



## Highlights of our work in 2015-16

- *Organised/participated in 126 patrols in jungle to check poaching and other illegal activities*
- *Total of 38 check dams built, 7 new waterholes created, 76 existing waterholes cleaned and de-silted*
- *45 soak pits dug to address health and human-wildlife conflict issue*
- *Organised 60 anti-plastic programmes to remove plastic litter from areas adjoining wildlife habitats and also organised 84 programmes to clean wells and areas surrounding hand pumps to promote village cleanliness*
- *Dug 36 compost pits to promote organic farming and lessen impact of chemical fertilisers in areas adjoining forests*
- *Assisted in planting over 41,000 saplings in 53 plantation drives*
- *654 visits to village schools to educate students about nature and wildlife and need for conservation. Including repeats, total attendance at these lectures exceeded 24,500*
- *Organised a total of 230 film shows on nature and wildlife conservation. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these film shows was close to 17,000*
- *Seven 2-day residential nature camps were organized in various Tiger Reserves for school students*
- *In livelihood support activities, we assisted 39 unemployed youths in getting jobs and organised 32 skill-development programmes which equipped 378 people with vocational skills*
- *27 capacity-building programmes were organized for Self Help Groups*
- *Organised a total of 330 medical camps to give free treatment and medicines to villagers. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these camps was around 11,700*
- *41 Village Eco-development Committee meetings were arranged to discuss issues related to village development, human-wildlife conflict and wildlife conservation*
- *Worked with several Government departments to implement mitigation measures on linear projects cutting through wildlife corridors*
- *Brought awareness and implemented actions to fight climate change in the villages of Satpuda landscape*
- *Organised eight demonstrations of solar-powered fencing and seven demonstrations of “smokeless chullahs” – stoves which use less firewood and emit less smoke*
- *Celebrated all important days in environment calendar like World Forestry Day, world Tiger Day, World Environment Day, Wildlife Week, etc...*



## 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

- Grassroots conservation activities including soil and water conservation, habitat restoration, organising of community anti-poaching patrols, assistance in fighting fires in the forests, promoting sustainable organic farming practices in agriculture
- Education as a tool to resolve conservation problems, promote conservation by conducting programmes targeted at both village children and adults
- Assisting communities in basic public hygiene and village cleanliness to address health and human-wildlife conflict issues
- Providing free medical treatment and medicines to villagers for trust building
- Organising of skill-development programmes to enable unemployed villagers and women's self-help groups (SHGs) to set up small businesses/trades as alternative livelihood options, reducing dependence on forests
- 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 38 check dams were built during the year, using locally available materials. These dams, mostly built on streams, 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 45 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. This also addresses health and human-wildlife conflict issues.

To ensure that wildlife got proper access to water, we created 7 new waterholes and cleaned and de-silted a total of 76 existing 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, Matkuli - Check dam built by our volunteers*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli – Volunteers build check dam in jungle*



*Pench Tiger Reserve, (Maharashtra) – Our field assistant Bandu Uikey and villagers clean waterhole in jungle near Ghatpendari village*

## **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 thanks to the wide spread presence of cattle, this is one of the most effective ways to ensure that villagers do not depend on jungles for firewood.

We have also been introducing “*improved chullahs*” (stoves) which use wire mesh and consume less firewood and produce less smoke.





*Pench (M P), Satosha – Our field assistant Niranjan Hinge teaches villagers how to use less firewood in cooking without making any major changes in their existing set-up*

## **CONSERVATION**

### *Community patrols*

One of our more significant achievements has been the involvement of village communities in patrolling forests in a 5 km radius around villages 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.

With financial support from Born Free Foundation, UK, during 2015-16, we organised and participated in a total of 126 such patrols in Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra and Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve.



*Nagzira - Patrolling team apprehends villager (in blue T-shirt) who had started a forest fire*





*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Kolitmara - Our field assistant Bandu Uikey (centre) identifies pug mark for benefit of new recruits of the Forest Department*

## **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 and the need to reduce usage of the same.

During the year, we organised a total of 60 anti-plastic programmes and 84 programmes to clean wells/areas around hand pumps to promote village cleanliness. This was possible thanks to IndusInd Bank which provided financial support to run this programme.





