

# Living In Fine Environment Trust - India (LIFE Trust-India)

ANNUAL  
REPORT

2019- 2020



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**Registered Trust:**

Registered No: 143/2017/BK4

Darphen ID: TN/2018/0197493

80G - ITBA/EXM/S/12AA/2018-19/1015380545(1)/80G

12AA - CIT(EXEMPTION) CHENNAI/12AA/2018-19/A/10550

**Field station office:**

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Photo credit: Mohamed Ashik



## From the Desk

I feel proud in the progress and achievements of Living In Fine Environment Trust-India and we have completed three years of service to the society. We see around us an array of global changes which were unheard before. With all these we tried our best to carry-out to fulfill the aims of our trust.

The vision of the Trustees is to work on five major areas Viz., 1. Capacity building – conduct training programmes for different stakeholders, to establish technical and industrial training institutions for the welfare of the human society; 2. Research and Development - research activities aimed at obtaining baseline data on current environment issues, that could affect local society and common people in India, undertake research activities for the conservation of wildlife and environment; 3. Rural development and public health - promote social welfare and social empowerment activities for the betterment of the public in India; 4. Education – environmental education, and; 5. Networking – collaboration with government, industries, quasi government institutions, firms, companies and charities.

LIFE Trust has completed three years of service and this year we focused mainly on the rural development. We were successful in gaining support from international organization to initiate research work in Tamil Nadu. We identified two villages in TN (Madathupatti) and WB (Mantapara) to extend our assistance who live there. Thanks to the collaborators for their extended support and assistance to achieve this. We have long way to go to achieve our goals. This pandemic has helped us to understand the real needs of the people and to help us understand the future course action.

We kindly appreciate the co-operation, support and love we have received from the supporters to fulfill the objectives of the Trust and for their continued assistance to our programmes, initiatives and efforts. It is only when we all work together that we can hope to be successful in our efforts to build strong, vibrant communities. We look forward to their continued patronage and support. The Trustees assure that our Trust will always be contributing in creating an environment that will be better to live, progress of the society and the nation.

**Rebecca Gnanabai**  
Managing Trustee

# Vision and Mission

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## Vision

Creating a comfortable living standard for life along with collateral sustainable development.



## Mission

To create a prosperous India by enhancing the living standards of people and by ensuring a common minimum species survival requirements and its habitat. Brining prosperity by providing empowerment and transformational change to community and to make them self reliant through sustainable practices, through partnership with government and industries.

# LIFE Trust Governing council – Trustees and advisors

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## Trustees

**Mrs. Rebecca Gnanabai B.Sc., B.Ed.,**  
MANAGING TRUSTEE - Chief Executive

**Dr. L. Isaiarasu, M.Sc., M.Ed., M.Phil., Ph.D.**  
TRUSTEE - Chairman

**Mr. A. Josh, B. Tech.,**  
TRUSTEE - Executive Director

**Mrs. Josephine Regina, M.A.**  
TRUSTEE - Secretary

**Dr. B.A. Daniel, M.Sc., Ph.D.**  
TRUSTEE - Finance

## Advisors

Mr. Ramachandra Raja B.A., B.L, New Delhi.  
Mr. Pandithurai M.A., (Rtd Librarian), Madurai  
Mr. Muthukumar M.A. (Rtd. Thasildar), Kovilpatti  
Dr. S. Jayabaskar MBBS., RJPM

## Auditor

V. Shanmugasundaram B.Com., FCA., D.I.S.A., (ICI)  
Chartered Accountant Coimbatore



Visit to a village tribal school for Education program



## COVID-19 Pandemic and services by LIFE Trust - India



SCHT Boys home, Krishnapuram,  
Tirunelveli

The first case of COVID-19 Pandemic in Tamil Nadu was reported on 7th March 2020. The lockdown was announced on 22 March 2020. During this period many people especially the daily wages and the coolies were affected much. Women especially lost their job and schools were closed down. Since this is new to our generation, and the lockdown was imposed severely by the state government, movement was almost nil. LIFE Trust was able to assist people remotely by assisting some families with financial support and through supply of groceries and their daily needs. LIFE Trust

supported people in Cuddalore, Gwalior, and Chennai by way of financial support. Later towards the end of the first wave, LIFE Trust supported 25 students in homes in Tirunelveli District. In addition, awareness was created through social media and promoted personal hygiene, social distancing and intake of nutritious diet.

