



## Satpuda Foundation

### (Activity Report 2007-2008)

Expansion was the theme of the year as the Foundation opened full-fledged field offices at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Kanha and Satpura Tiger Reserve. Nagpur emerged as the nerve centre of the Foundation's field operations, with daily activities in 6 Tiger Reserves being monitored and coordinated from the Tiger Capital of India.

The Foundation's existing activities gathered pace, with the Kids for Tigers programmes being extended to 28 schools in Nagpur while a nature education programme was started for village schools in and around Tiger Reserves in central India. New conservation initiatives were launched including the use of an LCD projector and DVD player to convey conservation messages to villagers through the medium of movies. A micro-finance survey was undertaken in Pench Tiger Reserve to assess the feasibility of providing cheap loans to villagers who follow eco-friendly practices.

By the end of 2007/08 (April-March), the Foundation was undertaking a whole range of conservation-related activities including environment education, research, community development, employment generation, health assistance to villagers and landscape restoration.

#### *The highlights of the year include:*

- *Opening of field centres at Moharli (Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve), Chapri (Kanha), Matkuli and Podar (Satpura-Bori Tiger Reserve)*
- *Foundation's President invited to participate in a 2-day workshop on leadership in climate change run by Nobel peace prize winners Al Gore and Dr Rajendra Pachauri*
- *Step-up in support to resettlement of villages from Tiger Reserves*
- *Increased networking and mobilizing of opinion in favour of conservation and conservation-related activities*
- *Launching of environment education programmes for children in villages in our areas of operations*
- *Launching of nature awareness camps for children living in tribal villages of Pench Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra) and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve*
- *Getting permission from PCCF (Wildlife) Maharashtra to prepare Tiger Conservation Plan for Navegaon-Nagzira landscape*
- *Starting of landscape restoration project in Akot tehsil in villages near Melghat Tiger Reserve*
- *Employment Cell activity gathers pace in Pench and expands to Tadoba-Andhari and Melghat Tiger Reserves*

## **The year in review**

Field centres were set up at Moharli in May, at Chapri in April and Podar and Matkuli in November as the Foundation expanded its activities across the Satpuda landscape. After the setting up of these centres, our field teams also initiated conservation-related activities in the respective Tiger Reserves – Tadoba-Andhari, Kanha and Satpura-Bori.

## **Tadoba-Andhari**

The Foundation has identified a set of 11 villages for its initial activities and this will be expanded in future. The villages are Bhamdeli, Sitarampeth, Adegaon, Kutwanda, Moharli, Junona, Dewada, Mudholi, Chorgaon, Palasgaon and Katwal.

In keeping with the Foundation's philosophy that sustainable conservation is not possible without the involvement of local communities, our field assistants Bandu Kumare and Sonal Awari have built up a database of all 11 villages. This was done by carrying out a detailed door-to-door socio-economic survey and collecting data from local panchayats and other official sources.

This has helped us ascertain the living conditions of the villagers in these areas, their pressure on the forests for firewood and fodder for their livestock and their livelihood issues. Thanks to this database, it is now possible to draw up an integrated plan for development of these villages which will take into account both the livelihood issues of the villagers as well as conservation issues.

Other activities by the Moharli team include environment education programmes, employment initiatives to reduce pressure on forests from unemployed youths and assistance to sister NGO Nature Conservation Society Amravati in holding medical camps for the villagers in the area.

Details of individual activities are listed out under the respective functional unit's report below.

## **Kanha**

The Foundation opened a full-fledged field office at Chapri village outside Kanha National Park in April, with the appointment of Mukesh Pathak as Conservation Officer.

He was subsequently replaced by Amit Awasthi as Conservation Officer in September 2007. The team also includes field assistant Sampathlal Dhurve.

The Kanha unit works in the following 11 villages : Dhamangaon, Samaiya, Bhagpur, Batwar, Khisi, Kutwahi, Sautiya, Chapri, Mocha, Manegaon and Patpara.

The team is engaged in community conservation programmes, education programmes and employment initiatives to assist unemployed youths in the area. Details follow under their respective functional heads.

