

PROJECT NOTE

Eco-Restoration of Tiger Habitat and mitigating the hardships of human habitants within Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve

Introduction :-

Tadoba-Andhari has almost contiguous habitat for tiger conservation, with the area of almost 625.40 Sq. km. Forest of Bramhapuri & Chandrapur Divisions are spread over another contiguous block of about 1000.00 Sq. kms. giving the area great importance & potential in developing into a prime Tiger Conservation Unit. However, the situation is far from ideal as existing 2.50 villages (include Part of Kolsa) have seriously jeopardized the situation. Unless timely measures are taken, neither long term conservation could be achieved nor the present inhabitants of 2.50 village will be able to meet their legitimate aspirations to be a part of main stream of developmental activities.

As provided in the Wildlife (Protection) Act and Maharashtra Land Revenue Code, the Sub Divisional Officer, Warora has already inquired into the rights and concessions of the people and has also ascertained the willingness of the people for relocation. All six villages have given their consent as has been brought out by the Sub Divisional Officer, Warora in his inquiry proceedings.

2. Threats to Habitat :-

Forest inhabitants and their cattle have deteriorating impact on their surrounds. As the villagers are forest resource-dependent, their existence within the forests, depletes/deteriorates ecological status around villages. As villagers protect and nurture their cattle in competition for food, wild herbivores are put to disadvantage. Forest villagers also harvest and utilize forest products for bonafide so also commercial use. These forest products are thus denied to the wild animals e.g. Mahuwa flower, Tendu fruits other edible fruits, tubers, bamboo rhizomes, medicinal plants etc. These biotic pressures also lead to over grazing, fires, which seriously disturb forest ecology. Presence of villagers in the midst of a sanctuary leads to hardships to the village inhabitants, as agricultural crops are prone to damage by wild animals like wild boar, nilgai, chital, sambar etc. There are also attacks on the livestock by predators like leopard and tiger. Even though compensation is paid for such losses, loss is not adequately covered. There are also chances of attacks on human beings by sloth bear, tiger, leopard etc.

The objective behind assigning an area with the status of National Park or Wildlife Sanctuary is to ensure biotic interference-free area, wherein wild animals are not deprived of their habitat. Habitat is fully protected against exploitation, destruction, depriving wild animals of its habitat etc. (Wildlife Protection) Act, 1972 section 35(5)(6)]. In the area notified as Wildlife Sanctuary, people are to be prohibited from exploitation/removal of any wildlife of destruction/damage of habitat of wild animals or depriving any wild animal of its habitat (Section 29 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act).

3. Advantages of freeing area of human interference :-

Human inhabitations have mostly been established in fertile lands with assured water supply. Such sites within forest area are limited and therefore, are ecologically significant. Flat grounds along major nallahs can support riparian floral and faunal attributes & such attributes are completely lost, with the presence of intensive agriculture practices within the village.

4. Eco-Restoration of the village sites :-

The geographical area of the Rantalodhi village is 175.26 hectares, out of which 40.46 ha. is presently under agriculture. The biotic interference in the adjoining compartments around this village will be drastically reduced as a result of relocation.

In the dry deciduous forest fire-prone area of Tadoba, availability of water is a limiting factor. When the life support systems like water sources come under stress, the human inhabitants and their cattle claim supremacy over wild denizens. Relocation will increase water availability to the wild animals.

Vacated area will be developed into meadows for which approaches such as protection and seeding area with palatable indigenous grass species would be adopted. Palatable species will be encouraged to grow and unpalatable weeds will be removed. Soil and moisture conservation will be adopted, wherever necessary, to improve ecological status. Area around the periphery of existing villages will be tackled in a phased manner primarily through rigid protection and eco-restoration measures will not involve major financial inputs, as nature will be allowed to take its own course. Whatever financial assistance required, will be available from ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Name of Village	Cultivation Land	Abadi	Other Non-forest Govt. Land	Reserve Forest in the boundary of village	Protected Forest Area	Total
Rantalodhi	40.46 ha.	5.50 ha.	53.58 ha.	75.72 ha	00.00 ha.	175.26 h.
Total	40.46 ha.	5.50 ha.	53.58 ha.	75.72 ha	00.00 ha.	175.26ha.

