

## **COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP FOR TIGER CONSERVATION (CLTC) LIFT, NAGARAHOLE**

**FINAL REPORT :- 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2001 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2001  
Submitted to 21<sup>st</sup> Century Tiger**

### **PROJECT ABSTRACT:**

Nagarahole National Park comprises mainly of moist and dry deciduous forest. The Park comes under the Global Tiger Conservation Priority Unit, TCU-55. It has one of the highest densities of large mammals including tigers in South India.

One of the potential threats, for the long-term conservation of tigers in Nagarahole National Park is habitat fragmentation, due to 55 tribal settlements scattered inside the Park, totaling 1550 tribal families. Tiger prey is being depleted, due to hunting pressures through innovative traps laid by the tribals, inside the forest. There is an increasing hazard of forest fires which facilitates illegal minor forest produce collection and due to unregulated movement of people into the Park.

With increased protection status of the forests, the wildlife in the Park has recovered, which in effect has increased human wildlife conflict. The demographic transformation in the tribal population is anticipated to increase the conflicting interests of the National Park objectives and tribal socio-economic welfare in the future. As the tribals do not possess any agricultural land for cultivation and with the gradual stoppage of timber logging and Minor Forest Produce collection, the tribal families are finding it difficult to generate cash incomes for their survival needs. Most of the tribals have to earn their livelihood in the neighbouring villages outside the Park as wage labour.

The State Government has come up with a rehabilitation package for any tribal family which volunteers to resettle outside the Park. The objective of the voluntary resettlement process is to address the critical issue of permanently resolving human wildlife conflict on ground by ensuring proper social justice to the tribals, while consolidating and improving quality of tiger habitats.

The first 51 families of tribals who volunteered to resettle were successfully rehabilitated in 1999, with the active co-ordination of LIFT, with support from Wildlife Conservation Society under Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project (Save the tiger Fund - National Fish and Wildlife Fund and ExxonMobil), in spite of opposition from some NGO's. This voluntary resettlement package has inspired confidence in another 200 tribal families to come forward and accept a similar resettlement package. This project intends to interface with various Government Departments and the tribals to make this voluntary resettlement project a success and establish it as a model, which will also inspire and motivate other tribals living inside the Park to opt for resettlement.

The CLTC is a pilot project to establish a base for a continued interfacing activity in the future for supporting tribals volunteering to resettle. The CLTC requests for bridge funding for this pilot project and looks forward for support from Global Tiger Patrol, Save the Tiger Fund - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and ExxonMobil and other tiger funding sources for a continued activity of this organisation at least for the next five years.

## **IV. PROPOSAL:**

### **A. PROJECT NEED:**

Nagarahole National Park (also known as Rajiv Gandhi National Park; 644 sqkm area) comprises mainly of tropical moist and dry deciduous forest (Pascal J.P., Meher Homji, 1982). The Park comes under the Global Tiger Conservation Priority Unit, TCU-55 (Wikramanayake E.D. et.al., 1998), in the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) - World Wide Fund for nature (WWF) report on prioritising areas for large mammal conservation, tiger as a case study. The Park has one of the highest densities of large mammals including tigers (Karanth & Sunquist 1992, 1995) in South India.

One of the potential threats, for the long-term conservation of tigers in Nagarahole National Park is habitat fragmentation, due to 55 tribal settlements scattered inside the Park, totalling 1550 tribal families living in the interiors of the Park. The tribal groups were originally hunter-gatherers and have later switched to collecting non-timber forest products for commercial markets. The tribals lifestyle has integrated with the market economy due to this over the years (Karanth et al, 1999). The tribals are mostly poor, landless and socially dominated by other caste groups.

The human wildlife conflict has increased, due to the recovery of wildlife by enhanced protection status in the Park. Since, no regular public transport amenities are available to these settlements; the tribals find it difficult to travel regularly to the neighbouring villages. Incidents of injuries and deaths due to elephant, bear, leopard and other wild animal's attack during their transit by walk to the neighbouring villages are common. The basic amenities like health, food supplies, education, power and water facilities cannot be provided by the Government as per law within the National Park. The demographic transformation in the tribal population is anticipated to increase the conflicting interests of the National Park objectives and tribal socio-economic upliftment in the future.

