

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Project: Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

The project, "*Strengthening conservation and resilience of globally significant wild cat landscapes through a focus on small cat and leopard conservation*," aims to build awareness of the local community and ensure their active participation in the conservation plans for increasing resilience to climatic variability associated risks and impacts. The purpose of a stakeholder engagement process is to solicit feedback from stakeholders on the project, incorporate their input into project design, and determine how, when, and what frequency stakeholders would like to be engaged during project execution. The Stakeholder Engagement Plan aims to incorporate local communities' voices, specifically marginalized groups, including women and youth, in the project planning and implementation plan, for the local community's participation in small wild cat's population and habitat management.

As keynote species and contributors to critical ecosystem services such as controlling pests, diseases, and rodent populations, small Cats are vital for our ecosystem. However, unlike their more significant counterparts like tiger and leopard, small cat conservation has received less attention in conservation planning. A few of the reasons might be the lack of adequate data regarding their habit and population and comparably less human-small cat conflicts. India, the host to 15 cat species, including 11 small cat species, is the wealthiest country globally for the Felidae population and hence from the small cat conservation perspective, is significant. A large proportion of the small cat populations believed to reside outside the PAs and around the human habitation and crop fields. Habitat loss, poaching, roadkill, and unintentional poisoning are significant threats for their population. Hence, engagement with communities for conservation of the smaller cat is crucial as they indirectly or directly impact the smaller cat population. Lack of awareness among the key stakeholders about their existence and specific needs, lack of data regarding their population, poaching, and roadkill makes the conservation efforts for these keystone species more challenging.

The project focuses on conserving the small cat population, on globally significant small cat landscapes in and around existing tiger landscapes, by engaging with the key stakeholders like local communities, civil society/ NGO, government departments, and the private sector. The project intends to create an enabling local, national, and global atmosphere for small wild cat conservation by facilitating supporting policy frameworks and infrastructure facilities. The project also recognizes the significance of the local community's active participation in creating suitable habitat for the small cats and hence aims to promote community stewardship. Further, the project also proposes encouraging other vital stakeholders'

sustainable engagement, such as government line departments, private sectors, and businesses. The project will build around and support existing conservation schemes and actions in place in three landscapes, the Ranthambhore landscape in Rajasthan, the Dudhwa landscape in the Uttar Pradesh terai region, and the Eaglenest-Pakke-Nameri landscape across Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.

Overall, the project will support India's Government to put in place an integrated model for wild cat conservation at a landscape scale that can be replicated nationally and in other range states. The project objective is to secure wild cats' populations and habitats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, north-eastern, and western India. The project is a child project of the GEF-7 Global Wildlife Program.

1.2 Project Objective and Components

The project objective is to secure wild cats' populations and habitats subject to habitat encroachment, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, and illegal trade in priority landscapes of northern, north-eastern, and western India. This will be achieved through four complementary components that aim to build the required enabling policy framework and institutional capacity (Component 1); strengthen government management of wild cats and habitats (Component 2) and build community stewardship (Component 3) at the landscape level; and enhance corporate sector partnerships, regional collaboration, and knowledge transfer and learning (Component 4). The project will accomplish its objectives through the implementation of four interconnected components:

Component 1 (UNDP GEF funded) will put a landscape-level approach to wild cat conservation that will guide the revision and implementation of existing policies, plans, and programs of government departments at national and sub-national levels, and other donors/partner initiatives.

Components 2 and 3 (WWF GEF funded) will be implemented in two project landscapes (Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest), putting in place the required local capacity, collaborations, and community stewardship for landscape-scale conservation in globally-significant landscapes for wild cats that are focused on Key Biodiversity Areas where small cat distribution overlaps with big cat habitats. Component 2 will bring together key government departments to play a role in wild cat conservation to support landscape-scale master plan implementation. This will help build a complementary and coordinated action portfolio for wild cat conservation bringing together big cat and small cat conservation under the guidance and supervision of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA). Working in parallel with Component 2, in the same wild cat landscapes, Component 3 will build community stewardship and engagement towards the co-management of wild cat habitats. Target locations for community collaboration on wild cat conservation were determined during the PPG phase, and local consultations were conducted to confirm support for project activities.

Component 4 (UNDP GEF funded) will build the necessary partnerships and information sharing platforms for integrated and collaborative wild cat conservation. This will include the establishment and initial operation of a national-level platform for green business, including developing a corporate-sector fund for community-based wildlife conservation.

The project will diversify local livelihood activities to increase the local community's income and reduce pressure on natural resources, including forest, ravines, and riparian lands. Habitat destruction was found to be one of the biggest threats to the declining wild cat population. This includes the conversion of commons/pasture land/ riverine areas for commercial agriculture purposes, as well as utilization of larger doses of synthetic fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, and fungicides. In some cases, farmers are also using rodenticides to control the rat population to protect their crops; however, that affects the prey base of the wild cat population. Due to religious and cultural beliefs, most community members living in the selected landscape do not kill cats. However, a small population of hunting and nomadic communities living in these areas kills wild cats for consumption purposes. Many farmers also hire these communities to protect their farms from herbivores attack. Communities, specifically vulnerable groups such as tribal, women, and girls who are dependent and engaged in forest-based resource management, will be capacitated as "wild cat conservation champions" through awareness generation and incentivizing their participation conservation program.

Successful implementation of all the four components of the project will require coordination with and cooperation of various stakeholders, starting from the forest departments at the national, state, and local levels to other line departments, local communities, civil society organizations, and private sector bodies, etc. Hence, effective stakeholder management, essential for achieving project goals and outcomes, will need an in-depth understanding of each stakeholder's strengths, weaknesses, needs, and interests. The stakeholder engagement plan, presented in Table 1, aims to detail how stakeholders will be involved in project implementation, who is responsible for the engagement and what resources are required for it.

2. Regulations and Requirements

The content presented here for the stakeholder engagement plan has been prepared for the Small Cats project to guide stakeholder engagement during development/design, planning, implementation, and project closure. In this regard, the plan lays out standards, guidelines, and concrete activities for the project to ensure transparency, inclusion, accountability, integrity, and effective participation of all affected parties by the project. The Small Cats project leading proponent is the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and is ultimately responsible for ensuring this Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The development and implementation of this stakeholder engagement plan are guided by WWF-US and UNDP policies (as the GEF Implementing/Project Agencies), the GEF, and the Republic of India requirements. The principle requirements in this regard are summarized below.

2.1 WWF requirements

The Environmental and Social Safeguards Framework (ESSF) and Environmental and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures ([SIPP](#)) require all WWF supported projects to commit to consult and engage potentially affected stakeholders (or parties) and to disclose information related to the project in a transparent manner. Specifically relevant for the Stakeholder Engagement Plan is the [Standard on Stakeholder Engagement](#) and the associated [Procedures for Implementation of the Standard on Stakeholder Engagement](#).

The Policy on Environment and Social Risk Management is an umbrella policy developed by WWF, which establishes the importance of:

- Integrated environmental and social management to identify and manage the environmental and social impacts, risks, and opportunities of programs and projects throughout the program and project life cycle; and
- Effective stakeholder engagement through disclosure of project-related information and consultation with local communities on matters that directly affect them.

The rest of the safeguard policies, standards, and guidelines included in the SIPP establish objectives and requirements to avoid, minimize, and, where residual impacts remain, offset or compensate for social and environmental risks and enhance sustainable development opportunities. The ESSF requires all WWF supported projects to commit to consult and engage potentially affected stakeholders (or parties) and to disclose information related to the project in a transparent manner. This commitment extends the project's requirement to have grievance mechanisms in place for stakeholders to lodge concerns and receive feedback.

2.2 UNDP Requirements

UNDP's [Social and Environmental Standards](#) (SES) underpin UNDP's commitment to mainstream social and environmental sustainability in all Programmes and Projects to support sustainable development. The objectives of the standards are to:

- Strengthen the social and environmental outcomes of Programmes and Projects;
- Avoid adverse impacts to people and the environment;
- Minimize, mitigate, and manage adverse impacts where avoidance is not possible;
- Strengthen UNDP and partner capacities for managing social and environmental risks; and
- Ensure full and effective stakeholder engagement, including through a mechanism to respond to complaints from project-affected people.

The standards are underpinned by an Accountability Mechanism with two key functions: 1) A Stakeholder Response Mechanism (SRM) that ensures individuals, peoples, and communities affected by UNDP projects have access to appropriate procedures for hearing and addressing project-related grievances; and 2) A Compliance Review process to respond to claims that UNDP is not in compliance with UNDP's social and environmental policies.

UNDP's SES includes [Guidance on Stakeholder Engagement](#). As summarized in this guidance, UNDP requirements include:

- Ensuring meaningful, effective, informed participation of stakeholders in the formulation and implementation of UNDP Programmes and Projects, providing stakeholders opportunities to express their views at all points in the Project;

- Ensuring that stakeholder analysis and engagement are conducted in a gender-responsive, culturally sensitive, nondiscriminatory and inclusive manner, identifying potentially affected vulnerable and marginalized groups and providing them opportunities to participate;
- Developing appropriately scaled stakeholder engagement plans;
- Ensuring that stakeholders who may be adversely affected by the project can communicate their concerns and grievances; and
- For projects that affect rights, lands, territories, resources, and traditional livelihoods of indigenous peoples, ensuring free, prior informed consent (FPIC).

2.3 India Government requirements

India's current environmental policy is governed by the country's landmark National Environment Policy (2006)¹. This policy acknowledges that India's degradation is being driven by population growth, poor resource usage choices, and poverty. The guidelines then go on to state that environmental protections need to be integrated into development processes. Besides, India's Government has several constitutional and legislative measures to protect the environment and safeguard communities, cultural and social elements, and land rights.

Environmental Protection Act (EPA). Since 1994, the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF), Government of India, under the Environmental (Protection) Act 1986, promulgated an Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification making Environmental Clearance (EC) mandatory for expansion or modernization of any activity. The procedure of prior Environmental Clearance (EC) mandates Public Consultation to elicit concerns of local affected persons and others who have a plausible stake in development projects' Environmental Impacts.

The Biological Diversity Act, 2002. The Act contains provisions that aim to preserve biodiversity and establish a system for equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of traditional biological resources and knowledge. The thirteenth Conference of Parties (CoP) to CBD in its Decision XIII/27, adopted the 6NR guidelines and reporting templates. One of the 6NR process's key elements is to ensure that there is adequate stakeholder engagement at different stages of the reporting process and that the stakeholders take ownership of the 6NR conclusions.

Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, is the major legislation enacted explicitly for the protection of India's wildlife. The Act provides for both species-specific and spatial conservation strategies. The Wildlife Protection Act empowers the central and state governments to declare any area a wildlife sanctuary, national park, or closed area. Specifically, Chapter IV of the Act provides details of the declaration of sanctuaries, national parks, and closed areas. It has specific provisions to prohibit hunting of wild animals except with permission of authorized officer when an animal has become

¹https://ibkp.dbtindia.gov.in/DBT_Content_Test/CMS/Guidelines/20190411103521431_National_Environment_Policy_2006.pdf

dangerous to human life or property or as disabled or diseased as to be beyond recovery; to protect specified plants, sanctuaries, national parks, and closed areas; restrict trade or commerce in wild animals or animal articles; and miscellaneous matters.

Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006. The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (also known as FRA (Forest Right Act) grants legal recognition to the rights of traditional forest-dwelling communities and makes a beginning towards giving communities and the public a role in forest and wildlife conservation. The Act secures the individual or community tenure or both and provides forest rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers on all forest lands, namely:- (a) right to hold and live in the forest land under the individual or common occupation for habitation or for self-cultivation for a livelihood by a member or members of a forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribe or other traditional forest dwellers; (b) community rights over the forest; (c) right of ownership, access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce which has been traditionally collected within or outside village boundaries.

3. Summary of stakeholder engagement process in PIF and Project Development

The project has already gone through several stakeholder engagement activities during the development phase. An overview of the key events and engagements is presented in Annex 01. Activities included workshops and stakeholder meetings, field-level consultations, individual consultations with key project stakeholders and partners, presentations, and interactions with other existing forums. The stakeholders' consultation for this project began in July 2019 and went through in-depth discussions until early 2020.

Following the guidance provided by GEF gender policy 2017 and GEF policy on stakeholder engagement, community consultations were organized. Nine consultations were organized in the core, buffer, and periphery regions of Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur, and Pilibhit tiger reserves with indigenous "Tharu" community, Scheduled caste, and Other Backward Caste communities. In Ranthambore- Karauli and Kela Devi area, more than ten community consultations were organized with men and women of different communities, including Mogiyas, pastoralist Gujjars, and farming community. In Nameri-Pakke- Eaglenest area, more than 12 community consultations were organized with Nishi, Bugun, and Shertukpen tribes. Besides, several other community stakeholders such as civil society organizations working for community development, agriculture, and other line departments, EDC members were consulted for understanding the impacts of the project on the community, how the project can be engaged with different stakeholders for implementation of the project while benefiting the local community and wild cat population simultaneously.

A gender action plan was developed based upon consultations with several stakeholders, especially the project affected communities, reviewing available documents, and analyzing the data collected during the field surveys. Information specific to gender issues in the project affected communities were gained from the community consultations completed during the project preparation (PPG) stage.

Consultations with Tribal/Indigenous and local communities in the project landscape by the PPG team were made between mid-July and late September 2019. (See Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) & Process Framework (PF).

- As part of project preparation, nine consultations were organized in the core, buffer, and periphery regions of Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur, and Pilibhit² Tiger reserves with indigenous "Tharu" community, Scheduled caste, and Other Backward Caste communities. In Nameri³-Pakke-Eaglenest area, more than 12 community consultations were organized with Nishi, Bugun, and Shertukpen tribes, among others. A standalone Community Consultation Report (See Annex 01) has been prepared as part of project preparation.
- Three community consultations in Dudhwa and three in Pakke- Eaglenest area were organized during January- February 2020, as part of the preparation of the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) and the Process Framework (PF) to collect demographics, social, cultural, and political characteristics of affected IP communities as well as assess the land and territories that they have traditionally owned or customarily used or occupied, and the natural resources on which they depend. Similarly, consultation with government officials, including officials of District Forest Offices, National Parks, Tiger Reserves have also been conducted to validate and confirm the information collected from communities as well as for understanding the impacts of the project on communities (the consultation report of each project landscape with details of consultations (dates, location and number of participants, etc., issues and concerns raised) have been provided in the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) & Process Framework (PF).

Consultations were conducted with key project stakeholders as research institutes (Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER), Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS), SACON (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History), ENVIS Centre on Wildlife & Protected Areas), NGOs and Donors (Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Traffic India, Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), FERAL (Foundation for Ecological, Research Advocacy and Learning), Wildlife SOS, Conservation Action Trust (CAT), Wildlife Protection Society of India) and Inter-governmental Organizations (Global Tiger Forum (GTF) and IUCN)

4. Key Project Stakeholders

The stakeholders identified for this project (see table 1) are clustered into the following groups:

Government: Includes Ministries, Regulatory Authorities and Agencies, Local Government Authorities at Regional and District level, and Research Institutes with either mandate or interest in delivering the interventions related to the project. These include the principle project partners, responsible for implementing activities, and working directly with local communities in the project sites.

² Pilibhit was covered and considered during the PPG consultations. Still, it lies outside the scope of the Dudhwa landscape for project implementation.

³ Though covered during the PPG consultations, Nameri NP was dropped out of this project landscape during the PPG process and will not be included in full project implementation.

Local Communities: The engagement plan will mostly focus on local communities, given that the project will affect either directly or indirectly all members of the communities. The local communities cited here are the populations currently residing and permanent residence in the project landscapes (Dudhwa and Pakke-Eaglenest).

Indigenous Communities: The project landscapes are inhabited by Indigenous/Tribal communities, including potentially vulnerable groups that might not have stable land rights arrangements. Indigenous/Tribal communities in project landscapes include the Monpas, Sherdukpens, Buguns, and Nyishi in Arunachal and the Tharu in Uttar Pradesh.

Women: Women in India share an extrinsic relationship with the forest, wildlife, and other natural resources. Their traditional knowledge of forest and wildlife management would help sustainable wildlife management and community stewardship promotion.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs): This constitutes non-state actors both locally and internationally working in project areas or interventions related to the project objectives. Like the Government in terms of potential role, most CSOs will be partners to the project for implementation, thus directly engaging with the local communities in the project sites.

Private Sector: Corporate bodies in India play a significant role in industrial development, agriculture, trading, infrastructure, services sector, and small-scale cottage industries. The project aims to engage the private sector in wild cat conservation and facilitate the identification of sustainable financing options to maintain community stewardship outside the core tiger habitats in PAs.

These stakeholders will be informed and engaged in the project as per the plan described further in this document. The process of identifying and reflect on the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders is a continuous process. The list of stakeholders, their interests and influence on the project, provided in Table 1, will be treated as a living document for the purpose of selecting changing social, economic and political environments throughout the project cycle.

5. Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan provides details of the different groups of stakeholders, the proposed methods and topics of engagement, and the timing and frequency of such engagement. The more strategic-level aspects of this stakeholder plan are further outlined in the following sections.