## **Satpura Tiger Reserve**

In November, Satpuda Foundation added Satpura-Bori Tiger Reserve to its area of operations by setting up field centres in Matkuli and Podar. Ashfaq Aarbi was appointed as Conservation Officer in November and the team was beefed up with the hiring of 2 field assistants Umashankar Yadav and Sampath Yadav in December.

The Foundation started operations in this Reserve at the invitation of Shri S S Rajpoot, Field Director and Conservator of Forests, Satpura Tiger Reserve. Shri Rajpoot and the Foundation agreed on the following agenda:

- To help to resettle nine villages from Bori sanctuary
- To design a local, specific conservation education programme and boost awareness of the children from all the three clusters
- To provide health facility to these clusters at regular intervals through its Mobile Health Unit (MHU)
- To conduct socio-economic survey and survey of un-employed tribal youths from individual families from the villages from three clusters
- To form a network of community leaders and invite block level officers from Revenue and other concerned departments in the meetings of community leaders to help them in resolving issues
- To conduct capacity building and training programmes for unemployed tribal youths to help them in getting employment

The team operates in 25 villages in 3 clusters. In the first few months of operation, it has completed socio-economic surveys and compiled data bases on unemployed youths in 18 villages spread over 2 clusters: Raikheda, Mongra, Nayakheda, Parraspani, Dhargaon, Aanjandana, Nankot, Birjikhapa, Sonpur, Kukra, Nandner, Suplai, Malupura, Khamda, Mana, Malni, Sankai, Podhar.

## **Pench**

The Pench field office at Turiya completed its third year of operations. Shri Anoop Awasthi was appointed as Conservation Officer in May 2007 and his team includes field assistants Bandu Uikey and Dilip Lanjewar in Maharashtra and Niranjan Hinge in Madhya Pradesh.

The team, which includes some members who have been working in the area for 3 years, turned in an all-round performance, conducting workshops for unemployed people, training programmes for self-employment, community meetings to address local development issues, nature education lectures and camps for school kids.

The team was able to assist over 40 youths in getting jobs and in helping organize training programmes for self-employment.

It also assisted the Mobile Health Unit of NCSA in holding several health camps monthly at which free treatment and medicines were handed out to villagers.

## **Nagpur**

The Nagpur office, established in 2002, emerged as the main base of daily operations for the Foundation. All daily activities in the field centres were monitored and coordinated from the city. The Nagpur office also started a process of monthly meetings at which each centre would give a presentation on its achievements and performance would be reviewed.

Currently, the team at Nagpur includes driver Anil Shelke, Employment Cell Officer Naved Khan and Executive Director Giri Venkatesan.

The Kids for Tigers programme was rolled out in 28 schools in Nagpur under the guidance of KFT coordinator Nandkishor Dudhe. The programme included slide shows, nature trails and a half-day festival Tiger Fest. Dudhe was also instrumental in organizing 4 nature camps – 2 each at Pench and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve – for the children of village schools in these Reserves.

Conservation  
Education  
Employment  
Health

## **CONSERVATION**

The Foundation was active in conservation programmes across the Satpuda landscape, including Tadoba, Pench (Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh), Satpura-Bori Tiger Reserve and Kanha.

Activities included socio-economic surveys in 74 villages across the landscape, giving detailed insights into the economic conditions of villagers, biotic pressure on forests, size of cattle population, landholding and earning patterns.

The surveys also helped determine the development and livelihood issues of the villagers and assisted the Foundation in initiating dialogues with the Revenue and Forest Departments in evolving action plans which take into account the villagers' needs as well as conservation issues.

