

## Eco-tourism threatens tribal welfare in India

Situated in India's majestic Western Ghats, one of the world's 34 biodiversity hot spots, Parimbikulam Wildlife Sanctuary occupies 285 square kilometres of lush tropical valleys in eastern Kerala. More than 20 square kilometres is covered by water; the rest is a blanket of greenery.

The area boasts a huge variety of animal life -- elephants (both wild and domesticated), sloth bears, tigers, leopards, snakes, Nilgiri Tahrs, deer, Gaur, panthers and monkeys -- as well as birds and plant life. It is a paradise for nature lovers or anyone in need of some peace and quiet -- precious commodities in India.

It hasn't always been so, however. During the 19th century, the area was part of the Sungam and Parimbikulam forest reserves. It saw heavy exploitation by the British of timber, primarily teak. In 1905, a tramway was constructed to facilitate the export of timber to the rest of the world as Cochin teak. With natural reserves depleted, plantation began in the 1920s and almost all of the teak still there today was planted in the 1970s and 1980s.

Parimbikulam was declared a wildlife reserve in 1973. Until 2004, its management was informal and dirt cheap. Since then, under new warden Sanjay Kumar, armed with an office full of textbooks, eco-tourism is a priority.

Guests can choose from eco-tourism packages with snazzy names such as "eco-meditation" and "tribal symphony". Accommodation ranges from tented niches for the family and romantic island nests for couples to dormitories for larger groups.

They're serious about nature here. The area has been declared a "plastic-free zone", with local stores forbidden to sell bottled water. Instead, one can only buy drinking water from the park store -- water purified in the park and packaged in reusable bottles. The number of guests and vehicles is restricted to limit any disturbance to animals.

People are part of the eco-system here. Parimbikulam is home to four different Adivasi communities, the name given to the tribal people of India, each with its own language, religion and culture. The Kadar, Malasar, Muduvar and Malamasar total more than 1

The park pamphlet assures visitors that "local people are harmless to the holy treasure of nature. Hence this sanctuary is a model for the peaceful co-existence of tribal people and wildlife." Therefore "eco-development programmes" have been set up "to improve their living conditions".

However, to limit local dependency on natural resources, park managers have begun enforcing limits on their extraction. What these programmes entail, broadly, is that tribal people are encouraged to sell their cattle, so that less land is used for grazing and they earn some money.

By way of alternative employment, tribal people can work as guides, cooks or cleaning staff, or help to manufacture crafts for the park store, which sells everything from branded T-shirts to honey. In every way, though, they're somehow serving the needs of the park manager rather than their own.

Initially, the Adivasi were hunter-gatherers. As outside forces showed more interest in the area, they became dependent on forestry. Now they are once more being forced to change their way of life.

Cultivation practices have spiritual relevance for the Adivasi. Seeds are not only important for food and money, but they are also literally worshipped.

In Parimbikulam, the only remaining natural teak is the mighty Kannimara, believed to be more than 450 years old. Legend has it that blood oozed from where an axe once struck. Since that day, the tree has been worshipped by the locals. Standing almost 50m tall with a girth of more than 6,5m, it is believed to be the largest living teak in the world, and it's a tourism drawcard. A valiant attempt at holistic park management? Or self-serving exploitation in the guise of eco-tourism?

### The bigger picture

Parimbikulam is only the tip of the iceberg. In fact, one could argue that its tribal people are relatively well off.

From Kerala to Karnataka and Orissa, the story is the same. Across the country, communities living within forests for centuries, dependent on their riches for their livelihoods, are now being alienated from their land by insensitive conservation laws and development programmes.

When the Indian government declares a forest a protected area, the collection of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) by the local inhabitants is banned. What NTFP bans mean for the Adivasi, along with restricted access to forest areas, is a loss of income; they also affect diet, drinking water, health and

housing -- and, inevitably, bring declining living standards. The situation for women is especially poor, with anaemia and vitamin deficiency commonplace.

Whereas traditional tribal agriculture was sustainable in the past, tribal people have in recent times been forced from subsistence to cash crops, seen as a threat by park officials. When there is an agricultural crisis (natural or man-made), tribal people are then forced into other sectors, but they lack the necessary skills so their opportunities are limited, though affirmative-action programmes exist.

Many families are migrating to find work, which has a serious effect on Adivasi social life and carries a greater risk of exploitation. They have nowhere to turn; the government has provided no alternatives. It has become a violation of human rights, a denial of basic livelihood resources necessary for the right to life.

Section 29 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act of 2003 permits the extraction of forest produce, but only as a means of wildlife management. Such produce is to go to local people, but only if the extraction is for "personal bona fide" and not for "commercial" purposes. But there are no clear definitions of "commercial", which has dealt a blow to the small-scale collection of forest produce.

