



# Satpuda Foundation

## Highlights of our work in 2016-17

- Total of 35 check dams built
- 24 soak pits dug
- 74 waterholes cleaned and de-silted
- 8 new waterholes created
- Total of 30,565 saplings planted
- Organised and participated in 142 patrols in jungle to check poaching and other illegal activities
- Organised 81 anti-plastic programmes to remove plastic litter from areas adjoining wildlife habitats and also organised 13 village cleanliness programmes
- 557 visits to village schools to educate students about nature and wildlife and need for conservation. Including repeats, total attendance at these lectures was over 24,000
- Organised a total of 144 film shows on nature and wildlife conservation. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these film shows was over 18,000
- Organised 4 nature camps which were attended by 120 students from village schools
- Organised 94 nature trails, 19 rallies and programme to celebrate important days in eco-calendar like World Forest Day, World Environment Day, Global Tiger Day
- In livelihood support activities, we assisted 72 unemployed youths in getting jobs and organised skill-development programmes which equipped 159 people with vocational skills
- Organised a total of 276 medical camps to give free treatment and medicines to villagers. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these camps was 8,544

## 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, organising of community anti-poaching patrols, assistance in fighting fires in the forests
- Education as a tool to promote conservation by conducting programmes targeted at both village children and adults
- Assisting communities in basic public hygiene and village cleanliness
- Providing free medical treatment and medicines to villagers
- 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, 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 24 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 74 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.

In addition, we prepared 8 fresh waterholes in the jungle for the benefit of wildlife.



*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Sillari – Satpuda Foundation staff, Forest Department staff and villagers pose after constructing a check dam as part of Wildlife Week 2016 celebrations*



*Kanha, Bhagpur – Check dam built by villagers under our guidance at Choupan Jodi nallah*



*Nagzira - Volunteers clean waterhole in Compartment 112*

## **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 “*chullahs*” (stoves) which use better technology and consume less firewood and produce less smoke.



*Pench Tiger Reserve, (Madhya Pradesh), Aamajhari - Stove, fuelled by bio-gas, being repaired by our staff*



*Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), Mohgaon – Our colleague Kamlesh Pawar demonstrates the use of stove which uses improved technology, reducing smoke emission and quantity of firewood*

## **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 2016-17, we organised and participated in a total of 142 such patrols in Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve.



*Nagzira - Our volunteers join Forest Department staff in patrol in buffer zone near Bagadband*



*Tadoba, Sitarampeth – Volunteers patrol jungle near village in programme organised by us*

## 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 81 anti-plastic programmes and 13 village cleanliness programmes.



*Kanha, Dhamangaon - Village children pick up plastic litter during our anti-plastic programme*





*Tadoba, Moharli – Result of 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



*Kanha, Chapri - Saplings planted by members of women's SHG in programme organised by us*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve – Saplings being planted in school at Singanama in programme organised by us*



*Satpura Tiger Reserve, Matkuli – Members of bio-diversity management committee fix container with water for birds in summer*



*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) – Our colleague Dilip Lanjewar assists in controlling fire in jungle near Fulzari village*

## **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, 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 557 visits to various classrooms, which were attended by a total of 24,292 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 144 film shows were organised during the year which were attended by 18,647 people.



*Kanha, Chapri – Our Conservation Officer Amit Awasthi speaks about nature and wildlife to students at nature camp organised by us*



*Nagzira – Our Conservation Officer Mukund Dhurve guides children through an interactive game about nature and wildlife*



*Nagzira, Kuradi – Environment education education programme*



*Kanha, Mocha – Students of High & Middle School prepare to set off on conservation rally organised by us as part of Wildlife Week celebrations*



*Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Dahoda – Our Conservation Officer Mandar Pingle addresses students before a film show on Global Tiger Day 2016*

### **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 72 unemployed youths got jobs while 159 people benefited from our various skill-development programmes during 2016-17.



*Tadoba, Moharli – Village youths get trained in driving four-wheelers through programme organised by us. 40 youths were trained in this programme*



*Satpura Tiger Resrve, Kursikha – Villagers get trained in making products from lantana*



*Senior banker of Hoshangabad district views lantana products made by villagers trained in our programme*

## **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 2016-17, we conducted a total of 276 camps at which 8,544 patients got free treatment.



*Tadoba, Chorgaon – Dr. Amol Dawange examines at free medical camp organised by us*



*Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), Doodhgaon –Dr. Zanjali examines a patient at free medical camp organised by us*

**Strengthening the PA management in new tiger sanctuaries in Maharashtra:**

Satpuda Foundation could bring the declaration of some new tiger sanctuaries in Satpuda landscape during 2012-15. SF further strengthen the efforts in these areas during 2016-17.

The areas are Umred-Karandla (189.29 sq km) in Nagpur district, New Nagzira (151.335 sq km) sanctuary and Navegaon (122.75 sq km) sanctuary in Gondia district, new Bor sanctuary (60.69 sq km) in Wardha district and Muktai-Bhawani conservation reserve in Jalgaon district.

**SF brought many policy changes for tiger protection**

Tigers face many severe threats in central India. Due to several developmental projects like mines and dams, tigers homes are threatened. The existing linear projects like railways, highways, irrigation canals are causing more deaths of wildlife due to accidents than poaching.

SF is working as a member on policy making bodies like Maharashtra state Board for Wildlife and standing committee of National Board for Wildlife (NBWL). SF raised these issue with the state and centre government.

Recently, both the governments have been agreed to address this serious issue in the PAs as well as wildlife corridors connecting these PAs. The mitigation measures to be implemented by respective agencies will avoid these incidents in the near future.

**SF helped to relocate villages from Melghat.**

Village relocation is a most important work to provide inviolate areas for tiger conservation. However the work is much complicated and complex due to involvement of many government agencies. But with the strong support at the ground from Satpuda Foundation teams and community network, Government of Maharashtra could relocate one village from Melghat Tiger Reserve.

#### **Collaborative work with University of Oxford and Columbia University USA:**

SF believes in working together. We have initiated many conservation and research projects with University of Oxford (UK) and Columbia University USA jointly with SGB Amravati University. The SF in collaboration with Network for Conserving Central India(NCCI) and WWF, New Delhi hosted a **Central Indian Landscape Symposium (CILS)** on **"Reconciling Development, Livelihoods and Conservation Goals"** on December 14-17, 2016 in Pench Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh, India. This symposium was

