



EXPOSURE VISIT TO THEMBANG BAPU COMMUNITY CONSERVED AREA



WWF INDIA
December 5th-10th 2015

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Introduction

The state of Arunachal Pradesh situated in eastern Himalaya with total geographical area of 83743sq.km. The area is endowed with great diversity in climate, landforms, ethnicity and resource availability. Nearly 80% of the total geographical area of the state is under forest cover. Out of this 60% forests are unclassified state forests which are under the community ownership which means that the owners and the users are the same. It has is extremely rich in faunal and floral diversity including many rare, endangered and vulnerable species. The region also harbours some of the spectacular wetlands of the world. These wetlands are home to rich diversity of rare and threatened high altitude plants and animal species.

The Western Arunachal Landscape (WAL) covering nearly 7000 sq.km area of West Kameng and Tawang districts of Arunachal Pradesh is one of the priority landscapes of WWF. The area is currently facing multiple conservation challenges like weakening of traditional management systems and changes in aspiration of the local communities, extension of grazing areas, developmental pressures, unsustainable utilization of forest resources, trade of wildlife parts, conflicts in between man and animal, lack of awareness, bordering issues etc. Due to the presence of Unclassed State Forest (USF), the area is not under the control of Forest Department but under the rights and ownership of the local indigenous communities and hence, the issues of conservation need to be addressed by the local communities as they traditionally own and use the area. Involvement and ownership of local communities is absolutely necessary for taking any steps for conservation in this area. Hence the concept of Community Conserved Area was initiated in this area.

In 2004, WWF-India facilitated the establishment of 30 sq.km area in Thembang village in Dirang CD Block, West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh as Community Conserved Areas (CCAs). The CCA well known as the 'Thembang Bapu Community Conserved Area' became the first CCA in the state. The area under the CCA was increased to 312 sq.km by 2009 and finally to 635 sq.km in 2012. A CCA Management committee known as the Thembang Bapu Community Conserved Area Management committee (TBCCAMC) was constituted by the village panchayat for the scientific management of the area and also for the socio-economic development of the locals. It has been registered under the Society Registration Act.



[View from the Thembang Village](#)

Community-based tourism (CBT) was seen to be the most viable sustainable livelihood option for the community by the management committee. The CCA model has been replicated by WWF team in two other areas covering 98 sq.km and 85 sq.km, bringing the total forest land under CCA management to be 818 sq.km.

There has been ongoing work in the landscape for bringing more areas under CCAs. The new conservation strategy has now completed more than a decade and the present report aims to understand the process of decision making for the CCA and Community-based tourism by the

management committee and its impacts in terms of conservation and economic wellbeing of the community.

An exposure visit was organized for the WWF staff working on social issues from the Living Himalaya landscapes (TAL, NBL, KKL, KCL) to Thembang Bapu Community Conserved Area from 5th- 10th December 2015. The agenda has been attached in Annexure 1.

Objectives

- To understand and learn about the concept and importance of Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) & Community Based Tourism (CBT).
- To assess the involvement and capacity of communities in CCA and CBT related management and activities.

Methodology

- 1) The WWF staff was divided into teams of two. There were 4 groups in total. The list of participants has been attached in annexure 2.
- 2) Each team was given a task to study the different aspects of the CCA and CBT.
 - a. Benefit sharing mechanism
 - b. Gender and Social Inclusion
 - c. Decision Making
 - d. Adaptation and Lessons Learnt
- 3) The teams were given a format in which the report. Along with the format each team was also given certain basic questions pertaining to each aspect being studied that needed to be looked at. The format attached in Annexure 3.
- 4) Each team developed its own methodology and prepared thematic reports on the tasks it was assigned.
- 5) The report was based on interactions with the Thembang Bapu CCA Management Committee, Surveyed households and also interactions with the women SHG.



Interaction with Thembang Bapu CCA Management Committee & Women Self Help Groups

- 6) Each team also visited households in the village and did informal interviews to observe and understand what the villagers think about the whole concept of the CCA & CBT.
- 7) The team had to develop its own methodology and choose its own sample for the interactions.
- 8) Interactions were also done with the home stay owners, porters and home restaurants owners.



