

Bridging the gap: Community outreach for wildlife conservation

Indigenous Peoples Planning framework

Our interactions with the indigenous forest dwelling communities are aimed to have positive impacts in our project. Our project focuses mainly on outreach activities in villages surrounding Protected Areas (PAs). These outreach activities intend to carry out public information campaigns regarding forest fires, human-leopard conflict and Eco-Sensitive Zones(ESZs) around PAs .

The Indigenous Peoples in our project sites include the Jenu Kurubas surrounding Nagarahole Tiger Reserve and the Soligas in the Biligiri Rangaswamy Temple Tiger Reserve. Our past interactions with these communities have had positive outcomes and no adverse impacts. These outreach activities have been carried out with free and informed consultation with the village elders in the hamlets of the communities. We intend to continue carrying out these activities with the same level of transparency and informed consultations as before.

Our activities do not affect traditional rights of the Indigenous Peoples in any manner. On the other hand, we aim to increase the positive impacts of the traditional rights of these marginalised communities. A case in point, campaigns on issues such as ESZs are mostly geared towards having positive impacts of ESZs on the Indigenous Peoples. ESZs regulate land use patterns and aim to ensure land use patterns are compatible with wildlife but also with local livelihoods. For instance ESZ delineated around Bandipur Tiger Reserve does not allow conversion of land from agricultural/horticultural purposes to non-agricultural use such as establishment of industries, etc. Similarly it protects land from mining or quarrying that is largely harmful for local livelihood practices. ESZs also ensures that land cannot be acquired for industrial or other similar purposes thereby protecting land rights of local people. It also helps in conserving water table as activities that require intensive water usage is also not allowed in ESZs.

All activities are carried out in the local language, Kannada, to ensure that the information is transparently disseminated efficiently and effectively.

Our volunteers take utmost precaution to avoid any adverse impacts from percolating to the Indigenous People. Though we do not foresee any grievances arising out of our outreach activities, we will sensitise our volunteers to note down any grievances that might arise.