocational skills
- Total of 35 check dams built
- 16 soak pits dug
- 52 waterholes cleaned and de-silted
- Organised and participated in 92 patrols in jungle to check poaching and other illegal activities
- Organised 38 anti-plastic programmes to remove plastic litter from areas adjoining wildlife habitats and also organised 8 village cleanliness programmes



## MISSION

Satpuda Foundation consists of dedicated conservationists working to save the forests and wildlife of the central Indian highlands while promoting sustainable development among village communities living in some of the best tiger habitats in the world.

Satpuda Foundation was established in 2001 by Kishor Rithe and a group of dedicated conservationists. While this group had already been individually and jointly engaged in nature conservation activities since the early 1990s, it was felt that a formal organisation with a professional set-up would serve the cause better.

This led to the birth of Satpuda Foundation. While the Foundation is registered in Amravati, its administrative headquarters is located in Nagpur. The Foundation works in 105 villages located around 6 major Tiger Reserves in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.

In Maharashtra, these are Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (18 villages), Pench Tiger Reserve (24 villages) and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (11 villages).

In Madhya Pradesh, the areas where we operate are Kanha Tiger Reserve (10 villages), Priyadarshini Pench Tiger Reserve (24 villages) and Satpura Tiger Reserve (18 villages).

These Tiger Reserves, along with adjoining forests and corridors currently support an estimated population of around 400 tigers. Wildlife experts estimate that this landscape has the potential to support a population of at least 600 tigers.

Satpuda Foundation believes that a piecemeal approach has less likelihood of success and has crafted a comprehensive, holistic approach to conservation. As livelihood is a major issue in the largely tribal villages where the Foundation works, one of the major thrust areas of its operations is livelihood training programmes and providing assistance to villagers in getting employment. The Foundation's strategy includes

- Education as a tool to promote conservation by conducting programmes targeted at both village children and adults
- Grassroots conservation activities including soil and water conservation, organising of community anti-poaching patrols, assistance in fighting fires in the forests
- Assisting communities in basic public hygiene and village cleanliness which also help to reduce the human-wildlife conflict
- Providing free medical treatment and medicines to villagers as a trust building activity
- Organising of skill-development programmes to enable unemployed villagers and women's self-help groups set up small businesses/trades
- Liaising with employers such as local resorts and hotels and trade and industrial groups in urban centres to get jobs for unemployed villagers



- Prepare blueprints for eco-sustainable development of villages

## CONSERVATION

*Water conservation* – A total of 35 check dams were built during the year, using locally available materials. The dams, mostly built on streams in consultation with the forest department, help retain water and recharge the water table. They also provide drinking water to both domestic and wild animals. The dams were built by volunteers comprising adult villagers, members of SHGs that we had mentored and children from village schools.

In other water conservation work, we dug a total of 16 soak pits across the landscape. The soak pits, dug next to wells/hand pumps in villages, collect spill over and run-off water and help recharge the water table.

To ensure that wildlife got proper access to water, we cleaned and de-silted a total of 52 waterholes located inside jungles across the landscape. These waterholes were clogged with organic litter and, in some cases; the water was barely visible beneath the scum.



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Jamandhonga - Check dam built by our volunteers*





*Kanha, Samaiya - Volunteers pose after building check dam at Pairi Jodi nallah as water level rises behind dam wall*



*Nagzira - Volunteers clean waterhole in Compartment 109*

## **CONSERVATION**

### *Reduced dependence on firewood*

To reduce dependence on firewood, we have been helping villagers repair and maintain their bio-gas units. As cow dung is easily available in villages due to good cattle population, this is one of the most effective ways to ensure that villagers do not depend on jungles for firewood.

We have also been introducing “*smokeless chullahs*” (stoves) which use better technology and consume less firewood and produce less smoke.





*Kanha, Batwar – Stove, fuelled by bio-gas, being repaired by our staff*



*Kanha, Batwar- Bio-gas unit being repaired at Balram Choudhry's residence by our staff*

## **CONSERVATION**

### *Community patrols*

One of our more significant achievements has been the involvement of village communities in patrolling jungles to thwart poaching, illegal felling and grazing. Thanks to our network and the amount of assistance that we give to village communities, we are able to get villagers to participate voluntarily in this crucial activity to protect wildlife and forests.

During 2014-15, we organised and participated in a total of 92 such patrols in Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra and Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve.





*Pench (Maharashtra), Ghatpendari - Field assistant Bandu Uikey on patrol with members of Special Tiger Protection Force*





*Nagzira - Forest Guards Aswale (far left) and Kahudkar (centre) on patrol with our team in Compartment 97*

## **CONSERVATION**

### *Village cleanliness and hygiene*

One of our key activities is to focus on village cleanliness and public hygiene. Our teams organise programmes to promote awareness about the need for cleanliness and the importance of disposing of litter properly. Little importance is given to litter in villagers who do not realise that the availability of food leftovers is often a reason why some wild animals are attracted to villages. Our programme also emphasise the impact of plastic /polythene on the environment /wildlife and the need to reduce usage of the same.