Intentional and accidental forest fires to facilitate illegal minor forest produce collection, cattle grazing, etc and due to the unregulated movement of people, transiting in and out of the Park is one of the long term threats to the quality of habitat. Hunting of small and large mammals through innovative traps laid in the forests by the tribals is another potential threat to the tiger prey population. Many other hunters prefer the tribals as guides as they are familiar with the interior of the forests (Madhusudhan M. D. and Karanth K.U.).

As the tribals do not possess any agricultural land for cultivation and with the gradual stoppage of sanction in timber extraction and Minor Forest Produce (MFP) collection, the tribal families are finding it difficult to generate cash incomes for their survival needs. Consequently, the tribals have to find sources of income outside the forests in the neighbouring villages, which are 5 to 30 kilometres from the present settlements. The Forest Department has employed some of the tribals and many others work as wage labour in coffee plantations.

Without any means of earning inside the park, 51 tribals living inside the Park volunteered to resettle outside the park. A memorandum was submitted to the Forest Minister of Karnataka by the heads of the tribal families, that agricultural land, housing, electricity, health care and other social amenities be provided to them outside Nagarahole National Park. The Chief Wildlife Warden, who was informed of the "Beneficiary oriented scheme for Tribal development (BOTD), under the Directorate of Project Tiger, forwarded the proposal to Govt. of India (GOI). Under the BOTD scheme, each tribal family willing to relocate got a grant of 2 hectares of Forest/Revenue land and

one lakh rupees (\$ 2380) for housing, land development etc in addition to other State Govt. schemes for water, electricity, school etc being dovetailed along with the GOI package.

This pilot voluntary resettlement project was successfully implemented with the active co-ordination of LIFT in 1999, with support from Wildlife Conservation Society under Karnataka Tiger Conservation Project (Save the tiger Fund - National Fish and Wildlife Fund and ExxonMobil). This effort has inspired and built confidence amongst tribals living in the interior of the Park and a second batch of more than 200 tribal families have voluntarily come forward to accept a similar package.

The main objective of the voluntary resettlement project is to address the critical issue of permanently resolving human wildlife conflict on ground by ensuring proper social justice to the tribals while consolidating and improving quality of tiger habitats.

The CLTC is a pilot project to establish a base for a continued interfacing activity in the future for all the tribals volunteered to resettle. The CLTC requests for bridge funding for this pilot project and looks forward for support from Global Tiger Patrol, Save the Tiger Fund - National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and Exxon and other tiger funding sources for a continued activity of this organisation at least for the next five years.

## **B. OBJECTIVES:**

- a. To eliminate human and wildlife conflict.
- b. To ensure economic and social security of tribals who have volunteered to re-settle outside the National Park by working with the Government for implementation of suitable social welfare schemes.
- c. To consolidate tiger habitats.
- d. To improve the carrying capacity of the habitat to enrich tiger and prey densities.
- e. To improve management of the park by reduced movement of people into the Park.

## **PROJECT PROGRESS :**

The activities of CLTC Project started as scheduled in January 2001. The project coordinator M.K. Appachu continued to monitor the voluntary resettlement program, following up the efforts initiated under KTCP. The summary of the activities undertaken by the CLTC project are outlined below.

The Budgeted amount under the CLTC project for six months and the expenditure incurred under various heads under the project from 01 January 2001 to 30 June 2001 are presented in Appendix - 1

## DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER CLTC - LIFT, NAGARAHOLE

(a) *Liase with the State Forest Department to ensure implementation of a humane voluntary resettlement program for tribals living in the interiors of the park.*

- The project coordinator continuously monitored the progress of voluntary resettlement project and intensively interacted with Karnataka Forest Department the main Government agency implementing the Voluntary Resettlement project, in this regard. Eight formal meeting were held with the park warden and the project progress was discussed in detail. These included land development and other inputs to be provided by the forest department for agricultural development. The project coordinator interacted with other forest department officials including Asst. Wildlife Warden, Range Wardens and field staff.
- Under the Beneficiary Oriented Scheme for Tribal Development (BOTD) of the Directorate of Project Tiger, Government of India, each beneficiary is entitled to agricultural support only for two years. However, the project coordinator successfully convinced the Forest department that the 50 tribal families resettled in 1999, need continued agricultural support. Based on this intervention, they received agricultural support this year also.
- The forest department has provided a total of six tube wells, in the resettlement area, after follow up by the project coordinator.
- In order to ensure protection for the agricultural fields from potential damage by wild elephants and cattle, the project coordinator moved the Forest department to provide a protective trench all around the settlement. Work is presently under progress.

