

Taj Safaris

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The aim of my study was to identify possible community engagement programmes surrounding Taj Safari properties in Bandhavgarh national park in Madhya Pradesh. The dual aims of these interventions were to advance tiger conservation and facilitate community development.

In order to find synergies existing between the needs of villagers and the aims of conservation, research into the villages surrounding the Taj Safari resorts was required. To formulate creative new ideas for interventions I carried out extensive primary research, conducting 'participatory rural appraisal' reports, and issuing surveys and structured interviews on energy consumption. With this data I formulated my primary recommendation for the establishment of a microfinance enterprise to provide villagers with more sustainable energies.

As my research illustrated, solar lighting or efficient cookstoves could be provided to villagers who would make repayments at a level equivalent to previous kerosene expenditure. The use of more sustainable energies has been proven to substantially promote both human development and wildlife conservation. With the available finances acting as a revolving fund, my initiative also had the benefit of being able to reach more villagers in the long term.

After presenting my proposals to Taj Safaris management in New Delhi, significant steps have already been taken to rolling-out my initiative, starting with providing villagers with solar lanterns to replace existing kerosine lamps. These new energies will help to improve villagers' standard of life both directly and indirectly, as well as aiding wildlife conservation in the area.