5.1 Objectives of the stakeholder engagement plan

The Executing Agency, MoEFCC, and its executing partners intend to implement the project in a transparent, inclusive manner and in a way that reflects realities on the ground. In this regard, this Stakeholder Engagement Plan guides to ensure inclusion, transparency, and continuous engagement with the beneficiaries and other stakeholders during the project's development and implementation. The specific objectives of the Stakeholder Engagement Plan are to:

- Establish mechanisms that ensure a high level of ownership across project partners, affected and interested parties throughout the project life cycle to align with the multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder project approach.
- Facilitate close engagement and grievances mechanisms of stakeholders in the further development and throughout implementation and closure of the project.
- Establish time frame and methods that ensure stakeholder consultation and disclosure of project information through the project life cycle; and
- Establish and manage communication and engagement mechanisms across partners, affected, and interested parties in a transparent, timely, and clear manner.

5.2 Proposed Strategy to incorporate views of women and other relevant groups

The project will use the following methods to ensure that the views of women and vulnerable groups are included in the project design, planning, and implementation of activities at the community level:

- A combination of methods will be used when consulting and engaging local communities while respecting all participants' views and knowledge, including focus group discussions using various criteria depending on the situation (per economic activity, age group, gender, geographical locations, etc.); critical informants discussions (e.g., to understand the historical perspective of certain activities, gender perception, and realities, etc.). In pursuing these methods, the project will ensure that there is enough time, flexibility (e.g., due to disability, some may come from far) to ensure participation of all intended members of communities. This will avoid the risks of vulnerable groups being excluded from taking part due to being banned from public gatherings due to their disability, gender orientation, economic activity, religion, or tribalism.
- In consulting and engaging women and other relevant groups, communication will be simplified to ensure that it fits the local context and helps build confidence. In all meetings, the local language will be used, and where necessary, the translation will be used to tribal languages using members of the communities. Community members and officials will lead the discussions at the community level from the district government.
- A register will be kept (recording the institution/group/village/district government office etc rather than names of all individuals, and recording number of participants and gender), updated regularly, and feedback systems developed to ensure that women and other relevant groups (minorities, elderly, young other marginalized groups) are fully included in consultations, benefit from the project, and informed on the progress project.

5.3 Proposed methods to receive feedback and to ensure ongoing communications with stakeholders

- All stakeholders that have been consulted and identified will be kept in the register (recording the institution/group/village/district government office etc rather than names of all individuals, and recording number of participants and gender) and updated regularly. These stakeholders will be kept abreast of information on project implementation reports and encouraged to provide feedback by individuals taking part in implementing the project through various means, including

phone calls, emails, and informal meetings, among others. Almost all stakeholders identified by the project have an interest in the project areas that will facilitate engagement and outreach throughout the project cycle.

- National ministries and agencies that are primary partners to the project will be invited to provide feedback on the project through meetings (or workshops), including the various technical and steering committees set up under the project to design and implement activities throughout the project cycle. The primary partners will also provide feedback through direct engagement with the PMU during the development and execution of activities throughout the project cycle.
- The institutional project arrangement has allocated responsibilities for all parties to monitor and collect feedback from communities and other stakeholders throughout the project cycle. This set-up will allow for collection, analysis, follow-up, accountability, and integration of feedback provided.
- The PMU, executing partners, and partners will take notes during community meetings, interviews, and focus group discussions when exercising their communities' responsibilities. These field notes will be used to write and analyze field reports and monitoring reviews to provide feedback to the project implementation. Notes and reports will be filed.
- As appropriate, regional and local government authorities will be invited to provide feedback through speeches during officiating workshops, the launch of reports, and forums. The politicians will also be engaged and consulted to provide their input through visits to the district and regional offices during the execution of various project activities.
- As it has been done during the project's design process, all other stakeholders that have already been identified will be invited to workshops and meetings as per thematic topics and their interests to provide inputs and feedback during designing activities, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the project. These stakeholders will be involved through individual consultation (phone calls, emails), sharing reports (workshops, monitoring) where feedback can be provided to PMU.
- The national-level government ministries, agencies, and members of PMU will also represent the project in various local and international multi-stakeholder meetings, forums, and workshops where feedback can be provided. This engagement will allow for input from various invited stakeholders, forge new partnerships, and identify new stakeholders beyond that have been identified.

5.4 Other engagement activities for the plan

Other engagement activities for the plan will include the following:

- Engagement with women's groups and youth for promoting community stewardship- Women are at the forefront in the fight for natural resource rights and collecting NTFP, fuelwood from the forest, human-wildlife conflict and hence, it would be essential to engage with youth and women groups to increase their awareness on small cat conservation, forest, and biodiversity protection.

- Increased Awareness for Small Cat Conservation: According to community members, watchers, and local guides shared that use of posters, signboards can be used for building awareness of community and other stakeholders on small cats.
- Creating Learning and Sharing Platform at the National Level and Across the Border for Sharing of Best Practices- Many wildlife NGOs working in the Pilibhit area have experience on camera trapping of small cats and running a public campaign community stewardship for conservation issues. But, largely, there is a lack of general knowledge and information regarding the small cat population, habitat, and conservation. Hence, it would be essential to create a national level and cross-border learning and sharing platforms to document, share, and replicate best practices for small cat conservation. It will also help increase the project's outreach to benefit other landscapes not covered under this project.
- Training and capacity building across project partners affected and interested stakeholders. The project will also build capacity on existing multi-stakeholder processes and established forums to provide room for partnerships and consultation with stakeholders beyond those directly affected by the project.
- In all meetings (individual, site visits, workshops, focus group discussions, key informants), records will be kept and documented for analysis, and various reports will be prepared. The documentation will also be used to keep stakeholders informed at different levels on progress, challenges, risks, and emerging opportunities.
- The district and communities will design, make a decision, and provide feedback throughout the project cycle. The identified district and community level state and non-state actors are beneficiaries (or effected parties) and partners to the project.

Table 1: Stakeholders and their mandate, project relevancy and planned engagement in project implementation

| Stakeholder identification | | | Engagement strategy | | |
|--|-------------------|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| Name of stakeholder | Stakeholder Group | Interests (stake) in the project | Form of engagement | Focus of engagement | Timing and frequency |
| <p>Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)</p> <p>Wildlife Division</p> | Government | <p>MoEFCC is the project’s nodal agency. MoEFCC will be the lead executing agency for the project, and with Global Tiger Forum will host and coordinate the Project Management Unit (PMU). MoEFCC will facilitate development of the project- planning of project activities and implementation plan, governance structure, budget, M&E). MOEFCC will also coordinate with the state forest departments and other government line departments for project implementation and policy changes. The state departments will provide technical input in project preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. GTF will serve as the lead technical partner for implementation of all four project Components, operating the National Project Management Unit and implementing work packages, acting in accordance with the IP’s rules and regulations, through agreement with MoEFCC.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • National Project Steering Committee meetings • National Technical Committee meetings and progress review workshops/meetings • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop • Regular updates from PMU | <p>Components: All the four components</p> | Throughout, regularly |
| <p>Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare (MoA&FW)</p> <p>Department of Agriculture, cooperation, and farmers’ welfare (DAC&FW)</p> <p>Department of Agriculture, Research, and Education (DARE)</p> | Government | <p>MoA&FW is responsible for increasing crop and land productivity for ensuring sustainable food production and income for farmers for ensuring food justice and security of the country. Agriculture is the key livelihood source of income for most of the local communities in all the landscape areas (Dudhwa, Ranthambore, Nameri-Pakke- Eaglenest). Increased use of synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, and rodenticides specifically in Dudhwa and Eaglenest are creating threat for wild cat’s habitats. Further, industrialized agriculture (Ranthambhore) putting a lot of pressure for conversion of commons/ pasture land/ ravines/ waste lands, potential wild cat habitats in the PA and buffer areas, into agriculture land. The project will work with agriculture departments for- capacity building of agriculture departments for sensitizing them regarding wild cat habitats, changing the cropping practices for adaption</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop | <p>Components 1, 2, and 3</p> | Throughout, periodically |

| | | | | | |
|---|------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | of more ecologically sustainable practices, and promoting agro-horticulture models suitable for wild cat population. | | | |
| Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries (DAHD&F) | Government | MoFAH&D is the nodal agency for regulating and overseeing livestock a fishery related issue. Besides, livestock (Dudhwa, Ranthambore, Nameri-Pakke) being one of major livelihood earning sources for the community, grazing of feral cows increasingly is a menace in Dudhwa and Ranthambore forest areas that is a threat for wild cat habitats. Further, in some cases communities reported that chicken and small goat kids became prey of the wild cat species like leopard cats; hence, fish pond farming is one of the optional livelihood sources in certain landscapes such as Nameri and Pakke. The project will consult DAHD&F departments for understanding and collecting information about existing livestock and fishery schemes in the land scape areas, any preferences of the local communities, challenges and opportunities for project implementation. The project will also ensure participation of the department in capacity building on wild cat species. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop | Components 1, 2, and 3 | Throughout, periodically |
| Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) Department of Rural Development (DoRD) Department of Land Resource (DoLR) | Government | The project intends to promote small wild cat’s habitat in the PA areas that includes ravines, waste lands that comes under the jurisdiction of DoLR, MoRD. Hence, capacity building of DoLR will help to influence the land utilization policies for maintenance of wild cat and other small species. Further, the project’s aim of promoting alternative livelihoods of vulnerable communities living in the PA areas and buffer zones coincide with the MoRD’s mission of promoting and strengthening livelihood opportunities for the vulnerable communities coincide with the project component 3 that intends to diversify livelihood of local communities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop | Component 2 and 3 | Throughout, periodically |
| Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas | Government | The ministry will be consulted to increase energy access of local communities, specifically vulnerable groups including tribal/ indigenous communities, and women, in the landscape areas. Access to clean energy will reduce the dependence of the local communities on forest for fuelwood and will help in the maintenance of the wild cat habitats. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop | Component 3 | Throughout, periodically |

| | | | | | |
|---|------------|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| | | | | | |
| National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) | Government | All the selected landscapes are coincided with tiger reserve areas where “project tiger” is implemented by NTCA. Hence, NTCA will be consulted throughout the project implementation for habitat management in the PAs and buffer zones, incorporating needs and concerns of small wild cats in the tiger conservation and management plans. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inception workshop at central level • National Project Steering Committee • Reflection workshops at end of each project year • Project close workshop • Update meetings from the PMU | Components: 1 and 2 | Throughout, regularly |
| State Governments (Arunachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan) | Government | The key departments- forestry, agriculture and farmers welfare, rural development, land revenue, rural development and Panchayati Raj, livestock and animal husbandry, fisheries, and horticulture will provide technical input in project implementation. They will be engaged in the project implementation and monitoring. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Project Steering Committee (lead Depts) • State Steering Committees • Landscape level project inception meeting • Landscape staff engaging with local govt and communities • Project website • Projects updates posted locally or on website | Components: All the four components | Throughout, regularly |
| Block and District level Government Departments Rajasthan- Ranthambore, Karauli; Uttar Pradesh Dudhwa- Katarniaghat; Arunachal Pradesh (Pakke- Eaglenest - Sonitpur, | Government | Local government departments will be partnered for implementation of the project. Local government departments’ support will also be obtained for monitoring and supervising the project activities. Incorporating the project activities in the District Annual Plan and engagement of the district committees will be ensured to increase the engagement and ownership of all the relevant government departments in the project activities implementation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape level project inception meeting • Landscape staff engaging with local govt and communities • Landscape Level Advisory Committees • Project website • Projects updates posted locally and on website | Components: All the four components | Throughout, regularly |

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| East Kameng and West Kameng district. | | | | | |
| Local Self- Governments in three Landscape Areas Gram panchayats – Dudhwa, Ranthambore and Pakke-Eaglenest | Governments | Gram Panchayats will play key role in implementation of the project activities for community development. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape level project inception meeting • Landscape Level Advisory Committees • Join the landscape staff engaging with local govt and communities • Projects updates posted locally and on website | Components: All the four components | Throughout, regularly |
| Local Communities and Organizations Women Self-Help Groups, Eco Development Committees (EDC), Forest Rights Committees (FRC), Tribal Village Councils (Pakke and Eaglenest) | Local Communities | Community stewardship for wildcat population and habitat protection, alternative livelihood generation for reducing community dependence on forest and other natural resources, and changing agricultural practices for wildcat habitat protection are some of the key project activities that requires effective participation and engagement of local community. Project will ensure participation of specifically vulnerable groups like women, tribal, Dalits, youth and kids through different project activities for ensuring their food and livelihood security while protecting wildcat population. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape staff engaging with communities • Landscape Level Advisory Committees • Projects updates posted locally and on website | Components: 1, 2,3 | Throughout, regularly |
| Tribal People Tribal people in selected three landscape areas (Tharu community in Dudhwa, Nishi community in Pakke, Bugun and Shertukpen communities in Eaglenest) | Indigenous Communities | Community stewardship for wildcat population and habitat protection, alternative livelihood generation for reducing community dependence on forest and other natural resources, and changing agricultural practices for wildcat habitat protection are some of the key project activities that requires effective participation and engagement of tribal community. Project will ensure participation of specifically vulnerable groups like tribal and women through different project activities for ensuring their food and livelihood security while protecting wildcat population. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape Level Advisory Committees • Landscape staff engaging with communities • FPIC process (see IPPF) • Project updates posted locally and on website | Components: 1,2,3,4 | Throughout, regularly |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p>Research Institutes:</p> <p>Wildlife Institute of India (WII); Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune (IISER) Centre for Wildlife Studies (CWS); SACON (Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History); ENVIS Centre on Wildlife & Protected Areas</p> | <p>Academia</p> | <p>Alliances and partnerships will be created with research organizations for project implementing, monitoring, and evaluation. Their expertise will be helpful in tracking wildcat population, understanding their habitat and food habits, creating awareness on wild cat species.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project website • Collaboration on M&E and KM | <p>Components: 1, 2,3</p> | <p>Throughout, periodically</p> |
| <p>NGOs and Donors</p> <p>Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), Traffic India; Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT), FERAL (Foundation for Ecological, Research Advocacy and Learning); Wildlife SOS; Conservation Action Trust (CAT); Wildlife Protection Society of India</p> | <p>Private Sector</p> | <p>Coordination with like-minded NGOs, for instance WTI in Pakke and Dudhwa, will be ensured during the project implementation for wider awareness generation on small wildcat species and habitat protection and for co-financing. National level platforms will be created for collection of best practices and wider replication of project ideas.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project website • State Steering Committee meetings • National level platforms for collection of best practices and wider replication of project ideas | <p>Components: 1,2,3,4</p> | <p>Throughout, periodically</p> |
| <p>Inter-governmental Organizations</p> | <p>Inter-governmental Organizations</p> | <p>The Global Tiger Forum will serve as the lead technical partner for implementation of all four Components, operating the National Project Management Unit and implementing specific work packages, acting in</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contractual agreements between MoEFCC, UNDP, WWF and GTF | <p>Components: 1,2,3,4</p> | <p>Throughout, fulltime</p> |

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|---|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <p>Global Tiger Forum (GTF)</p> <p>IUCN</p> | | <p>accordance with the IP's rules and regulations, through agreement with MoEFCC. For the UNDP-led Components 1 & 4, GTF will be a sub-level responsible party; and for the WWF-led Components 2&3, GTF will be an executing partner.</p> <p>The GTF also provides an avenue for international knowledge sharing further to WWF and UNDP's networks.</p> <p>IUCN hosts the <i>Cat Specialist Group</i>, which aims to promote the long-term conservation of the wild living cat species and their habitats by means of continuous monitoring and assessment, information-sharing, identification of conservation priorities and facilitation/delivery of these priority actions through collaborative conservation work. Its web portal provides a major means of communication: http://www.catsg.org/</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GTF to host and operate National PMU • National Project Steering Committee meetings • IUCN Cat SG engagement in research/monitoring/citizen science / awareness raising / information sharing on small cats | <p>Components: 1,2,3,4</p> | <p>Throughout, periodically</p> |
| <p>Other GEF Agencies</p> <p>IUCN and FAO</p> | <p>GEF Agencies</p> | <p>These agencies will be invited to participate in the project multi-stakeholder landscape level forum and the project , through the forum, will coordinate and consult with the GEF Agencies to ensure convergence and involvement in the dissemination of best practices and knowledge exchange.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project website • Multi-stakeholder forum | <p>Component 1 and 4</p> | <p>Throughout, periodically</p> |
| <p>Corporates (Public and Private)</p> | | <p>Public and private sector corporate bodies in India play a significant role in industrial development, agriculture, trading, infrastructure, services sector, and small-scale cottage industries.. India's National Biodiversity Action Plan (2019) encourages the participation of the private sector in biodiversity conservation. The Confederation of Indian Industry is a key player in catalysing the engagement of Indian businesses in sustainable practices through the CII-ITC Centre for Excellence for Sustainable Development (CESD).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project website • PMU outreach • National level Green Business platform and business partnership development in Output 4.1 | <p>Components: 2,3, 4</p> | <p>Throughout, periodically</p> |

6. Timetable

The schedule and locations where various stakeholder engagement activities including consultation, disclosure, and partnerships will take place is included in Table 1. The dates by which such activities will be undertaken is provided but not in specific terms as the engagement will be updated by the PMU in the project inception phase. As outlined before, the implementation of this stakeholder's engagement began at very early stages of project document development to ensure ownership, confidence, and reflection of priorities over time. The stakeholder's engagement will continue throughout the project cycle including during identification of beneficiaries (including women and other relevant groups) and during periodic monitoring to allow for reflection of the progress, adjustment and corrections.