(b) *Interact intensively with tribals and build up tribal representatives in the leadership of LIFT to provide motivation and support to tribals.*

- The project has identified and built up a team of 15 tribal youth from the resettled families. They are being trained by Living Inspiration For Tribals (LIFT) in community development and in providing leadership to the community. The Project coordinator has also been instrumental in training these tribal representatives to communicate and correctly project the tribals views on resettlement and their development aspirations to officials, media persons... when they visit the resettlement site.

Similarly leaders have been identified among the tribals still living inside the reserve to motivate them to accept similar voluntary resettlement packages.

(c) *Liase with various other Government Departments and NGO's to leverage/dovetail specific schemes to ensure a better package.*

The Project Co-ordinator has actively liaised with the Social Welfare Minister, the District Minister, the elected representative of the area and functionaries of other local bodies. This has ensured the implementation of several state government welfare schemes for the resettled tribals, which are listed below:

- The Social Welfare Department has allocated a budget of Rs. 16 lakhs (₹ 24,000) to provide all the 205 resettled families draught cattle at a cost of Rs. 8000 per family. Under this scheme they

were entitled to Rs. 6000 as subsidy, and they were required to contribute Rs. 2000 (i.e 25% of the unit cost) as their share. The Project co-ordinator successfully managed to get the Scheduled Tribes Corporation (a State Government agency) to provide a soft loan to the tribals towards their share of contribution. The actual implementation of the scheme is underway.

- A budget of Rs. 1000 (£15) per tribal family was sanctioned by the Social Welfare Department for purchase of agricultural implements, based on the co-ordination initiated under the project.
- Ten tube wells were sunk (in addition to six provided by the forest department) to provide water for drinking and irrigation after the Project co-ordinator apprised the local member of the legislature assembly, who heads the sanctioning committee of the need.
- Liaison with the Food and Civil supplies department has ensured that 155 resettled families received Ration Cards, which enables them to purchase food grains at subsidised rates.
- Four tribals were trained as drivers under the Vocation training scheme of the Social Welfare Department. The project co-ordinator facilitated the process.
- Three Medical Camps were held in collaboration with 'Green Watchers' Tumkur, and 'Tribal Health Unit' Government Hospital Hunsur, at the resettlement area. 236 tribals availed of specialist medical assistance, which included free medicines. In addition the project helped 47 tribals to access medical care in Government hospitals during the project period.
- Consistent follow up with the Social Welfare Department has resulted in the establishment of a Primary School at the resettlement area in February 2001. The school presently provides education to 25 students. The project co-ordinator has made efforts to enhance the student intake to 40 during the next academic year.
- The Project co-ordinator networked with Mr. Veerendra Hegde, a prominent social leader and Chairman of Dharmasthala Rural Development Project. This ensured that nine students received admission in the residential school at Dharmasthala near Mangalore. Mr. Veerendra Hegde, who had visited the resettlement area along with Dr. Ullas Karanth has also agreed to provide free education to 10 tribal students, including higher education.

Fifteen students from resettlement area have been admitted in different schools in the adjoining areas.

*(d) Guide the tribals on agricultural and horticultural practices and help them attain self-sustainable livelihood.*

- 155 tribal families were enabled to take up agriculture. With inputs from the Forest department food crops were raised on one acre, and commercial crop on another acre. During the Project period, 310 acres of land allotted the resettled families were cultivated. Comprehensive guidance on agricultural practices were provided to the tribals based on a proper plan covering several aspects like sowing and use of fertilizers; judicious use of land by prescribing the right mix of food crops and horticultural crops.

- Two field visits were arranged to facilitate interaction with experienced tribal farmers, who provided practical advice on sustainable farming techniques to 65 tribals from resettlement area. Project coordinator networked with BAIF - Institution for Rural Development and Agricultural Training, in this regard.

*(e) Build up a tribal squad to help the State Forest Department in wildlife protection.*

- This could not be achieved since the resettled tribals needed time to develop their land and economically establish themselves.

