



Interim Report

Alternate Livelihoods for Baiga community through Art & Craft

Kanha Tiger Reserve

Reporting Period - August 2021 – December 2022

Submitted to - Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society



Submitted by -  **LAST**
WILDERNESS *foundation*

Project Team

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Project Details

Reporting period	August 2021 – December 2022	Project title:	Alternate Livelihoods for tribal communities through Art & Craft, Kanha Tiger Reserve
Date of report:	December 2022	Project Manager:	Vidya Venkatesh
Report author:	Vidya Venkatesh, Rishika Dubla	Project Sponsor:	Madhya Pradesh Tiger Foundation Society

Introduction

The Kanha Tiger Reserve (KTR) is one of the largest tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh. Spread across the Maikal Range of the Satpuras, the park spans a total area of over 2000 sq. km and is home to a kaleidoscopic range of ecosystems and biodiversity, such as the Bengal Tiger, leopard, wild dog, sloth bear, jackals, blackbuck and the Gaur.

KTR faces similar pressures to most protected areas: development and infrastructure projects, illegal poaching and wildlife trade, grazing, woodcutting and bushmeat hunting. The park consistently lost populations of prey species like blackbuck and barasingha to poaching. KTR also faces conservation crises in relation to the native Baiga tribe of the park. In order to maintain critical tiger habitat, these tribes, traditionally nomadic hunter-gatherers, were relocated to other areas where they struggled to adjust and thrive. This resulted in not only the tribes resorting to illegal and unsustainable methods of earning a living, but also often resorting to retaliatory killings of tigers and other precious wildlife in the event of conflict interactions.

Therefore, in line with the LWF's aim to achieve landscape-level conservation of India's biodiversity through community conservation practices, an alternative livelihood program was developed in association with the Baiga community of the KTR, which utilizes their traditional jewellery-making skills and culture and establishes it as a legitimate and sustainable form of livelihood. This not only reduces their dependency on limited natural resources of the forest, but also helps to preserve dying cultures and artforms of tribal communities from Central India. LWF hopes to eventually set this up as an independent form of livelihood for this community and potentially replicate this model across other ostracized tribes in the region.

Progress

- Approximately 8 to 10 women from Khatiya and 8 to 10 women from the Mukki areas have been involved in the alternative livelihood program established in Kanha Tiger Reserve.
- A training program was conducted in October/November 2021 to provide selected women with the training necessary to create the products and fine-tune their traditional skills. A trainer, Ankita Roy-Assistant Professor, Department of Design, IIT Hyderabad was invited to provide the training and instruct women on how to optimize their skills. Following this, two follow-up trainings were also conducted by the LWF team to ensure quality management, identify any logistical or manufacturing issues, and act as refreshers trainings for the women. The main purpose of these follow-ups was to also provide the women with training on how

to run this program independently with local businesses and wholesalers so as to minimize third-party involvement and maximize the profits directly earned by the women.