Following are some of the highlights of the community conservation programmes undertaken during the year:

- Community meeting held in Pench at Turiya, Sillari and Ghatpendari covering all the 34 villages in our area of operations. The meetings included officials from the Forest Department, district administration and prominent villagers

- Preparing of databases of issues faced by residents of 18 villagers in Satpura-Bori Tiger Reserve and handing over of same to Field Director and district administration officials
- Preparing of databases of issues faced by residents of 11 villages on fringes of Kanha National Park and follow-up of the same with concerned officials
- Invited by local forest officials to assist in implementation of eco-development programmes including bio-gas schemes, Kapildhara Yojana, etc...
- In Tadoba, our team formed a self-help group (SHG) in Adegaon village which successfully led a campaign to shut down liquor shops in the village and gained the appreciation of local villagers
- Launch of campaigns in all areas of operations to celebrate major festivals like Ganesh Chaturthi and Holi in eco-friendly manner
- Launch of awareness programmes on harmful effects of plastic and motivating people to cut down on its use
- Motivating children in Turiya to collect seeds/saplings for plantation programmes
- Introducing villagers in Pench to organic farming techniques to help them shift towards more sustainable farming
- Launch of landscape restoration project in Akot in areas adjoining Melghat Tiger Reserve in a project which will eventually involve 12 villages and around 2,500 hectares
- Support to resettlement initiatives

***TATR Conservation Programme supported by Cartoonist Software professional Vikram Nandwani***

The core team placed at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) is supported by funds raised by Cartoonist software professional Vikram Nandwani. Vikram has been raising funds through his blogspot ([www.save-tiger.blogspot.com](http://www.save-tiger.blogspot.com)) for this initiative. The team has done socio-economic surveys of villages on the periphery of TATR, assisted SF's Employment Cell in training and placement of tribal youths, also assisted in resettlement work of village Botezari & Kolasa villages from TATR and also has helped NCSA's Mobile Health Unit in reaching the health services to tribals.the

***Conservation works around Kanha supported by Derek Remington***

SF's well wisher Derek Remington from UK, who has spent his childhood in central India, has been raising funds to support the Foundation's work in Kanha. He gives slide shows on Tiger Conservation in UK and sends SF what ever he raises. SF could do the nature education work, socio-economic survey and employment survey in the villages around Kanha.

***WCT support to resettlement work***

The SF has been actively assisting in the resettlement of villages from core areas.

In Tadoba, Botezari village has fully shifted out while Kolasa has been partly resettled, both at Bhagwanpur in the Mul range of Chandrapur.

Villagers were facing lot of problems at the new site as it was their first year. SF listed out their problems and helped in resolving them with the help of district administration.

The Foundation also provided monetary help to villagers for ploughing their lands and also in getting seeds and other essentials. A package of Rs. 4 lakhs was provided to 116 resettled families, thanks to **Wildlife Conservation Trust** which made the funds available. The Foundation's team at Moharli has been visiting Bhagwanpur at least thrice each month to monitor the conditions of the villagers and assist them in resolving their issues.

Separately, the Foundation is actively following up on the formalities required to expedite the resettlement of Fulzari, the only remaining village in the core area of Pench Tiger Reserve, Maharashtra.

### ***Energy Security efforts in Pench Maharashtra***

Satpuda Foundation is working with the Government to provide free LPG connections to tribal villagers in Pench Maharashtra so that the biotic pressure of these villages on the forest area for fuel wood is reduced. We have been entrusted with the task of identification of the eligible tribals and ensuring that documentation is proper.

## **EDUCATION**

The year was marked by a step-up in educational activities, in keeping with the Foundation's policy of targeting the next generation. Besides running the Kids for Tigers programme for urban school children in Nagpur and Akola, the Foundation reached out to children of village schools in 5 Tiger Reserves – Pench (Maharashtra), Priyadarshini Pench Tiger Reserve (Madhya Pradesh), Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Satpura-Bori Tiger Reserve and Kanha.

Around 70 schools with around 3,000 students were covered in the programme which included a mix of lectures, inter-active sessions, nature trails and nature games. Since the launch of the programme in August, our teams visited each of these village schools at least 7 times to drill the conservation message home.

Towards the end of the academic year, in March, the Pench and Tadoba teams conducted 2 nature camps each for the children of their areas. Each camp was attended by at least 25 students and 5 teachers and the children were treated to fun-filled, educational sessions of nature games, nature film and slide shows, lectures, inter-active sessions, safaris and nature trails.