# Mantapara

## SNAKE CHARMERS' STORY

(A brief note from LIFE Trust India)

Project co-ordinator  
Manas B. Majumdar

### Our visit to Mantapara!

On 1st December 2019, a team of members from LIFE Trust India and other like-minded NGOs from North Bengal visited Mantapara village to assess on the status of the standard of living of snake charmers. Our contact person Mr. Jyotish Roy who works as a Santana child labour school teacher at Mantapara village coordinated a brief meeting with the community. This visit remains in our minds and created a deep scar.



### Why Mantapara & Where is it?

Mantapara is a village in Jalpaiguri district, North Bengal. Snake charming was the only profession and income-generating activity of Mantapara people until it was banned. Now they cannot continue with it due to the new regulations that they respect. For their living, they do a variety of jobs like carpentry works, handmade jewelry, construction work, and other coolie works. Their daily income is meager earnings for which both men and women work. They have temporary houses made of tin in plots allotted to them by the government. A total of 150 families live here with an average family size of 2-3 members.

### Livelihood support:

we can also support them by providing the following training

- To manufacture palm plates
- Training on food processing
- Training in handicrafts
- Providing micro financing
- Tailoring
- Trainings on Poultry farming
- Cattle rearing
- Doll making etc.
- Setting up a cooperative system



### How we can help?

- The school need a cement floor
- Some furniture for students
- Basic toilet facilities for the students
- Plain painting work on tin sheets
- Plantations around the school
- Few utensils for Mid-day meals

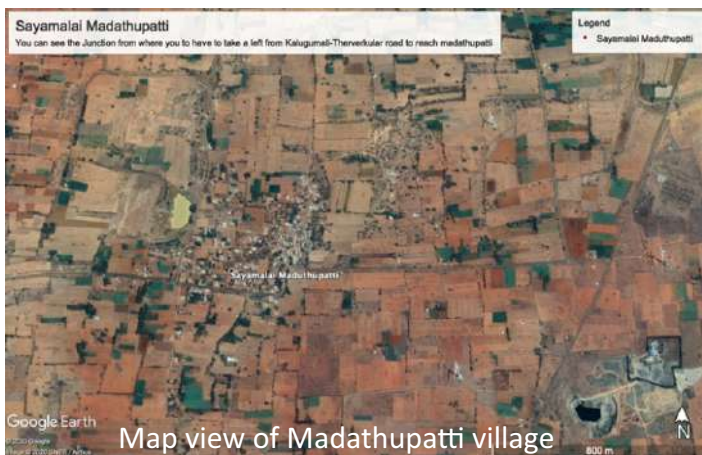
# Madathupatti – Community focal meeting

Project co-ordinator:  
A. Josh

Community Focal meeting – Salayamalai Madathupatti. Madathupatti is a small village in Thirunelveli District near Kalugumalai, having 150 families. The village has a primary school in which about 60 students are studying. Agriculture and agro related activities are the main occupation of the village. Every year about 5-6 students complete their +2 of which one or two students go for higher studies. There are about 40 youth who are still trying to find some job after their education. Though the village has produced prominent people for the society, most of the villagers are still under poverty and need support.



Group photo with Madathupatti villagers



Map view of Madathupatti village



Group photo with Madathupatti villagers

A survey was conducted among the youth and people below 40 age and the survey showed that they require some needs such as tuition centre for their children, some support to improve their school, regular medical check-up facilities for the villagers and some way of service to find job for the youth. A village focal meeting was arranged on 6 March 2020 at the temple campus with an objective to assist the children with their education, assist youth through vocational training program, coaching to appear for written exams, guidance to get job, assist farmers through modern farming and to provide livelihood support training for the single women and widows. It was decided to start with the activities some evening tuition may be taken some time after Pandemic. It was also decided to extend support for the physically handicapped in the village. As part of it a rain coat was given to Mr. Mariappan, Madathupatti. Some education materials published by LIFE Trust India was also issued. They were served with snacks towards the end of the meeting.

