



GOOD PRACTICES FROM THE STATE

‘The Tizu Valley Biodiversity Conservation’ of Environment, Forest & Climate Change Department

The Tizu Valley of Zunheboto district in Nagaland consists of six villages namely: Sukhai, Ghukhuyi, Nihoshe, Vishepu, Xuyivi and Kivikhu Villages. As per the customary rights of the state, the majority of natural habitats are owned and managed by individuals and clans overseen by village and district councils and other traditional institutions. These traditional conservation practices help protect biodiversity, through customary laws and other effective means. However, most of the economic activity in the villages is based upon the utilization of natural resources leading to the over-exploitation of forest resources.

In December, 2016, three villages –Sukhai, Ghukhuyi and Kivikhu declared their Community Conservation Areas (CCAs) and agreed to form a joint CCA Management Committee resulting in the formation of an apex local body called – Tizu Valley Biodiversity Conservation and Livelihood Network (TVBCLN), for supporting biodiversity conservation through livelihood creation. These CCAs include forests, freshwater resources, grasslands as well as agricultural forest complexes within their ambit. One of the major characteristics of these CCAs is that the communities are the decision-makers and have the capability to enforce rules and regulations.

With the intervention of the TVBCLN and the support of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, the following results were achieved:

1. Conservation education and sensitization: Community engagement through consultation, conservation education, and public sensitization approaches was used to increase awareness of threats and integrated approaches at the community and stakeholder level. Thus reaching out to a total of around 1,200 individuals directly, along with a positive impact on more than 10,000 individuals indirectly living in the vicinity of the project site.

2. Formation & formalization of joint Community-Conserved Areas: Due to the continuous and intense engagement with the communities, the three villages formally declared around a total of 939 hectares of biodiversity-rich forest as CCAs in their respective villages, which are now being jointly managed by them. However, apart from these CCAs, they have also banned hunting and destructive fishing across the entire landscape of their villages, covering 3,751 hectares of forests and rivers. Also, a blanket ban on hunting wild animals and birds, a ban on fishing by use of explosives, chemicals, and generators, a strict prohibition of cutting of fire-wood/felling of trees, as well as a ban on collection of canes and other non-timber forest products, have ensured the conservation of large contiguous forest areas along with the unique endemic biodiversity they support.

3. Biodiversity assessments and preparation of People’s Biodiversity Registers (PBRs): Regular biodiversity surveys in the designated CCAs found an increase in the diversity of birds, reptiles, butterflies and moths with the current checklist listing 222 species, 31 reptiles, 11 amphibians, 200 species of butterflies and more than 200 species of moths. These have been documented in the People’s Biodiversity Registers (PBRs) with local and scientific names. These PBRs document the folklore, traditional knowledge, ecology, biodiversity and cultural practices of the locals and help codify the oral knowledge of the communities. The sightings are also uploaded on websites such as

“eBird” and “Birds and Butterflies of India”. These surveys, by documenting unique, rare or special fauna, have also acted as a catalyst to attract more outsiders to the area as ecotourists.

4. Alternative livelihood opportunities through ecotourism: The training of youth in biodiversity assessments and sustainable use of natural resources, as well as the training and capacity building of local community members as nature guides for ecotourism, has resulted in enhanced livelihood opportunities with the steady flow of tourists that are visiting this area to spot ‘bird and butterfly specials’. This has further motivated the communities, including those from neighboring villages, to take up conservation and protect their natural resources.

The Tizu TVBCLN’s CCAs have yielded positive results in terms of sustainable use of biological resources by adopting long-term sustainability, enhanced governance and effective conservation of Socio-Economic Production Landscapes (SEPLs). Up-scaling of activities initiated by the communities will involve the formalization and mainstreaming of a network of CCAs in the State which are at par with India’s Protected Area (PA) network in conjunction with the Government of Nagaland. Given that 88.3% of forests are under the governance of the communities in Nagaland, the CCAs constitute the primary method for forest management and conservation of SEPLs in the State.

The TVBCLN was awarded the India Biodiversity Awards 2018 under the Special mention Category for Sustainable Use of Biological Resources. TVBCLN works are mainly aligned with ‘SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss’.

