



Examining The Extent Of Local Cooperation Towards Conservation In Ranthambore National Park, Rajasthan, India

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ABSTRACT- Local cooperation and the community participation can never be neglected and is therefore detrimental to attain prosperity in a region. Success of the conservation scheme lies in the involvement of local people. They may contribute to regional planning, creating job opportunities for local youth, educating the local community, socio-economic growth of the region and environmentally sustainable development which is essential for development of any conservation area. In this study the Ranthambore National Park is chosen to highlight the role of community in conservation activities and resource management. It will also help to understand the involvement of host community to various conservation and development practices. The study is based on primary, secondary data collected from site and different articles published, Rajasthan government policies and reports. The findings revealed that the supportive participation of locals and effective implementation of the government policies resulted in positive outcomes of the conservation scheme. The study also points out the need to involve the local community in capacity building, sustainable eco-tourism possibilities and realistic planning for conservation.

Keywords: Resource management, Conservation, Community participation, Sustainable development and Empowerment

INTRODUCTION:

Conservation schemes are a crucial and essential part of the global effort to preserve biodiversity. However, the execution and existence of conservation schemes frequently come at a high cost to the local population. Local people's access to natural resources is restricted by conservation schemes, which also impede cultural practices, economic activities and traditional ways of life. It often uproots indigenous communities from their traditional and customary lands (du Toit, Walker, & Campbell, 2004). There has been an increasing push for including communities in Conservation schemes in order to lessen social disputes, make peace with losses caused by these schemes, and foster community support for conservation schemes (Andrade & Rhodes, 2012; Berkes, 2009; Tessema, Lillieholm, Ashenafi, & Leader-Williams, 2010). However, these initiatives to engage the community have frequently failed because of several reasons mainly ignorance,

historical attachments, also because of shortsighted results (Brosius, Tsing, & Zerner, 1998), unequal benefit distributions (Dahal, Nepal, & Schuett, 2014; Sekhar, 2003), and incorrect interpretations of the concept of a "community" (West & Brockington, 2006). Communities are not the tightly knit, homogeneous units that many people think they are. They are difficult to identify complex units of people, including families and individuals, with varying values, socioeconomic classes, and multilayer interactions (Agrawal & Gibson, 1999). These heterogeneous communities, each with two distinct socioeconomic and demographic identities, as well as separate histories and relationships with their environment, are only one of many stakeholder groups in the area of conservation schemes. Bennett (2016) found that people's opinions of conservation are influenced by a variety of origins, values, and management viewpoint.

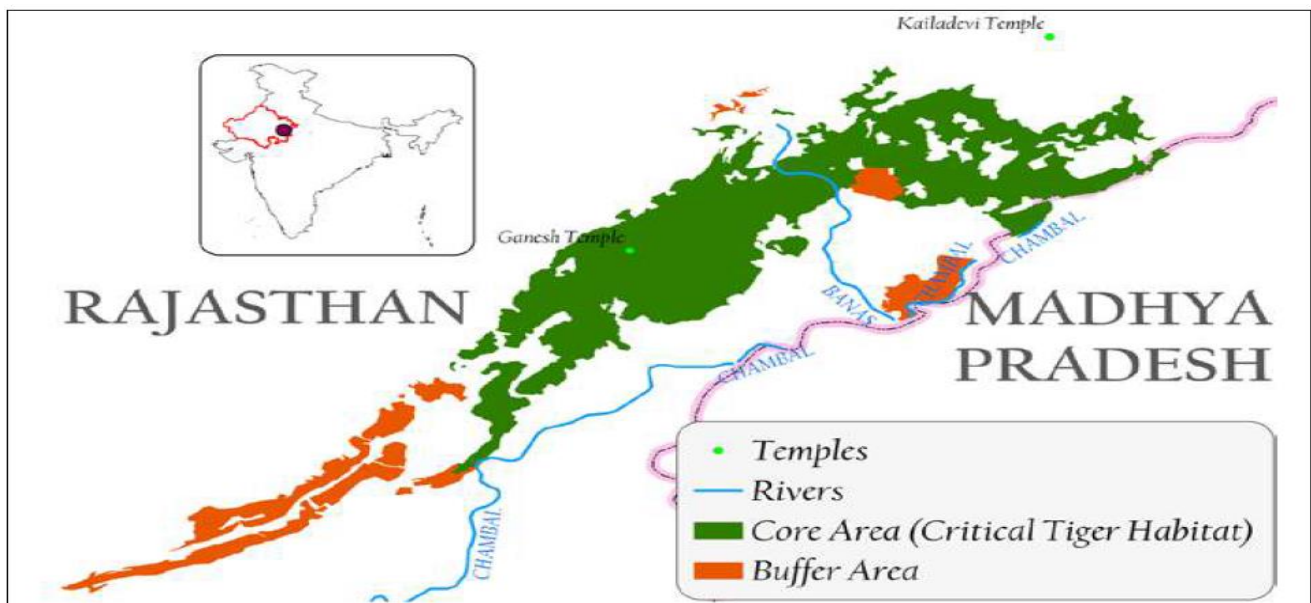
OBJECTIVES:

1. Examining the extent of local communities' involvement in conservation schemes and sustainable development.
2. To explore the present status of conservation scheme in Ranthambore National Park
3. To identify the connect between local communities and the conservation and regional development practices.

STUDY AREA:

The UNESCO-designated world heritage site "Ranthambhore Fort" (Hill Forts of Rajasthan) inspired the name of the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve (RTR). It is incredibly beautiful since the majestic fort of Ranthambhore is perched on a hill in the middle of the national park. Located between latitudes 24°41 N and 26°22 and longitudes 76°16 E and 77°14 E is the Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve. Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve lies at the junction of the Aravali and Vindhya hill ranges in eastern Rajasthan. The reserve is located in the Sawai Madhopur and Karauli districts in Rajasthan's southeast region. The Ranthambhore National Park is located in the southeast to the Banas River.

The Ranthambhore Tiger Reserves, which cover 1,394.5 square kilometres, include Sawai Man, Kaila Devi Wildlife Sanctuary, and Ranthambhore National Park. Rich wildlife combined with a strong cultural and historical heritage make Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve a hotspot for wildlife viewing. Proximity and easy connectivity to Delhi, Mumbai and Jaipur makes it a preferred choice for Indian and International tourists and one of the most visited tiger reserves in India.



Source: ARC GIS 10.4

The territory is essentially tropical, dry deciduous and thistle woodland with some semi-arid ranges. In addition to the tiger, the biodiversity of the park incorporates a huge assortment of reptiles, feathered creatures, and warm blooded creatures such as the panther (*Panthera pardus*), caracal (*Caracal caracal*), spotteddeer (*Hub pivot*), sambar deer (*Rusa unicolor*), and Indian Gazelle (*Gazella bennettii*). The human populace thickness around RNP is tall, with more than 300 towns encompass the stop inside 5km of its span. The towns are ruled by the Meena, Mali, and Gujjar communities (Bagchi, Goyal, & Sankar, 2003). Whereas the Meena and Mali community are basically agriculturists, the Gujjars are an agro-pastoral community. Trim striking and livestock loss due to natural life are common within the locale. Due to the park's nearness to the 'Golden Triangle of Tourism' (Modern Delhi-Jaipur-Agra), it is frequented by sightseers. Be that as it may, whereas tourism is a vital portion of the neighborhood economy, thinks about show that less than 0.001% of the nearby populace is included in tourism exercises (Karanth & DeFries, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Available related literature collected from varied sources including websites, libraries, personal collections, gazetteers and manuscripts etc. will be consulted. Data Collection (including primary and secondary along with different outcomes), classification and tabulation, use of quantitative techniques and analysis of data, Cartographic representations and interpretation of facts with their critical analysis will be carried out. The participatory social research tools (Ashford and Patkar 2001) were used for data collection that allows greater flexibility and comfort levels among the respondents. The survey tools used for data collection were Household questionnaires (HHQ), Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KII).