*(f) Counter the campaigns by certain NGO's with vested interests against voluntary resettlement of tribals by ensuring a "share of voice" for the tribals demand for resettlement.*

- The voluntary resettlement project of tribals from Nagarahole Reserve was opposed by some NGO's. The project coordinator ensured that the tribals received a fair and sensible resettlement package of land housing... which they were demanding since 1991. After the implementation of the voluntary resettlement project demonstrable improvement in the quality of life of poor tribals led to serious questions raised by the tribals, about the failure of those NGOs in delivering social justice even as their (NGOs) quality of life improved dramatically. These issues were projected by the media resulting in 15 reports in the English and local vernacular media. The project coordinator also continued with the effort of generating official support for the project. Ministers, senior officials and peoples representatives visited the Voluntary Resettlement site and called upon all tribals inside the Reserve to come out and accept the socially just resettlement package.
- In April 2001, the state government held a 'mini cabinet meeting', in a tribal settlement, 80 kilometers from our project area where the Chief Minister of the State participated along with several cabinet Ministers. Efforts of the project coordinator contributed in ensuring that the cabinet officially endorsed voluntary resettlement as the Government's accepted policy for people marooned inside wildlife reserves.

Thus, the negative campaigns of NGOs opposing the voluntary resettlement were effectively countered.

*(g) Raise funds through grant proposals to support the functioning of the organization.*

- Save the Tiger Fund of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has approved a three year grant proposal for the Community Leadership for Tiger Conservation - Nagarahole project starting July 2001. This will enable Living Inspiration For Tribals to continue with the resettlement efforts.

*(h) Establish project co-ordination office in Hunsur, the National Park Administration Headquarters close to the rehabilitation site.*

- An office has been established at Hunsur, with a telephone and other facilities, 12 Kms from Nagapura - the resettlement site.

## COLLABORATORS

LIFT has networked with the following organizations for effective implementation of this project during the project period.

- \* Dr. Ullas Karanth , Center for Wildlife Studies, Bangalore and Wildlife Conservation Society India Program, for scientific advice on conservation issues.
- \* Kodagu Ekikarana Ranga, Madikeri, for social development and forest conservation support.
- \* Coorg Wildlife Society, Madikeri, for wildlife conservation linkages.
- \* Wildlife First, Bangalore, for State level conservation support
- \* BAIF - Institution for Rural Development and Agricultural Training for agricultural training
- \* Dharmastala Rural Development Project, for education support.
- \* Mr. Rajendra Singh, Tarun Bharag Sangh, Bheekampura-Kishori, Rajasthan, for advice on social welfare, watershed management and forest protection activities.

## EVALUATION:

The Project performance could be evaluated based on the following achievements:

1. 205 tribal families have been resettled so far. They are being supported to take up agriculture and other activities to enable them earn cash incomes. Liaison with Karnataka Forest Department has ensured that the resettled families received all the socio-economic benefits that were promised. This is the result of 10 years of effort of LIFT's collaborators - Wildlife Conservation Society and Wildlife First, and has greatly contributed in consolidation of prime tiger habitat in Nagarahole Reserve.
2. An additional hundred families have been motivated and are now willing to accept voluntary resettlement, based on the success of the project.
3. The State government's policy commitment to move people marooned inside Wildlife reserves by offering an attractive resettlement package has resulted in generating positive governmental support for voluntary resettlement. This is a major achievement resulting from the success of the voluntary resettlement project at Nagarahole.

**APPENDIX - I - BUDGET & EXPENDITURE STATEMENT**

Sl. no.	Expense Categories	Amount Recd in £	In Rupees	Expenditure	Difference
1	Salaries and stipends		105000	97000	
2	Permanent equipment < \$ 5000		21000	--	
3	Large permanent equipment > \$ 5000		--	--	
4	Computer equipment		--	--	
5	Vehicles		--	--	
6	Travel				
	6.1 International travel		--	--	
	6.2 National travel		12600	--	
7	Supplies & expendable equipment < \$ 1000		21000	36717	
8	Others				
	7.1 Repairs & Maintenance		8400	13267	
	7.2 Food & Per Diems		21000	19897	
	7.3 Utilities		16800	12045	
	7.4 Communications		8400	5722	
	7.5 Postage & Freight		4200	1515	
	7.6 Purchased Services (Solus Consultancy)		25200	27600	
	7.7 Miscellaneous		--	--	
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£ 4007</b>	<b>Rs 243600</b>	<b>Rs 213762</b>	<b>Rs 29837(+)</b>

AMOUNT RECEIVED	<b>£ 4,007</b>	Rs. 2,64,218
EXPENDITURE INCURRED FROM 01-01-2001 TO 30-06-2001	<b>£ 3,242</b>	Rs. 2,13,763
<b>BUDGET SURPLUS</b>	<b>£ 765</b>	<b>Rs. 50,455</b>