Through the year, the children were taught the importance of nature and how it affected their lives and livelihoods. Different aspects of nature conservation ranging from water conservation to reduced use of plastic, controlling of forest fires and saving of wildlife were some of the themes spelt out to the children. Besides the importance of wildlife in the natural chain, children were also made to realize that wildlife tourism would be a failure if wildlife was eradicated through poaching and habitat destruction and this

would, in turn, lead to loss of income and livelihoods for families and villages depending on tourism.

The Wildlife Week in October was marked with a series of rallies, slogan and painting contests and essay writing contests in Pench (Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh), Kanha and Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. Children took out rallies, shouting slogans in support of wildlife conservation and displayed their creative skills in slogan, painting and essay writing competitions.

### **TATR Nature Education Programme supported by Madhav Subrahmanyam**

*Satpuda Foundation started a Madhav Tiger Conservation Fund in December 2006. The fund was started when 10-year-old Madhav Subrahmanyam from Mumbai had donated Rs.15,000 to Satpuda Foundation in 2006. Madhav has personally raised Rs.1,47,151 for this fund and today the fund has reached to Rs.1,67,151. The interest amount has been spent on the conservation education activities for tribal kids in TATR.*

### **KFT in focus in urban areas**

In urban areas, structured activities included the KFT programme in 11 schools (please check numbers) in Akola and 28 schools in Nagpur. More than 11,000 students attended the audio-visual presentations in 28 schools in Nagpur and around 80 students attended the nature trails.

The Tiger Fest was a success in both cities, with participation from 18 schools in the various events at Nagpur. Around 400 students participated in events such as fancy dress, dance/drama/skit, stall decoration, face painting. Around 2,000 people visited the venue.

The Festival was inaugurated by Shri B Majumdar, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (wildlife), Maharashtra and Shri Prakash Dubey, Editor of the Central India edition of Dainik Bhaskar.

At Akola, around 10 schools participated in the event, with around 2,000 students attending and enjoying the programme.

“Kids for Tigers’ tireless efforts for saving tigers would be remembered in Indian natural history,” said Dr. Shrikar Pardeshi, Collector of Akola district, who attended the event.

Several programmes including stage shows, painting, face painting, debates, nature games and drawing were organized during the day long “Tiger Fest”

Both Akola and Nagpur also organized nature education workshops for school teachers at the start of the academic year. In Akola, teachers and principals from 11 schools attended the workshop while at Nagpur, 23 teachers participated from 16 schools.

### ***Among other events of note during the year***

- **EE Experts visited SF Nagpur office**

In December 2007, Edward McCrea and James Massey of Environment Education and Conservation Global (EECG,USA) visited Satpuda Foundation Nagpur and lauded the efforts of the organization for the conservation of Satpuda Landscape.

Edward and James, who are also international trainers in Environment Education (EE), have agreed to start an international course in Applied EE with Satpuda Foundation soon.

- **SF Akola launched eco-friendly Holi campaign in Akola city**

The Foundation launched an eco-friendly Holi festival campaign in Akola City. Nature lovers took out a bicycle rally wearing specially designed message caps. Collector of Akola, Dr. Shrikar Pardeshi, and Dy. Director (Social Forestry), Mr. Kamalakar Dhamagaye, inaugurated the rally.

The Collector and Dy. Director rode bicycles wearing message caps and participated in the rally actively to encourage the participants. SF District head Amol Sawant and his team took great efforts to make the event successful.

## **EMPLOYMENT CELL INITIATIVE**

The Employment Cell initiative, funded by UK-based Lifeforce Charitable Trust, is one of the critical components of the Foundation's conservation blueprint. The Foundation had decided early on that sustainable, long-term conservation was not possible without tackling livelihood issues of tribal villagers.

A socio-economic surveys reveals that around 60 percent of villagers in Tiger Reserves are landless and most of them do not have any stable source of income or employment. Landless and unemployed villagers are, typically, more likely to fall prey to financial inducements from poachers, timber contractors and MFP traders. The Employment Cell was, therefore, set up to try and assist such people in getting gainful, legal employment and in providing them with self-employment skills.

