

SATPUDA



FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2018-19

**Report of our activities during 2018-19 (April-March)
in Pench Tiger Reserve, Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger
Reserve, Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Kanha Tiger
Reserve, Satpura Tiger Reserve and Priyadarshini
Pench Tiger Reserve and in the Pench-Bor and Yawal-
Melghat corridors**

Highlights of our work in 2018-19

- Total of 48 check dams built
- 5 soak pits dug
- 113 waterholes cleaned and de-silted
- Total of 23,410 saplings planted
- Organised and participated in 143 patrols in jungle to check poaching and other illegal activities
- Organised 136 anti-plastic programmes to remove plastic litter from areas adjoining wildlife habitats and also organised 112 village cleanliness programmes
- 512 visits to village schools to educate students about nature and wildlife and need for conservation. Including repeats, total attendance at these lectures was over 23,000
- Organised a total of 243 film shows on nature and wildlife conservation. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these film shows was nearly 16,000
- Organised 18 nature camps which were attended by 540 students from village schools
- Organised 96 nature trails, 69 rallies and programme to celebrate important days in eco-calendar like World Forest Day, World Environment Day, Global Tiger Day, World Water Day
- In livelihood support activities, we assisted 104 unemployed youths in getting jobs and organised skill-development programmes which equipped 175 people with vocational skills
- Organised a total of 258 medical camps to give free treatment and medicines to villagers. Including repeat visitors, total attendance at these camps was 10,864

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 121 villages located around 6 major Tiger Reserves in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh and in two wildlife corridors: Pench- Bor and Yawal-Melghat . The total population of the villages in our area of operations is around 77,000.

In Maharashtra, the areas covered are Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (15 villages), Pench Tiger Reserve (24 villages), Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (12 villages), Pench-Bor corridor (6 villages) and Yawal-Melghat (3 villages).

In Madhya Pradesh, the areas where we operate are Priyadarshini Pench Tiger Reserve (24 villages), Kanha (10 villages) and Satpura Tiger Reserve (27 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 48 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 5 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 111 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.

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 2017-18, we organised and participated in a total of 143 such patrols in Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra, Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve.

During the year, we organised a total of 136 anti-plastic programmes and 112 village cleanliness programmes.

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.



Siladevi - Bandu and Balkrishna assisting in fire-fighting in Compartment no. 221 (left);, Ghoti - New waterhole made with help of villagers (right)



Awaleghat- Balkrishna with volunteers after check dam construction (left). Khapa- Volunteers pose after waterhole construction (right)



Kirangisarra- Cattle vaccination program (left); Ghoti- Dilip and villagers dig waterhole

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

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 512 visits to various classrooms, which were attended by a total of 23,462 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 243 film shows were organised during the year which were attended by 15,952 people.

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
- Driving four-wheelers
- Poultry farming
- Making products from lantana

Thanks to our efforts, a total of 104 unemployed villagers got jobs and 175 people benefited from our various skill-development programmes during 2017-18. Our donor Pratyancha Pardeshi and Derek Remington financially assisted lantana furniture initiative along with the nature camps for tribal Kids.

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 staff 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. Thanks to donor Adv. Janak Dwarkadas for his valuable donation to run

the unit. During 2017-18, we conducted a total of 258 camps at which 10,864 patients got free treatment.