Home stay and Cultural Programme Team

Suggestions & Observations

- To increase the participation level of women: There are only two women members in the executive committee and they are not completely aware of the functioning of the committee. Regular meeting of the women could be arranged where matters related to the work done by the TBCCAMC and the village panchayat would be discussed.
- To increase awareness: Most of the people in the village especially the women are not aware of how the TBCCA functions. The villagers should be made aware of the CCA & CBT.
- Efforts should be made to also include the marginal households in the CCA& CBT processes so as to involve the entire village.
- The committee should try and get funds from CSR companies which will help in the functioning of the committee and development of the villagers.
- CBT should be linked to a third party like Thembang Tourism Circuit so that there is a continuous inflow of tourists.
- The committee has received funds independently from DST, Government of India for livelihood augmentation. This is very encouraging and currently steps are on going to utilise these funds to engage women more proactively and also reduce dependence on fuelwood for space heating.



Products made by Women SHG

- This model of Thembang was adopted by villages of Lumpo and Muchat in the Zemithang valley, and they in turn inspired the villagers of Kharman and Kyalegteng, who sought WWF-India's support towards demarcating an 85 sq km forest as PLACCA in 2011. Along with this WWF- India now working on replicating the successful CCA model in Mandla Phudung, Domkho & Morching which are also Monpa dominated village and the forest of the villages are supposed to be one of the best Red Panda habitat in the area.



Interactive sessions with the villagers of Domkho & Morching

Annexure 1- Agenda

Date	Time	Travel plan/ Place visit	Programme
5 th Dec 2015		Hotel Tezpur Heritage	Reach Tezpur and boarding at Hotel Tezpur Heritage
6 th Dec 2015	08.30 am	Check out from the Hotel Tezpur Heritage	Check out from the Hotel Tezpur Heritage after breakfast and reach WWF-India (WAL) office at Tezpur.
	09:00 am to 10.30 am	WWF-India (WAL) office, Parvati Nagar, Tezpur	<u>Landscape overview:-</u> Presentation on Community-based Conservation in Western Arunachal Landscape (WAL).
	10.30 am	Proceed for Thembang	Proceed for Thembang from Tezpur at 10.30, via Balukpong, Tenga and Bomdila
	Approx. 01.00 pm	<u>Lunch</u>	Lunch on the way at Balipara or Bhalukpong or Sessa.
	06.30 pm	Reached Thembang at night	Boarding at Homestay at Thembang
	08.00 pm	<u>Dinner</u>	Dinner at Homestays at Thembang, Discuss about the next day program after dinner.
7 th Dec 2015	07:00 am	Thembang village	Walk through Thembang village and surrounding area.
	08.00 am	<u>Breakfast</u>	Breakfast in the Homestays
	09:00 am	TBCCAMC office	Brief presentation and open discussion of CCA formation process, challenges and opportunities.
	11.30 am	TBCCAMC office	Interaction with TBCCA Management Committee
	01.30 pm	<u>Lunch</u>	Lunch at Home restaurant - arranged by TBCCAMC
	12:00 pm	Site visit to different interventions	Interaction with women members in Thembang on livelihood activities and visit to some of the Income Generating activities. Visit Gonhung and Pangma village
	03:00 pm	TBCCAMC office	Interaction with CBT members, Brief presentation on Thembang CBT and benefit to local community.
	04.00 pm	TBCCAMC office	Discussion on other livelihood option in different landscape
	08.00 pm	<u>Dinner</u>	Dinner at Homestays at Thembang, Discuss about the next day program after dinner.

8 th Dec 2015	07.30 am	<u>Breakfast</u>	Breakfast in the Homestays
	08:30 am	Trekking inside Thembang CCA/ bird watching	Starting from Thembang Gonpa to Pangma village via Chilling, passing through temperate and bamboo forests.
	10:30 am		<u>Tasks to be completed as given:-</u> Participants to be divided in to four groups of two each with specific tasks for each group.
	01.30 pm	<u>Lunch</u>	Lunch at Home restaurant - arranged by TBCCAMC
	02:30 pm	Sangti valley visit	One of the wintering sites of Black-necked Crane.
	05.00 pm	Return to Thembang	Attend Monpa cultural programme
	08.00 pm	<u>Dinner</u>	Dinner at Homestays at Thembang, Discuss about the next day program after dinner.
9 th Dec 2015	05:00 am	Departure for Tenga via Dumkho/Morshing and Shergaon	Shegaon is one of our young interventions for community based conservation in the landscape. Participants will get an opportunity to interact with community in Domkho and Shergaon briefly. We will pass by some of the spectacle red panda habitat near Mandla and Phudung.
	08:00 pm	Night halt at Tezpur	
10 th Dec 2015	04:00 am	Departure for Guwahati	

