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Implementation Of “The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972” At Dudhwa National Park & On The Tharu Tribe Of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Authored By : Shreyee Tarafdar

ABSTRACT

Earth Day is celebrated on the 22nd of April each year. The theme of 2023 is “Invest in Our Planet”. This theme is intended to convince companies, governments, and people all around the world about the importance of making investments in our planet to protect the environment and provide a better and safer future for the generations next.

The theme is well applicable in the context of Dudhwa National Park and it's one of the original inhabitants, “the Tharu Tribe” who reside side by side with the predators of the dark forest, and therefore the conflict of interest has existed ever since. However, the fittest must survive, which does not mean the other has to compromise. The introduction of the Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972 thus works as a regulator for reducing the man-wild conflict.

This article highlights the provisions of The Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972 and tries to analyze the implementation of the Act at Dudhwa National Park, including the author's personal experiences.

INTRODUCTION

THE WILDLIFE PROTECTION ACT, 1972

PROTECTION OF WILDLIFE IN INDIA

The set of laws that concerns environmental & wildlife protection:

- Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- Forest Conservation Act, 1980.
- Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

- Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

The Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972 therefore, was enacted carefully, provided that all the previous laws didn't exactly cover all the scope of wildlife plus environmental protection.

OVERVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK ON WILDLIFE PROTECTION

- I. Article 21 of the Indian Constitution contains the legal foundation for protecting wildlife, forests, and the environment. The right to live in a sane and healthy environment is part of the right to life and personal liberty.
- II. Article 48A of the Directive Principles of State Policy imposes a non-obligatory duty on the state to safeguard woods, wildlife, and the environment.
- III. Article 51A(g) imposes a purely non-binding duty on the people to preserve the nation's woods, wildlife, rivers, and animals.
- IV. These commitments have been met by both the federal and state governments, it is because of the 42nd Constitutional (Amendment) Act of 1976, which added the term "forest" to Article 17A of the Concurrent List and the conservation of wildlife and birds to Entry 17B.

OBJECTIVES

1. Prohibiting the hunting of:
 - Wild animals,
 - Different species of birds, etc., are one of the key goals.
2. Another objective is to:
 - Establish a range of penalties for breaking laws and ordinances to maintain proper control over human activity.¹
 - Give officials the authority to punish anyone in violation of the provisions of this Act.
3. Many schedules of this Act offer certain endangered species absolute protection, e.g.,

¹ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 51, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

deer, wild boar & ducks that are vulnerable to hunting. This also includes providing shelter and security for animals who are not in danger but still need to be protected.

4. A hunter is required to obtain a license from the District Officer to hunt such animals (e.g., blue cow). He would be allocated a certain, confined area to shoot the animals but with a genuine reason for the license to be granted. Any actions that lead to the violation of such a license shall be immediately stopped.²
5. Assist the state and federal governments in declaring any place as a National Park/Sanctuary. Further,
 - To grow trees in huge quantities.
 - Construct protected wildlife parks in the designated area to provide the wildlife with a natural habitat that is environmentally friendly.
 - To protect endangered plant species that are in danger.³
 - To preserve the variety of flora and fauna in the nation and a sound ecological balance.
6. Another objective is to:
 - Create wildlife advisory boards,
 - Hire wildlife wardens/officials,
 - Designate each member's responsibility, duty, and power.
7. Advocate for the International Convention on the Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1976) and assist at the beginning of the 1971 Man and Biosphere Program's National component.
8. To strictly put a stop to the sale and exchange of specific protected species. In certain circumstances, a license/certificate can be granted for:
 - Ownership,⁴
 - Sale⁵, and
 - Transfer to facilitate trade and commerce with some wild species.⁶

² The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 11, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

³ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 17A, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

⁴ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 42, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

⁵ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 48, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

⁶ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 44, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

NEED FOR THE ACT

Wildlife is a component of "forests," and until Parliament established this law in 1972, this was a state matter. It is currently a Concurrent List. Following are some justifications for a federal law protecting the environment & wildlife:

1. India is home to a wide species of flora and fauna. Edward Pritchard Gee, a naturalist, mentioned that India was home to over 40,000 tigers in the 20th century. However, a census taken further revealed a sharp decline in this number.
2. Ecological imbalance can result from a sharp decline in flora and fauna, which has huge effects on the ecosystem and the climate.
3. The Wild Birds and Animals Preservation Act of 1935⁷ was the latest law to be passed during the British era in this regard. This needed to be improved because the penalties given to wildlife poachers and merchants were out of proportion to the substantial profits they made.
4. There were only five national parks in India before the enactment of this Act.