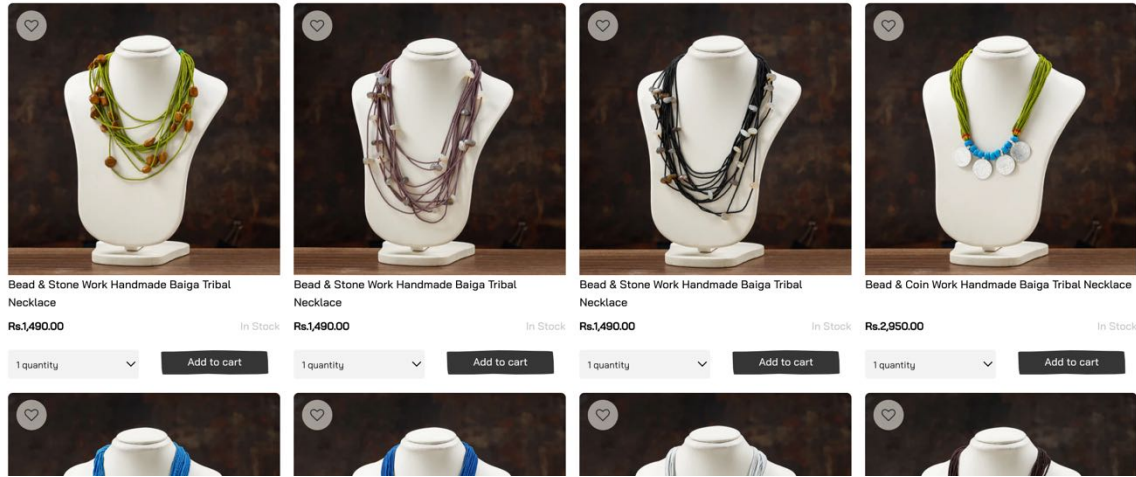


- The women have developed a range of products to provide enough options for buyers, with more planned for future development. Product catalog is provided in Appendix 1.
- Till date, the program has resulted in the production and sale of more than 150-200 pieces, with profits of over INR 50,000 to several local and pan-India businesses, such as Baiga Haat in Lagma Village and iTokri (online portal), as well as individual buyers and tourists. The program currently supports 4 villages (In addition to the 2 villages on the Mukki side, 2 villages from the Khatiya area have been added viz. Manegaon and Khatia). As designs are different across the two regions, each one serves as a promotional banner for the other site for tourists and businesses alike, thus doubling the potential benefits in the region for both regions. The women also travel to resorts and hotels and provide in-person workshops for tourists where products can be customized as per their preferences, creating a unique hands-on experience. Furthermore, popularity of the products through on-ground and social media promotions have also increased interest in other alternative livelihood programs being run in the region, creating a feedback loop to better enable these communities to reduce their dependency on forest resources.

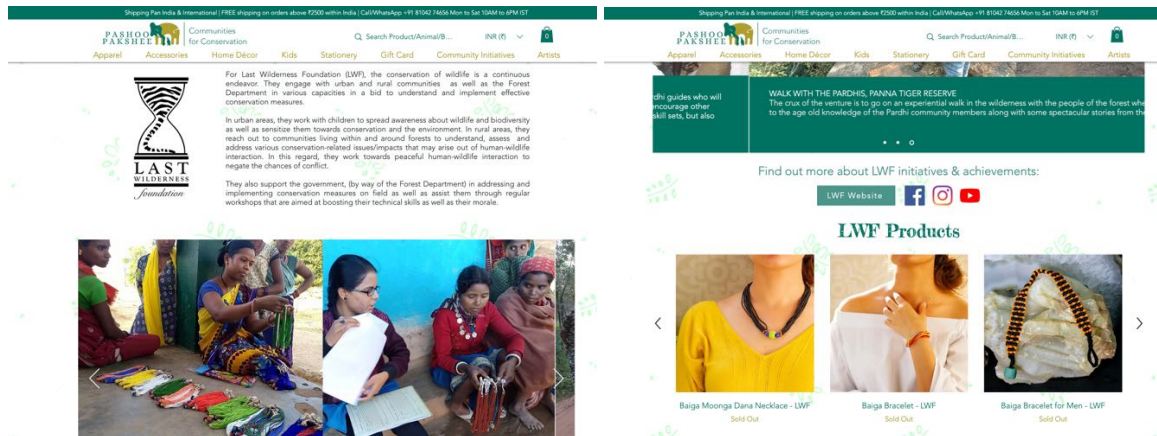
Baiga tribal jewelry
Classic and Versatile

Necklaces Bracelets

Showing 49 Results



Baiga jewellery listed on <https://www.itokri.com/>



Baiga jewellery listed on <https://www.pashoopakshee.com>

- Additionally, under the National Rural Livelihood Mission government scheme, 2 Self Help Groups have been formed for the groups of women from the two regions, and corresponding bank accounts have also been established.
- Strong support from the Forest Department has also significantly contributed to the success of the project; Forest Guard Anita Marko from Khatiya and Range Officer Smt. Sita Jamra from Mukki have been instrumental in helping with on-ground coordination and logistics of the program. Both are in charge, for their respective areas, of documentations, book-keeping, coordinating with couriers and deliveries of raw materials and finished products, and ensuring timely payments for the women.