Through the financial year 2007/08, the Cell arranged for more than 50 youths to get jobs with companies in Nagpur, MIDC Buti-Bori and hotels and resorts in Pench (MP). Training programmes were conducted in which around 60 villagers attended and exposed to a variety of potential small businesses such as candle-making, preparation of edible items such as chips, etc... In addition, more than 30 youths were provided training in different aspects of the hospitality industry such as catering, front and back office work in hotels and housekeeping. This training ranged from a 2-day workshop at Sillari in Pench (Maharashtra) to a one-month course conducted by Church of North India's Social Services Institute at Sadar in Nagpur which was funded by NABARD.

The Employment Cell initially focused on Pench, mainly due to logistical reasons and has now expanded its activities to Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve, Melghat Tiger Reserve and Kanha.

### ***Employment Cell supports anti-fishing operations in Pench***

Following a High Court order in April 2002, encroachers involved in illegal fishing operations in Pench reservoir were evicted from Totaladoh Irrigation Colony and were provided land by the state Government at Wadamba village. However some of the families still continued entering the Reserve for illegal fishing, due to their livelihood problems and proximity of the Reserve from Wadamba.

SF has now decided to adopt this village and address their livelihood issues. SF's Employment Cell will extend its activities to villagers of Wadamba to reduce the number of unemployed youths and divert their families from illegal fishing. The initial response of the villagers to the SF team has been hostile but the team is confident of breaking the ice and working with the residents.

### ***Employment Cell supports resettled villagers at Bhagwanpur***

As part of its support to the resettled villagers at Bhagwanpur, the Foundation included youths from the village in its job placement workshop at Moharli on March 25. As many as 13 youths from Bhagwanpur came for the workshop, where they were lodged and fed by the Foundation. All of them were offered jobs with a Nagpur-based security agency and they plan to join in May after fulfilling personal commitments.

## **HEALTH**

Health remains one of the primary issues for the villagers living in and around Tiger Reserves and the Foundation is actively engaged in supporting villagers in this area. Providing of free health care and medicines has been a major trust-building activity for the Foundation and has helped us gain acceptance among the villagers.

The Foundation does not have a vehicle of its own for this purpose and has been supporting the activities of the Mobile Health Unit of the Nature Conservation Society Amravati, a sister NGO.

The Foundation has been able to organize a network of doctors in Nagpur to support this initiative and its field teams have organized and run the health camps. On an average, camps are held 3 weekends every month in Satpuda Foundation's areas of operations in Pench, Tadoba and Satpura-Bori. The camps, which were initially spread over the weekend, have now been extended to 4 days each. Around 200 patients are treated on every trip.

### ***SF receives medicines worth Rs.10,000 for Tribal patients***

In August 2007, Satpuda Foundation received medicines worth Rs.3,000 from Mr. Aniruddha Oke and Mr. Raju Kasambe (both Medical Representatives) to be distributed to tribal patients living in Tiger Reserves.

### ***SF receives Rs.20,000 donation for Tribal patients***

In August 2007, SF received a donation of Rs.20,000 from a Delhi-based donor to support the health service programme in Tiger Reserves in Central India. The amount has been earmarked for use at Kanha.

## Other Activities

### ***Landscape Monitoring Initiatives Supported by Born Free Foundation***

#### ***Anti-poaching Advocacy***

Satpuda Foundation has been urging the state government to track the movements of Baheliya community members, basically engaged in poaching around tiger habitats of Central India, and has asked the concerned departments to restrain their entry.

A SF survey has found that over 100 such gangs operate around prime wildlife areas in central India, especially in Vidarbha.

SF wrote to the respective police department, RTO and district collectors that Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts are regularly recording the presence of Baheliya camps. Some of the Bahelias are involved in poaching tigers, leopards, sloth bears and other animals with the help of special steel traps. These traps are even provided to local poachers and Baheliya traders help them in transporting the derivatives like skin and bones.

SF in its open letter to State Government listed out the places in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts where presence of Baheliya camps has been noted.

SF requested the principal secretaries of home, forest, revenue and transport and excise departments to direct collectors of all the tiger range districts to ask the police patils to report on Baheliya camps near their village without any delay. Besides, Government should order inspection of all such Baheliya camps and recover wildlife derivatives/forest products from them and register offences as appropriate. It was suggested that the RTOs should direct the check posts at the state entry and exit points to monitor and physically inspect the vehicles of Baheliya community and stop their entry in the state.