SALIENT FEATURES

- The Wildlife Protection Act provides for the appointment and designation of:
 - a) Director of Wildlife Preservation⁸,
 - b) Chief Wildlife Warden⁹, specifying further their powers to delegate.¹⁰
- The Act also further provides for the constitution and formation of the different boards:
 - a) National Board for Wildlife¹¹-
 - i. The Central Government of India is advised by this advisory board on matters about wildlife protection in India.
 - ii. The Board's primary duty is to advance the protection of forests & animals.
 - iii. Also, it is the top board responsible for reviewing and approving all issues about wildlife, projects in national parks, sanctuaries, etc.
 - iv. The Prime Minister serves as its chairperson.

⁷ The Wild Birds and Animals Protection (Amendment) Act, 1935, C.P. 27, Act No. 8, 1935 (India).

⁸ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 3, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

⁹ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 4(a), Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹⁰ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 5, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹¹ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 5A., Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

- b) Standing Committee of the National Board¹²-
 - i. Function is to draft policies and provide guidance to the federal government and state governments on how to successfully combat poaching and the illegal trafficking of wild animals.
 - c) National Tiger Conservation Authority¹³-
 - i. It is a legislative entity under the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change that functions as per the Act.
 - ii. Its mission is to improve India's tiger conservation efforts.
 - iii. It provides “Project Tiger” with the legal power it needs to continue to save endangered tigers from extinction since it was founded in 1973.
 - d) The Act further provides for the constitution of the Central Zoo Authority¹⁴ in 1992. The Authority is responsible for managing zoos all over India.
- The Act also provides power to the Central Government for the declaration of areas as National Parks¹⁵ and Wildlife Sanctuaries.¹⁶
 - a. The State government may declare national parks via notification. A resolution passed by the State Legislature is required before a national park's boundaries can be changed.
 - b. A national park's primary goals are to conserve biodiversity, the local natural environment, animal, and plant life in their native/original forms.
 - c. Their limits are clearly set and defined.
 - d. Currently, about 106 national parks are existing in India under the Act, covering an area of 44,402.95 km².
 - e. Except with the Chief Wildlife Warden's consent, no person is allowed to harm/destroy/exploit/remove any species of animals in the National Park.
 - f. Within the constrained boundaries of the National Park, livestock grazing is not permitted unless the person has explicit permission.
 - One of the major achievements is that India was able to join the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora owing to the Act (CITES).

¹² The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 5B., Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹³ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 38L., Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹⁴ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 38A., Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹⁵ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 38, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹⁶ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 18, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

HUNTING UNDER SECTION 11

- Hunting is strictly not permitted for any of the animals mentioned under Schedules I, II, III, and IV.¹⁷ Example:
 - a. the Indian Elephant,
 - b. Royal Bengal Tiger,
 - c. Great Indian Bustard, to name a few.
- The Chief Wildlife warden may grant permission by a written order if, after the review process of the supporting document, it is determined that the animal cannot be:
 - a. Trapped,
 - b. Tranquilized, or
 - c. Relocated with the least possible stress to it.
- If the animal is so severely injured/ill that it cannot be saved, it may also be hunted. To authorize the hunting of a specific animal or group of animals for a specific purpose in a specific location, the Chief Wildlife Warden must adhere to the same procedure.
- Section 11 also permits killing/injuring any wild animal in self-defense if it is done with a bona fide intention. The animal that is harmed shall further become the government's property. But, if the person was violating the Act when he claimed defense, it should not absolve him of liability.

HUNTING UNDER SECTION 12

- The Chief Wildlife Warden can permit hunting under exceptional circumstances:
 - a. Education,
 - b. Scientific Research,
 - c. Scientific Management: includes the transfer of the animal to an alternate habitat/museum/zoo etc. with the prior consent of the State Government.¹⁸

¹⁷ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 9, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

¹⁸ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 12, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

CASE LAWS

1. TARUN BHARAT SINGH ALWAR VERSUS UNION OF INDIA (1992)¹⁹

- This is a case in which the petitioner, a social action group, was an organization dedicated to the preservation and protection of wildlife. For certain statutory notifications issued by the State government in the region, which was referred to as the "SARISKA TIGER RESERVE" was designated as a sanctuary under Section 55 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972²⁰, and the group who felt wronged by the state government's actions filed PIL under Article 32 of the Indian Constitution.