# Tarantula spider research

Funding agency:  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Project co-ordinator:  
Mohamed Ashik. M



Photo credit: A. Josh



A snap with Tribal community kids

## Project Title

A study to understand the pervasive threat of exploitation and trade of Indian Theraphosid spiders and to involve local community for species and habitat conservation through education

## Project Goal

To fill-up the information gap on the prevalent exploitation and trade of Theraphosid spiders to prevent illegal trade and to bring in attitudinal change among the community in favour of species conservation.

## Objectives

- 🎯 To sensitize local communities and stakeholders and to involve them in species conservation through conservation education.
- 🎯 To obtain a better understanding of the pervasive threats of exploitation and trade of Theraphosid spider.
- 🎯 To address species and habitat quality decline and to promote conservation
- 🎯 Dissemination of project results

The project on spider study started on January 2018. During this financial year ie., from April 2020 we moved to the second phase of our project by initiating the field work, visit to important identified villages on the foothills of Western Ghats, obtaining forest permit for the field visit, and initiation for the development of education materials on spider conservation. As part of it we completed the field work in Coimbatore division. Usually the field trip is conducted for 4-10 continuous field travel and this year was made in March 2020. Out of the 13 districts we covered four districts until March 2020. With regard to the education materials preparation, we worked out the content of the education program, design and development of soft copies of the education materials, translation design and proof-reading works wre done. Our aim is to complete printing work by end of the 2020. The following materials namely Poecilotheria Booklet, Factsheet, Sticker and Hand fan. A souvenir (key chain) were designed. We went to field visit at Anaimalai Tiger Reserve and Sathyamangalam Tiger reserve. We went to 12 days south Tamil Nadu trip as a part of field visit.

## Questionnaire survey at various districts of Tamil Nadu



## Conservation education and Training at Purulia Forest Division, Kangsabati, South Bengal

Project co-ordinators:

Mohamed Ashik. M

Josh. A

Manas B. Majumdar



Purulia is the south western most district of West Bengal state of India with a unique topography. It is part of the eastern plateau and hill region and part of lower Gangetic plain region. This district is bordered in the east by Bankura, Pashchim Midnapore districts, in the

north by Bardhaman district of West Bengal state and Dhanbad district of Jharkhand state, in the west by Bokaro and Ranchi districts of Jharkhand state and in the south by West Singhbhum and East Singhbhum districts of Jharkhand state. The district and its remaining forest cover have been playing a very crucial role as a corridor for migrating elephants from its adjoining states. The forests of this district are also used by herds of elephants as refuge and transit stay during the annual and seasonal migration. This brings people living in the area into direct conflict with the elephants. As human civilization progressed so did its expansion. There have been human deaths, property loss and agricultural damage on the part of humans and elephants also suffered hugely through trauma, inflicted injuries, electrocution and death, shot when declared rouge by the Forest Department, ecological damage and loss in habitat and corridors.



The aim of this project is to conduct trainers training programme for selected educators in Purulia Forest Division, Kangsabati Forest Division, South Bengal and to promote human-wildlife coexistence for the people who live in the Human elephant conflict area.

The PI Dr Isaiarasu, LIFE Trust-India, Chairman in collaboration with Arulagam executed this project. The project was just executed by LIFE Trust India without any charges to build up collaboration among like-minded organizations. About 30 participants and 10 members from the coordinating organizations like Simultala, TEESTA, and forest department took part in the program. Thanks to all collaborators and supporters who helped to run this program.

# Insect as food project

Project co-ordinator:

**Lokesh Kumar**



Lokesh, Interviewed paniya tribe woman at Pandalur

A research study was carried to document the fading traditional knowledge on the entomophagy (insect eating) practices among the primitive tribes of Nilgiris district of Tamil Nadu. A pilot study has been conducted in January 2019 where few respondents of Kurumba and kattunayakan tribes of Thorapally village of Gudalur Taluk has been enquired using a structured questionnaire to collect information about their insect eating habit. Later on the similar field survey was carried on extensively during the months of February to March. In that survey about 120 respondents belonging to six primitive tribal group viz. Todas, Kotas, Paniyas, Irulas, Kurumbas and Kattunayakans from 12 tribal villages in the six taluks (Udhagamandalam, Coonoor, Kotagiri, Kundah, Gudalur and Pandalur) of the district

were covered up during the study. For reaching the tribal groups prior permissions and help was obtained from the authorities of Tribal research centre (TRC), Udhagamandalam. Also the prior informed consent from the tribal respondents was obtained for academic and non-commercial usage of their revealed data. The filled up questioners were then analysed and the data were interpreted.