Challenges

- The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic last year strongly hindered progress in the project due to quarantines and social gathering restrictions. However, as these restrictions have been lifted, the project has swiftly picked up pace and is on track as per its objectives.
- The women also earn a livelihood through farming practices and a clash of commitments does arise when orders come in at the same time as planting or harvesting season comes around. The team are in the process of understanding the commitments and time-restrictions, as well as brainstorming contingencies such as stockpiling for these periods to overcome this challenge.



- At the initial stages of the project, urgent orders could not be completed as the process involved first waiting for orders and then buying raw materials. However, as the success of the project has grown, seed money and part of the profits have been used to stockpile raw materials so that orders can be immediately completed. As the project stands, the women are now able to complete urgent orders in a few days compared with nearly a month as per the previous model, and there are enough raw materials stored to facilitate immediate urgent orders.
- A regular issue being faced is with regard to the couriering of raw materials to the women. Currently, wholesalers do not have the extensive reach required to quickly mail and provide raw materials to the women and the invaluable help of the Forest Department is required, who take courier deliveries and then transport them further to their final destination. The

team are considering possible solutions to this issue in joint dialogue with wholesalers, local businesses, and the Forest Department.

- At present, one of the products that had been planned to be introduced is on hold as the particular stone selected to be used is out of stock. This exemplifies a bigger issue where the women are still reliant on third-party involvement in sourcing raw materials and coordinating the logistical aspects of the project. The LWF team hopes to continue trainings and dialogue with the women to eventually show them the ropes and make them completely independent and self-reliant in all aspects of the project, from manufacturing to transport, sourcing materials, promotion, and product development.



Future Plans

The LWF team will be visiting the Baiga women in Jan to Mar 2023 for completion of the following:

- Streamlining courier service for raw materials and product delivery
- Training women to become more independent in the logistical and management aspects of the products
- Continue on-ground and social media promotions of the products and tourist-activities, such as the workshops
- Partnering with more brands and portals for better market coverage
- Building capacity locally for accepting orders and processing the same

FUNDS UTILISATION SUMMARY

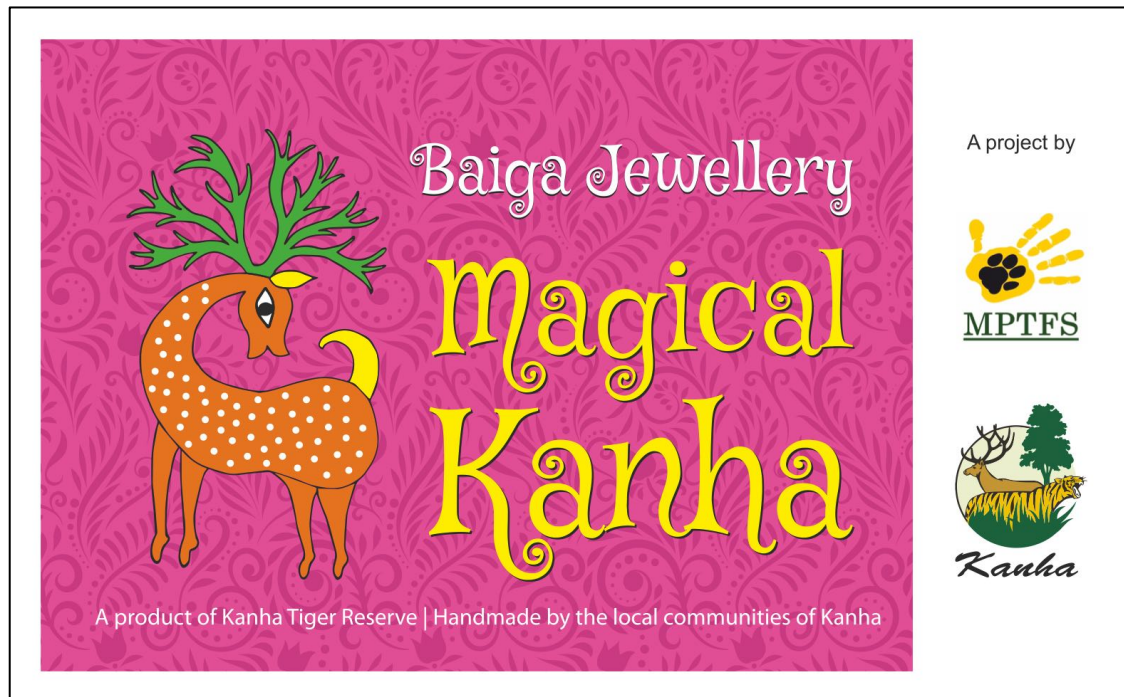
Alternate Livelihood for Tribal Communities Through Art & Craft Project