2. CHIEF FOREST CONSERVATOR (WILDLIFE) VERSUS NISAR KHAN (2003)²¹

- The short facts of the case are that the appellant was a dealer in birds that were found in abundance in Uttar Pradesh. The state government issued him a license so that he could operate his business. Because he would be unable to continue his business of breeding captive birds without hunting, the license renewal was denied to him after the period had expired. The licensing authority had the right to refuse to renew the license because the business of breeding birds in confinement by trapping is prohibited under Sections 9 and 2(16) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The respondent had challenged the High Court's order and filed a writ petition in the Supreme Court, claiming that it was a violation of his basic fundamental right, the freedom to carry on trade or business under Article 19.

3. G.R. SIMON VERSUS THE UNION OF INDIA (1997)²²

- Short facts of the case are that the petitioner, a manufacturer of snakeskin goods such as bags, shoes, and briefcases as well as coats and gloves, challenged the 1991 Amendment of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 ban on the trafficking in animal products. It was argued that the Act is colorable legislation since it violates Article 19(1)(g), the fundamental right to carry on trade/business. Furthermore, some wild animals constitute a threat and are unproductive. The Delhi High Court rejected the arguments and concluded that every animal plays a crucial role in preserving ecological

¹⁹ Tarun Bharat Singh Alwar v. Union of India, AIR 1992 SC 514.

²⁰ The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, § 55, Act No. 53, 1972 (India).

²¹ Chief Forest Conservator (Wildlife) v. Nisar Khan, (2003) 4 SCC 595.

²² G.R. Simon v. Union of India, AIR 1997 Delhi 301.

harmony and that it is the responsibility of every Indian citizen to preserve and enhance the country's wildlife. Therefore, no fundamental right is unalienable and can be limited when doing so serves the common good.

4. SANSAR CHAND VERSUS THE STATE OF RAJASTHAN (2010)²³

- Despite being illegal under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the legal trading and commercialization of animals have had a negative impact on the ecosystem, as this case demonstrated. Because no trade occurs within India but is instead trafficked outside of the country to satisfy demand from other nations, such as tiger poaching for the Chinese medical business, these premeditated crimes are transnational in nature.

5. PRADEEP KRISHEN VERSUS THE UNION OF INDIA & OTHERS (1996)²⁴

- The petitioner contested the Madhya Pradesh government's directive authorizing villagers living close to sanctuaries and national parks to collect tendu leaves via contractors. 11 locations, representing around 12.4% of the state's total forest cover, have been designated as national parks and sanctuaries in Madhya Pradesh. The petitioner claimed that the advent of villagers was to account for the destruction of several trees in this region. The Madhya Pradesh administration was ordered by the Supreme Court to act quickly to impose restrictions on villagers and tribal entry into national parks and sanctuaries as per the provisions under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