While the Act and NTFP bans undoubtedly prevent the destruction of natural ecosystems, the case of the Adivasi has made it clear that its interpretation can actually backfire against conservation itself. Sometimes tribal people who perceive themselves to be suffering at the hands of forest officials do not report poachers or fires to authorities.

Taking its toll

It is not purely a question of conservation policy. More generally, whether it is in so-called protected areas or not, tourism is taking its toll on the Adivasi.

The state of Kerala has a tribal population of about 350

There are approximately 40 tribal groups here. Close to Parimbikulam, the district of Wayanad has the highest number of tribal people in the state. Approximately one-sixth of Wayanad's population is tribal, which has given the area a reputation for being less developed than other parts of Kerala.

Forty years ago, there were animals everywhere. The eight or so tribal communities living in Wayanad found enough food in the wild to enjoy a balanced diet. Then city dwellers began to migrate from the plains to the west and north, taking over land, exploiting the locals and cornering them into smaller areas where they were "allowed" to live.

Because of Wayanad's relatively mild climate, natural beauty and rural charm, tourism has started to flourish. From December to March, streams of vehicles enter the area from western Kerala and Bangalore. Big resort hotels are popping up everywhere.

According to Omana TK, director of the Rural Agency for Social and Technological Advancement, a Wayanad-based NGO, tourism has caused drastic increases in the cost of land as well as other environmental problems.

"With these kinds of developments, construction came, people came bringing hotels, plastic, pollution," she says. People are littering plastic in biodiversity hot spots. During the hottest time of the year, April and May, many elephants come to the roadside. "Elephants eat the plastic, they die."

Kerala's unique rural culture suffers too, Omana says. Traditional occupations such as basket-weaving and pot-making are being abandoned. "What happen is these kinds of tourists come here and corrupt the culture. And we are selling our culture. Ayurveda massage is corrupted; it becomes sexual exploitation of young girls

Women want to make more money, so they submit to sexual exploitation."

Along with a change of lifestyle, livelihood and diet, into tribal life have also come new health problems such as HIV, high blood pressure, alcoholism and drug addiction.

"We have our own system here, then tourism comes," says Omana, who believes that only wealthy people and business really benefit. "I don't see how poor people can benefit ... They may get a job cleaning, cooking. At the same time they are being exploited. That is my belief."

What is the root cause of these problems? Is it government conservation policy, eco-tourism gone wrong, tourism in general or simply a function of capitalism and modernisation, rampant throughout India, a land of huge inequality, particularly across the rural-urban divide? Is it simply a case of the powerless being left behind?

The effects of modernisation and capitalism are felt throughout the world and it's the rural poor who bear the brunt of it. Little can be done in this regard, perhaps. But surely tourism and conservation policy can be managed to avoid exploiting those who are most vulnerable.

The solution

It is in the best interests of conservationists to ensure that tribal people are on their side, so that development programmes can help provide rather than restrict opportunities for such people. In return, they patrol the forests and report eco-unfriendly behaviour.

A workshop policy document entitled Towards a Community Responsive Tribal Development Policy in Kerala finds that instead of tribal people being overlooked in a top-down planning process, or tribal development projects being planned and designed with a generic view, the real solution is formulating a community-specific plan of action, one that takes into account the specific features and issues related to each Adivasi community.

A lack of unity between tribal groups and a lack of knowledge of land ownership rights contribute to these groups' struggle to mobilise for pro-community policies in the first place. Understanding the diversity of Adivasi experience therefore helps outline common issues to be addressed.

A recently published book, edited by BR Ramesh and Rajan Gurukkal and entitled Forest Landscapes of the Southern Western Ghats: Biodiversity, Human Ecology and Management Strategies (Institut Francais de Pondicherry), tries to shed some light on the situation in Parimbikulam and in general. The editors reach a similar conclusion. Their model of "participatory forest management" offers a conservation paradigm that tries to reconcile the often contradictory interests of all stakeholders.

According to Ashish Kothari, a member of the Kalpavriksh Environmental Action Group, writing in the Hindu (August 26 2007), "there is a crying need for a more balanced approach to conservation and livelihoods ... since the current one is alienating people". NGOs and the government need to get on board, not to dictate, but to facilitate. While such collaborative and sustainable area-management initiatives are happening across the world, "here, in India, we remain blinkered by outdated Western conservation visions, which the West itself is discarding".

Clearly, though tradition and modernity will clash anywhere in the world, tourism can help relieve or intensify the strain felt by "traditional communities". Conservation policies that affect tourism can do the same. When man is part of an eco-system, even those protected by law, he needs to be given a chance to live and a choice of how to do so.

Guanbu Zhu also enable the mouth of the strong male body from the threat of a nutritional imbalance survey: 30 to 45-year-old male In as much as 65 percent of the people in the imbalance of which 30 per cent in serious condition.

Nutritional imbalance This term does not love sports for a day, more than eight hours of computer time and as partners, at least three times a week banquet entertainment for the men is not an exaggeration. And long-term nutritional imbalance in the results

Now, please join with the experts, physical conditioning, a balanced diet.