7. Resources and Responsibilities

The project will be executed by the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and Global Tiger Forum, through the Project Management Unit and Landscape Units. Overall, MoEFCC will be responsible for the development, execution and monitoring of all safeguards plans prepared as per the WWF Environment and Social Safeguards Integrated Policies and Procedures (SIPP) and UNDP policies. The Executing Agency, MoEFCC, has the overall responsibility and oversight to carry out stakeholder engagement activities which include consultation and disclosure. Their role, apart from overall responsibility and an oversight, will include supporting the PMU at national level in:

- Disclosing and providing project implementation reports and other key documents on agreed timeline and in transparent way.
- Managing and authorizing disclosure of information related to the project on all communication methods.
- Leading national consultation level processes for national activities with project partners.

Other resources to enable implementation of this plan will include the following:

- In this engagement plan, the role of WWF and UNDP will be to make sure the project complies with policies and requirements of those of GEF, UNDP and WWF; to monitor the project in accordance with the proposed stakeholder engagement plan and provide recommendations for improvement; and facilitate disclosure and publication of information and reports from the project as authorised by MoEFCC.
- Monitoring of this plan, as defined further below, will be the responsibility of MoEFCC, and carried out by the PMU's M&E Officer
- In implementation, some activities may be commissioned out to independent agencies (and/or consultants) to avoid bias, ensure transparency and credibility, and enable feedback to improve grievance mechanisms. The role of independent agencies (and/or consultants) will include providing an independent view of the progress of the engagement plan; collecting, documentation and ensuring that concerns by affected parties are incorporated throughout the project cycle; facilitate and support MoEFCC and the PMU in implementing this plan in an independent way but adhering to GEF policies on safeguards and stakeholder engagement.

A minimum total⁴ of USD 570,720 of the GEF project budget has been allocated to support implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan.

| SN | Budget item | Unit | Total cost (USD) | Remarks |
|----|--|------------|------------------------------------|--|
| 1. | M&E and Safeguard Analyst at national PMU | 1 | $\$120,000 \times 0.2 = \$24,000$ | Component 4; 20% |
| 2. | Landscape M&E and Safeguards/IP Specialist | 1 x 18m | $\$72,000 \times 0.5 = \$36,000$ | Components 2 & 3; 50% |
| 3. | Community mobilizers at project sites of each landscape | 3 x 54m | $\$158,400 \times 0.5 = \$79,200$ | Components 2 & 3; 50% |
| 4. | Landscape Conservation and Stakeholder Engagement Officer | 2 x 60m | $\$120,000 \times 0.2 = \$24,000$ | Components 2 & 3; 20% |
| 5. | Landscape Communications and Awareness Officer | 1 x 44m | $\$88,000 \times 0.5 = \$44,000$ | Component 3; 50% |
| 6. | Gender & Social Inclusion Specialist | 1 x 12m | $\$48,000 \times 0.75 = \$36,000$ | Components 3 & 4; 75% |
| 7. | Capacity development consultant for EDCs and CBOs (Output 3.1) | 1x 15m | $\$60,000 \times 0.5 = \$30,000$ | Component 3; 50% |
| 8. | Subcontracted services for communications, awareness campaigns, website / regional knowledge platform development, etc | | $\$200,000 \times 0.25 = \$50,000$ | Component 4; 25% |
| 8. | Travel related to stakeholder engagement | | $\$475,200 \times 0.1 = \$47,520$ | Estimated at 10% of total: C1 - \$133,000; C2 - \$67,200; C3 - \$164,000; C4 - \$111,000 = \$475,200 |
| 9. | Meetings, consultations, awareness events | | \$200,000 | Estimated at \$50,000 C1; \$40,000 C2; \$60,000 C3; \$50,000 C4 |
| | Total | | \$570,720 | |

⁴ Note – it is not possible to fully determine all budget inputs that may be considered as contributing towards stakeholder engagement, because this is a cross-cutting operational issue that is integrated across project staff and activities. Therefore the identified budget is presented as an estimated minimum contribution.

8. Grievance Mechanism

MoEFCC will inform and engage the communities to provide guidance and assurance in which those affected by the project implementation can submit/express their grievances (claims or concerns) and seek resolution. The grievances mechanism will be simple, understandable and seek to protect the complainant for sensitive issues. Along all steps of reporting and resolving claims and concerns, MoEFCC will ensure that there is proper and timely documentation of all steps and decisions taken. This will ensure that confidence, fairness, transparency and lessons to avoid future in project implementation.

The GRM will be established early in project implementation, following the IPPF/PF. It will comply with the following requirements⁵.

- The GRM will have multiple uptake locations and channels. Project affected persons and groups will be able to submit complaints or suggestions in person, via mail, email, phone, or complaint boxes located in strategic locations of the designated project offices. These channels will be locally-appropriate, widely accessible and publicized in written and verbal forms on all project communication materials, and in public locations (e.g., local stores, offices of Gram Panchayat, local offices of forest department and government line agencies, offices of tribal/village councils, offices of Village Community Resource Management Committee (VCRMC), Eco-Development Committees (EDC), Biodiversity Management Committee (BMC), Forest Rights Committees (FRC), and offices of local governments, schools etc.)
- All grievances will be registered. All complaints submitted to GRC at village level and to the office of national project coordinator at PMU will be registered and the complaint should be assigned a unique tracking number upon its submission and will be acknowledged. Each GRC should maintain a database with full information on all submitted complaints and responses made. This data is important to assess trends and patterns of grievances across the project regions and for monitoring & evaluation purposes.
- Strict complaint resolution procedures will be developed and observed, and personnel will be assigned to handle the grievances. The project team will develop clear and strict grievance redress procedures and assign responsibilities. Dedicated staff having adequate knowledge on IP issues and social analysis capacity should be assigned in project teams to investigate complaints and take appropriate actions. Such procedures will include a requirement to register all complaints with acknowledgement of received, strict allocation of responsibilities, clear timelines for processing and handling complaints (e.g., responses to complaints must be provided within 12 working days (2 weeks) and or 18 working days for particularly complex complaints), and regular communication with affected persons and groups regarding the status of their complaints. To the extent possible, complaints will be handled at the lowest decision-making level, as close as possible to the complainant. Complaints that are beyond the Project scope will be conveyed to the complainants as well as the relevant project offices.
- Complainants will be notified of their right to appeal the decision taken by the project team. If complainants are not satisfied with the project's response to their grievances, they will be able to

⁵ More detail of the levels of GRM and their responsibilities in Grievances Management inside the Indigenous Peoples Planning Framework (IPPF) & Process Framework (PF) document.

appeal the decision to the executive ministry. All appeals will be registered in the ministry and decisions will be taken within 15 days. Project affected persons and groups will also have a right to bring their grievances to the court of state at any stage, if they are not satisfied with the Project's GRM.

In order to have a culturally appropriate and well-functioning grievance mechanism, the system and process will be transparent, legitimate, accessible, holistic, predictable, equitable and rights compatible. The mechanism will be legitimate – with a governance structure that is clear and sufficiently independent to ensure grievances are dealt with fairly, and without interference of any involved party. The GRC is responsible to hear, resolve and monitor the grievances. The PMU GRC needs to give decisions within 15 days of received of any grievances. The decisions of GRC at PMU will be implemented and monitored by Project Manager and the M&E/Safeguard Specialist at PMU with the help of safeguard consultant and its staff working for the projects and other stakeholders.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

The target beneficiaries and project affected groups will not only be the source of information but also provide situational analysis for monitoring and reporting purposes. Given this, the process to monitor and report on progress of the stakeholder engagement will include and involve target beneficiaries and affected groups throughout the project cycle.

Throughout the project, the following will be involved in monitoring:

- Activities related to stakeholder engagement will be documented and reported by the PMU and on a half-yearly basis (as part of regular reporting in project progress reports). The monitoring visits and meetings conducted will be documented and feedback reported back to the local communities (through means already identified) and stakeholders with concerns or interest in the site or activity.
- Independent third parties may be invited to confirm the implementation of this stakeholder engagement plan and other project targets. This will enable transparency, build confidence and encourage open opinions.
- WWF GEF Agency and UNDP will also take part in monitoring for the purpose of supporting the project and support on issues affecting timely and quality project implementation. WWF and UNDP will review the quality of outputs and progress against the stakeholder engagement plan.
- The national Project Steering Committee will also take part in monitoring the project's compliance to the plan at least twice a year and advises (or take decisions) appropriately and as per the standards set forward for the stakeholder's engagement plan.

Annex 01: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities Analysis

Population

In the core, buffer, and periphery areas of the Dudhwa tiger reserve and Katarniaghat tiger reserve area, the indigenous "Tharu" community is dependent on agriculture and allied activities forest resources for their livelihood. Besides, Tharu communities, most of the population belong to Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Castes (OBC), and Muslim communities. Again, many Sikh families settled down in this region after the partition and are mostly engaged in a sugarcane plantation. The average landholding of Tharu communities ranges from 2- 2.5 acres, while the Punjabi/ Sikh settlers have huge landholding of more than 50-100 acres. Most of the scheduled caste communities are landless and largely depended on agriculture wage labor and daily wage labor for their livelihood. Ranthambore- Karauli –Kela Devi area, unlike Dudhwa, is a habitat for a diverse population. Mogiyas living in the site largely depended on hunting for their livelihood and have been forced to shift to other livelihoods after the tiger reserve declaration. The pastoralist "Gujjar" community keep livestock, mostly sheep and buffaloes, and do seasonal migration to the Ranthambore forest. Besides, many SC, ST, and OBC communities live in the area and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. The average landholding of many villages was found to be 2-2.5 acres.

Economic Activities

Despite most of the Tharu, Scheduled Caste, and OBC families living in the PA buffer and periphery areas have access to cooking gas under the "Ujjwala" scheme, most families are still funded to depend on the forest for fuelwood. Most of the participants shared that although the cooking stove and cylinder were subsidized for the first time, it is difficult for them to arrange 700-900 rupees per month for gas cylinders, and hence, they prefer to use it judiciously. The community collects few NTFPs like different mushrooms, locally known as "*Dharti ka Phool*," from the forest. The mushrooms grow on the *sal* trunks fetch a good market price, 1500 rupees per kilo in the local market. Earlier, the community used to collect grass from the forest area and take the livestock to forest buffer areas for grazing. After the declaration of the tiger reserve, the movement of animals for grazing has been reduced significantly. In the Dudhwa region, women and men shared that they are facing trouble accessing fuelwood from the jungle after the tiger reserve declaration. Women participants shared that forest officials should allow the community to collect the grasses instead of burning them by a forest fire, which often risks forest population. In the Katarniaghat, the community shared that they have to pay a certain amount of rice and wheat per family after harvesting each crop to the forest officials to get access to the forest to collect fuelwoods and NTFP like mushrooms.

- **Agriculture:** Most of Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Pilibhit, and Kishanpur is primarily dependent on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. In addition to agriculture, people keep livestock, poultry, goat for consumption and commercial purposes. People usually grow traditional crops like rice, wheat, sugarcane, mustard, pulses in Kharif, and rabi season. While during the summer, except the perennial sugarcane crops and few vegetables and peppermint farming, fields remain barren. Besides the traditional crops, with the support of the agriculture department and NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission), people started experimenting with

new cash crops like peppermint and turmeric. Due to distress sell, farmers are not getting adequate returns against peppermint and turmeric crops. Strengthened forward and backward linkages will help the farmers to get a better return for their produce. Most of the women participants felt that turmeric processing doesn't need much skill. However, it gives a good recovery; women groups should be trained and encouraged to take up turmeric processing and marketing.

- **Sugarcane Plantation:** Sugarcane is one of the major crops in this Tarai area, widely cultivated in Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur, and Pilibhit. Although it is a high feeder crop that requires massive fertilizer and water for cultivation, being a perennial crop human management and labor cost is less. Besides being a poor management-intensive crop and suitable for Tarai, a well-established marketing structure encourage farmers to cultivate sugarcane in a significant proportion of the area. There is a lot of confusion around whether sugarcane cultivation is suitable for wildlife conservation or not. Some people think sugarcane is a grass variety planted for an extended period with less human management; it provides a vast landscape to the wildlife. While the other group of people thinks sugarcane provides wildlife comfortability of forest area and make them come relatively closer to the human habitats that increase the probability of human-wildlife conflicts.
- **Livestock:** Due to a change in the socio-political and market situation, people are not interested in keeping more than two cows. Most people in Katarniaghat and Dudhwa shared that they prefer buffaloes over the cows as the milk of the earlier one fetch a better price in the market and dairies. It is easy to purchase and sell buffaloes, unlike cows. Tharu women shared that women are more interested in keeping goats as they do not require much care. Women can decide the buying and selling of the goats and utilize the money according to their interests. Villages near the forest reserve areas shared that poultry units' establishment might attract more wild animals.
- **Handicrafts:** Women groups shared that strengthening of forwarding and backward linkages for the handicraft work would require more skill training for increasing their income from the activity while reducing their input cost and drudgery.

Main Social and Economic Challenges:

- **Urbanization:** Migration to urban areas like Mumbai, Delhi, Shimla, and Dehradun for daily wage labor is widespread. Both men and women of Dudhwa areas, specifically the Tharus, migrate to nearby states- Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand during the apple picking seasons for picking apples. The wage rate they receive, 250 rupees for women and 300 rupees for men, in the apple orchards are relatively higher than the wage rate they receive in the local areas. According to most EDC members of Dudhwa areas, the migration rate has increased significantly in the last few years as the number of workdays they used to get under MGNREGS has been reduced considerably.

- **Access to property rights:** In the Dudhwa area, many villages were found to be "Van gram" villages (forest villages) who are struggling to get individual and community forest rights. Around two villages received individual forest rights, and one town received community forest rights. Two other villages, including the Kajaria village, where we organized one community consultation, are struggling for community forest rights. Landholding of "Tharu" families usually higher than the scheduled caste and OBC families. None of the women, irrespective of caste and religion, consulted have land ownership in their name. Grazing land available for villages has been decreased significantly over the years due to land allocation for the landless and allocation of the land for the common purpose activities of Government.

Community's Awareness about Small Cats and their Habitats:

Most of the communities are aware of the small cats; however, they find it hard to distinguish among the different species. Locally, in Ranthambore- Karauli, and Dudhwa- Katarniaghat area, they use the term "van billar" to categories all the jungle cats. Awareness about different species is higher in Nameri-Pakke-Eaglenest landscape, where many women and men participants can share separate local names for different species of wildcats. In Nameri-Assam, the Leopard cat is known as *lotta mekuri*. The jungle cat is known as *bidali*, *haphai*, and the clouded leopard is known as *gudha futuki Bagh*. According to people, small cats try to stay away from the habitation and prefer to stay either in the periphery of the jungle or in the grassland area. People often found small cats in the sugarcane fields. Fishing cats are usually found around the water bodies. Most community members disagree that small cats can control the rat menace in the area. They believe the rats are digging and staying in too deep holes, and that's why they think the cats can't eat the rats.

- *Tharus* believe that "if you kill cats, they will take revenge and will try to destroy your family." Hence, people avoid killing cats. In some villages, people shared that one needs to do atonement if they kill any cat by mistake by doing some specific rituals. In some cases, if the person denies doing atonement, villagers take more decisive action against her/ him. However, these rituals and beliefs, according to the community, are getting weaker and fading away.
- The pastoralist community, locally called "*Kuchbandia*," moves from one place to another and depends on hunting smaller animals like rats and cats for their food. With increased devastation by rats in the agriculture fields, some villages in Katarniaghat and Dudhwa area invited "kuchbandia" to hunt rats from the grain and sugarcane fields. People do admit that they sometimes hunt cats with rats for food purposes.
- Human and wildlife conflicts are high in Katarniaghat, where leopard attacks are rampant. In Dudhwa and Pilibhit, some attacks of tigers are observed but not widespread like leopard attacks. People are not highly bothered about the carnivores attack except in the case of leopards. Most community participants shared that it is the herbivores like wild pig/ boar, elephants cause the most and significant crop loss. According to the community, wild animals like small cats don't drive much loss either to the crops, livestock, or human. Although sometimes they eat poultry birds or drink milk, the amount of loss is not much.

Sanitation:

In Ranthambore, the construction of the toilet has helped to reduce people's movement in the forest. In the local area, people going for defecation is called "Jungle Jana" (going to the woods). Women are at the forefront of adopting the use of toilets. People in the local area use toilets mostly in the winter and rainy season, but during the summer season, due to scarcity of water, people still prefer open defecation. Most of the tiger and leopard attacks are observed during the early hours when women and men often go for open defecation.

