

## The Rufford Foundation

### Final Report

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Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

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Grant Recipient Details	
<b>Your name</b>	Prasanjeet Yadav
<b>Project title</b>	How to manage exotic timber plantations in the natural Shola forest-grassland matrix on sky islands in the Western Ghats.
<b>RSG reference</b>	17049-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	March 2016 ( Extension was granted after request)
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5000
<b>Your email address</b>	Prasenjeet88@gmail.com
<b>Date of this report</b>	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2017

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
1) Assemble information and collate perceptions of different stakeholders on removal of exotic plantations and shola-grasslands management.				Over the period of last 18 months, we ended up conversing with multiple stakeholders, conservation scientists and managers from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka state regarding their perception towards removal of exotic plantations from Shola Grassland landscape. Most of these interviews were video/ audio recorded for the project purposes. After these interviews, we realised that the plantation related scenario is very different in all these states and will require lot more understanding of the system and each location will require a unique management strategy.
Script development for creating a story on management of these grasslands				This was a constant process during the entire course of project. The script kept modifying as and when new inputs were gathered from scientists and managers regarding the project
Filming/ photographing for the story				Nilgiri hills, Palni hills and Anamalai hills landscape was documented as part of this project. Filming was done over time of the project to get footage of plantations as well as pristine shola-grassland landscape.
Post-production of the story (Writing, recording, editing etc.)				The short film is under post production now. As the script kept developing and changing the assembling of the final film got delayed. We hope to have a final film ready by end of April

				2017
Create awareness about loss of Shola grasslands landscape and explain it's importance to communities and other stake holders				Over the last 18 months, we managed to engage with the larger community explaining the importance of these last remain shola grasslands. We manage to explain this in form of workshops, photo talks, discussions and meetings. In this, the information that we had collated from all the conservation scientists was shared with the people to explain the issues and misconceptions regarding plantations. ( Images attached)
Screening of film				We plan to screen the film at decided locations once we get the final film ready.

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

At the beginning of the project, we had not anticipated that each location will have totally different management challenges. Initially, we were focussing on explaining that the established plantations are not causing any harm and they in turn are actually nursing the young shola trees but eventually after speaking to scientists we realised that it's the grasslands that are under threat and their conservation should be prioritised.

Getting permits to certain locations took way longer than we expected but due to our collaborations with forest department, we managed to get those eventually.

Weather conditions turned out to be lot more unpredictable than thought. Few trips were totally unproductive due to extreme rains. This was tackled by asking for extension and re doing those field trips.

**3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

- One of the key outcomes of this project was the strong engagement with forest department.
- We used photos and videos taken from this project to engage with Forest Department officials of different states in public and private presentations of the issues at hand. The addition of the visual component (from this project)

greatly added value and helped persuade the forest department towards conservation action.

- At present the Kodaikanal Forest Division has agreed to participate in grassland restoration efforts at two sites. This will be commenced in 2017-2018.
- The forest officers at Nilgiris are very positive about participating in conservation action and have encouraged our team to conduct a follow-up study.
- We managed to facilitate and be part of workshops where we had a dialogue with the forest departments and other managers of two of three states. These workshops were attended by many NGOs, plantations owners and conservationists and the workshops were concluded with the intent to shift conservation focus from shola forests and plantations to recovery of grasslands
- As part of this project, the Shola forest and grasslands from entire southern Western Ghats were documented and the media produced is made available to others for creating awareness about this landscape
- We also managed to reach out to a large number of people to explain the importance of this landscape and these high elevation grasslands.

**4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefited from the project (if relevant).**

Although this was not our goal but as part of this project, we managed to share our produced media with local NGOs and restoration practitioners to equip them with visual evidence to support their cause of grassland conservation.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes, we plan to finish our objective of completing this film and share it with the larger audience. We also hope to engage with policy makers to put forward the issues of grassland conservation.

