

**CONSERVATION OF CRITICAL FRESHWATER FISH HABITATS IN THE SOUTHERN
WESTERN GHATS**
Navadarsan Public Charitable Trust
Kochi, India

Note on Indigenous Peoples Plan

The project 'conservation of critical freshwater fish habitats in Southern Western Ghats' aims to develop and implement species specific conservation plans for single location endemic freshwater fish species in Kerala, and manage such irreplaceable sites. As part of this project, we are focusing on two sites, the **Periyar Tiger Reserve** and the **Santhampara hills**, which together hold the only remaining populations of eight threatened fish species and hence qualify as Alliance for Zero Extinction sites.

In the Periyar Tiger Reserve, the **Mannans** are the most important tribal community relevant to the project activities as their primary occupation is fishing. However, the fishing area of Mannan tribals is the Lake proper where none of the AZE species have been known to occur. Our field surveys during the last six months also failed to record any of these species from the Lake. The areas where the AZE species occur are in the upstream areas inside the Periyar Tiger Reserve where tribal movement and activities are minimum. **Hence the project activities including any current and future conservation interventions will not adversely impact the livelihoods of the tribal communities in any way.**

Similarly, the scheduled tribe, **Muthuvan** is the most important tribal community living in Santhampara. However they live deep inside the forests where the scope of the present project is limited. The current project will be carried out at sites in the Panniyar stream which flow around a mosaic of cardamom plantations. **Therefore tribal communities will neither be affected nor be actively involved in project activities at Santhampara.**

Since there will not be any impact of the project activities on the indigenous people living in or near the vicinity of the project areas, we have not prepared a detailed indigenous peoples plan according to the CEPF requirements.