Gender:

- **Women's Contribution to Agriculture and Allied Activities:** In the indigenous "Tharu" community, more than 80 percent of the work in the agriculture field and more than 90 percent of the household work is done by women. In many Tharu villages around Dudhwa, women groups started owning agriculture machinery like power tiller, rotavator with the support of NRLM, and they have begun taking up plowing activities as an income-generating activity.
- **Violence against Women:** Violence against women, specifically domestic violence, is rampant in the area, specifically among the indigenous community of "Tharu." Most women participants shared that men usually beat women during the inebriated condition and blamed alcohol for their problem. However, many "Tharu" women disagreed with this argument and blame social and cultural norms that give men a higher position, despite women doing most of the productive and care jobs for domestic violence.
- **Social and Cultural Norms against Women:** In West Kameng and East Kameng area of Arunachal Pradesh, Women are considered impure when menstruating. A menstruating woman cannot visit religious places and are banned from touching many things, including instrument used for hunting. If a woman is menstruating, people suggested that her spouse not hunt as the prey will catch the smell and flee away.

Annex 02: Community Consultations Report

Summary:

Community consultations were organized following the guidance provided by GEF gender policy 2017 and GEF policy on stakeholder engagement. One of the key objectives of the community consultations, as suggested by GEF gender policy 2017, is creating equal opportunity for local men and women for participation and decision making in project design by conducting inclusive stakeholder analysis and selecting participatory consultation methods that ensure that women's and men's needs, knowledge, and expertise are heard. Nine consultations were organized in the core, buffer and periphery regions of Dudhwa, Katarniaghat, Kishanpur and Pilibhit tiger reserves with indigenous "Tharu" community, Scheduled caste and Other Backward Caste communities. In Ranthambore- Karauli and Kela Devi area more than ten community consultations were organized with men and women of different communities including Moghiyas, pastoralist Gujjars, and farming community. In Nameri-Pakke- Eaglenest area, more than 12 community consultations were organized with Nishi, Bugun, and Shertukpen tribes among others. Besides, several other community stakeholders such as civil society organizations working for community development, agriculture and other line departments, EDC members were consulted for understanding impacts of the project on community, how the project can be engaged with different stakeholders for implementation of the project while benefiting local community and wild cat population simultaneously.

Recommendations:

- **Insuring crop and livestock against wildlife attack** and compensate farmers for their losses.
- **Human and wildlife conflict** is majorly result of antagonism between community and forest departments that can be resolved by creating different sharing platforms like EDCs and increased engagement.
- **Engagement with women's groups and youth for promoting community stewardship-** Women are at the forefront in the fight for the rights and collecting NTFP, fuelwood from the forest. hence, it would be essential to engage with youth and women groups to increase their awareness on small cat conservation, forest and biodiversity protection.
- **Increased Awareness for Small Cat Conservation:** According to community members, watchers and local guides shared that use of posters, sign boards can be used for building awareness of community and other stakeholders on small cats.
- **Village Electrification/ Solar lights specifically in the buffer and periphery areas:** Although, for a small cat conservation project it is not essential as human-small cat conflict is quite less. However, sometimes people, has shared in the consultation, take their revenge on smaller animals when they lose any relatives or livestock to leopard attack. Hence, in the area specifically in Katarniaghat where leopard attack is widespread project can try to address this issue by creating linkages with other government programmes rather than from the core funding.
- **Creating Learning and Sharing Platform at the National Level and Across the Border for Sharing of Best Practices-** Many wildlife NGOs working in the Pilibhit area have experience on camera trapping of small cat and running public campaign for community stewardship for conservation

issues. But, largely, there is a lack of public knowledge and information regarding small cat population, habitat and conservation. Hence, it would be essential to create national level and cross-border learning and sharing platforms to document, share and replicate best practices for small cat conservation. It will also help to increase outreach of the project benefit to other landscapes not covered under this project.

- **Study on Sugarcane Plantation:** A study on sugarcane plantation, whether it is beneficial for the small cat population or not would be required before suggesting any change in the crop pattern. However, few experiments on crop practices can be adapted like reducing cropping density, introducing intercropping of herbs and pulse crops for better return and reduction of human-wildlife conflict.
- **Alternative Cropping Pattern:** NRLM and agriculture department already initiated training people on medicinal and horticulture crops like Litchi and banana; such activities can be adapted on pilot basis under the project for diversifying the livelihood of community.
- **Creating Forward and Backward Market Linkages for peppermint and turmeric crops.**
- **Promoting fodder cultivation in the agriculture field bunding area** for reducing the community's dependence on forest.
- **Promoting handicraft making with women groups but** with strengthening of forward and backward linkages.
- **Policy Suggestion for subsidising the LPG cylinder** in the villages of buffer and periphery zone for at least three years to habituate them with the utilization of cooking gas. Young girls and boys can be made champions to discourage use fuelwood.

Community Consultations, Dudhwa Landscape, Uttar Pradesh

Community Consultation participants:

Dudhwa- Parsia, Bankati, Kajaria (07/08/19)

EDC members of four villages of Bankati area of Dhudwa (7/08/19)

Katarniaghat- Bishanpur, Fakhirpur, Anand Nagar (08/08/19)

Kisanpur- Kishanpur (09/08/19)

Pilibhit- Simrat Taluk (10/08/19)

Date: 08/08/2019

Venue: Bishanpur Village, Katarniaghat

- **Demography:** Bishanpur village of Katarniaghat is demographically homogeneous where only 297 Tharu (Adivasi/ Scheduled Tribe) families live. Total population of the village is around 4500. All people in the village have some amount of land holding. Average landholding of the village is around 3 bigha land/household (240 decimal). Average numbers of children per family, in the village, is around 4-5 children.

- **Basic Services:** Many girls of the village are continuing higher education (graduation studies) in nearby towns or in Delhi. However, many girls are still getting married at the age of 16. Dowry system is highly prevalent. Hand pumps are the sources of drinking water; level of ground water is 40-45 ft.
- **Livelihood:** Rice, wheat, mustard are the major crops. Most people stopped cultivating sugarcane in the last few years due to payment delays by the sugarcane millers. In last few years, local community have started cultivating turmeric and peppermint. Peppermint, a short-duration crop, cultivated during the late winter season gives good amount of time for land preparation after harvesting. Marketing of peppermint, like other agriculture crops, is difficult for the local people due to the absence of proper backward linkage. Middlemen usually comes from outside for purchase of peppermint and collects the produce from the village after harvest but at a lower market price.
 - Paddy is cultivated majorly for consumption purpose.
 - One decade earlier, maize was the major cultivated crop, but due to low productivity they shifted to other crops like peppermint.
 - Peppermint is water, labor, and fertilizer intensive. Market and cooperatives are providing fertilizer to the farmers; female headed households and women have less access to agriculture inputs including fertilizer.
 - Turmeric cultivation also needs market. Women participants suggested that women self-help groups can be engaged in preparation and marketing of grounded turmeric.
 - Irrigation is one of the major challenges for farmers. Bore well is not feasible in the area due to depleting groundwater. Flooding is also a problem for farmers.
- **Livestock:** Local community keeps poultry, goats, cow and buffaloes. Lack of grazing area is a problem for livestock after declaration of national park and tiger reserve.
- **Handicraft:** Some women participants were engaged in thread work called “*chikankari*” with the support of local NGO who used to provide them forward and backward linkages for the handicraft work. Currently, due to lack of market support, they have stopped working on the handloom operation.
- **Migration:** Mostly men migrate to other parts of Uttar Pradesh and India such as Delhi for daily wage work. Women, usually, go to near-by villages and within the village for labor work. After 2015, with reduction in amount of work provided under MGNREGS, migration of both men and women to Himachal Pradesh have been increased. They get employment as apple pickers in the apple farms. Agriculture laborers, in the local area, are usually getting 200-250 rupees per day while in the apple farms they earn 450-500 rupees per day per person. Both in the agriculture field and apple farms, women laborer receives less than men; men get 250 and 500 rupees in agriculture field and apple farm respectively, while women get 200 and 400-450 rupees in the apple farm.
- **Tourism-** Tourists do visit the area, but they don’t provide much livelihood to the local community.
- **Support from the Government Department:** NRLM, unlike in Dudhwa district, don’t have much operation in Katarniaghat area.
- **Land Ownership:** There is not a single woman landowner in the village; land titles are in the name of men only. No women participants were about Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005 or inheritance right to land.
- **Access to Cooking Energy:** Out of 18 participants, 10 participants received LPG connection under Ujjwala” scheme. Despite having access to LPG connection, most villagers still depend on fuelwood

for cooking purpose. High cost of LPG cylinder and huge demand of the firewood are the reasons for continuation of firewood for cooking purpose. They collect fallen twigs from the forest for firewood purpose; however, for collecting fallen twigs and dead logs they have to pay huge fine to forest guards. Community gives 20 kilograms of paddy and wheat per family per year to forest department for getting permission for collection of firewood.

- **NTFP Collection:** Local community is dependent on forest for NTFPs like mushroom and some other herbs. Mushroom available in the Sal forest fetches high price
- **Gender Division of Labor:** In farming, only land preparation, i.e. ploughing, is done by man. Rest of the practices, starting from transplanting to harvesting, is done by woman. For selling of the produces, female headed households depend on middlemen while men usually go to market to buy and sell the produce.
- **Violence against Women:** Domestic violence cases are significantly high. Women participants shared that they feel better when men migrate as they get escaped from violence.
- **Human –Wildlife Conflict:** Neel gai, wild boar, monkey, and elephants cause huge crop loss to farmers. Community wasn't aware of any compensation process for the crop loss.
- **Knowledge regarding small wildcats:** Fishing cats and jungle cats are locally known as “*van billar*”. There are no specific different names for different small cat species. Community participants believes that small wildcats, sometimes, kill their poultry birds and goat kids.
- Community don't believe that small wildcat can play any role in controlling rat population.

Date: 08/08/2019

Venue: Fakhirpur Village, Katarniaghat

260 Tharu families, around population of 1800, lives in Fakhirpur village of Katarniaghat.

- **Livelihood:** Paddy, wheat, and mustard are some of the major crops for the local area. Vegetables, mostly, are cultivated for consumption purpose. Soil of the area doesn't support cultivation of sugarcane or turmeric cultivation. Peppermint cultivation have been started in last few years. Peppermint crop cultivation requires more irrigation. A small patch of land gives benefit 2000-4000 rupees. Cash crops like peppermint provides cash on hand.
 - Flooding is a problem for the agriculture crop production.
 - Some people keep duck and backyard poultry for consumption and commercial purpose. Backyard poultry was also promoted by the district animal husbandry department who gave few broiler chicks to all the families.
 - Agriculture department provided seed for rice cultivation. Some people do have access to fertilizers. HYV paddy seeds like MTU-1029, Mansoori seeds cost 50 rupees per kilo while hybrids like Supriya and Shankar seeds cost 280 rupees per kilo in the market.
 - State government don't have any procurement system for the paddy seeds; hence, farmers are selling the paddy produce in the market at the rate of 12-14 rupees per kilo. Sometimes, it is hard for the farmers to even earn cost of cultivation. During such food scarcity situation, women, socially responsible for providing food in the table, face additional burden and migrate to nearby areas for labor work.

- Need of ready cash for addressing dairy needs, health and education requirements, social needs and input cost for the next agriculture crop often leads to distress sell. Lack of storage space also push people to sell the produce at lower cost
- **Fishing:** Forest department doesn't give permission for fishing in the river; people, sometimes, are fishing from the river, but that is very rarely. No family can base their livelihood on it. Fishponds are not feasible in the area as due to flooding in the river they often loose the farmed fishes.
- **Migration:** Some people migrate to Delhi, Jalandhar for work purpose after the non-operation of MGNREG scheme in the area.
- **Collectives Working on Forest and Conservation Issues:** Forest Rights Committee (FRC) is not operating in this area as most of the lands are revenue lands owned by local community. 10 years back, EDC was formed by the forest department. But it is not functioning anymore.

Date: 09/08/2019

Venue: Kisanpur

Access to Basic Services: Community is facing challenges in accessing basic services such as health and education. Primary health care center is located 15 kilometers from village. Primary school, till 8th standard education, is located in the village; children have to travel more than 10 kilometers for going to secondary school and college. Hence, girls in the village stop their education after primary schools; a few boys are continuing their schooling in secondary school and college. During the rainy months, due to unpaved dirt roads, accessing basic facilities like health care and education is difficult specifically for women and young children. One woman lost her life in last monsoon season as she was not able to take to hospital on time.

Human and Wildlife Conflict- Wild boar, Neel gai, monkey is causing highest crop loss.

Meeting with NGOs in Pilibhit on 10/08/19

NGOs: Pahal, Shri Bhagwati Mahila Kalyan Sansthan, Prakriti Vanya Jiva Samaj Sambrudhi Sansthan, Grameen Sewa Sansthan, Wildlife and biodiversity conservation society, Wildlife Conservation Society, Akshya Kshetra Samiti.

- Fishing cat and leopard cat is often located outside the PA areas. Hence, it would be essential to focus on outside PA areas for small cat conservation.
- Small cat specifically fishing cat poaching is high in Sarada belt and sugarcane fields.
- Many incidences of poisoning of the small cats specifically fishing cat is observed. Bengali community living around the Sarada river belt often targets fishing cat.
- Some people say "caracal", locally known as "siyaghos", is located in the Pilibhit area; however, there is no such confirmation available.
- Pilibhit is a linear forest stretch without much diversity.
- Wildlife and biodiversity conservation society promoted 200 volunteers/ local youth as "tiger friend" and 1500 people as " Saras friend". This model helps to increase community awareness and engagement of community in the conservation.

- Many schools in the Pilibhit areas are allocating one period every week to talk about wildlife conservation under tiger conservation project. These platforms can be used for small cat conservation or such platforms can be created elsewhere too.
- Kuchbandias are poaching small cats for food purpose. Specific programmes targeting them should be planned to stop small cat poaching
- According to NGO respondents, one fishing cat was recovered from a poacher in the year 2014 but not reported by the forest officials.
- Fodder cultivation specifically sudangrass cultivation can be done to reduce community's dependence on forest. Kanha has better grassland management plans which can be adapted in other areas for developing and managing grassland area within the PA.
- Area under sugarcane is getting increased over the year and there is strong backward market linkage for product procurement.
- Farmers are not getting MSP for rice and wheat although government has a procurement system. In the Tarai region, it is difficult to ensure 17 percent moisture content in the paddy and that's the reason most of the farmers' products been rejected by the procurement departments.
- However, in case of sugarcane farmers, according to Allahabad Court verdict, are even get paid 15 percent interest for the late payment by the sugarcane mills.

Date: 10/08/19

Venue: Pilibhit

- In the Pilibhit area, people, specifically trained watchers and local guides shared that there are many road kills specifically jungle cat and fishing cat.
- Tourism policy of the state is not clear whether to promote or discourage in the tiger reserve area.
- Sign boards play significant role in increasing curiosity of people regarding the species and forest reserve areas.
- WWF has initiated a LPG gas connection in this locality prior to "Ujjwala" scheme which found to be beneficial for reducing the community's movement in the forest area.
- Engagement of local youth as watchers and local guide is gradually increasing the community's awareness and interest on wildlife conservation.
- Number of tourists are growing year by year and there is not enough infrastructure to support the tourist inflow. Homestay can be a good medium to increase community's engagement on wildlife conservation as it will incentivize them too.
- Visitors book to document the identification of wildlife is maintained by the local guides. Although cats are scheduled-I animals, often due to lack of awareness they don't register it. They are only aware of fishing cat, not about other small cats.
- However, growing human-wildlife conflict in the area affects the watchers and local guides too. Community often targets them if there is any human or livestock loss due to wildlife attack.

Community Consultations Report, Ranthambore- Karauli Landscape, Rajasthan

Date: 17/07/2019

Date: WWF office, Ranthambore

Participants: Male – 05 (Sarpanch- Talwar village and four village panchayat members)

- Organic compost from cow-dung is far better than the chemical fertilisers ones since the latter along with pesticides destroy important species as well.
- Livestock populations have reduced in his village and so there is not enough dung and so chemical fertilisers are being more commonly used now. Most people are aware of the dangers of chemical fertilisers and pesticides.
- Due to the recent change in the political situation, people are not interested to keep more than two cows as the selling price of the same is very low in the market. Two cows wouldn't produce enough compost for the agriculture field, hence farmers have to depend on the chemical fertilisers.
- Cropping pattern has been changed over the years with increased technology and seed availability. Now, many people are largely growing chili which is fertiliser intensive, but it gives good money.
- Very few people are growing millets like Bajra and Jowar. Wheat and rice are grown for the food consumption purpose.
- Cats benefit farmers by eating rodents and there is no real conflict with small cats.
- No villager has ever killed a cat intentionally and killing cats, even wild ones, is considered to be very bad in the community, with several repercussions and corrective actions.
- Many Jungle Cats are killed on roads surrounded by agricultural fields.
- Waste management and sterilisation required for control of feral dogs.
- In Talwas, there are only around 30 – 40 feral dogs.
- In Talwas EDC, villagers give high importance to the environment and wildlife management as they had undergone several training programmes. It is essential to aware community about the need of wildlife and forest protection for their well-being.