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Worldwide attempts to maintain the integrity of conservation in national parks can be divided into two basic categories: (1) conservation through exclusion, and (2) community-based conservation. Through a focus on nature protection and a critical assessment of the role of local communities as the ecological saviours, one group of authors has been inclined towards harsh enforcement methods for biodiversity conservation (Terborgh 1999; Oates 1999). Such an exclusive approach may have been successful in certain cases, but it came at a high societal cost and caused conflict, particularly in emerging nations (Lele et al. 2010). Another group of scholars focuses on the socio-political aspects of environmental preservation and describes the methods that might be developed through coordinated talks with the local community (Brandon and Wells 1992; Martino D 2001; Neumann R 1997; Ferraro and Kramer 1997; West and Brechin 1991; Brandon 1996; Wells et al. 1999; Brechin et al. 2002). In order to protect biodiversity, people-friendly methods have been tried in Integrated Conservation and Development Projects (ICDPs), which are significant examples (Machlis and Tichnell 1985; McNeely and Pitt 1985; Larson et al. 1997; Wells et al. 1992; Brandon and Wells 1992). Published work on ICDPs has evaluated these initiatives' contribution to biodiversity preservation and offered suggestions for how these initiatives might be carried out (Kellert et al. 2000; Wells and Brandon 1993; Wells 1994; Wells et al. 1999). Conservationists in developing nations like India understand that many protected sites have a limited future without the help of the local population. Since the 1980s, ICDPs have made an effort to balance park administration with local needs and ambitions, frequently with unsatisfactory outcomes (Wells and McShane 2004). Attaining local cooperation and support without compromising conservation goals remains a top priority for parks. Trials have been made to work with a modelling approach for anthropogenic intelligent on biological system related with the complex human and environment intuitive for economical scene advancement (Nautiyal and Kaechele 2009). Luckily, the lessons from these encounters give an imperative opportunity to advise another era of biodiversity preservation programs, counting those concerned with destitution easing as well as those working at biological system and scene scales. All over the world, with the developing mindfulness approximately the part of biodiversity preservation in keeping up the environmental adjust, the governments, courts, nongovernmental organizations, traditionalists, and human right activists have begun raising their voice for Ensured Ranges to spare arrive and water assets, halt deforestation and anticipate species termination (Brooks et al 2009).

A Summary of Conservation Conflicts Across the Study Site:

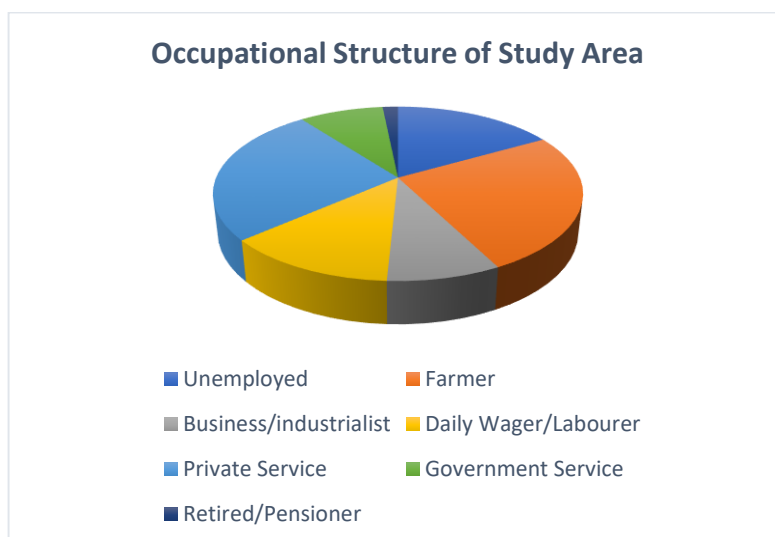
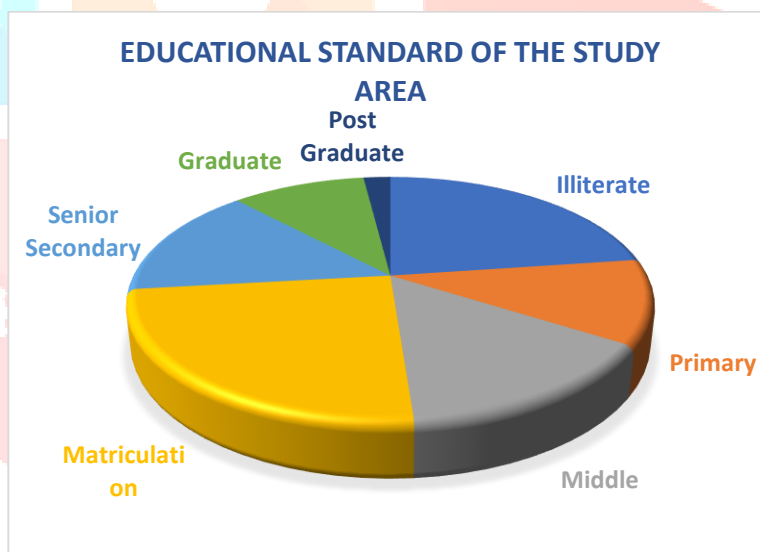
Nature of Conflict	Bases of Conflict	Ranthambore National Park
Superficial conflict	Forest Access	Conflicts around regulated forest access are partially addressed. Where unaddressed, people broke rules.
Deep- rooted conflict	Human- Wild Interactions	Focus on tiger related issues, while intense crop loss caused by ungulates are uncompensated Locals rely on forest managers to act.
	Distrust and Discrimination	Distrust between locals and Forest Department
	Power Inequalities and Exclusion	Community participation is sought but is selective (restricted to a few people in a community) to avoid internal rifts in the community.