*Kanha, Manegaon - Plastic litter collected in anti-plastic programme organised by us*



*Pench Tiger Reserve, (Maharashtra), Kolitmara - Volunteers collect plastic litter from jungle adjoining village in programme organised by us on World Forestry Day*

Other conservation activities include

- fighting fires in the forest
- planting saplings – Over 41,000 saplings were planted during 2015-16
- 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





*Nagzira - Our volunteers battle fire in forest in Compartment no. 108*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Almod - Sapling plantation programme organised by us*





*Kanha, Manegaon - Village children provide water for birds*

## EDUCATION

Education is one of the key tools used by Satpuda Foundation to resolve conservation problems, 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 654 visits to various classrooms, which were attended by a total of 24,500 students.



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

We also conducted 7 two-day residential nature camps for children from villages in the buffer zones of the major Tiger Reserves in central India. At these camps, children were taught about the precious bio-diversity of the area and the need for conservation.

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 230 film shows were organised during the year which were attended by 16,843 people. This helped to draw their support for conservation actions like building check dams, participation in cleanliness drives, protecting birds etc



*Tadoba, Moharli - Students on wildlife awareness rally during Wildlife Week programme organised by us*





*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Kolutmara - Our field assistant Bandu Uikey speaks about nature to students of village school*



*Nagzira – Mukund Dhurve explains the importance of conserving our bio-diversity to students of village school*





*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Kolutmara - Students learn about nature on trail organised by us during Wildlife Week*



*Kanha, Mocha - Students watch film on nature and wildlife conservation shown by us as part of our educational activities*







*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Sawara - Our instructor Ishwar Dhawale teaches village children how to use various software packages as part of our IT education initiative*

## **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 and dependent on forests. 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

- Making products from lantana
- 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 39 unemployed youths got jobs while 378 people benefited from our various skill-development programmes during 2015-16.



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli - Villagers learn to make products from lantana in programme organised by us*





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Almod - Skill-development programme organised by us and funded by Forest Department*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve - Villagers display lantana products at our stall at Pachmarhi festival*





*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Kursikhapa - Candidates display products made from lantana in training programme organised by us*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Almod - SHG members learn to pack food products for effective marketing*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Naya Raikheda - Village women get trained in tailoring and embroidery*





*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Sawara - Tribal dance group which was set up by us and is being mentored by our team*



*Tadoba, Moharli - Youths get trained in driving four-wheelers in programme organised by us and funded by Wildlife Conservation Trust*

## **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 and where we run conservation, education and livelihood programmes.

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 2015-16, we conducted a total of 330 camps at which around 11,700 patients got free treatment. Many of these patients became our partners in conservation after treatment and initiated conservation actions in their villages.



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli - Villagers register for free treatment at our medical camp*



*Nagzira, Bagadband - Dr Bhasme examines patient at our free medical camp*

Worked with several Government departments to implement mitigation measures on linear projects cutting wildlife corridors

The Government is setting up several developmental projects in the Satpuda landscape, including linear projects like irrigation canals, highways, railway lines and transmission lines. The Foundation has worked with the government departments to bring about awareness about the negative impact on wildlife and forests from such projects and we have been able to get them to implement several mitigation measures on such projects.





*Railway line in corridor of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve*



*Highway passing through Pench Tiger Reserve corridor*





*Transmission line passing through buffer zone of Pench Tiger Reserve*



*First wildlife overpass on canal near Bor Tiger Reserve – result of SF's efforts*

## Brought awareness and implemented actions to fight climate change in villages of Satpuda landscape

With the support of European Climate Foundation, we have promoted awareness among the villages situated in the buffer zones of Tiger Reserves and inter-linking corridors about the impacts of climate change and village level actions which need to be taken to mitigate the problem.

### ***Our supporters:***

*Conservation activities: Born Free Foundation*

*Education Programmes: Individual Donors*

*Resource assistance: LifeForce Charitable Trust*

*Employment Cell: Wildlife Conservation Trust, Mumbai*

*Health Unit Programme: Born Free Foundation*

*Other supporters: IndusInd Bank, European Climate Foundation*





*Government of Maharashtra, Government of Madhya Pradesh, Pench Tiger Conservation Foundation*