### ***Campaign to support Satpuda Landscape conservation***

The Landscape monitoring unit (LMU) of SF has started a campaign to attract the attention of policy makers on the ecological services that our tiger habitats from Central India are providing to the country.

A SF study found that cities that flourish in Central India have ignored the issue of survival of rivers, on which their development depends. Tiger Reserves like Kanha, Pench, Pench (Maharashtra) Satpuda, Melghat and Tadoba Andhari have been constantly feeding these rivers but the contribution of their ecological services have been ignored. SF has made an appeal that the reserves, which act as watersheds, need to be rewarded for their tangible and intangible benefits so that we can keep these rivers alive. The appeal got widely published through the Sanctuary Magazine, website and print media.

### ***Efforts to create new sanctuary, Mansinghdeo, to expand protection to Pench tigers***

After a detailed study of the area around Pench Tiger Reserve, the Landscape monitoring unit called upon the Government to declare the area of Mansinghdeo forest as a sanctuary to expand protection to tigers in Pench Tiger Reserve.

The Forest Development Corporation Maharashtra (FDCM) made some efforts to stall the proposal of Mansinghdeo Wildlife Sanctuary which includes 11 key compartments of the corporation. The corporation was not ready to part with these compartments and wanted huge compensation for these areas. ***If that is not possible, it wants the Rs 344.82 crore loan to be revised by including the cost of these areas.*** (???)

Local villagers, at the instigation of some politicians and lower staffers of FDMC, had planned an agitation in front of the Legislative Assembly which was made ineffective by the advocacy work of the unit.

Chief Minister of Maharashtra has already issued verbal orders to go ahead with the sanctuary, due to our successful advocacy.

In June 2007, the Chief Minister had directed the FDCM to hand over compartments coming in the way of Mansinghdeo sanctuary, but the administration is yet to honor his instructions.

Mansinghdeo is necessary as a buffer zone for survival of tigers in Pench National Park whose entire 257 sq km is a core area. Pench would have no future if the sanctuary is not created.

More recently, the Principal Secretary has approved the proposal which will be routed to the chief minister.

### ***Compensation for cattle and human loss by wild animals***

A few years ago, a tigress and three of her cubs were found dead in Chikmara beat in Sindewahi forest area in Chandrapur Circle, after eating the carcass of a cattle, which was apparently poisoned. In 2006, around 10 Gaurs died in the adjoining FDCM division after drinking water which appeared to have been poisoned. The frequency of these cases indicates the anger of villagers whose cattle were killed in attacks by predators and who have not received compensation from the Government for the same. After following these cases, the Landscape monitoring unit of SF started advocacy work to address the financial problem involved in this issue.

Compensation worth as much as Rs 5.53 crore had not been paid to kin of tiger attack victims or villagers whose cattle were killed or farms damaged by the big cat and other wild animals.

The Kolhapur circle was the worst affected with pending compensation of Rs over 1.87 crore, followed by Yavatmal (Rs 1.33 crore); south and north Chandrapur (Rs 1.16 crore); Nagpur (Rs 33 lakh); Melghat (Rs 16.10 lakh); Amravati (Rs 19.57 lakh); Dhule (Rs 12.18 lakh); Aurangabad (Rs 11.46 lakh); Pune (Rs 6.39); Mumbai (Rs 4.92 lakh); Thane (Rs 1.06 lakh); and Nashik (Rs 17,200).

The situation was alarming and delayed compensation was proving detrimental to wildlife. There was a spurt in killing of wildlife due to poisoning by villagers. Finally, after much follow-up by the LMU, compensations till March 2007 were released. The Minister has promised to rectify the financial modalities in next financial plan.

### ***Advocacy to declare Sahyadri as critical tiger habitat***

The 741.22 sq km proposed Sahyadri Tiger Reserve, constituting Chandoli National Park (317.67 sq km) and Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary (423.55 sq km), under the Kolhapur Wildlife division, is the only area in the state after Vidarbha, which has a sizeable number of tigers. In 2007 census, the division was estimated to have 9 tigers and 66 leopards.