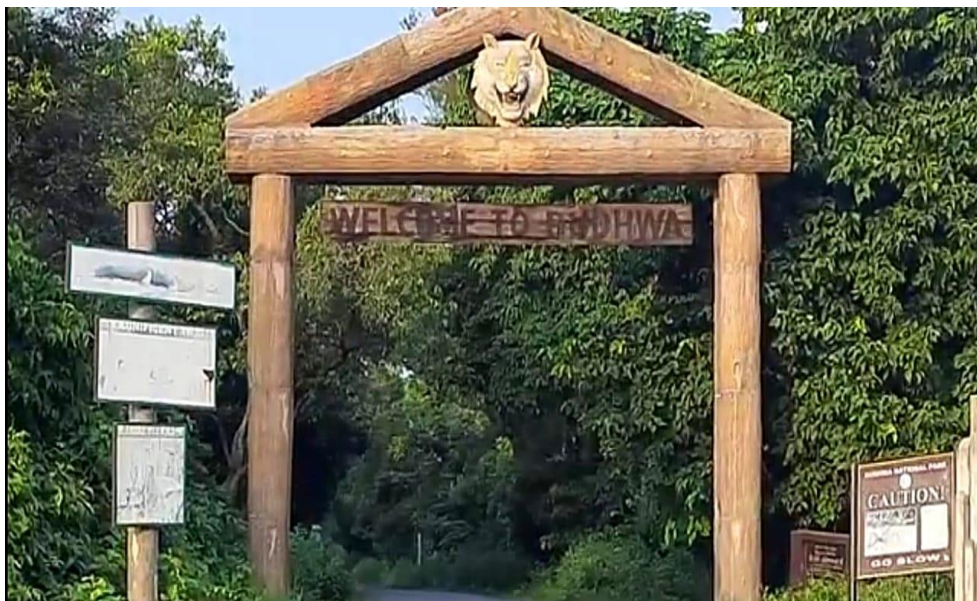
DUDHWA NATIONAL PARK

The Terai belt of marshy grasslands in northern Uttar Pradesh (District Kheri), India, is home to the Dudhwa National Park. Dudhwa is the last remnant of the Terai region, one of the most endangered ecosystems on the planet.

²³ Sansar Chand v. State of Rajasthan, 2010 (10) SCC 604.

²⁴ Pradeep Krishen v. Union of India & Ors., AIR 1996 SC 2040.

This complex ecosystem is a beautiful assortment of dense Sal forests, Grasslands, and Swamps. About 47 species of mammals are found at Dudhwa and out of these, 13 species are declared endangered. Dudhwa is home to a sizable Tiger, Rhino, Deer, Alligator/Crocodile, and



Elephant population besides a large variety of Birds and Butterflies.

The Dudhwa jungle experienced a significant invasion during the pre & post-Independence era. The Britishers had laid a railway line piercing through the entire jungle to carry huge quantities of logs. After independence, a large area of the forest was consequently turned into farmland. Also, because of its location on the Indo-Nepal border, the likelihood of poaching, hunting, and trading of wild animals, which marketed their products in Nepal and other international markets, increased significantly.

The story of the tiger reserve in Dudhwa is the story of the late **Billy Arjan Singh**, (Padma Shri awardee) whose tireless efforts resulted in the declaration of the forest as **Dudhwa National Park in 1977**.²⁵

THARU TRIBE

- I. The area is mostly inhabited by the THARU indigenous community, which is an agrarian community, and Dudhwa has been a territory of struggle for them for a long time.
- II. The Tharu Tribe is broadly categorized into 2 sects:

²⁵ 'Billy' Arjan Singh - the legendary 'Tiger-walla' departs, WWF (March 27, 2023, 17:19 PM), <https://www.wwfindia.org/?3880/Tiger-walla-departs>.

1. **RANA Tharu-** The ones who consider themselves as the descendants of Maharana Pratap of Rajasthan.
2. **CHOUDHARY/DANGAURA Tharu-** The ones who claim themselves as the original native descendants of the area.
3. However, there are some Sub-Sects like **Kusmi, Sonha, Kochila, Danuwar, Kathariya, etc.**



I. It is important to note that the Tharu tribal people reside on both sides of the Indo-Nepal Border and, if spoken particularly in India, the areas that they reside

are right from Uttarakhand to Bihar. Three of their major/main festivals are:

- **Hori (Holi)**
- **Maghi (Makar Sankranti)**
- **Dussehra**

Though Tharu people have their own distinct language, the community in Nepal has adopted the Nepali language whereas, in India, Hindi is the lingua franca.

- IV. 44 out of the 46 Tharu villages in the Dudhwa region received revenue status after being

relocated, and they were subsequently transformed into revenue villages in 1986.²⁶

V. According to reports, two of these villages, Surma and Golbhoji, resisted the eviction drive and have since continued to struggle for their



customary rights. The two villages battled a court case against the relocation in 1980, but they lost the 23-year-long legal struggle in 2003. But with no other choice, the populace started a non-violent way of resistance, mostly led by women.

VI. This persisted until the Forest Rights Act went into effect in 2007, at which point the relocation was suspended. Several charges have been lodged against the Tharu tribal people at various points in time due to a tussle between the villagers and the forest



²⁶ Eleonora Fanari, Villagers in UP's Dudwa Tiger Reserve Face Human Rights Violations, Eviction Notices, Land Conflict Watch (March 27, 2023, 21:27 PM), <https://www.landconflictwatch.org/conflicts/dudhwa-national-park>.

department/officials. Once, the community even burnt down the forest office, BANKATI (PS Gaurifanta).