Ideally the process of restoration that has been initiated as a partial outcome of this project needs to be documented

Once the film gets ready, we might want to explore possibilities for a follow up grant to conduct more workshops with forest department and policy makes with the help of scientists and conservationists.

**6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

We have already shared a lot of work in public platforms. We managed to reach out to a large audience through workshops, conservation talks, photo talks etc. at local, national (WWF India, INK India, NCBS, Nature India, Kerala Forest department, Tamil Nadu forest department etc.) as well as international platforms ( Banff, Telluride, National Geographic, American Embassy at Indonesia, Stanford university and University of Missouri).

This story about the conservation and sciences of this unique shola grassland landscape won Banff photo essay competition in 2016 LINK. The story is currently travelling around the world with the Banff world tour. This conservation story was presented at the National Geographic headquarters in Washington DC and we are discussing with them to share our story on their platform. This was also presented at the Telluride film festival which is a hub for screening of conservation films from around the world.

**7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The grant was used over the period of 18 months. We ended up extending our project by 8 months due to delays in permits and bad filming conditions. The necessary extension was granted by the Rufford program officer after our request.

**8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Per diem for student	1800	1800	0	
Field assistant	120	150	+30	We ended up doing more trips than expected due to bad weather
Bus travel	100	150	+50	We ended up doing more trips than expected due to bad weather
Food & Accommodation	600	600	0	
Field vehicle hiring	0	130	+130	Apart from our collaborators contribution, we had to hire field

				vehicle at few instances
Fuel	576	600	+24	
4K camera	900	750	-150	We managed to hire the camera at lower price
Tripod	0	0	0	Collaborator contributed
Nikon Batteries	100	100	0	
Studio charges for narration	300	300	0	
Narrator charges	200	100	-100	Narrator agreed to lower the price for this story
Stationary	134	134	0	
Telephone and Internet	120	120	0	
Postage and Freight	50	80	+30	We invested more money in safer delivery services because it involved transporting hard drives.
<b>Total</b>	<b>5000</b>	<b>5014</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Difference paid by project leader</b>

### 9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?

The next step would be to reach out to policy makers and educate them about the problems that these managers and restoration practitioners are facing today. It's very difficult to restore the grasslands so the next important step would be to safeguard the existence of the remaining grasslands and save them from invasive plantations wherever possible.

We also plan to present this information to law-makers of the states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu such that when matters related to this habitat come up in court, they may be better informed.

### 10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The Rufford logo was used in talks and workshops at the following locations

1. INTACH meeting, Kodhaikanal
2. Kodhaikanal International School
3. Bee Museum, Ooty
4. Rangoli Metro & Art Centre, Bangalore
5. Forest department, Munnar
6. St. Theresa Collage, Kochi
7. Forest Department Headquarters, Trivandrum
8. WWF India, Delhi

9. Nature India, Delhi
10. National Geographic Society ( Washington DC)
11. Telluride Mountain Film Festival, Colorado
12. Stanford university, SFO
13. University of Missouri, Missouri
14. Bogor Agriculture University, Jakarta
15. @America, Jakarta
16. UNAS, Jakarta
17. Banff Mountain Film Festival, Canada
18. National Centre for Biological Sciences

Along with this, the photo exhibition of Grasslands conservation story was assembled at Telluride & Banff where Rufford was acknowledged. The Rufford foundation logo will also reflect in the final version of the short documentary film

**11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.**

- Prasenjeet Yadav was the team leader and his key role was to photo/video document the entire story and assemble as short film on the grassland conservation issue. His role was also to establish a communication between all the grassland conservationists and restoration practitioners and to create awareness about this issue at National level.
- Dr V. V. Robin was one of the team members whose role was to help collate information from all the stake holders from all the three states. He also played a vital role in acquiring permits and engaging with the government officials.
- Robert Stewart and Tanya Balcar, Vattakanal Conservation Trust: Conducted forest and grassland restoration in the Nilgiris and Kodaikanal for over 20 years. They played a key role in providing inputs on the story from their decades of experience. They were the key reason why this conversation/project was initiated.