On directions in November 2007 from Dr Rajesh Gopal, member-secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a three-member expert committee -- comprising principal chief conservator of forests (PCCF), wildlife, B Majumdar, chief conservator of forests (CCF) Dr Nand Kishore, and head of LMU Kishor Rithe -- was formed for identification and delineation of core or critical tiger habitat in tiger reserves under section 38V of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), 1972.

The committee, on December 3, on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, proposed to the state government to declare four reserves as critical tiger habitats, including the proposed Sahyadri Tiger Reserve.

However, state Government did not notify it at first instance in December 2007, despite the fact that the state had submitted the proposal to the Project Tiger Directorate (now NTCA) for declaring Sahayadri as a tiger reserve. After the successful intervention of LMU, the revised proposal has been sent by Maharashtra Government and even NTCA has shown positive inclination.

### ***Advocacy to shift colony out of Pench***

Despite a high court ruling on April 22, 2002 that no human settlements are permissible inside the reserve forest area, the Water Resource Department (WRD) of Maharashtra has not shifted the Irrigation Colony at Totladoh, which is proving a deterrent to wildlife and Pench National Park. There are 161 Madhya Pradesh State Electricity Board (MPSEB) quarters and 47 state irrigation department quarters inside the Pench Tiger Reserve.

In a meeting held on July 30, 2002, the chief secretary stated that funds for shifting the colony will be provided by the state. There is an inter-state agreement between MP and

Maharashtra on the Pench Hydroelectric Power Project, Totladoh, that water will be shared by the state and power by MP. Hence, the expenses to shift both the colonies have to be shared by the WRD. The Water Resources Department (WRD) has sent a revised proposal now to the district collector to acquire land for shifting the irrigation colony.

The LMU had regular meetings with CCF (Wildlife) Nagpur, Field Director Pench Tiger Reserve and Collector of Nagpur in this regard. Due to this, a revised proposal on November 1, 2007 for acquiring 5.03 hectare land in survey number 27/1 at Paoni, outside the reserve has been sent and Collector Nagpur has promised to sort it out soon.

### ***Resettlement cell to expedite relocation of villages in PAs***

Government of Maharashtra had appointed a state level advisory committee to expedite the resettlement work in it and nominated SF President Kishor Rithe as a member.

To expedite the process of relocation of villages further, the state forest department recently announced that it would start a resettlement cell at its Nagpur headquarters. This was announced by the Forest Minister during his visit to Melghat in February 2008.

At a meeting at Tarubandha in Melghat Tiger Reserve, Forest Minister Babanrao Pachpute said the cell would be looked after by an official of the rank of chief conservator of forests (CCF) and a collector who would work as a nodal officer and coordinate with the revenue officials in every district to resettle villages in a time-bound manner.

The government has already notified three tiger reserves in the state as 'critical tiger habitats' under the amended Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. There are 32 villages in three tiger reserves — Tadoba, Melghat and Pench — and 48 villages that are to be resettled from 11 wildlife sanctuaries and national parks in Maharashtra.

Till now, only 4.5 villages have been successfully resettled out of these PAs. These include Koha, Kund and Bori in Melghat and Botezari and half of Kolsa villages in Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR). Presently, 26 villages need to be rehabilitated in Melghat, four in Tadoba-Andhari and one in Pench.

### ***Advocacy for preparing tiger conservation plan***

Even as the tiger population is coming down at an alarming rate in Maharashtra, the government is yet to constitute a steering committee and has also not prepared a tiger conservation plan for ensuring coordination, monitoring, protection and conservation of tigers and its prey-base. The authorities have sent the proposals to establish tiger conservation foundations in three tiger reserves which will make them financially independent but the required order has not yet been passed.

The LMU is following up on the issue and expects the state Government would constitute the said committees soon.