Annexure 2 List of Participants

S.No	Name	Name of Landscape
1)	Deependra Sunar	Khangchendzonga Landscape
2)	Ankita Sardana	Terai Arc Landscape, Uttarkhand
3)	Jishu Chakorbarty	Terai Arc Landscape, Uttar Pradesh
4)	Phulmani Baro	North Bank Landscape
5)	Saikat Sutradhar	Terai Arc Landscape, Uttar Pradesh
6)	Sakshi Kakar	Secretariat
7)	Sarkam Rongphar	Kaziranga Karbi Anglong Landscape

Annexure 3: Report Format & Tasks Assigned

Each team should include the points given below in the report

Overview of the CCA/CBT:

Purpose of the Visit

Task Assigned

Methodology (You need to develop this should give sampling information too and should be gathered from across households and not from the leaders of the institution alone)

Findings of the Task

Suggestions

Observations on

Leadership and community Empowerment

Conservation Impacts

Livelihoods Augmentation

Linkages with other agencies/stakeholders

Replicability

Sustainability

Any other

Remarks by each Team

Indicative Questions for guidance. Please add more and do a detailed assessment

Team: Laku and Saikat

1. Benefit sharing mechanisms –
 - a. Are there any existing benefit sharing mechanisms for sharing benefits from
 - i. Community Based Tourism
 - ii. CCA
 - b. What are they ? Please list separately for both.
 - c. What do people see as benefits? Again elaborate
 - d. How many types/nature of benefits are perceived by people?
 - e. How many people (HHs) are aware of them?

- f. How many office bearers are aware of them?
- g. How many HHs have benefitted from them?
- h. If any accrued? How has it benefitted the HHs (in what manner)?
- i. Are people happy with the existing system?
- j. Do they have any suggestions for improvement?
- k. If yes, get details

Team: Sakshi and Sarkham

- 2. Gender and social inclusion –
 - a. Are there any existing mechanisms to include Women/Youth and other marginal HHs/community groups in any aspect of
 - i. Community Based Tourism
 - ii. CCA
 - b. What are they? Please list separately for CCA and CBT and for all Groups.
 - c. Are women seen as an important part of the management process?
 - d. Do people feel that only a few HHs control everything?
 - e. How many people (HHs) feel that special effort should be made for including Women and others?
 - f. How many office bearers feel that special effort should be made for including Women and others?
 - g. Do women feel that they are not part of any process carried out either for CCA or CBT?
 - h. Are there any special activities which ensure women participation and any other kind of involvement?
 - i. Are people happy with the existing system?
 - j. Do they have any suggestions for improvement?
 - k. If yes, get details

Team: Deependra and Ankita

3. Decision making

- a. Are there any processes prescribed or in place for decision making for
 - i. Community Based Tourism
 - ii. CCA
- b. What are they? Please list separately for both.
- c. For what aspects do they have any processes in place (example protection measures, benefit sharing etc)?
- d. How are decisions being currently taken? CCA and CBT. Again elaborate?
- e. How many people (HHs) are aware of them?
- f. How many office bearers are aware of them?
- g. How many HHs are part of the decision making processes?
- h. Which processes are they part of and how?
- i. Are people happy with the existing system?
- j. Do they have any suggestions for improvement?
- k. If yes, get details

Team: Jishu and Phulmani

Adaptation and Lessons learnt

- a. Since its evolution in late 2006/07 --Has there been any lessons learnt for
 - i. Community Based Tourism
 - ii. CCA
- b. Since its inception Has there been any change in any processes prescribed for
 - Community Based Tourism
 - CCA
- c. What are they? Please list separately for both.
- d. For what aspects have they made any changes or any new additions? (example protection measures, benefit sharing etc)
- e. What has been the change or any new additions?
- f. What has been the rationale for each of these changes/and or new additions?
- g. How were these decided ? CCA and CBT. Again elaborate?
- h. How many people (HHs) were part of this process??
- i. How many office bearers have been involved in this change/and or new additions?
- j. Is there any sharing systems or documentation for the lessons learnt on managing CCA and CBT by the community and management community
- k. Is the process of change/adaptation/new additions with full consent of the Community (HHs)?
- l. Do they have any suggestions for improvement?
- m. If yes, get details