- VII.** Of late, the community has progressed in education, culture, and self-reliance through SHGs and as forest guides. Taking the opportunity of government schemes, many Tharu people have either joined government services or started self-business through bank loans. Several government/NGOS-run residential schools are providing quality education as well as sports facilities to the Tharu children.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

- In the face of the global problem of:
 - a) Species extinction and
 - b) Loss of the world's natural capacity to support all life, national parks are an essential instrument for preserving biodiversity.
- Furthermore, some species like Brow-antlered Deer, the Indian rhinoceros, the Indian Tuskers, etc. can be found only in some national parks, besides rare species of birds/insects, and their populations outside are almost diminished.



about 3000
tigers as of
2021. In
addition to
reducing
conflicts
between people
and wildlife, the
large increase
in tiger
populations is
attributable to

the management of tiger reserves and protected areas.

- As a result, national parks in India have shown to be a successful method for protecting the species. While conserving species, these areas on the other hand, also protect habitat, as the local people only take resources from the forest on a necessity basis.

CHALLENGES TO NATIONAL PARKS

- Although protected areas offer chances for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development, several issues need to be resolved to administer national parks effectively.
- Many of the national parks are reportedly under threat from clearance, logging, hunting, fire, floods, and grazing.
- Furthermore, the importance of local concerns has not been adequately addressed by the bulk of eco-development initiatives. Due to these problems and disputes, the local population at times perceives things negatively and experiences a crisis of trust.
- If the economic benefits from the parks are few and the number of beneficiaries is high,



this might be much more serious.

ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF THE AREA

1. RESOURCE USE

The management of any national park has always faced significant difficulties in regulating resource use and extraction. Additionally, poachers and smugglers continue to:

- Hunt wildlife,
- Illegally extract substantial amounts of forest resources, and
- Murder government personnel.

This increases pressure on the local people and eventually results in an over-extraction of the forest resources, which degrades the natural habitat and in turn affects the vegetation and the ecosystem. As a result, human-made activities pose more serious dangers in national parks than natural fire and flooding.

2. WILDLIFE TOURISM

Wildlife tourism is a double-edged sword; while it may be profitable economically on the one hand, it may also be harmful to biodiversity on the other. Tourism, including wildlife safaris which occur almost twice a day, not only disturbs the tranquility of the natural habitat but also degrades the environment and threatens biodiversity, which as a result compromises ecological service. The construction of the hotels, resorts as well as guesthouses is done by none other than hampering the forest areas.



**WWF
(WORLD
WILDLIFE
FUND for
Nature) IN
DUDHWA**

One of the most
trustworthy
agencies
working in the



field of
conservation
of forests and
wildlife is
“The World
Wildlife
Fund
(WWF)”.

WWF, an
NGO,
established in
1961, works

in the field of wilderness preservation and the reduction of human impact on nature. WWF works to:

- Restore and safeguard species and their habitats,
- Influence markets and policies toward sustainability, and
- Assist local communities in preserving the ecological resources they rely on.²⁷

ROLE OF WWF IN THE CONCERNED AREA

WWF has been actively participating in the conservation of the environment and protection of forests besides generating employment opportunities for the people living in the vicinity of Dudhwa National Park. With its sustained efforts, a lot of change has been noticed in villages in and around the national park area. It works as a bridge between the local people and the forest department. While WWF is funding, sponsoring, and promoting the local products made by the Tharu people, thus enhancing the living standards of the population, it also works with the forest department for **Rhino-Rehabilitation Program** and has successfully shown the world the co-existence between nature and human being in Dudhwa National Park area. It is worth mentioning that apart from the Dudhwa National Park area, WWF has a widespread program of preservation of forest and wildlife in **Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, Katarniya Ghat Tiger Reserve Forest, Suhelwa Reserve Forest, and Pilibhit Tiger Reserve**, all situated in nearby areas of Dudhwa National Park.

WWF is the field leader in the following areas:

- **TO INFLUENCE FUNDING & MARKETPLACE**

WWF aims to close the gap between the amount of funding received and required for forest conservation, including lowering emissions of greenhouse gas pollutants, particularly carbon dioxide.

The WWF also motivates the Tharu Community to initiate small businesses to promote their unique traditions and culture, thus further motivating the marketplace.