Date: 17/07/19

Venue: Tiger Watch Office, Ranthambore

Participants: (Moghiya community members) Female: 17

Male: 08

- Moghiya community used to depend on poaching for their livelihood. However, after the declarator of the tiger reserve they faced existential threat as they were not allowed to poach anymore.
- Tiger Watch trained both men and women of the Moghiya community on handicrafts that includes cloth sewing, block printing, patch stitching. More than 40 members are engaged in the handicraft work.
- The payment is based on the numbers of pieces created. Different price is allocated for different pieces considering the amount of time required for doing the piece, market demand and skill requirement.
- Most of the women members shared that they were engaged in agriculture as the agriculture laborers, except one who has some land holding of her own, prior taking of the work of sewing and crafting. Men were engaged on poaching animals.

- Agriculture in the PA periphery areas is not anymore beneficial as wildlife is causing huge crop loss and community is not allowed to take any action against wildlife. Forest department charges huge fine if any wild animal is impacted.
- Many farmers are either leaving the field barren or taking up the activity in smaller area that they can easily protect.
- Few members of the community are also running a café, with the support of Tiger Watch.
- They were aware of 4 species of small cats but not of Fishing Cat.
- Moghiyas and Bagarias are two communities that eat Jungle Cat.
- According to them the main threats to small cats are rodenticides used in wheat fields, road kills especially on highways and village roads and dogs.
- No rodenticides are used in millet (bajra) fields, but poisons are used to kill wild boar which may kill cats if they scavenge on carcasses.
- They spoke of their experiences during camera trapping and as informers against poachers.

Date: 17/07/19

Venue: Dastakar Office, Ranthambore

Participants: Women: 03

Men: 01

- Dastkaar, a non-profit organization, was started in the year 1989 with support of Ranthambhore Foundation with a purpose to provide livelihood support to the families lost their livelihood due to formation of tiger reserve. Earlier, most of these families used to collect NTFP products from the forest or were cultivating in the PA periphery areas.
- Agriculture is not any more beneficial for community due to wildlife attack- there is no compensation system to protect the farmers from the crop loss.
- The handicraft cooperative, on any point of time, is providing employment to more than 300-350 people, mostly women. Around 300 rural women of Ranthambhore area are currently employed by the foundation.
- They are preparing a range of products starting from women kurtas to bags, pouches, hosiery. According to her, wide range of products helps them to get better clientele and regular market.
- There is huge demand in the market. Many people, specifically women, due to loss of crop and livelihood, are interested to take up the work.
- Payment to the employee is done mostly on the basis of per piece of handicraft. Different prices are allocated for different piece of handicrafts. It is difficult to tell earning of the women as it largely depends on efficiency of the women crafter and the number of hours she works.
- Linkages with online and offline platforms like Delhi Haat, Dastkaar, Delhi helped them to build national and international reputations and to get more work. Market demand for the product is growing steadily and even sometimes they don't able to cater the market requirement due to shortage of labor.
- Some of the challenges for organization is the lack of required skill among the local community, growing competition with new business establishments who tries to market their product saying it is made by local women, fund requirement for supporting training and transportation of the employees.
- Support is required to provide training to a large group of local women members considering the

increased demand in the market. All of them except some payment during the training period which is difficult for the organizations to pay as most of the products prepared during the training period are not marketable.

- Training young girls in the beginning of the project, she said, was a mistake for them as most of them left the area after continuing for short while after their marriage. Although, she mentioned, it was good that they carried forward the skill to other area, from the business point of view it is important to keep a balance between numbers of daughter and daughters-in-law trainees.
- Speaking about government policies, she said, government should promote homestay under eco-tourism rather than big resorts that would benefit the local community lost their livelihood in the tiger reserve. Most of the resorts are run by outsiders who are only positively benefitted by the reserve.

Date:

Venue: Ranthambore Foundation, Ranthambore

Participants: Male: 02

Female: 00

- All the work of forest and environment conservation, and community development started under one umbrella of the Ranthambhore foundation which later divided into many individual and independent units/ NGOs. For instance,
 - Tiger watch was started with activities like controlling poaching by creating alternative livelihood and other means, camera trapping to track movement of tiger, youth engagement;
 - Dastkaar was started for community development specifically for economic empowerment of women with promotion and marketing of handicraft products;
 - Ranthambhore foundation- education;
 - Ranthambhore School of Arts- Youth engagement
 - Prakrutik Society- Health and Family planning
- Targeted interventions were taken up for promoting livelihood with women groups as women were responsible for collecting fuelwood.
- Prakrutik Society: A mobile hospital with one doctor, one nurse and one compounder pay visit to all the villages to provide health care support. The mobile health care van, in addition, was also used for raising awareness about population control measures. Hybrid stall feeding cows was promoted by the society to control the grazing problem. In addition, biogas units were linked with promoted livestock units for controlling the fuelwood collection. Initially, some families were also given high yielding cows and bulls for increasing milk production and stall feeding. BAIF also supported artificial insemination.
- Ranthambhore foundation currently looking at education and livelihood promotion of rural women. They are training the young kids on environment education and wildlife conservation in addition to the conventional education and operating two centers with more than 60 women on carpet making.
- Tiger conservation programme changes the community's attitude towards tiger and other wildlife. They are gradually understanding the role of biodiversity in the ecosystem.

- Numbers of tigers in the area has been increased from 15 to 71 shows biodiversity in the area has been increased as without biodiversity a top key stone species like tiger wouldn't survive.
- **Small Cats:** "Caracal" is often spotted in this area. Most of the small cats are spotted in the periphery of the village.
 - Never heard of any negative influence of small cats in the community. Most of the human-wildlife conflict is due to leopard and wolves. Herbivores are also a cause of concern for farmers.
 - There is a religious belief in the village that it is not good to kill the cat.
 - However, earlier the numbers of spotting were higher and gradually it is decreasing.
 - One of the primary reasons of reduction of small cat numbers might be their habitat destruction. They used to spot around the riverine area often, but now not much riverine is left. Most of the riverine areas are encroached due to increased population.
 - Not aware of timing of "small cat" spotting.
 - Earlier, spotting of small cats were higher. Reason for decrease in spotting is not known-one of the reasons might be reduction in the forest and pastureland.
- **Livestock:** Hundreds of abandoned cows and bulls are found in the Sawai Madhopur area. People abandons bulls as due to change in the farming practices and adaptation of tractors, bulls are of no use for the community. Indigenous cattle breeds give very less amount of milk and that also fetches very less money in the market due to low fat content. Hence, people are preferring to keep buffaloes, as the milk amount and fat percentage in the milk is quite higher, over the cows. Hundreds of cows are abandoned in the street. Unlike cows Buffaloes, both dry and the male kids, can be sold to the slaughterhouse.
 - Many people keep goats, but poultry birds and fishery are not found in the area.
- **Agriculture/ Cropping Pattern:** Kharif (rainy) season cropping is less valued in comparison to Rabi (winter) season cropping. During Kharif, people, in this region, due to dependence on rainwater for crop production and soil type, people usually cultivate crops like Pearl millet (locally called "Bajra") and Peanuts. In the winter season, people cultivate mustard, wheat, chana (pulses) and chili.
 - In the adjacent areas, rice cultivation has started recently due to access to electricity and bore-well facility for irrigation.
 - In last 15 years, guava plantation has been increased significantly in the area.
 - Contribution of Guava plantation to local economy is almost equivalent to the contribution of the tourism in Ranthambhore.
 - Small farmers, over the years, started doing guava plantation due to good assured return.
 - Rat attack is usually high during the month of May and June. But people don't use rodenticide in the field.
 - Land is mostly in the name of men, however both men and women contribute towards the food production sector.
 - Increasingly, people are registering the land in the name of women as they are getting reduction in the registration charges.

- HSAA 2005 (Hindu Succession Amendment Act 2005) gives equal rights to daughters as sons in the land and property but in 95 per cent cases, due to social and cultural norms, women prefer to give away their rights in favor of their brothers.
- Besides, natural resource-based livelihood handicraft has become one of the major livelihood sources for many families, specifically, women, in last 20 years.
- **Social Dynamics:** Most people belong to Hindu and Muslim community. Few Christian families live in the urban areas. Following castes are found in the area-
 - Meena (ST), Mali and Saini (OBC), Gujjar (dependent on livestock) (SBC), Berua/ Jatau (SC), Jat (mostly found in Khandar belt) (OBC)
 - Meena community is declared as scheduled tribe but they are economically better-off than other communities.
 - There is no religion or caste specific livelihood followed in the community, but Muslim youth mostly engaged as mechanics, vehicle repairing.
- **Dependence on Forest:** Increasingly, there is restriction on cutting firewood in Sawai Madhopur area by the forest department. However, it is tedious task to control people's movement in the forest. Older generation still prefer to for firewood collection, but new generation prefer to use LPG based cooking stoves.
 - Construction of toilet is really helped to reduce people's movement in the forest. In the local area, people going for defecation is called "Jungle Jana" (going to forest). Women are in the forefront in adapting the use of toilets. People in the local area are using toilets mostly in the winter and rainy season, but during summer season, due to scarcity of water, people are still preferring open defecation.
 - Most of the tiger and leopard attacks are observed during the early hours when women and men, often women, go for open defecation. Last year, in the village "Kundla", woman went to toilet get attacked and killed by the tiger. Two years back, similar incidence happened in another nearby village where a tiger attacked and killed two men when they went for defecation.
- **Commons/ Pasture/ Riverine:** Riverine is gradually encroached by community, because of increased population, for construction of houses and agriculture land preparation.
- Grazing land available for villages have been decreased significantly over the years due to allocation of land for the landless and allocation of the land for the common purpose activities of government like construction of museum (recently happened in the area) and granting land to the soldier's families for showing respect to their commitment and sacrifices.
- Reduction on grazing land and riverine has increased the dependence on the forests.

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Date: | Venue: Khichirpur/ Sherpur, Ranthambore |
| Participants: Women: 12 | Men: 01 |

Women's Livelihood: Women are engaged in carpet making as an alternative livelihood activity for second year. Ranthambhore foundation trained women on carpet making and provide them design to make the carpet. Foundation also support in marketing the produce. Most women, earlier, working as housewives took up this carpet making as

they can handle it with their household chores. Although, due to less time allocation they, usually, take more time to finish a single piece and earn less amount.

- Many youth and women of the village get engaged in the hotel as care takers, cleaners and waitress. They earn around 250 rupees per day. But, most of them are paid on monthly basis. Most of the hotels and restaurants in the area are operated by non-locals and locals work there as daily wage laborer.

Fuelwood Collection: Women are responsible for collection of water and fuelwood. All the families haven't been yet received the LPG gas connection under government's "Ujjwala" scheme as the scheme is being implemented in the phase-wise manner. After 3 "o" clock, most women take off from the craft making and go for fuelwood collection that usually take then one to two hours as they have to search for the dry twigs fell from the trees. During summer days, they collect extra amounts of fuelwood for rainy days. After declaration of national forest, community lost their access to forest for fuelwood and other NTFP collection. Families who do not have LPG gas connection are largely affected.

- "*Prosporis Juliflora*" plants planted by the forest department by areal broadcasting process is mostly used for the fuelwood. Although, women don't prefer to use Juliflora as it causes a lot of bad smelling smoke. "Dhonk" woods make better firewood, however as the Dhonk plants grow very slowly it is impossible to use them as fuelwood. Replacing/ regenerating the "Dhonk" plant will be difficult. Women members seem to understand the importance of the different plants for their environment.

Women's Access to Institutional Credit: Most women in the village have own bank account under "Jan Dhan Yozana", however, most of them are non-operative. Many women, according to participants, have only 500-700 rupees saving in the account. Two women SHGs, three years old, operates in the village and they have their bank account. However, none of them have taken any loan from the bank for livelihood purpose.

Land Ownership: Most of the participants shared that they are landless and do not have any agricultural land. According to participants large section of the village do not have any land except the home and homestead land. Homestead land is not enough for kitchen gardening.

Community Livelihood: In the absence of land and land-based livelihoods, most families are dependent on daily wage labor for their livelihood. Many men work in the hotel industries in Ranthambhore and some of them also work as construction workers.

Electricity Connectivity: Village has good electricity connection and all the houses have access to electricity.

Human and Wildlife Conflict: *Monkey, Langur* create a lot of nuisance in the village as they often damage the fruit crops. Besides, *Neel gai* and *wild boar* affects the agriculture crop production most. Carnivores like tigers, according to people, attack the people only when they come very close contact with them and that happen mostly in the early morning or late evening. People's visit to the jungle in those wee hours have been reduced due to the toilet construction and hence, that has reduced the interaction between people and tiger. Tiger conserve project, according to many women members, created new income avenues in the area.

Small Cat: Most participants recognized "Caracal" is known as "Siyagosh" locally and Jungle cat is known as "Jungle Billi". Few community members recognized fishing cats and told they are spotted near the water sources. Participants shared that fishing cats are locally known as "Baghere", however, there was confusion as few members objected that leopards are called "Baghere".

- Rat menace is high in the area; people shared that if small cats can able to control the rat population that would benefit farmers and other villagers. However, they were not very sure of it.
- According to most participants, existence of small cat, generally, is inconsequential for community as they don't pose any major threat.

- Participants shared that “Cats don’t create any mess around; they even covered their poop after defecation”.
- People don’t kill cat as they believe killing cat is equally sin like killing cow or mother. Hindu religion, according to them, gives equal weightage to killing of cow, mother and cat. Although, they gave credit to “religion”, it was interesting to note that both Hindu and Muslim women had equal beliefs regarding killing of cats.
- Some people believe that if someone kills cat by mistake, to protect their own soul from damage he/ she needs to ask for forgiveness by worshipping.

Livestock: According to women participants cow doesn’t have much market values left. After mass use of “tractor”, in the place of bullocks, for ploughing the land value of bull became insignificant in the market. Dry cows do not have any market value either. The amount of milk produced by the indigenous cows, largely available in the area, is quite low in comparison to buffaloes. And, further, due to low fat percentage cow milk fetches less price in the market. Hence, cows and bulls in large numbers are abandoned and live in the street.

- Buffaloes and goats- People have more preferences to keep buffaloes and goats as goat and buffalo milk fetches good price in the market. Further, unlike cows, it is easy to sell these animals in the market.

Carpet Preparation: On one day, they able to make only four inches of the carpet that earn them around 50 rupees wage. Due to household chores, women don’t able to give required time for carpet weaving. Depending on the amount of time they allocate, members are earning between 1200-2000 rupees.

Gender Wage Gap: Woman earns around 200- 250 rupees wage per day for the farm sector work and gets around 250 rupees per day for the construction work while man earns 300 rupees for the similar work in the farm sector and 500 rupees in the construction sector. However, the work role of man and woman quite differs in the construction sector; woman usually works as an unskilled labor while man work as a skilled labor. Landholding of people in the area is quite low, hence very rarely people get work in the agriculture field as mostly family labor is enough for the agriculture production.

Food pattern: There hasn’t been much change in the food pattern in the area. Most people for large part of the year still eats Bajra (pearl millet) and after the harvesting of the wheat in the winter, they eat wheat flour chapatis.

Poaching and Hunting: There are few “Mogiya” community (hunting and gathering community) living in the area who still do poaching and hunting for own consumption (meat eating) and commercial (only meat) purposes.

Education: There is a government school that runs till 12th standard and a private school that runs up to 10th standard. People, now-a-days, considering the quality of education, are preferring to send their kids to the private education although that takes a lot more investment.

Domestic Violence: According to few participants, there is a rise in cases of violence against women with increased exposure and alcohol uptake; however, some other women disagreed and said there is not much change in the cases of domestic violence and only few men, irrespective of alcohol uptake, beat their wives. Level of acceptance of violence was higher among the older member than the younger members, but younger women participants were hesitant to talk about domestic violence.

Horticulture and Forestry: Neem plantation in the backyard is quite high among the villagers because of its medicinal benefits. Besides, people also plant fruit trees like mango, guava, goose berry and lemon in the backyard. Over the years, guava plantation, due to good market price, has been increased significantly.