Sanctioned Amount			350,000.00
Date	Party	Particular	Amount
04-Oct-21	Kanha Tiger Reserve	Baiga Jewellery Training	50,000.00
22-Oct-21	Imran Khan	Baiga Jewellery Training	10,500.00
22-Oct-21	Last Wilderness Foundation	Raw Materials for Baiga Jewellery Training	11,458.00
16-Nov-21	Kanha Tiger Reserve	Kanha TR for Baiga Jewellery Training	38,177.00
11-Jan-22	Shyamlal Radhakrishna and Co	Purchase of Baiga Jewellery beads (Raw material)	16,236.00
20-Aug-22	G Mahavir Digital	Baiga Jewellery Project for Brochures, Tent card, Colour Printout & Stickers	12,567.00
20-Aug-22	Siddhesh Narayan Shinde	Baiga Jewellery Project for Baiga Card & Stickers	3,540.00
02-Nov-22	Shyamlal Radhakrishna and Co	Purchase of Baiga Jewellery beads (Raw material)	17,772.00
01-Dec-22	Shyamlal Radhakrishna and Co	Purchase of Baiga Jewellery beads (Raw material)	4878.00
		Total Expenditure	165,128.00
		Balance Amount (Sanctioned)	184,872.00

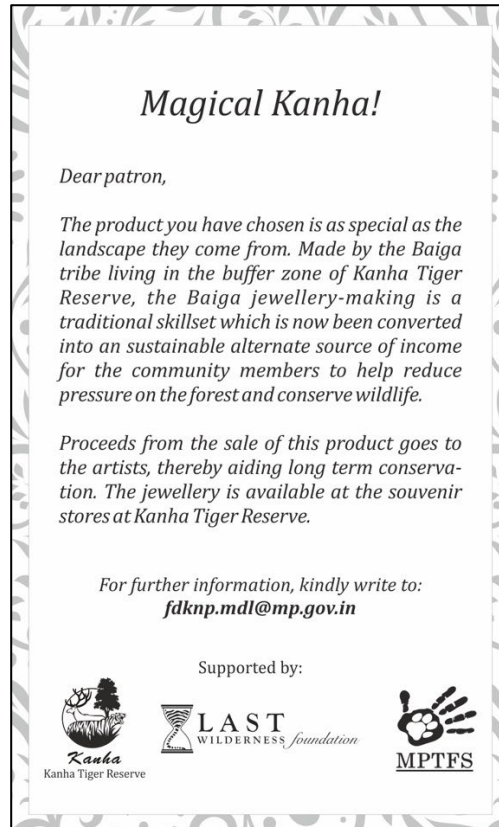
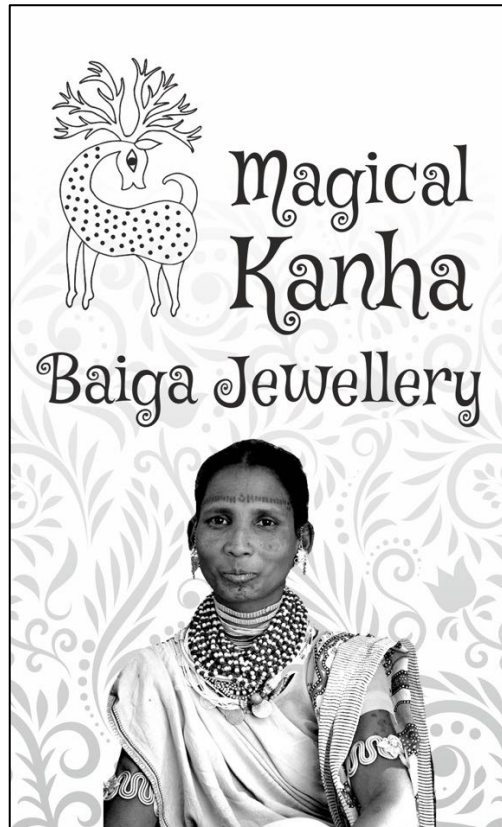