- **TO INFLUENCE SCHEMES & REDUCE MAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT**

WWF influences the schemes to be effective through their reports on the environment and people living in the secluded forest area. WWF also uses sustainable approaches such as

²⁷ World Wildlife Fund, <https://www.worldwildlife.org/about#:~:text=WWF%20works%20to%20help%20local,local%20to%20a%20global%20scale>. (Last visited March 27, 2023).

human population growth, urban expansion, infrastructural developments, climate variability, and other factors that promote habitat degradation are all contributing to an increase in the frequency, severity, and prevalence of human-wildlife conflicts.²⁸

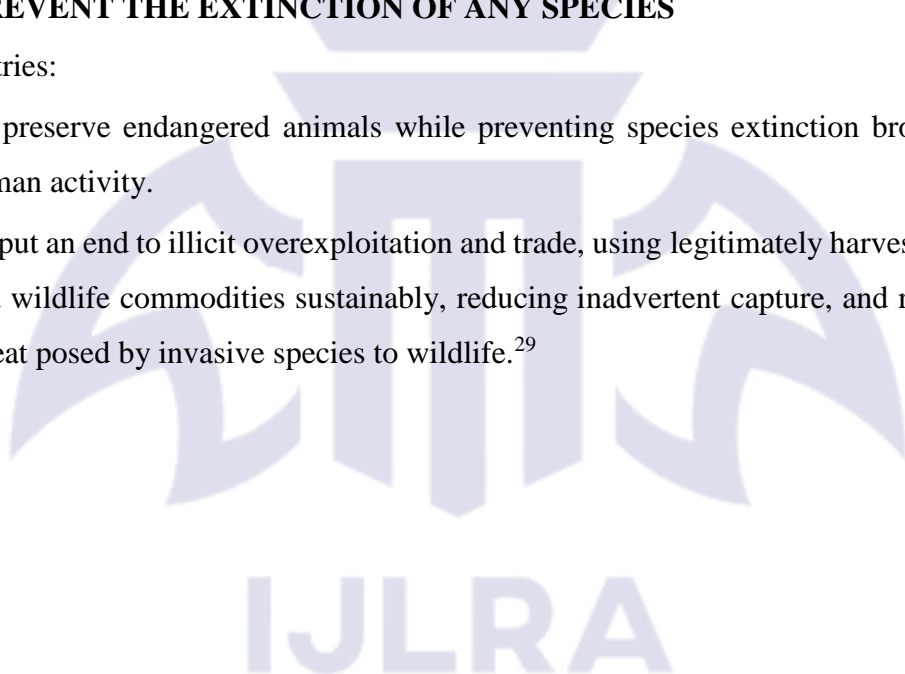
- **TO PREVENT ILLEGAL LOGGING**

WWF focuses on eliminating unsustainable and illegal logging because the entire local community as well as the wildlife are in some form or the other directly or indirectly dependent upon the forests for their livelihood. Therefore, WWF ensures that poachers and smugglers also coming from across the borders don't deprive the woods of the forests.

- **TO PREVENT THE EXTINCTION OF ANY SPECIES**

WWF tries:

- To preserve endangered animals while preventing species extinction brought on by human activity.
- To put an end to illicit overexploitation and trade, using legitimately harvested wildlife and wildlife commodities sustainably, reducing inadvertent capture, and reducing the threat posed by invasive species to wildlife.²⁹



²⁸ Human-Wildlife Conflict, The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (March 27, 2023, 12:17 PM), <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-brief/human-wildlife-conflict#:~:text=Wildlife%20can%20threaten%20people's%20safety,grow%20and%20habitats%20are%20lost>.

²⁹ Global Goals, World Wildlife Fund (March 27, 2023, 12:17 PM), https://wwf.panda.org/discover/about_wwf/our_goals/.



COMPARING THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE AREA

There has been a notable change in the living standards of the people in and around Dudhwa National Park in the last 10-15 years as government efforts through Village Panchayats and Government Machinery have been able to implement most of the schemes launched by the Centre and the State. Organizations like World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE), etc. have also been active through various SHGs in creating job and financial avenues, thus protecting the National Park from:

- Poaching,
- Felling of trees, or any
- Other illegal activities.

In Dudhwa National Park Area, they have regularly been organizing awareness campaigns, and forest camps for the protection of wildlife which has a bearing effect on environmental protection. The participation of the local people in such campaigns, events, seminars, and village-to-village tours resulted in a better understanding of nature, the environment, and the protection of the wildlife of the area. It has mentored a whole generation of young people for such work who now carry forward the baton locally.

Several institutions like Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Eklavya Model Residential School, ITI, Composite School, Ashram Paddhati School, etc. have educated a generation of young people who have been successful in getting government/public jobs besides doing business. People have become Right Conscious and the introduction of the Internet through the



mobile network has brought them into the mainstream.