Forest Dependency: Except for firewood, community shared that they don’t collect any other forest produce- timber or non-timber from the forest.

| | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Date: | Venue: Kundera, Ranthambore |
| Participants: Women: 21 | Men: 4 |

- **Forest Dependency:** Communities are mostly accessing forest for fuelwood. Although, most families in the village now have access to LPG gas connection, but regular cooking is still done by the chullahs only. Gas is used for making tea and snacks, cooking in the rainy season or during night hours. One of the primary reasons for infrequent use of gas is people's inability to pay 900 rupees per month for purchasing gas cylinder. If they cook regularly on gas, according to them, considering their family size, one gas cylinder will hardly run for 20 days. Some community members shared that the food cooked on gas is less tasty than the food cooked on chullahs. Some people suggested for subsidizing the gas cylinders for longer period, at least 3-5 years, for better adaptation by the community.
 - Earlier, some people used to collect leaves of trees like Keula for plate making and tendu leaves for bidi making. But, after declaration of tiger reserve people are not engaged on such activities anymore.
- **NFSM-** Under National Food Security Mission, government is providing 5 kg ration per family every month that helps to attain food security for many families, specifically old and widow people.
- **Electricity:** village is electrified completely and all the families have access to electricity. Monthly bill of 500-800 rupees is a concern for few families. Further, many discrepancies have been observed regarding billing system. Government is planning to install individual meters that community think would help to reduce the electricity bill and related irregularities.
- **Human and Wildlife Conflict:** Two years ago, one woman of the village went to forest for defecation in the early morning hours when she was attacked and killed by the tiger. Now, maximum people of the village constructed toilet in their house under "Swachh Bharat Mission" and since then interaction of human and carnivorous wildlife has been reduced. They, sometimes, spot the tiger in the village boundary, but haven't heard of any accident recently.
- **Small Cats:** Most people recognized the desert cat. They don't able to identify any other cats. According to community, spotting of cats have been reduced. But most of them were not sure, as they said, they don't pay much attention to small cats.
- **Agriculture Practices:**
 - Guava and papaya orchards have been populated highly over the years due to the good income and less investment on management.
 - Besides, farmers are also cultivating black gram, wheat, green gram etc.
 - Rat attack has been increased in last few years. They are not sure the reason for increase in rat population. They shared that farmers are using some medicines for control of the rat population; however, they are not aware of the name of the rodenticides.
- **Livestock:** Most farmers are preferring to keep buffaloes over cows. Besides, villagers are also keeping goats, cows. Due to low productivity, farmers, gradually, are abandoning cows.
 - Buffaloes, the indigenous breeds, are giving 8-10 liters milk per day that is being sold in the village/local market at the rate of 50 rupees per liter while cows are giving, on an

average, 3-4 liters of milk per day that is sold in the local market at the rate of 40 rupees per liter.

- *Murra* and *Haryana* buffalo breeds are generally reared in the area.
 - Few people in the village are keeping hybrid breeds like Jersey that gives around 10-12 liters of milk. But stall-feeding cost of hybrid breeds are too high.
 - Significant reduction of commons is creating a challenge for livestock population; some of the farmers have been started doing fodder cultivation to suffice that need.
 - Household decision making related to livestock buying and selling is mostly done by men. In some cases, they consult with the women before selling or buying, but the final decision is always taken by men only.
- **Basic Services:** Village has a government school till 12th standard and after finishing the school in the village both girls and boys are going to Sawai Madhopur that is 20 kilometers from the village for completing higher education. Girls are usually getting married at the age of 15-16 years after the completion of schooling. Village has a functional PHC.
 - **Domestic Violence:** According to young women participants, cases of domestic violence has been increased over the years. There was disagreement amongst the elderly and young generation women participants regarding this; elderly women participants are in view that domestic violence is existing in the society for generations without any change. Out of 22 women participants, 7 members shared that they are facing domestic violence.
 - Tiger conservation, largely, helped rich people from outside who opened their hotel and restaurants here, local people lost their jungle and are working as laborer”.

| | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Date: | Venue: Mabusatu village, Pakke |
| Participants: Male: 12 | Female: 03 |

- **Gender Based Social and Cultural Practices:** Women are not allowed to touch the arrow used for the hunting as they believe that if woman touches the arrow they won't be able to catch the prey. When they set trap for hunting, they don't do intercourse with their partners till the moment they don't catch the prey as they believe that might upset the luck in hunting.
- Women are also banned to be part of the sacrifice tradition or eat the meat from the sacrifice. But after adoption of Christianity there is no gender-based discrimination in accessing food. Earlier, women had many restrictions during mensuration. They are not allowed to access some parts of the house or go near to other men. But after accepting Christianity such norms are no more practiced in the community.
- Fishpond is successful in the village.
- Mabusatu 1 and Mabusatu 2 villagers are displaced from the tiger reserve, but they haven't received any compensation from the government department.

- **Gender Division of Labor-** currently, men are doing most of the work and earlier women were doing most of the work. Because of receiving higher education in last few decades, many women are engaged in very good government and private jobs and hence, are not interested to do agriculture anymore.
- **Drudgery of Women Workers-** gas cooking stove and drinking pipe facility reduced drudgery of women folks who used to travel to forest for collection of fuelwood and water. Bore wells is often suggested as a best bet for getting safe water drinking access, however, many people suggested in the hilly region boring well is very expensive and probability of success is quite low.
- Government has policy to do several filtrations before supplying the water to the villagers but that's not being implemented properly.
- **Suggestions for project implementation-** Monitoring should be very effective. Committee should be involved in transparent money transfers and villagers should be part of the decision-making process in the project implementation. Budget allocation should be very clear. Every village should get share. Project should try to reduce the impact of few people and their monopoly on implementation. Baseline assessment is very important. Women should be part of the committee members. Job card direct money transfer is a good way to control corruption in project implementation.
- Project should select few beneficiaries and do the piloting rather than investing few rupees at each and every one that wouldn't benefit many people. Budgeting of project activities for Pakke should be different from the mainland.
- Community doesn't have much trust on NGO and government processes. According to participants, many research teams are coming and using them only for their research purpose and not providing any benefit to the community.
- **Human and Wildlife Conflict-** Banana, pineapple, coconut cultivation is in risk because of the elephant attack. 20 percent ex gratia is given by the government for the crop loss by the animals which is even not enough to cover cost of cultivation. The cost of cultivation calculation is based on the property size and doesn't consider the price inflation. May it be the crop damage or house damage, they usually get 10 per cent of the amount of the damage cost. Sometimes, they ended up getting only one percent of the crop loss as compensation as labor cost is not included. People used to believe that elephant doesn't damage crops like king chili and lemon, but in Pakke elephants even spoil chili and lemon crops. Only EV fencing seems like a feasible option for providing protection from the elephant attack. Fishponds also need fencing as sometimes baby elephants play on the ponds and damage the pond completely.
- **Land Ownership-** These are forest villages and they don't have land titles in their own name, instead they have receipts of land tax which is usually in the name of man only. Land inheritance follows through male heirs only. Because they think girls will get the land in her marital house.
- There is no forest rights committee (FRC) functioning in the area.
- **Agriculture:** Synthetic fertilizer application is almost insignificant; people prefer organic fertilizer. However, the trend is changing with introduction of rubber plantation; synthetic fertilizer application is significant in rubber plantation.
- **Alternative Feasible Livelihood Options:** Piggery, poultry and fishery are alternative livelihood options for Pakke villages. There is restriction in fishing in the rivers. As the river is located in the fringe of the tiger reserve and there is high probability that heavy fishing activity in the river will disturb the

animals who comes to river for drinking water. According to some participants, communities depended on fishing are facing the existential crisis. But this argument is not agreed by most of the participants who shared that only blasting and netting is not allowed that has negative consequences on environment and fish population. Community decided to do community reserve and protect the fish species for the future generation as they already lost many species. Market linkages are essential for sustaining any livelihood practice.

- **Market Support for Agro Produces-** They get credit support for ginger and turmeric cultivation from Kisan Credit Card (KCC), but without proper market linkages they are unable to sell the produce at a better price and repay the loan on time. Betel nut is one of the majorly grown crop in the area; however, due to lack of market support they are forced to sell it to middlemen from Assam at lower price who later sell it at much higher price and better profit. Without having proper forward and backward market linkages, if they increase the supply, the demand will reduce significantly and will reduce the price further.
- **Knowledge regarding Small Cats-** Fishing cats are spotted around the Kameng River. Marble cat has been spotted by the community too in the area. Marble cat is called 'tash' in the local area. Clouded leopard is available but doesn't usually come to lower belt of the forest; they, mostly, are found in the hilly area. Marble cat often comes to attack poultry birds. Fishing cat has rare sighting. Otter is available in this area who usually spotted in the river.
- Most of the participants suggested that *Gaon Budhas* (village elders) might know the local names who used to be engaged in the hunting and had more frequent visit to forest.
- It is difficult to catch the small cats. No one hunts cats for meat. Poultry farm people sometimes might kill them who incurs loss due to cat attack.
- Animals of cat families and elephant are not hunted as community believes these animals are spiritual animals and if anyone kill them, his/her soul will be hunted by the animal's soul.
- If someone kill tiger, he/she has to follow an extended atonement process to clear the sin. Although participants shared that killing cat is considered as bad, two participants shared that they killed fishing cat and jungle cat respectively for food without facing any repercussion. Some other animals such as jungle bison also recognized as spiritual animals who are supposed bot to be hunted.

Challenges: Village level politics found to be very destructive in the villages where most villagers thought that NGO drives projects and researchers are using them only for their profit. It took more than five hours to initiate the meeting as most of them were not interested to talk about NGO driven projects. At the end, they said if the money is routed through government departments, there will be no problem.

Community Consultations Report, Nameri-Pakke-Eaglenest Landscape, Assam-Arunachal Pradesh

Venue: Jungle camp, Mabutsa

- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is no more profitable. Jhum cultivation has been affected by the elephant attack. After 2004 flood the cropping pattern has changed.

- **Access to Credit and Basic Services:** All most all families have bank account. Women do have bank account in their name.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Elephant attack is causing severe crop loss. Electric fencing is a solution to control the elephant movement.
Alternative Livelihood Activities- Lemon cultivation can be adapted as elephants are usually deterred by smell of the lemon crop and change their path. Kitchen garden, betel nut cultivation, and community fish ponds can provide alternative.
Engagement with Youth- Local youth have an association called “*Maya Wasanbu*”. Primary aim of the association is to conserve flora, fauna, and wildlife.
Due to nature conservation project, community has lost their trust on NGOs. Community social audit should be adapted in all the project to ensure that projects do not have any negative impact on life and livelihood of local community. Further, direct fund transfer for the community project is a good way to control the corruption. Account transfer will reduce the corruption charges.

Venue: Jolly Basti, Pakke, Arunachal Pradesh

- There are 41 families in the village and all the families belong to Nishi community. Nishi tribe is a hunting community who still practice hunting majorly for consumption purpose. Hunting is part of their culture. They teach their children, specifically boys, how to hunt wild animals.
- **Agriculture:** Ginger and turmeric are major crops. People, also, are cultivating millet and betel nut. Market is a problem for most of the agriculture products. Crops like ginger, turmeric and betel nuts have better market. They are selling the betel nuts at the rate of 8-9 rupees kilogram, but middle men are getting 15-20 rupees per kilogram of betel nut. Fish pond is successful in the area and two families, currently, are practicing fish ponds.
- **Daily Wage Labor:** MGNREGS work was used to provide daily wage labor work to villagers during the off-season. But in last few years the amount of work under MGNREGS have been reduced significantly and villagers are not getting adequate job days. Some of the people who worked in the MGNREGS project three years back, haven’t received their wage against the work done. Both women and men, but mostly women, used to work in the MGNREGS project. Besides getting wage work, MGNREGS was also helpful for building rural infrastructure like rural roads, fish ponds etc.
- **Gender Division of Labor-** Women are doing more work than the men as they do most of the work in the farm and at the household. Gender wage gap exists in all the workspheres. In the rubber plantation project, woman receives 250 while man receive 300 rupees for the same work.

- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Farmers have stopped cultivating paddy because of elephant attack and continuous loss year after year. The compensation they are receiving from the forest department against the crop loss is not enough. Tiger attack intensified during the winter. The compensation for death of cattle by tiger, according to participants, is 2500 rupees. Participants shared “we can easily get 25000 rupees by selling a cow, but after spending 2000 rupees to get the compensation we are getting only 2500 rupees. Sometimes, it takes months to get compensation from government.”_Sometimes, the tiger snatches the cow from the grazing field. Tiger attacked two people in Seijosa almost 15 years ago.
- Rate of hunting has been decreased significantly. Earlier, they used to do the community hunting. Due to restriction of the forest department community hunting has been reduced, but many people are still hunting individually for consumption purpose. They were not very sure what is better for wildlife population- community or individual hunting.
- **Access to Basic Services-** Electricity is available in the village only for three days in a week. Solar light is not available. Accessing electricity is a challenge in Seijosa. Primary health care facility is available in Seijosa; they also go to Tejpur for health issues that isn’t addressed in Seijosa. Government has provided piped water to houses by lifting it from the river. There is only one water tank in the village; hence, sometimes it is not adequate for the entire village population. Needs of community will be better met with two or three tanks.
- **Education:** Most of the schools, considering the topography of the area, are residential that provide hostel facilities to both boys and girls. Village has a primary school, but the middle school is located 5 years far away from the village. Education, both for boys and girls, is a priority for the community. Good numbers of local people attending and have attended higher educations including PhDs, engineering, and medical studies.
- **Fuelwood:** Every family doesn’t have access to LPG gas; Only BPL families have received the gas connection. Cold weather and requirement of warm water for most of the daily activities increases the fuel requirement and hence, people found it expensive to function only on LPG gas. Women are primarily responsible for collection of firewood; everyday they spend around 1-2 hours in collecting firewood. Time spent on fuelwood collection is high during the summer season as they have to collect and save wood for the rainy season.
- **Other NTFP Products** they collected from the forest include mushroom, bamboo, jhuna (used for religious purpose, as a mosquito repellent, and also for the treatment of chickenpox and smallpox). They also collect and use a plant product, locally known as *Rabbatari*, for pain healing.
- Earlier, forest department used to allow local people to cut tree logs for house construction that have been stopped after declaration of national park. According to local community, forest department is putting a lot of restriction in accessing natural resources from the forest area

such as driftwood from Kameng river and regulated many activities including fishing. As a result, local community is facing additional challenges to access local natural resources.

- **Community Conservation-** People are mostly engaged in the plantation. According to community, EDC didn't function in most of the villages due to lack of funding and supports from the department and NGOs.
- **Violence against Women:** Incidences of domestic violence is rare in the community as village council takes storing action against the offender. If something happened among the couple, community try to resolve the issue. According to participants, this doesn't hold true for other Nishi communities living in the neighboring villages most of the families came from Assam and other parts of Arunachal Pradesh and gradually settled down here. Social capital and bonding among those community is less that makes the action of village council weaker against social problems like violence against women.
- **Knowledge, Attitude and Practice towards Wildlife and Wild Cats-** Despite being a hunting community, Nishi have some strong traditional norms regarding hunting to protect the wildlife population. In the months of December, January and February they don't kill any female animals as most of the animals during winter is pregnant. They even don't kill the male one hornbill as he provides food to the pregnant female hornbill. Local community believes killing male hornbill during the winter means killing the entire family and specifically future generation.
- Local community considers tiger as their big brother and killing of tiger is banned by social norms. There are many folklores on the relationship of human and tiger that passes through generations. They have an extensive atonement process if someone kills the tiger by mistake. According to local community, they respect the small wild cats as cats are considered as the relative of tiger. They believe tiger is cat's uncle.
- Local people believe that cats don't like to live in the large families, as they get disturbed by children. So, cats always prefer small families. There are also folklores on why cats avoid tiger's landscape.
- **Social and Cultural Practices-** All girls, as a tradition, are trained on sewing. But over the years, the tradition of weaving own clothes has been perished and people have started depending on market for clothes

Venue: Mabutsa 2, Pakke

Participant: Takum (Village head)

- Women SHGs played significant role in conservation. But most of the SHGs, due to lack of guidance and funding support, are defunct.

- Youth of Pakke also takes interest in forest and wildlife conservation. Many village level youth groups are formed for patrolling and protecting wildlife. However, they need equipment like motor bikes and camera for proper patrolling.
- If the project is implemented with the government departments, it would be better to plan a different route for the fund flow otherwise will be difficult to implement the programme.
- Alternative livelihood like livestock, - pig, poultry rearing, and dairy should be promoted for increasing income of the local villagers.
- Most people don't know about small wildcats; it would be essentials to build people's awareness on small cat's habitat, prey base and threats.
- Protection of agriculture crops from wildlife by using electric fencing will help to protect the agriculture crop and increase their income.
- Crop and house compensation amount should be increased. Currently, the amount provided by the department is not enough.
- Claim process of crop compensation is very complex and takes a lot of time.

Venue: Eco park, Nameri

- **Demography:** The community in Nameri village are belong to Other Backward Castes (OBC).
- **Agriculture-** Agriculture is one of the primary livelihood options for most of the farmers in the Nameri region. However, due to elephant attack many farmers have stopped doing paddy farming for last three years. They cultivate paddy, cauliflower, potato, and vegetable for consumption purpose only. Most people, in the village, own on an average 3-4 bigha land. They usually take one crop in the low land. Earlier, they also used to cultivate other vegetables like pumpkin, but due to elephant attack they have stopped cultivating any vegetable. In the uplands, they cultivate vegetables. Farmers, mostly, are using high yielding seed varieties like Ranjit for cultivation. Other traditional varieties available in the area includes kamal dhan(Boka rice) that can be cooked by soaking in the cold water without boiling. Utilization of chemical fertilizer, insecticide and pesticide is quite less in traditional varieties of seed.
- Some of the women Self-Help Group members are engaged in weaving and some of them are engaged in agriculture food processing such as pickle preparation. Some members are preparing and selling pickles since 2012-13. 203 people in the village are engaged on Pickle making. They are selling the product in the outlets and guesthouses.
- **Livestock-** Community keeps only cow and bulls; cows are kept for milk purpose while bulls are used for the ploughing purpose. Lack of grazing land is becoming a problem for the livestock keeping. People don't keep buffaloes in this area. Earlier, community used to use hills for the grazing, but now army's eco-taskforce had stopped people's entry and grazing of the animals in the reserved area. However, community faces the grazing related problem only during the rainy season when most of the revenue lands are cultivated.
Community keeps other livestock such as goat, duck, and poultry birds for consumption and commercial purpose. Women are primarily responsible for the trading and maintenance of the small ruminants while sale-purchase of the larger ruminants like cows and bulls, largely, done by men. Wild dog is becoming a problem for both domesticated and wild animals.

