

Biodiversity Conservation is the central theme of WWF India's current activities. While establishing WWF India in 1989, the focus of attention was mainly on the conservation of India's rich wildlife, especially larger mammals. Gradually, importance was given to environmental education, creation of awareness among the public at large, and conservation of habitat and ecosystems.

CONSERVATION of Biodiversity in India – APPROACHES of WWF-INDIA

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The programmes which have direct relevance to conservation of biodiversity are:

Conservation of Biodiversity Conservation Movement (CBCM)

The programme was initiated in 1990 and aims at the conservation of biodiversity through the formation of Conservation Movement (CBCM) in 1990. From 1990 onwards various inputs were taken up for biodiversity conservation. Inputs from existing programmes were also drawn into the effort.

Conservation of Biodiversity Conservation Movement (CBCM)

Introduced to on WWF India's educational activities, organisational training camps, educational resource materials, etc. Various projects have been implemented by grassroots organisations in different states of the country.

Conservation Corps Programme (CCP)

Introduced in 1990, the Conservation Corps Programme aims to establish a cadre of young, motivated, and dedicated individuals as 'Volunteers' for conservation work. They are given intensive education and intensive training to enable them to gain experience in project and resource management through a variety of task-oriented activities. Volunteers are deployed for a maximum period of two years, during which they are provided with a moderate monthly honorarium. The programme provides opportunities to the volunteers to work with recognised

Biodiversity Conservation is the central theme of WWF India's current activities. While establishing WWF India in 1969, the focus of attention was mainly on the conservation of India's rich wildlife, especially larger mammals. Gradually, importance was given to environmental education, creation of awareness among the public at large, and conservation of habitat and ecosystems. From the experience gathered, WWF India broadened its perspectives by emphasising the involvement of local communities in conservation work, especially for protecting the country's rich biodiversity. WWF India launched the Community Biodiversity Conservation Movement (CBCM) in 1989. From 1990 onwards, various initiatives were taken up for biodiversity conservation. Inputs from the existing programmes were also drawn into this effort.

The programmes which have direct relevance to conservation of biodiversity are enlisted below.

Community Biodiversity Conservation Movement (CBCM)

The programme focusses on the conservation of threatened plants and animals through *in situ* and *ex situ* measures and conservation of fragile ecosystems through collective community action. The programme also covers conservation of areas having rich biodiversity near human habitations and areas traditionally held in reverence such as sacred groves.

Conservation Action Support Programme (CASP)

Introduced in 1990, this programme aims to provide small grants to organisations in order to support their conservation efforts. WWF India helps organisations with financial assistance to hire expertise, launch public campaigns, carry out environment educational activities, organise training camps, prepare educational resource materials, etc. Various projects have been implemented by grassroots' organisations in different states of the country.

Conservation Corps Programme (CCP)

Introduced in 1990, the Conservation Corps Programme aims to establish a cadre of young, motivated, and dedicated individuals as 'Volunteers' for conservation work. It imports a combination of education and intensive-training to youngsters to enable them to gain experience in project and resource management through a variety of task-oriented activities. Volunteers are deployed for a maximum period of two years, during which they are provided with a moderate monthly honorarium. The programme provides opportunities to the volunteers to work with recognised

organisations as well as the local communities. It is supporting a number of volunteers in different states of the country.

Biodiversity 'Hotspots' Conservation Programme (BHCP)

WWF India, with a grant from MacArthur Foundation, USA, launched this programme in 1992 to focus on biodiversity conservation in the globally recognised 'Hotspots' in India, e.g., the eastern Himalayas and the Western Ghats. In 1995, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were included within the ambit of BHCP.

The programme attempts to strengthen the institutional capacity of WWF India in the area of biodiversity conservation; to identify gaps in the existing efforts on biodiversity conservation; to establish a computerised database, to provide support to NGOs to strengthen their conservation efforts; and to establish long-term institutional linkages with army units, plantations, (especially tea gardens), and various communities.

The basic approaches taken are:

- strengthening the protected areas' network,
- conservation of biodiversity in areas outside the protected areas' network,
- eco-development,
- promoting income-generating activities, especially among tribal communities,
- urgent action to prevent destruction of biological diversity,
- strengthening the legal and policy framework, and
- applied research in biodiversity conservation.

Army Biodiversity Conservation Programme

There has been collaboration between the Armed Forces and WWF India since the early 1980s in the conservation of biodiversity. WWF India has extended support by providing resource persons, literature, and other materials to the Armed Forces to enable them to carry out conservation-related activities.

The programmes of WWF India lending support to its mission of biodiversity conservation are given in the following passages.

Wetlands' Conservation

This programme, started in 1990, attempts to create awareness about the value of the wetlands and promote protection and sustainable use of wetlands. Special focus is given to the Ramsar sites in India.

Protected Areas' Programme

The programme attempts to formulate eco-development and management plans, organising a network of NGOs, extending legal support, building a database, and supporting specific national and special conservation projects.

Forestry Programme

WWF India has introduced the Forestry Programme as part of its broader strategy for biodiversity conservation. The forestry programme gives importance to forest conservation and management with the objectives of developing participatory approaches and ecodevelopment in the forest areas. It also pays attention to the national forest policy and legislation, national forestry action plan, emerging international issues in forestry, and the forest information system.

Traffic-India

Traffic-India aims to identify areas of utilisation that may be detrimental to species and to facilitate control on trade in them. It also provides enforcement and trade data support to the CITES.

Indira Gandhi Conservation Monitoring Centre (IGCMC)

This centre was started in 1994 as an important supporting facility to store, retrieve, and disseminate information on India's biodiversity through the use of information management systems. This centre is also lending management information support to official and non-official programmes for biodiversity conservation in India.

Centre for Environmental Law (CEL)

The centre came into existence in 1993 with the aim of strengthening the professional support base for biodiversity conservation. The centre reviews environmental laws and policies in India. CEL, acting on behalf of WWF India, takes up important public interest issues with respect to natural resources' conservation and law reform.