Knowing the importance and vital role of local communities in conservation, there have been various plans and initiatives towards conservation in Ranthambore National Park, teaming up with local and regional people attaining their cooperation. Some of these initiatives include:

- Community-based conservation:** Along with well-planned conservation scheme, recently there has been a shift towards community-based conservation initiatives in Ranthambore National Park. Local communities residing close by have been encouraged to participate in conservation efforts, they are actively involved in monitoring tiger movements, activities of other wild animals and reporting any other illegal activities like deforestation, poaching, illegal mining and hunting. The forests around the Ranthambore fort that were once the private hunting grounds of the kings are now witnessing a new tribe of warriors - those who are trying to protect the wildlife. They are part of the Village Wildlife Volunteers programme that a local NGO, Tiger Watch has started. This cites a classic example of community-based conservation.
- Public-private partnerships:** Another major step in involving community is to build trust full relations and partnering with the government by several private organizations to support conservation efforts in Ranthambore National Park. An example of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve Sustainability Project by the Indian Hotels Company (IHCL) in collaboration with the Rajasthan Forest Department. It aims at reducing the park's ecological footprint.
- Awareness campaigns:** To spread awareness and literacy about the plans and conservation projects planned by government several awareness campaigns have been launched. They aim to educate the local and regional communities about the importance of conservation. These campaigns aim to reduce human-wild conflict and promote responsible tourism practices. The volunteers resulted thus, worked

hard to have the number of poaching incidents come down, the movement of animals are tracked more efficiently, the human-wildlife conflicts are better addressed and even the local hunting community is slowly changing its way.

- Anti-poaching measures:** A major threat to wildlife is poaching, the park authorities therefore have also implemented anti-poaching measures to protect the wild animals specially tigers from poachers. Various such measures include increased patrols, installation of camera traps, community awareness and use of sniffer dogs to detect illegal activities. Tribal people, who as an age-old practice, carry hunting as their main occupation are also sensitised and brought into mainstream by planning a sustainable occupation for them. According to a volunteer from NGO Tiger Watch, stated that the Mogyas are a specialised traditional hunting tribe. They are small in number, but their impact (from hunting) is huge. Their economic condition is very bad. People who are hungry for bare necessities can't be taught conservation. They started healthcare programmes for them and involved the women of that community in handicraft work to ensure a steady income. This effort resulted well.
- Income Generation Activities (IGA)** have major interventions planned such as : Vermicomposting, Medicinal Plant Cultivation, collection and its marketing, Ecotourism, Seed, tree oil Extraction, Wage Employment, Street Theatre and manufacturing Crafts/Souvenirs.