Vaccination of animals are done by the government veterinary and animal husbandry department; Eco camp is also providing the vaccination service for last 13 years.

- **Fishponds-** Only 4 families among the participants have fish ponds. Due to sandy soil, siltation is a concern for fish pond maintenance. Most people keep fish pond for self-consumption. Sometimes, when the fish production is high, they sell it in the market. The fish production and sell are generally high during December to May. Participants shared that out of 60 households only 35 families use it for the commercial purpose.
- **Labor-** With reduction in income from agriculture, many farmers are now engaged in agriculture labor and construction work for earning livelihood. Some people are also working in the camps and guest houses. MGNREGS is not providing any wage labor to community members as most of the work is done by JCB.
- **Handicraft-** Women groups are preparing various weaved products that includes stroll, towel, muffler and traditional *mekhla chador*. It takes around one week to prepare one *mekhla chador* and selling that at the rate of 300-500 rupees. They do the weaving only in the free time, not engaged for full time. Some expensive ones, specifically made up of silk, are been sold at 2500 rupees. If they spend eight hours per day, they may able to do it in 4-5 days instead of 7-8 days. Thread quality influences the price of the product and amount of thread used per piece. Usually, thread costs around 450 rupees per kilo. Market demand for weaved product is high
- **Women's Access to Land Ownership-** In Assam, land is not mutated and still in the name of fore fathers. None of the participating women have land in their name. None of the participants were aware of Hindu succession amendment act 2005 that gives equal rights to daughters as sons on inherited land including agriculture land.
- **Access to Basic Services:** Well is the source of drinking water for villagers. Water quality is good. Water is available around at 10-12 ft. Expense of digging a well is around 10,000 rupees.
- Village has a primary school and a High school. Most of the children, both boys and girls, attends education till high school. Many children are attending college and higher educations in near-by towns.
- Everyone in the village has toilet. Government provided the toilet facility recently, but prior to that people had their own traditional latrine as culturally open defecation is not encouraged in the region.
- **Access to Credit-** More than banks, women prefers to take loan from the SHG (Self-Help Group). Women, in the village, formed saving and credit group called, Jyotiaya Atma Sahaya Group, in the year 2004. Group members started the saving with 20 rupees and now reached to 100 rupees saving per person per week. Group provides loan to the group members at the rate of 3 per cent and outsiders at the rate of 10 per cent.
- **Fuelwood:** Most people have the Ujjwala gas connection. However, they do use the fuel wood in addition to the cooking gas. They, usually, use tractor or by-cycle for collection of fuel wood and men are primarily responsible for the fuel wood collection. Some people don't have Ujjwala gas connection due to lack of identification and other relevant documents.
- **Gender Division of Labor-** Ploughing is done only by men; ploughing by tractor costs around 500 rupees for one hour and one needs to plough thrice to prepare a land for paddy cultivation. In one hour, they cultivate around three bighas (5 Bigha= 1 acre). Seed preparation is done by women while men purchase seed from the market and take decision regarding seed varieties. Transplantation is

done by women. Harvesting is done by both men and women, and post-harvest work is mostly done by the machine. They are using machine to harvest the crop fast so that can save the crop from the elephant attack. Men don't do the household chores; it is primary responsibility of women only.

- **Gender Wage Gap-** Woman get 120 rupees plus food per day while man get 250 rupees plus food per day for agriculture wage labor because Men's work is considered more labor- intensive. Further, due to care work women contribute less time in the field. For instance, during transplanting women work for 4 hours (8 am to 12 pm) while men work for 8 hours (8 am to 4 pm). In the jungle camps (eco-homestays) woman earns 200 rupees per day i.e. 4000 rupees per month while man -gets 6000. Head cook in most of the eco-homestays in the area is usually man. Due to household chores and care work women usually don't prefer to take up full-time work.
- **Violence Against Women:** Domestic violence was prevalent in the area. However, after formation of women SHGs and committees, community action against violence has reduced numbers of incidences. Women participants believe that alcohol is one of the primary drivers for domestic violence, although culturally, both men and women drink homemade alcohol in the region.
- **Eco-Development Committee (EDC):** EDC is functional in the village. Around 35 women are member of EDC. Handloom and handicraft were promoted by the forest department with women members through EDC. Out of 35 only 6 women members are continuing with the handloom work in the community hall constructed by the forest department.
Human-Wildlife Attack: Jia bhoreli river, known as kemang river in Arunachal Pradesh, creates a natural barrier between Nameri National Park and villages and protects the forest and wildlife. Earlier, many people used to hunt animals for consumption purpose and that have been stopped for many years.
- **Elephant Attack:** Elephant attack has been intensified in last two and three years. People think due to deforestation, with the reduction of forest size, elephant attack has been increased over the years. Some peoples' houses have been affected too. People have received compensation around 10,000 rupees only for house damage, but haven't received anything for crop damage. It takes more than one year to get money in the compensation process. Rice cultivation area has been reduced due to the elephant attack. Elephant even breaks the storage and eats the paddy. APMC system don't procure any paddy from the area due to the high moisture content. Most people are forced to harvest 15-20days prior to the harvesting time because of the fear of the elephant and hence, they don't able to fulfil the moisture content requirement for the selling of the paddy in the government outlets. "Electric fence is the only solution for restricting elephant's movement" as community suggested.
- **Community's Knowledge about small wildcat:** Community have different local names for different species of small wild cat. Leopard cat is known as *lotta mekuri*, jungle cat is known as *bidali*, *haphai* and clouded leopard is known as *gudha futuki Bagh*. Community believes that marble cat attacks the poultry birds. Adivasis, known as tea tribes, working in the tea garden in Assam, are believed to eat the small cat. Community also believes that if one kills the cat, s/he has to give the golden cat of same size to temple to clean the sin. They also believe that if someone accidentally kills the cat and immediately laugh loudly realizing the mistake, the soul of cat might return back. Participants were not sure about benefit of small wild cat. They identified rat-eating habit with domesticated cat and credit them for protecting farmland from rats' attack.

Respondent's Name: Gadamili

NGO Name: Dolung Ajan Samajik Kendra

Dolung Ajan Samajik Kendra works on community income generation, awareness campaign on afforestation and biodiversity conservation, women livelihood and income generation, Self -Help Group formation, skill training and capacity building.

- **Handicraft-** 31 women self-help groups are working in the area on weaving and marketing of handicrafts.
- **Tourism-** NGOs and eco-camps are supporting marketing of the weave products through promotion of tourism. Tourist flow is high from November to February. Eco-tourism might able to help some local youth. Earlier, NGOs like Aranyakas, WWF, NEN, tourist department used to refer for tourism, word of mouth is the best method for marketing. Most people here hire people temporarily for running the operations during the tourist season. North East Network (NEN) also engaged with the community in promotion of weaving, tourism, and women empowerment. Balipada foundation operates in the Nameri buffer area and works on ecotourism.
- **Agriculture-** Most of the vegetables are cultivated only for the consumption purpose. Vegetables such as chili, green leaves are cultivated in the area; both for consumption and commercial purpose. Due to wild animal, specifically elephant attacks, people are not interested to do agriculture or crop cultivation. Multi-cropping, such as black pepper, pineapple, betel nut, can be a way forward for the region for increasing income and reducing impact of changing climate. Food processing training has been given to the people, but it is not successful. Fruits such as star fruit, plum, berries, and pineapple are abundantly available; however, marketing of the product was an obstruction. Agriculture is not a preferred livelihood activity by the community, specifically youth.
- **Access to Basic Services-** Around 50 per cent people have gas connection.
- **Gender Division of Labor-** Men are engaged on agriculture full time, part time in weaving and sometimes in shops. Men sometimes migrate to Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Kerala and Karnataka for work. Rate of male outmigration is gradually increasing.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict-** Elephant attack is one of the biggest concerns for farmers and due to recurring attack, many farmers in last few years changes the cropping practices or left agriculture. After electric fencing, movement of elephant has been restricted. Earlier, they used to damage one or two houses every day. Now, the group movement of elephants have been reduced. Many people in the area still depend on hunting for livelihood, specifically in the Bhalukpong area (Arunachal Pradesh- Assam border area). Poachers are still hunting wildlife. Hunting of deer and sambhar is high for the meat purpose. Wild boar's meat is also in high demand among local population.
- **Government Led Initiatives-** No Initiative on Horticulture has been taken by the government department. Central Government has initiated a 2 crores project called "Dharikati cluster hand loom centre". Fishponds can be a success in this area. Fishery departments have schemes for promoting fishpond and fishery activities. They provide training and financial assistance for individual fishponds. However, one needs to initiate the project by itself first to get support from the department.

Government also gives one-time grant for the nursery preparation. However, people do not want to take up agriculture cultivation due to lack of market.

Village- Uttar Darikati, Nameri Assam

Participants: Male- 02

Female: 05

Community: Mishing Tribe

- **Demography:** All the villagers of the Uttar Darikati village belongs to Mishing tribe. Following the sixth schedule of Indian constitution, village Uttar Darikati is an autonomous village council (AVC) of Mishing tribe that gives local governance and decision-making capacity to the tribe council.
- Population size of Darikati is 1500. Family size is small in comparison to other communities; most families are restricted to either one or two kids. Very rarely, people go for third child. Mishing community doesn't treat boys and girls differently.
- They do not practice dowry in the village and the community never support sex selection during birth.
- Average marriageable age for Mishing community is 22; but due to higher education Some girls even get married at the age of 25-26 years. Education is a priority for the community.
- Village council has provided financial support for house construction, built temple and bore well in the village.
- Lack of proper road connectivity is a problem for the community. Both the rural road and the road connecting to the national highway need repairing and continuous maintenance.
- Girls are trained on weaving since childhood. Earlier, a girl must have to prepare at least a box full of weaved clothes before marriage and that was considered as a sign that the girl is ready for marriage. After marriage, *gram budha* (village elder) first see the clothes what they brought. Traditional cloth is the social status in the village. They make the list of the product the girl brought with her, if there is any disagreement among the couple and girls return back to her parental house because of the marital discord, they have to give back all the items mentioned in the list.
- **Access to Basic Services:** high school, is 3-4 kilometer. Girls are often continuing to high school and higher education; boys attending high school is rare. College educated boys and girls are there. Some even has gone for studies.
- **Livelihood:**
- **Agriculture:** Agriculture is the primary livelihood option for most of the community members. Paddy, arum, chili, and brinjal are few of the major grown crops in the area. They travel five to six kilometers to sell their agro-produces in the market. Arum, one of the highest grown vegetable in the village, fetches 20-22 rupees per kg. However, middlemen sometimes give less than the market price. They do most of the vegetables for house consumption only. Elephant attack have been reduced in last few years because of electric fencing.
- **Livestock:** Most people keep poultry birds, piggery and cows. Milk production is not the primary reason for keeping cows as most of the indigenous cows give around 1-liter milk per day. Grazing is not a problem as many people cultivate fodder. Panchayat provides the fodder seeds for the fodder cultivation. Poultry and pig, they sell sometimes but often it is for household purpose.

- **Fishery:** There are few fishponds in the village which farmers keep for the consumption. Some of the village men are working in the maintenance and management of fishponds in the Eco-camp. It's part of the conservation system. It's not for use purpose. They are doing the fish breeding in the fishponds. Forest department allows to collect small fishes from Jia Borueli river only for the consumption purpose.
- **Handicraft:** Women, usually, takes one week to make one *mekhla chador*, but If they work daily for seven hours, it will take 3-4 years. NGOs are supporting in weaving by providing inputs in designing and helping to sell of the product. Sometimes they also provide raw materials like silk for weaving.
- **Manual Labor-** MGNREGS work has been reduced significantly over the years. Most of the work still is happening by the machines and hence, is not providing much employment opportunity for the villagers as expected. Panchayat gives 2000 rupees to the MGNREGS card holder to withdraw money from the bank as according to the rule government gives the labor charge in the bank passbook only. Deducting 2000 rupees, card holder pass on rest amount to the Panchayat and job contractor.
- **Firewood-** Most families have gas connection, but they still use firewood. Most of them planted trees in their own land; and they mostly use the twigs and wood from their own tree for the firewood purpose. For social purposes like marriage and death when the demand of firewood is high, they take permission from the forest department to get wood from the forest. They also collect the drifting log woods from the river and use it for fuelwood purpose. Women shared that they take one hour and half to collect the firewood from the forest. Both men and women go for the firewood collection.
- **Gender Division of Labor:** Women contribute significantly to agriculture, but men are also engaged in agriculture. There is no social restriction on who will do the housework and who won't; both men and women share the household chores. But women contribute major share of the household work.
- **Land Ownership:** Dharikati is a forest village and hence, community do not have any land title in their name. Instead, they have the registration receipt; registration receipt and 7/11 is in the name of men only. Mishing follows patriarchal societal norms and inheritance pass in the society through male heirs only.
- **Women Collectives:** 16 SHGs are functioning in the village. Primary function of the SHG is limited to saving and credit. They do weave and sell traditional towels as a group activity. Loan interest rate within committee is 3 per cent interest and for outsiders 10 per cent.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** Among the wildlife, elephants are causing major damages to crop and houses. Hunting and gathering has been reduced.
- **Community's knowledge of Small Wildcat:** Participants shared that they saw different species of the small cat in the discovery channel only. They call cats, both domesticate and wild, "Mekuri". People don't prefer to kill the cat as they think that will protect them from the rat menace. Villagers have a system to ask forgiveness for killing of cow and bull, but no such system for killing of cats.

Venue: Eco Camp, Nameri

Resident: Showkham Chetiya, Resident Camp Manager, Eco-Camp

- Eco-camp is the society-driven eco-tourism camp that runs by 235 members.
- Eco-camp employs local men and women for all the jobs, from cleaning to cooking, in the eco-camp. Women are mostly engaged in the cleaning and maintenance job as they are restricted by their household chores and care responsibilities. Men usually work for longer hours.
- Local community still depends on forest for many of their needs including loan repayment. New generation banks, like Bandhan bank, are giving loan to village youths for enterprises but at higher weekly interest rate. Weekly interest is often too high for men to repay consistently. When they don't able to repay weekly interest, they cut down a tree and sell in the forest. Logging is still rampant in the area, although after declaration of national park logging has been regulated.
- Women contribute significantly in the agriculture work. Due to their responsibility of household chores and care responsibility, women often do not able to participate in the economically benefitting jobs like tourism or weaving. Employment generating programme for women should consider their social and cultural roles and provide flexible working schedules.
- Eco-tourism can provide employment for local youth. They can be engaged as guide or bird watchers.

Venue: Forest Office, Nameri

Participants: EDC members-

- **EDC:** 18 EDCs were formed in the Nameri area; however, only four are functional. Lack of funding is one of the prime reasons for non-functional of EDCs. Two EDCs in Torajaan and Dharikati are most functional. In Torajaan, 22 families are members of the EDC. For EDC functioning, fund is a biggest obstruction.
- **Agriculture:** Both Torajaan and Dharikati is agriculture dependent. Agriculture equipment like the tractor and power tiller can be helpful for the agriculture purpose. Market is a problem. Charijuaar is the nearest market that is around 10 kilometers far from the Torajaan and Darikati village.
- Lemon crop don't have good market in the local area. Two years back, lemon used to get good price but with increased production the market price has been decreased significantly. Road is a problem for reaching out to market. Elephant also causes of concern for the transportation as it creates obstruction for many transporters.
- Turmeric, ginger, arum, areca nut, and other seasonal vegetables are the major crops.
- Government departments like horticulture, agriculture haven't implemented any project in the area. KVK officials, according to participants, never visited the area.
- **Livestock:** According to community, "increased population has reduced the size of commons and that is creating problem for the livestock due to lack of grazing land". Investment and

handholding support like vaccination will be able to improve and promote livestock-based livelihood activities like poultry, piggyery. Poultry, goat, piggyery farm, fishery, and dairy farming with Jersey breed can be successful in this area.