### ***Wan-Ambabarawa and Narnala WLSs declared as Critical Tiger Habitat***

The Government of India has demarcated the 28 existing tiger reserves and eight new proposed tiger reserves as critical tiger habitats under the amended Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

However these notifications mentioned Wan-Ambabarawa and Narnala Sanctuaries bordering Melghat Tiger Reserve as “Critical Tiger Habitats”. This will enable these 3 protected areas to get the status of Tiger Reserve in the Maharashtra part of Satpuda Landscape. A long-pending demand of NCSA and Satpuda Foundation has been fulfilled by this notification.

On the directions in November 2007 from Member-secretary, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA), a three-member expert committee comprising Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), wildlife, B Majumdar, Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Dr Nand Kishore, and SF President Kishor Rithe was formed for identification and delineation of core or critical tiger habitat in tiger reserves under section 38V of the Wildlife Protection Act (WLPA), 1972.

Accordingly, the committee, on December 3, on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, had proposed to the state government that it declare four reserves as critical tiger habitat which included Melghat Tiger Reserve (MTR) comprising Gugamal national park, Melghat, Narnala, Ambabarwa and Wan wildlife sanctuaries (1,500 sq km)

This will ensure strict legal protection to Wan, Narnala and Ambabarawa sanctuaries to maintain the continuity of tiger habitats in the Satpuda Landscape.

### ***Advocacy for filling up the vacant posts in the Tiger Reserves and PAs***

At a time when poaching pressures are growing and the tiger population is showing a steep decline in number, the Maharashtra forest department is yet to fill up 1,900 vacant posts of range forest officers (RFOs), foresters and guards. The backlog of 1,900 vacancies is till June 2007. Out of these, 1,339 posts are in group C and D, including 327 of foresters, 581 of forest guards and 211 of RFOs. The LMU raised the issue with Principal Secretary and Forest Minister who later filled up most of the posts.

### ***Survey of Railway track upgradation proposal from Wan sanctuary***

There was a proposal by Railway Ministry to upgrade the Purna-Khandwa metre gauge track passing through the Wan Wildlife Sanctuary. If the existing meter gauge track were to be upgraded, there are chances of an increase in fire incidents in Wan sanctuary. This proposal would also require the cutting down of a huge number of trees and could also lead to killings of wild animals.

The railways plan to convert the track to broad gauge from Purna in Nanded to Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh under the South Central Railway (SCR). In the first phase, work on Purna-Hingoli section has already been completed and is likely to be commissioned in a month's time.

Research by the LMU disclosed that the second phase aims to complete the 120-km stretch between Hingoli and Akola by March 2008. It is learnt the Ministry would later take up the upgradation of Akola-Khandwa route.

### ***SF gets registered under Income Tax Act***

Donors contributing money to SF will get the benefit of Sec 80G tax breaks. The exemption is valid from August 2007 to March 2012 vide Income Tax Number: CIT-III/Tech/80 G/(13/123)2007-08 (from 17.08.2007 to 31.03.2012). Donors can send their donations to

Satpuda Foundation

c/o Kishor Rithe,

"Sapphire" Appt Flat 201,

Plot 17, Puranik Layout, Bharat Nagar, Amravati Road, Nagpur. Tele- Fax: 0712-2557320 (Tele-Fax), Email : [satpuda@gmail.com](mailto:satpuda@gmail.com), satpuda@gmail.com

### ***Satpuda Foundation participates in The Climate Programme in New Delhi***

Former Vice President of America and Nobel peace prize winners Al Gore and Dr. Rajendra Pachauri Chairman of America's IPCC had selected 125 Indian experts on climate change to participate in a workshop. Kishor Rithe, President of SF, participated in this leadership program in Climate Change held in New Delhi on 14-16 March, 2008.

Al Gore's climate change leadership program aims at increasing public awareness about the climate crisis through the training of select leaders and activists. The trainee participants will later take on the mandate of spreading the message to the broader community. This is a worldwide initiative of "The Climate Project" and over 2000 people across the globe have already participated in this program.

The workshop was organized at India Habitat Centre New Delhi and Al Gore participated in the workshop.

***(Thanks to our Donors: Born Free Foundation, LifeForce Charitable Trust, ABN-AMRO Foundation, Sanctuary Asia, Wildlife Conservation Trust, Vikram Nandwani, Derek Remington, Vasanta Iyyer, Madhav Subrahmanyam and many others)***

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