5. Advantages of Eco-Restoration :-

(i) Advantages to local inhabitants:-

Maharashtra Land Revenue Code/G.R. dated 3 November 2012 and State Policy of Rehabilitation will ensure that this village will have modern amenities at the new settlement site near Parsoda village in Warora taluka. This place has been selected by the people themselves mainly because of closeness to the market, all weather roads, medical aid facilities etc.

With the absence of crop raiding animals like Wild boars, Nilgai & Chital, agricultural products could be fully harvested and utilized. Agriculture produce will also give better returns with the proximity to market centers.

Landless families will be given land as provided under the G.R. dated 3 November 2012 and, therefore, such landless families also stand to gain. These landless persons can adopt modern commercial practices and with closeness to centers of consumption, returns for the efforts made will be substantial.

(ii) Advantages to forest Eco-system:-

Shifting of the Rantalodhi village will overcome the existing human interference having deleterious effects on the TATR area. Ecological boundaries of the TATR area would be firmed up and provisions under the Wildlife (Protection) Act for the TATR would be implemented in letter and spirit.

Shifting of cattle will eliminate serious competition for fodder and water. It will be possible to establish meadows over an area of about 175.26 ha. These meadows will also have assured water supply and, therefore, it is expected that within a short period of 3 to 4 years, these meadows will be able to support increasing herbivores like Chital, Sambar and Gaur.

With the increase in the prey-base, tiger population in the TATR area will improve and will be free of conflict with human beings which, many a times, leads to poisoning of carcasses, resulting, in tiger deaths.

The extent of forest fire, which is mostly human induced, would be drastically reduced thereby resulting in overall Eco-restoration of about 2800 ha. of Protected Area.

(iii) Research and Monitoring:-

Relocation of village will provide an opportunity to unravel process of ecological succession. This site is, therefore, expected to provide much needed data base, which would be of great relevance to understand the ecology of dry deciduous forests and the floral and faunal attributes at different stages of succession.

6. Rehabilitation Site :-

The villagers of Rantalodhi along with forest & revenue officials have jointly inspected the proposed site and finally selected the Reserve Forest land Comptt. No. 14-B near village Parsoda in Warora-Tahsil of Chandrapur District. The total area of this Comptt is 374.75 ha. As the proposed rehabilitation area is not far away from the original village site, and other reserve forest is near to this site the people will have easy access to the natural resources in those forests. In addition, there is a provision in the rehabilitation package to provide village woodlands and pasture lands, as far as possible, to the affected people. This site is about 42 km. from Rantalodhi village.

7. **Rehabilitation Package :-**

Civic amenities will be provided to the villagers and the hardships presently faced by them shall be redressed. With the consent of people's representative, a suitable package will be evolved taking into account present facilities available their needs & expectation and as per the G.R. dated 3 November 2012. This package will have following features:

A) **Common Facilities :-**

1. Permanent drinking water facilities.
2. School along with play ground.
3. Construction of Panchayat office community hall etc.
4. Internal metal roads.
5. If required walking path for cultivation land.
6. Electric supply.
7. Burial ground.
8. Sewerage line.
9. Community Toilets and Loan for Private Toilets.
10. Land for Cattle Pound.
11. Land for Bus Stand.
12. Khalwadi land.
13. Grazing land.
14. Land for weekly market with platforms.
15. Land for future extension of Gaothan.
16. Land for School, Hospital, PHC, Bank, Post Office, Children Park, etc.
17. Land for Registered Societies of old village.
18. Land for play ground.

B) Other Facilities :-

1. Every farmer will be given land equal to his land in old village but minimum will be 2.00 ha.
2. All landless families will get 2.00 ha. land each.
3. The land will be made cultivable.
4. Assistance will be given for transport of household from old to new village.

8. Financial Provision :-

Govt. of India has a scheme to provide Rs. 10 Lakh for each family for its rehabilitation outside the Protected Area for which the Central Government will provide Rs. 24.40 Cores. The State Government will provide remaining costs from the existing schemes through convergence approach.

Chandrapur :-

Date :- 07.03.2019


(N.S. Ladkat, IFS)

Dy. Director (Core)
Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserved
Chandrapur