- **Youth Engagement-** Youth prefer technical jobs like electricity mechanics. Some of the local youth are trained by the forest department as nature guard; most of them are aspiring to have more engagement in the national park.
- **Handloom-** EDC operates a hand loom where around 18 people are engaged. Around 60 women were trained for 45 days; only 2-3 women are engaged in weaving. They also provided support for the tailoring and other such skills. Various training programmes are planned with them. Mishing community is more interested in continuing the handloom work.
- **Forest Protection:** EDCs are also engaged in the protection activity. Some NGOs are engaged in the protection activities. Need more policy guidance for engaging community, NGOs and EDCs on forest protection. Forest department is planning to start the check gate; EDC members can get engaged in that activity. In the buffer zone, the illegal logging is still rampant.
- Collection of NTFPs such as Khair and bamboo and sand gravels from the river basin and fishing have been restricted after declaration of the national park and tiger reserve. Thatch collection from the paddy field has been stopped due to change in the paddy variety. As the access to khair has stopped, people are forced to buy tin sheets for roof of their house. To earn money for tin roof sheets, most families are cutting the trees illegally and selling in the market.
- People are now opting for alternate housing equipment. Khair has a very good market. Many people are preferring the eco-sensitive houses because of awareness raising.
- **Human and Wildlife Conflict-** Earlier, local community used to hunt wild animals, but after declaration of sanctuary hunting has been reduced significantly. Electric fencing can protect the crops from the elephants.
- **Community's Knowledge Regarding Small Wildcat-** Local names for Jungle cat among assamese tribe is *bunda* or *ban mekuli* while Mishing community calls it *bunda mendali*. Mishing community call tiger "*sima*". Fishing cat is called *messaka*, *machoi mekuli* in the local language. Local community believes that if one kills *mekuli*, he or she has to give a cat made up of gold. Participants claimed that leopard cats, sometimes, kill poultry birds and causes financial loss to community. Regarding killing of the cats, participants shared that cats are very fast and it is difficult to catch them.
- **Alternative Livelihood Opportunities:** Small enterprises such as handloom, pickle making, and preparation of jam and jelly can be helpful for women members. Bamboo based ornaments and furniture preparation can also generate employment for the local community. Bamboo treatment plant establishment will be required for promoting cane craft and bamboo craft. Training on local guide, boatmen, watchers and birding training can be good avenues for youth. Hotel management and hospitality industry training can be helpful for youth to get jobs in the camps.

Venue: Department of Agriculture, Rupa, Eaglenest
Participant- Agriculture Officer

- **Government's Priority:** "Doubling farmers income" is one of the major goals of this government and in Arunachal Pradesh they are planning to achieve this goal through expanding area under agriculture. The cultivable land is planned to increase by converting the forest land as in the districts like West Kameng amount of cultivable waste land is very negligent. Such policies or approach might threat the ecology and environment of Eaglenest. Economic development path should be balanced with ecology and biodiversity needs.
- Cultivable land of West Kameng district is 5000 ha. State government is planning to increase 100 ha per year by converting wasteland and forest land to agriculture land.
- **Cropping Pattern and Agriculture Practices of Local Community:** Local community is not practicing Jhum any more in Rupa; instead, local community have started practicing other ecologically suitable agriculture system like land terracing.
- Maize and rice are the staple crop in Rupa and Bugun villages. Farmers are cultivating wheat too. Rice, not cultivated in the region due to topography, is majorly sourced from the cooperatives. Tomato is the main cash crop. Earlier, land under maize cultivation was significantly higher, but in last two decades vegetable cultivation has been increased.
- **State Agriculture Department Support:** Agriculture Department provides irrigation support to farmers specifically for horticulture and vegetable crop cultivation. Department's experimentation on solar based lift irrigation system is not successful in the area.
- Department is also providing support for vermin composting to reduce farmers' dependence on synthetic fertilizer.
- **Land Ownership:** Land titles are in the name of men only. Panchayat keeps the land record.
- **Synthetic Fertilizer Usage:** Synthetic fertilizer application rate is high specifically in the vegetable crops like tomato and vegetables. They have high dependence on synthetic fertilizers for the monsoon tomato cultivation.
- West Kameng belt is the highest consumer of synthetic fertilizers in Arunachal Pradesh.
- Farmers in Rupa and Bugun are dependent on Assam traders for most of their requirements- seed, fertilizer, agriculture equipment.
- Market of the agro-produce is a major constraint for farmers. Most of them are forced to sell the produce to Assam traders at a loss due to lack of proper marketing facility.
- Open grazing is also a threat for the forest conservation.
- Men and women have equal contribution in agriculture production. Unlike other states, women in this region are ploughing and preparing the land by mini power tillers. Bullocks are still in use for the land preparation.
- **Knowledge about small wildcats:** People working in agriculture department, like general public, are aware of small cats but would not able to differentiate different species, their habitat or prey base.

Venue: Rupa

Participants: Head-District Cooperative Society, Rupa

- In Arunachal Pradesh, Cooperatives functions like PACS. Cooperative is providing support to all the villagers. Cooperative has seven board members. They have annual board meeting and general body meeting for planning the workplan of cooperative.
- Rupa cooperative society have 500 shareholders (community members).
- Cooperative is providing support for handloom promotion and marketing, Kisan Credit Card for agriculture loan, food processing work, and distribution of subsidized ration.
- Food processing activity initiated by cooperative was not successful due to lack of marketing. Another reason for failure of food processing was better market price of tomato crop. As the farmers are producing tomato in the off-season, they are receiving on an average 10-20 rupees per kilo. Hence, procuring tomato at such a higher cost and producing processed food wouldn't gain any profit.

Venue- Bugun Village, Eaglenest

Participant: Sarita, Mahila Mandal Chairperson

- **Domestic Violence:** Domestic violence rates are quite high among the Bugun tribes. Extra marital affairs and alcohol are found to be the major reasons behind high incidences of domestic violence cases. Men, usually, go for second marriage when they don't get child from the first marriage; there are many cases of second marriage. Domestic violence cases are handled by the *Mahila Mandal* (women wing of the village council). Non-tribal communities who came from outside are bringing most violence cases. Liquor is the primary reason for violence.
- **Land Ownership:** Land is in the name of men only and they inherited the land from fathers. Community believes that as the girls are going far after marriage, land is of no use for them.
- **Village Councils:** Village councils have different branches for addressing concerns of different social and population groups. Women group, youth group and conservation groups have been constructed under the village council to address specific concerns. Each group is led by a chairperson, but they all report to the village councils. *Gaon Budha (village elder)* holds highest position in the village council who takes most of the decisions in the village council. *Gaon Budha* position, not based on any selection method, is hereditary and son inherits the position from his father.
- **Community Tax System:** Non-tribal and tribal settlers who settled down in West Kameng district have to pay annual taxes to local community for land, houses, animals, firewood etc. Taxes from land leasing is one of the major income sources for the local community. Annual land tax for agriculture land is 5000 rupees. They also give annual house tax to the landowners. Livestock of settlers, on the basis of their consumption level, are taxed annually; big animals like cattle are taxed higher than the smaller animals like goat and sheep. Young cubs are less charged, for instance an adult goad is taxed 50 rupees annually while kids are charged 30 rupees only. Families pay firewood tax for collecting wood from the forest. Land tax goes to individual owner while the tax collected from animals and firewood goes to the village council as the later are considered as community resources while agriculture and house land are considered as individual resource.
- **Food Habits:** Rice is the staple food for local community. Cooperative gives 25 Kg ricer per person per month at a subsidized rate. Most people eat meat and fish, but not very regular.

- **Major Cultivated Crops** are tomato, cabbage, capsicum, cauliflower. Application of synthetic fertiliser and insecticide is quite high. However, in the kitchen gardens they use only FYM.
- **Knowledge, Attitude and Practice Regarding Small Wildcat:** Killing cat is considered as a bad omen in the society. If someone kills the cat by mistake, then people believe that they will get disorders like hands and legs shaking.
- **Social and Cultural Gender Beliefs-** Women are considered impure when they are menstruating. Menstruating woman is not allowed to visit religious places and are banned to touch many things including instrument used for hunting. If woman is menstruating, then people suggested her spouse to not to go for hunt as the preys will catch the smell and will flee away.

Venue: Rupa, West Kameng

Participant: Ramana Athreya, Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research

- Conservation and community development should go hand-in-hand. It is impossible to sustain conservation without involvement and development of local community.
- Crop diversity have been reduced significantly over the years. Cash crops like tomato and cabbage have been replaced many traditional crops and varieties. Crop rotation has been almost stopped in most of the agriculture fields.
- Planned and regulated ecotourism can generate alternative livelihood for the local community, specifically local youth and women, and promotes conservation.
- Conservation project should consider influencing and advocacy activities for changing cropping practices.
- It will be difficult to promote ecotourism on small wildcats as they are nocturnal animals; hence, it will be essential to adapt landscape approach in promoting the ecotourism and include other flora and fauna like moth and ants in Eaglenest.
- Considering many other national parks, Eaglenest is still undiscovered from the tourism perspective. Hence, it is essential to regulate the tourism activities to reduce the negative impact of tourism on ecology. One should target scientists and nature lovers and promote ecologically viable homestay facilities with minimum luxuries.
- Cultural tourism can be promoted alongside to increase benefit for the local community and raising awareness on their social and cultural practices.
- Handicraft and handloom can be promoted under cultural tourism.
- Tourism project should focus on other areas than Eaglenest sanctuary; homestays should be promoted between the lama camp and community reserve.
- Quantified assessment of how conservation projects have changed the ecological value and biodiversity of the targeted place is essential.
- Unmarried women have more rights and freedom than married women.
- Bompou camp is now managed by the Shertungpen community and Lama camp is managed by Indie who belong to Bugun tribe.

- Bugun tribe was oppressed by other tribes, but after the discovery of Bugun bird and establishment of community reserve respect of Bugun tribes have been increased by multifold.

Venue: Rupa

Participants: Shertungpen community

- Small wildcats are known as “Sangathu” in the local area. However, they never spotted small wildcats in the Eaglenest as most of them are nocturnal.
- Fishing cats are available and easily spotted around the river; earlier numbers of spotting were less but their number has been increased over the years.
- Most tourists visit this area for birding.
- Shertungpan community, traditionally a hunting community doesn’t eat domesticated animals; they used to eat only wild animals and fish. Hunting of wild boars and deer for consumption purpose is still prevalent among this tribe. Gradually, this practice is changing; with exposure and interaction with other communities, most of them have started eating poultry meat, goat meat.
- 8th, 15th and 30th of every month is celebrated as no cultivation and no fishing days. Most meetings in this area have been organized in these dates.
- Thupeng village council has good authority over the community; if anyone disobeys the council, they are fined 10,000- 12,000 rupees.
- Jhum cultivation is banned and no more practiced in the region. However, as the income from tomato cultivation has grown high significantly in last two decades, a lot of inspection is required to ensure that no one is converting the forest land to agriculture land.
- Shambu Kumar, agriculture inspector stationed in Rupa in 1990s, had piloted the tomato cultivation, after which cropping practice of the region has changed significantly. Earlier, people only used to cultivate maize.
- Earlier, there was no cultivation during winter. Families used to travel to the foothills in Assam to collect the salt and other requirements. Most people still have houses in the foothill. A barter system with Assam villages were there in earlier generation; local communities used to get salt and other things not available on hills by giving meat of wild animals, clothes, wood products.
- Forest timber cutting – timber cutting is banned since 1995. Most people in the village were were engaged in timber business. When Supreme Court banned the timber cutting, tomato cultivation was started at a larger scale to compensate the economy loss.
- Soil quality has been deteriorated because of high fertiliser, fungicide, and insecticide application in tomato cultivation. Crop insurance might reduce the insecticide application by providing a guarantee income against crop loss. It is difficult to control the insecticide application in tomato cultivation. Soil testing and soil health maintenance is another challenge in this region.

Venue: Thongre, Rupa

- **Women Collectives:** A women collective was functioning in the village with 11 members, but due to less income many people didn't able to save every month and that made SHG group inoperative.
- **Agriculture:** Major crops cultivated by the community, both for consumption and commercial purpose, are: Tomato, potato, cabbage, cauliflower, and capsicum. Kiwi orchard, due to less input and labor intensive, have started getting high traction among the farmers.
- Most of the traders are from Assam who finance the entire agriculture crop and they take the produce once the product is ready. If the crop is not good enough than they carry forward the loan amount to the next year. Farmers need assurance for crop loss. Crop and seed variety is selected by the farmers. Most of the decisions farmers and traders take together.
- Tomato cultivation is no more economically beneficial. Production has been reduced significantly by 50 per cent. They are trying to replace it with the kiwi plantation. But they need support from the government.
- Horticulture should replace the vegetable cultivation.
- Birds also attack the tomato; rats also cause crop losses. But farmers don't apply rodenticides.
- **Government Support:** Support of agriculture, horticulture and forest government department is not reaching to the community.
- MKSP programme is not working in Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Livestock:** Most people keep goats and some people do keep cattle and poultry too. Because of agriculture, they don't keep the cattle and poultry as they can't manage the livestock with crop. Usually, men take care of the livestock. Every family has a dog and cat.
- **Land:** Average landholding of community is 2.5 to 3 acres.
- **Gender Division of Labor:** Culturally, women don't do the ploughing as they can't use the bullock driven plough. If essential, they can use the pharaoh to do the land preparation. Women do more work than men; more than 80 per cent of the farm work and household chores is done by women. In agriculture, Fencing and laborious work is mostly done by women.
- **Handloom:** Women weave the traditional clothes at home. They have started marketing of the traditional clothes, but there is low demand in the market due to limited designs and lack of promotion.
- **Community's knowledge, attitude and practices regarding small wildcats:** Women participants identified marble cat and leopard cat from the brochure and confirmed that they saw these cats in the forest. Some women participants claimed that small wildcats sometimes eat and hampers the tomato; however, after discussion it was confirmed that women participants confused wildcats with other animal.
- Herbivores like monkey, wild boar, and porcupine hampers the vegetable crop most. Crop loss due to herbivore attack is gradually increasing. Elephant attack and damage caused is gradually increasing.
- No one eats the small cats. People don't kill the animals or wild cat for skin or carpet purpose; most hunting is for food consumption purpose only.
- They believe that hand will shake if one kill cats knowingly or unknowingly.
- **Gender Wage Gap:** Male labors are paid 2000 plus food per month and Female labors are paid 1500 rupees plus food per month, In addition, both male and female labors receive clothes once or twice in a year. Most of the labors are hired from the plain, from Assam, due to the dearth of labors in the local area.

- **Gender Based Socio-Cultural Practices:** There is no restriction on girls or boys for attending school and college. There is no restriction on women on accessing food unlike many other local tribes where women are not allowed to eat particular kind of fish or meat. Women, in the village, eat every kind of fish. Women go for fishing, but they don't go for hunting. Domestic violence cases are rampant. Community doesn't follow any dowry system, but they give traditional ornaments during the marriage. Village council doesn't have any women members as women are not allowed to enter the traditional sanctimonious place in the council. Gram panchayat participation of women is also quite low.
- **Access to Credit:** Everyone, both women and men, have account in the bank. Women usually operates the household finance.

Venue: OMC 4 Number Camp, East Kameng

- **Demography:** All the participants are Nepali settlers who settled down in West Kameng area for generations.
- **Access to Basic Services:** All most all children go to school. Girls don't study beyond 12th standard; most girls get married at the age of 16-18 years. In the government schools, education fees are free for the locals because most of them fall under the ST category, but Nepali settlers have to pay the charges.
- **Agriculture:** They cultivate vegetables mostly for consumption purpose and hence, they don't apply any synthetic fertilizer in the field. They, instead, use goat dung for the agriculture cultivation.
- **Manual Labor:** Road construction worker gets 11000 rupees and other laborer's get 6500 rupees. Laborers get four Sundays off.
- **Land:** They pay rent to the village council for the house, agriculture land, and livestock. Around 60 years back when most of their families came here for settlement, amount of area they were able to clean off the forest became belong to them. That time they had to pay a very nominal land tax for homestead land, but no tax was levied on agriculture land. For house, they are paying 500 rupees tax per annum while for goat kids and adult goats they are paying 20 rupees and 50 rupees respectively. But they don't have to pay any rent for kitchen garden. For fuelwood they have to pay some rent decided by the council. Deforestation was significant. Most people are using timbers for the house construction. Tribal also cut a lot of the forest under jhum cultivation. They are renting the land to outsiders for tax although they don't able to cultivate the land by themselves.
- **Social and Cultural Norms:** Most of the women make their own choices in the marriage. There is no restriction on women's movement in the public space or their participation in the economic sphere. Dowry system is not prevalent. Participants shared that keeping three-four wives was prevalent among Bugun tribe, but that trend is gradually changing. There is no conflict between the locals and outside settlers although social practices are quite different. Besides, they also have to pay some contribution for festivals and functions of the tribes. For instance, last year they collected around 1000-1500 rupees per household for Bugun's "wang" festival.

- **Violence Against Women:** Domestic violence is rampant, but no one reports about it in the committees or public forums.
- **Gender Division of Labor:** Both women and men do agriculture cultivation. Mostly women do the agriculture work while men go for labor work.
- **Gender Wage Gap:** Women, usually, get 250-300 rupees while men get 350 rupees as agriculture labors. Social perception of men does more labor-intensive work, according to participants, increases their wage rate in the agriculture field.
- **Support from the Government:** Toilets and dustbins are constructed under 'Swacch Bharat' and that is helping to keep the locality clean. But they don't have access to any other government schemes. They even haven't received ujjwala gas connection.
- **Deforestation/ Logging:** Earlier, there was not much restriction in accessing to forest but now, after declaration of national park and community forest reserve, for collecting the firewood and entering to the forest they are required to seek permission.
- **Human-Wildlife Conflict:** There is no harm from the wild animals. Snakes mostly found in the summer season. They have never seen any other wild cats in the area. Nepalis settlers don't usually engage in hunting of the animal.