

The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

Final Report

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

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	JAY MAZOOMDAAR
Project title	Documenting the impact of the Forest Rights Act* on India's prime forest areas through a series of field reports in the national media and a web archive (* The Act recognises land rights of communities inside forests)
RSG reference	1. Peter Jackson, former chair IUCN CAT specialist Group 2. Paul Kvinta, Contributing Editor, National Geographic magazines 3. Late Fateh Singh Rathore, conservationist 4. Dr Rajesh Gopal, member-secretary, NTCA (formerly Project Tiger), Govt of India
Reporting period	One Year
Amount of grant	£5865.
Your email address	jaymazoomdaar@gmail.com
Date of this report	23 June, 2010

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
Cover six locations for field studies				More than six locations were covered during the project
Highlighting the diverse ground realities as case studies Publishing all the field reports in mainstream national media				The project areas were chosen after meticulous homework/recce such that each field report explores a unique facet of the issue.
Publishing all the field reports in mainstream national media				Published as a designated series by Open magazine
Creating a website with the field reports and other resources				http://tnt.net.in
Involving and empowering local communities				While this objective was fully achieved at most locations, the success was limited in insurgency-ridden areas
Influencing policies and help mid-course correction				The full impact of the reports will unfold in weeks and months to come but some reports have already been utilised by different stakeholders.

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

Two unforeseen issues came up while implementing the project. First, the dynamics of rights settlement and relocation is an ongoing process. To be on top of the evolving field developments in different project areas, I had to make multiple trips in a few cases and/or update my reports. This shot up the expenditure and also caused substantial delay. The publication schedules in the mainstream media are always flexible and negotiating this factor also resulted in some delay. Besides, I suffered a cervical condition in 2010 that kept me away from fieldwork for a few months. While I did not allow these factors to compromise the quality of work, the project got extended by a few months.

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

First, the series of field reports highlighted that a one-size-fits-all central Acts cannot tackle challenges as varied as large-scale encroachment in Assam to the survival of an ancient tribe in Karnataka. It raised questions if poor forest dwellers could assert their rights against a wily bureaucracy or keep the army of manipulative forces at bay.

Secondly, issues came up in mainstream media with vital inputs for policy decisions and mid-course corrections.

Thirdly, a comprehensive website came up with reports and resources as pulse of this issues and may over time encourage more such groundwork in the mainstream media.

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

Local communities in each project area were deeply involved with the study work. In places such as Orissa and Karnataka, the local communities used the field reports in their fight for rights. Also, the communities benefited during thorough interactions they had with the project team that enhanced their understanding of rights, laws, government notifications, conservation imperatives and other relevant issues.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The impact of the field reports resulted in many requests from affected communities and forest officials to conduct similar field studies in their areas. I am committed to continue the work to study this evolving process that has immense significance for ecological and tribal rights. The early response to the project website (<http://tnt.net.in>) has been very encouraging and highlights the need to enhance the resource base and carry out regular field studies. I intend to continue the work and hope to secure a second RSG for the purpose.

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

The website (<http://tnt.net.in>) is an integral part of the project and the reports/resources are being already used by members of local communities, the media, rights and conservation activists, forest officials and policy think tanks.

7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The RSG was used over about 22 months. This is 10 months longer than anticipated. The actual length of the project was nearly 24 months.

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
Stay and food	£ 1,050	£ 1,300	£ 250	Extra field days
Air/train travel & field transport	£ 2,160	£ 2,950	£ 790	Extra trips and field days
Field transport Web development/ Stationary /transmission etc.	£ 625	£ 600	- £ 25	Incidental
Photo/video documentation	£ 680	£ 150	- £ 530	I doubled up as photographer and avoided video

				documentation to keep the cost down
Per diem (6 months)	£ 1350	£ 865	-£ 485	To compensate for the extra cost incurred in the project
Total	£ 5,865	£ 5,865		

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

Given the issue has been unfolding in diverse field realities, the most important step is to covering as much ground as quickly as possible. The project website should be constantly enhanced and expanded to serve as the pulse of this massive social and ecological churning. The process should eventually be able to encourage others in the mainstream media to report these issues closely and extensively.

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

I used the RSG logo in the project website (HOME and ABOUT page). This reaches streams of visitors to the website (<http://tnt.net.in>).

11. Any other comments?

The proposed timeline of the project was a little unrealistic. This experience will help in the second phase of the project that should span about 15 months.