

# Another Thre

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The latest legalization of human activity in forest in the name of implementation of Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of forest Rights) Act 2006 has posed a serious threat to wildlife existence in general and monkeys in particular in Tripura. The state govt has already distributed about 160 Sqkm forest land out of total about 6294 Sqkm forest area among the traditional dwellers in past two months and according to the estimation, about 1000 Sqkm of forest land would be required at present to settle the existing claims. And since giving land right (Patta) to the forest dwelling communities is continues process, its quite comprehensible what would be the future of green bank (forest) of Tripura. Tripura is the only state in the country, which allowed human population to live in the reserve forest. Reacting on the issue, forest minister of the Staten of Tripura, Jitendra Choudhury said, "The then govt suddenly notified reserve forest area in 1965 without rehabilitating the dwellers and as a result, still the state is facing the same problem".

It is believe to be more dangerous that the left parties in Tripura demanded to reduce the time-limit for non-tribal dwellers from 75 years to 25 years for giving patta. According to the provision, Patta would be given to the tribal family who had been residing in the particular plot of forest land on or before December 13, 2005 but in case of non-tribal dwellers it was 1930. Left front MPs raised the issue in the parliament last time and demanded to fix the cut of year 1950 for traditional forest dwellers.

The history of forestland in the state is a long tale of unsettled land rights. The tribals of Tripura practiced Jhum (slash-and-burn cultivation), which the government doesn't approve of. While Jhum is not acceptable to the government, monoculture plantations of rubber fit into its idea of forestry with the inception of Tripura Forest Development Corporation (TFDPC) in 1976. The major objective was the rehabilitation of Jhum practitioners to rubber plantations. The primary aim of this policy (adopted on the recommendations of National Commission on Agriculture) was to increase the productivity from the forests in order to give a fillip to the production forestry in the country for meeting the growing needs of the people for the goods and services from the forests resources. In 1991 Tripura has started a participatory forestry activity in the name of Joint Forest Management (JFM) in the degraded forest land under the occupation of the forest department and so far about 1055 Sqkm areas have come under about 400 JFM for livelihood management of about 33000 people. Joint Forest Management (JFM) approach is considered to contribute substantially the habitation loss of monkeys in Tripura. Human activities in forest areas in general and in particular as well as economic activities in the forest land have led to loss of monkey habitats in Tripura. Along with population growth and deforestation, the govt sponsored forestry generation activities in degraded forest areas are believe to be responsible of habitat loss of monkeys in Tripura. The situation has changed after communal riot in 1980 between tribal and Bangalee, forest based activities like Jhum cultivation, firewood collection, collection of horticultural produces and generation of high-timber trees have adversely affected the composite natural forestry in Tripura. Rubber, teak, shal like trees got importance because of it's high economic value but it destroyed the natural forest rather monoculture in forestry sector has got momentum since mid-eighties.

The conflict between man and monkey is due to the changes in the behaviour of



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man and animal. Different factors in different times cause these changes in their behaviour. Implicit reasons are caused in the weakening cult of human behaviour and explicit reasons are caused due to failure of the agencies empowered for their maintenance of co-existence. Any measures relating to change the historical mindset of men is time taking. The superiority of men has made the monkey inferior. It is not practically possible for any governmental agencies to teach the monkey the lesson of adoptability. Human beings have to make promising remark to say 'good bye to their self imposed ambition' and Government has to restrict its vision for development. The spirit of

balance of relation between man and monkey should adhere to the spirit of relation between 'the theory of check and balance and the theory of 'change and development'. To limit the progress is unsound and unwholesome but to restore the relation of man with nature is a greatest necessity. Conflict of man with money can be resolved with the restoration of man's relation with nature.

The natural food of monkeys has been vanished because of promotion of economic activities based on forest land. On the other, the number of leopards has gone down in the forest areas because of shortage in dense jungle and restriction in corridor. Leopard is one who eats monkey and naturally control its population but due to reduction of leopard population in the forest and consumption of high protein food have been increasing the monkey population, admitted Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) of Teliamura Mr Rajat Das. Value addition of banana and jackfruits in Atharamura range and other hilly areas of the state have posed a serious threat to monkey population. Forest dwelling communities are managing livelihood by selling various horti and agricultural produces from forest land, which was the major food of the monkeys.

Besides, Indian towns, huge quantities of jackfruits in deep forest were sold even in premature stage to Bangladeshi businessmen who are collecting the crops and taken away to

Bangladesh. More over, the frequent movement of forest for livelihood and development activities like construction of road etc for the forest living communities is adversely affecting the monkey habitats and food supply.

Tripura - Bangladesh border fence has made life harder on some farmers inside the fence, and also damaged valuable wildlife habitat in particular areas in Khowai and Gandacherra sub-divisions. There has been disturbance of monkey since 1980s but recently it increased heavily because of food crisis in the forest. There was a big forest where monkeys were used to stay for many more years in Bangladesh under Habiganj district, about two kilometres away from the border line - called Rema Bagan. Rema Bagan is connected directly with north-western range of Atharamura. Supporting the statement Mr Balendra Debburma (73) of Behalabari said that other side of the border, there was a huge clutch of forest and a large area under jackfruit and mango trees but now wire fencing has been erected in between the forest. As a result, the monkey movement across the area was disturbed. Nirmal Tripura, a resident of Bhandarim - Thalcherra area in North Tripura said that same thing was happened in eastern part of Tripura, just opposite to Chittagong Hill Tract (CHT) region of Bangladesh.

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