Kota woman in her traditional outfit at Kollimalai, Ellanalli

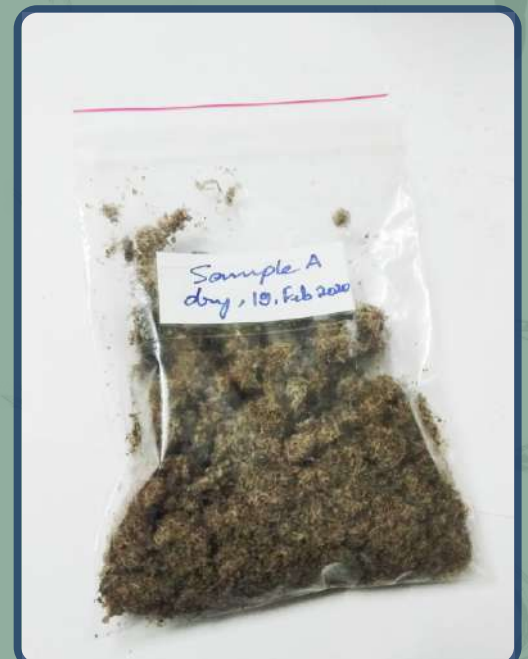


Lokeshkumar with the members of Kurumba tribe at Archidin, Coonoor



The primitive tribes of Nilgiris do consume various life stages of 8 species of insects (*Apis dorsata*, *Apis cerana*, *Apis florea*, *Trigona* sp., *Oecophylla smaragdina*, *Vespa affinis* and *Odontotermes* sp.) from 5 families of 2 insect orders (Hymenoptera and Isoptera). The collection, processing

and cooking methods of the edible insects were documented along with the therapeutic uses on their consumption. The edible insects mentioned by the ethnic people of Nilgiris district were collected, preserved and were taken for taxonomic identification and species authentication. The collected edible insects were also photographed and used for the report. Some ethnic communities in few parts of Tamil Nadu consume edible winged termites as their traditional food. We have documented such practice of an ethnic group inhabiting a village in Villupuram district. Their traditional light trap termite harvesting method was keenly studied along with their processing and cooking methods.



Manufacturing process of the insect food products

# About LIFE Trust India

Since 2013, a group of people informally carrying out social welfare related activities in Andhra Pradesh, later in Southern Tamil Nadu and in the year 2017 the group decided to register it as a registered body. Thus, Living In Fine Environment Trust, India (LIFE Trust-India) was formally registered on 20th September 2017 under Tamil Nadu Trust Registration Act 1963. Since inception LIFE Trust-India has put efforts to achieve some of its aims and activities. The board members in consultation with advisors and experts developed project proposals that fit into the objectives of the trust Bylaws.

Aims and objectives of LIFE Trust - India are: Capacity building, Research and development, Rural development and Public health, Education and Networking.





# Acknowledgment

We like to thank the following people for their generous assistance during the course of the year. Thanks to Mr. Mari, Mr. Allithurai, Mr Mani, Mr. Amul and Mr. Ethayakumar – Madathupatti; Dr. M. Salahudheen, Assistant professor, Department of Zoology, Jamal Mohamed College, Trichy; Mohammed Shahidh; Mr. Singaraja, Rajapalayam; Dr. B. Vasantharaj David, Dr. D. Narasiman, Dr. Sumathi, Dr. Udhayakumar, Dr. Ranjana Jaiswara, Dr. Srinivasan, Mr. Rajalingam; Dr Rajkumar, Mr. Ramachandra and Dr Heidi Riddle, USA for the advice.

# Photo gallery



Snap with tribal childrens



questionnaire survey



Interview with Local villagers



picture a tribal children and their house



Visit to a school for education program

# Collaborators



Arulagam, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu



Society for Nature Conservation,  
Research and Community Engagement



TEESTA - Jalpaiguri, West Bengal

Purulia Forest  
Division, Govt. of West Bengal



Asian Elephant Support, USA

Simultala Conservationists,  
(Foundation for Wildlife),  
Purulia, South Bengal



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Washington, USA