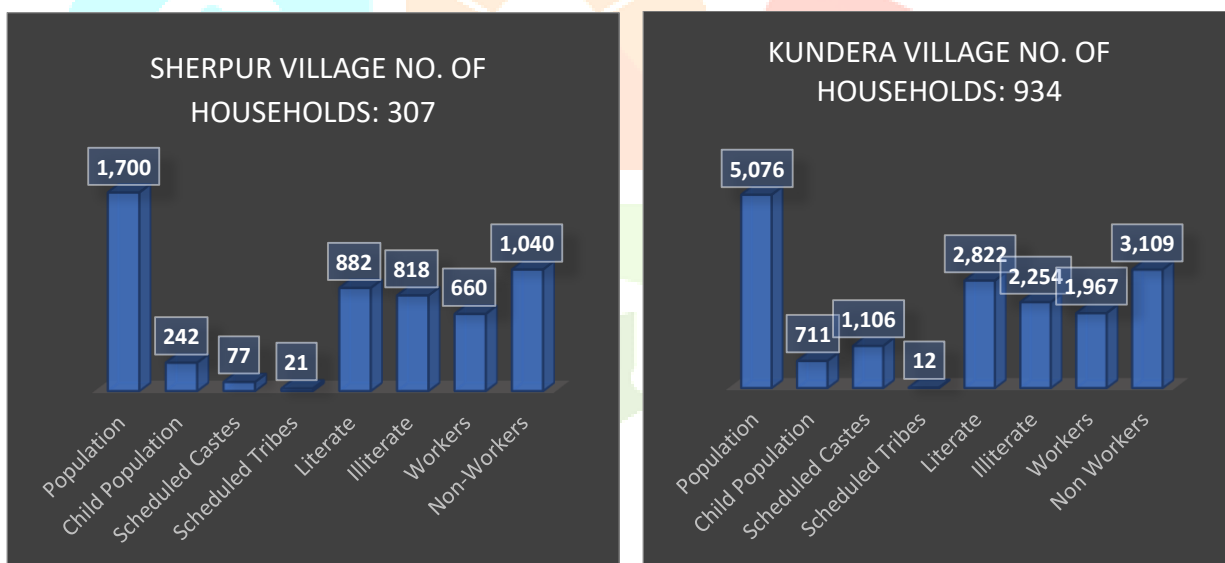


INNOVATIONS AND INITIATIVES:

In order to assist themselves and get the conservation going the local community Initiated few forestry Programmes in the study area like Gram Utthan Sabha, Gaon Committee, Soil Conservation Co-operative, Mahila Mandal, Van Sangini, Wildlife Protection Groups, Water source protection, Traditional protection of Neem, Keekar, Khejdi trees, Informal committee for Bird Protection and many more such initiatives. Furthermore, measures like: livestock development centre, Integrated Livestock Development, Immunization Programme, Alternative income source for people, Compensation frequency, Displacement Procedure and development of Eco tourism may bring the community and locals even closer in helping the administration to effectively run the conservation schemes with desired results.

These measures helped the administration up to a great extent to effectively deal with pertinent issues like: Illegal grazing, poaching, mobility, encroachment and mining Control.

Socio-economic survey report of sample villages (Source- Self collected data):



CONCLUSION:

Ranthambore National Park is the most popular and most visited wildlife destination in Rajasthan. The rich flora and fauna, local tradition and culture are the major attractions for people from all over. The sustainable development and positively resulting conservation is flourishing with the efforts of government in partnership of the local community living here. It can be therefore concluded evidently that the combined efforts of both the locals and the administration collectively are conserving the habitat effectively. The study encompassed issues like poaching, hunting, deforestation, man wild conflict, illegal grazing, mining, encroachments etc. At the same time strategies to over come these issues and challenges were suggested. Better results and effective conservation may be ascertained by the combined effort of the government, the

community and all other stake holders. The community has shown a greater extent of commitment and ownership in conserving the flora and fauna of Ranthambore National Park.

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