1. The need to maintain immunity - vitamin A study found that vitamin A has increased immunity and cancer, but also to protect their eyesight great benefit. Intake - male normal daily vitamin A intake was 1.5 mg - the equivalent of a cheese vitamin content, Banwan steamed carrots and vitamin A content is it four times. Sources of food - rich in vitamin A food animal liver, fish, apricot and melon. Experts advocate the best meal in a day from vitamin A, no additional supplementary tablet, because of excessive easily add poisoning, have still not.

2. Decompression necessary - magnesium study shows that normal intake of magnesium can reduce heart disease, lower blood pressure. In addition, magnesium can also enhance the reproductive capacity, improve the semen

Intake - 350 milligrams about better sources of food - you can be treated, including Liang Wan Mai Pianzhou plus skim milk and a banana in are breakfast daily requirement of magnesium 2 / 3. Kao Baishu, beans, nuts, oat cakes, peanut butter, whole flour, green leafy vegetables and seafood are rich in magnesium.

3. Cardiac care for the hero - Vitamin C vitamin C enhance immunity and reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, is conducive to gums and teeth,

to prevent cataract and speed up wound healing and ease asthma, the treatment of infertility also have a certain effect . Intake - per person per day of vitamin C intake in just about 30 mg, smoking is even more men should be added the amount of attention, but also not to add more than 35 milligrams. Sources of food - an adequate supply of vitamin C can delay aging. Kiwi, oranges, lemons, grapefruit are a good source of vitamin C.

4. Cholesterol nemesis - Vitamin E studies show that vitamin E can lower cholesterol, prevent platelets in the build-up within the artery and improve immunity, the body remove impurities and prevent cataracts. Intake - no more than 300 mg. Sources of food - food rich in vitamin E are almonds, peanuts and Hickory. If you can not protect from the daily diet of adequate vitamin E, then the best take vitamin E capsule, just one day, not excessive.

5. Intestinal health guarantee - cellulose high cellulose content of the diet to reduce the incidence of colon cancer (colon cancer in men susceptible to cancer

Help you lose weight. Intake - the ideal daily intake is 18 to 35 grams, and more than 70 percent of intake of less than half. Sources of food - more food containing cellulose are whole-wheat bread, kelp, Cumi, strawberry, pear and all kinds of stem edible vegetables such as cauliflower and carrots, and so on.

6. The source of life - water in all the nutrients in the water the most important, especially for those muscular people, the muscles in the water contained in more than three times the fat. (In the general male body, the muscles of the 40%; in the general female body, muscle accounted for 23 percent.) Water can be lubricated joints, regulate body temperature, water can also supply to the human body contains a variety of minerals. Intake - ordinary people need at least four liters of water per day, equivalent to eight glasses of capacity. If he likes sports, the requirements are doubled. Sources of food - not just mineral water, we like the fruit juice, green tea and vegetable broth contain the water every day.

7. Achievements of male beauty - the body of zinc have enough zinc to ensure strong sexuality, sexual health and reproductive ability of normal, doctors use zinc to treat impotence. Zinc can also speed up the healing of human wounds, disease resistance are also obvious effect. Intake - The United States nutritional standards

If zinc deficiency is more large amount of exercise, because sweating men than women will be more loss of zinc. Sources of food - 110-gram pieces of lean beef provide half of the requirements of other zinc-rich foods are turkey, seafood, cereals and pulses, and so on.

8. Away from the threat of bladder cancer - vitamin B6 vitamin B6 can prevent skin cancer and bladder cancer, but also the protection of kidney stones is not a problem of (male incidence of kidney stones is a woman twice), but also for insomnia also have a certain Therapeutic effect. Intake - you just 2 mg per day of vitamin B6 - equivalent to about two bananas in large enough. Sources of food - good sports of men s consumption of vitamin B6 relatively high, so the table can be more than a chicken or potatoes, can also eat a daily supervision of his Avocado and some sunflower, such as the pine nut nuts.

9. Endurance guarantees - such life-sustaining chromium necessary minerals can reduce cholesterol levels and increase endurance athletes, athletes can also make bodybuilding muscle growth and reduce fat. Intake - ordinary men need at least 50 micrograms per day chromium, active men need 100

## About the Author

From [www.mg.co.za](http://www.mg.co.za):

From these data it is concluded that, in healthy man, vitamin D3 is solubilised in vivo in mixed micelles only, and is governed in the aqueous.

It seems to me that the only way a guru makes himself or herself a guru is by making himself or herself.

Supplement reviews and supplement price comparisons for bodybuilding and weight loss, Vitamin Shoppe Ultimate Man is a high potency multivitamin.

Man Vitamin. Getting The Right Amount Of Vitamins If you eat healthy and balanced meals each and every day, you will get all of the necessary.

Source: <http://productsherbal.com>