During the year, we organised a total of 38 anti-plastic programmes and 8 village cleanliness programmes.





*Nagzira, Pongezara - Volunteers with litter collected during our anti-plastic programme*





*Tadoba, Sitarampeth -Village women clean main road in cleanliness and anti-plastic programme organised by us*

Other conservation activities include

- fighting fires in the forest
- planting saplings
- setting up of seed banks/nurseries in schools. While in some schools, students are encouraged to collect seeds which can be planted in the monsoon season, in other schools, we have set up nurseries to nurture saplings which are planted during the monsoon season
- encouraging villagers to put up small containers with water for birds and small animals



*Tadoba, Kondegaon - Seeds collected for plantation programme including kaner, gul mohar, bhel, jambul and sitaphal*





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli - Plantation programme organised by us at Govt. Ashram School*





*Pench (Maharashtra), Sillari - Villagers plant saplings in plantation drive organised by us*



*Kanha, Manegaon - Village children fill water pot for birds to quench their thirst in the scorching summer*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Mehandikheda – Our Conservation Officer Ashfaq assists in fighting fire*

## **EDUCATION**

Education is one of the key tools used by Satpuda Foundation to promote the conservation agenda. Our target audience is school-going children in villages adjoining 6 major Tiger Reserves in central India. The children are sensitised to the conservation message through a mix of classroom lectures, nature games with a conservation message, nature trails, bird-spotting trails and nature camps. Visits to the Nature Interpretation Centres at the Tiger Reserves and safaris are also organised with the support of the managements of the Tiger Reserves. In addition, the children are periodically led on rallies through their villages so that the conservation message is conveyed to adult villagers also.

All the key days in the “eco-calendar” such as World Environment Day, World Forestry Day, Wildlife Week, etc are also celebrated and a range of programmes is organised including quiz, drawing, painting and essay contests.

During the year, our teams made a total of 480 visits to various classrooms, which were attended by a total of 16,122 students.

The major festivals are also used as occasions to promote our conservation message.

The Foundation has a utility vehicle fitted with a projection screen, LCD projector, speaker and a bank of movies on nature and wildlife conservation besides films with a social message. There are





also movies on topics like rainwater harvesting and organic farming. This vehicle visits all the villages where we work and movies are shown through the year.

A total of 278 film shows were organised during the year which were attended by over 18,000 people.



*Kanha, Kutwahi - Conservation rally by students, with members of women's' SHGs and villagers*



*Pench (Maharashtra), Narhar – Our field assistant Bandu Uikey describes common trees of the area to village children and members of Special Tiger Protection Force*





*Pench (M P), Satosha - Our field assistant Niranjan Hinge speaks about nature and wildlife conservation to students of village school*





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Khari –Our Conservation Officer Ashfaq Aarbi teaches village children about nature and wildlife conservation*





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Navalgaon-Chopna - Students watch film on wildlife*

## **LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT TO VILLAGERS**

Livelihood options for villagers are a major focus area for Satpuda Foundation as most villagers in our area of operations are very poor. The Foundation's experience has shown that communities with stable, sustainable livelihoods are more likely to be consistent partners in conservation. As part of our strategy, we assist unemployed villagers in getting jobs with both local businesses such as resorts and with businesses in nearby urban centres.

We also organise skill-development programmes where villagers pick up skills which will help them get jobs or start their own businesses or trades. These training programmes are organised jointly with the Forest Department in some case, with Village Eco-Development Committees in others and some programmes are organised by us individually.

Some of these programmes last year included

- Tailoring and embroidery
- Training in becoming beautician
- Welding
- Diesel engine mechanic
- Electrician
- Driving four-wheelers
- Poultry farming
- Data entry

Thanks to our efforts, a total of 36 unemployed youths got jobs while 106 people benefited from our various skill-development programmes during 2014-15.





*Pench (Maharashtra), Sillari – Launch of programme to train youths in driving four-wheelers*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli - Village youths, trained in tailoring in programme organised by us, prepare bags on the basis of samples provided by us*

### **MEDICAL CAMPS**

One of our major achievements is providing basic medical assistance to villagers living in remote areas on the fringes of Tiger Reserves. Our ambulances ferry doctors to villages, some of which do not even have electricity, let alone medical facilities. The villages where we conduct medical camps are selected in conjunction with the managements of the respective Tiger Reserve.

Trained doctors from Nagpur/Amravati diagnose the patients and prescribe medicines which are then provided free of cost.

Our local field staffs use the camps to build goodwill and convey our conservation message.

We also treat staff of the Forest Department and have distributed first-aid kits to some of the more remote outposts.

During 2014-15, we conducted a total of 338 camps at which 10,517 patients got free treatment.





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Chandan Pipariya - Children approach doctor for treatment at our free medical camp*





*Nagzira, Asalpani - Doctor examines patients at our free medical camp*



*Nagzira - Dr Basme treats patients at our free medical camp at Chorkamara*