Appendices

Appendix 1: BAIGA JEWELLERY PACKAGING STICKER



Appendix 2: INFORMATION CARD



Appendix 3: TENT CARD

Magical Kanha!

Dear patron,

The product you have chosen is as special as the landscape they come from. Made by the Baiga tribe living in the buffer zone of Kanha Tiger Reserve, the Baiga Jewellery-making is a traditional skillset which is now being converted into a sustainable alternate source of income for the community members to help reduce pressure on the forest and conserve wildlife.

Proceeds from the sale of this product goes to the artists thereby aiding long term conservation. The jewellery is available at the souvenir stores at Kanha Tiger Reserve.

For further information, kindly write to: conservation@thewilderness.org

Sponsored by:








Magical Kanha

Baiga Jewellery

Appendix 4: BAIGA JEWELLERY CATALOGUE

Baiga Jewellery Catalogue



The delicate art of crafting traditional jewellery by the Baigas






The Baiga are an ethnic group found in central India primarily in the state of Madhya Pradesh. The largest number of Baiga is found in Baiga-chuk in Mandla district and Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh.

Last Wilderness Foundation, in association with the Kanha Forest Department, works with close to 40 women across three villages for the Baiga livelihood project.



₹800 Sarai

For orders: conservation@thewilderness.org





₹800 Sarai

For orders: conservation@thewilderness.org






The Baiga Jewellery initiative is aimed at preserving the Baiga culture and to reduce their dependence on the forests by empowering them to start their own entrepreneurial ventures.



₹800 Sarai

For orders: conservation@thewilderness.org





₹700
Jhalar

For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org



Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha

The Baiga Jewellery initiative is not only aimed at conservation of wildlife & forests, but also to preserve this dying art of jewellery-making. This initiative has helped in the younger generation and the men folk of this community to learn this art.



₹950
Single coin Athani

For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org



₹700
Maharani

For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org



Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha

Baiga tribes sing various folk songs and dances in groups. Amongst many other dance forms, Karma and Salla dance forms are the most commonly seen in this landscape.



₹600
Moonga Dana

For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org





₹300.00
Unisex Bracelet
For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha



Tribals, particularly the Baigas, are very passionate about their culture, and wearing self-made cultural ornaments using cowries, shells, bones, metals and wood has been a long standing tradition.
In the Baiga's, both men and women have imbibed these tattoos and the cultural Jewellery as part of their physical and spiritual décor.



₹700
Rajmata
For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha



₹1,650
3 Coin Athani
For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha



Each layer of the jewellery that the Baiga women wear has a different name viz. Moonga Dana, Athhani (silver coin), Bichola (choker) etc.



₹300
Multicolor Bracelet
For orders: conservation@thelastwilderness.org

Baiga Jewellery
Magical Kanha



Our tribes are our living heritage, and these ethnic tribes have managed to keep alive the original formats of the Indian culture, tradition including the traditional Indian Jewellery designs. Jewellery made using bone, wood, clay, shells and crude metal, by tribals, is not only attractive, but also holds a distinct rustic and earthy charm.

By purchasing the products from this catalogue, you will be supporting the Baiga community who live in the buffer areas of Kanha Tiger Reserve.

Thank you

Community partner

LAST WILDERNESS Foundation

A project by

MPTFS Kanha

End of Report