In this connection, the role of WWF and its important functionaries, particularly **Dr. Mudit Gupta**, has helped in transforming the lives of the

people from darkness to modernity. He stressed the role of the Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972 as a key factor for wildlife preservation.

A self-help group “**THARU GHARELU UDYOG**

Ms. Aarti Rana and supported **Village Gabraula (PS Chandan** remarkably brought financial bunch of local women. For her **Aarti Rana** has been conferred **for Women Empowerment in** one-on-one conversation, **Ms.** her success to the awareness, sincerity, dedication, honesty, the local people, particularly the women folk as the women have solely taken up the burden of



HATHKARGA SAMUH” led by

by **WWF** at **Chowki** has independence to a contribution, **Ms. President Medal 2022.** During a **RANA** attributed willpower, and discipline of

work that is leading to a system of matriarchy in the Tharu society. She also informed that her SHG (self-help group) procures traditional raw materials from nearby areas leaving the ecosystem of the forest undamaged and prepares daily use items typical to the tribal yet modern in nature.

FURTHER PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

On visiting and exploring the local Tharu villages located within the periphery of the national park, villages like **Dhuskiya, Balera, Bandarbhari, Najhauta, Sunda, Bankati, Bangawah, Kajaria, Shera Bera, Kiratpur, etc.** under two police station limits (**Chandan Chowki & Gaurifanta**) caught my attention.

I had particularly taken interest in the local home structures and the daily chores of the Tharu people including their way of traditional farming, cattle grazing, etc.



I had the privilege to meet **Mr. Omkar Rana** and **Mr. Vasudev Rana** of **Najhauta and Balera Villages**, both **Uttar Pradesh State Government Officers**, who provided me

with the knowledge that the education standard in the villages has substantially enhanced and people now are availing government schemes to improve their living standards, while also easing tensions between the tribal people and the forest officials.³⁰

³⁰ THARU RESEARCH CENTER, <https://tharuresearchcenter.com/> (last visited March 27, 2023).

Further, I met **Mr. Nibloo Rana**, a resident of **Bankati Village**, who is a contractual employee of a local Government Office. The Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 has been providing immense protection to the forest area under Hunting and Poaching.

He also mentioned that the local people are now hugely aware of the education system and



sports up to the national level as compared to the situation 10 years ago in the concerned area. His children, a girl around 12 years old and a boy around 15 years old, are receiving proper

education, and the young boy has already participated and won several medals in State Level Sports Championship Tournaments (Swimming & Athletics) and is now preparing for National Level Sports Tournaments.

Furthermore, I met an **Uttar Pradesh State Government Officer** and as well as a **Social Activist, Mr. Sher Bahadur Rana** (originally a resident of Belaparsuwa Village) at Dhuskiya village (PS Chandan Chowki). In addition to highlighting improvements in the educational system, he also emphasized improvements in peoples' social lives. When a major section of



the locals became aware of the Act itself, they began to take the minimal measures and steps required to safeguard and preserve the

species and the rich biodiversity of the Dudhwa National Park. Mr. Rana underscored the significance of encouraging homestay tourism as a great method to boost the local Tharu population's economy while maintaining local culture and traditions, which will in turn motivate the community to protect the environment and the forest.

In **Gaurifanta**, the village at the Indo-Nepal border as well as a recognized trade point between India and Nepal, I met another humble person, **Mr. Manoj Kumar Maurya**, an **Assistant Ranger** earlier posted in Gaurifanta, now in Katarniaghat. He supplied me with practical knowledge about the forest area and how they communicate and deal with the local problems of the local communities residing there. Additionally, he stated that along with the **SSB (Sashastra Seema Bal) personnel**, they are stressing **COMMUNITY FORESTING** involving the locals, a section of which ensures that the forest wealth remains intact and is protected from poaching and hunting at the local level. This will ensure co-inhibition between man and wildlife.

CONCLUSION

The Wildlife Protection Act, of 1972, has therefore had a positive impact on the entire region of the Dudhwa National Park as well as on the local community. In recent years, people have been exclusively made aware of their rights as well as the significance of the Act which is meant for the betterment of their lives as well as the forest area. Furthermore, the government has provided the locals with numerous employment opportunities and the demands & concerns of the local inhabitants have been mostly addressed by the government which in turn has not only reduced man's reliance on wildlife resources but has also helped in reducing the man-wildlife conflict throughout the entire region.