

Reintroduction of Cheetah in India





Historically, Asiatic cheetahs had a very wide distribution in India extending from Gujarat passing through Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jarkhand and Odisha in the south till Tamil Nadu. Approximately 7,000 cheetahs are remaining in 9% of their global range. In order to revive the past glories and to restore the grassland habitats, the Government of India has decided to introduce the Cheetah, the only large carnivore species that went extinct in Independent India. The cheetahs for release into the selected sites in India would be sourced from the African continent populations depending on the suitability and continued availability of animals. The international endeavour will not only strengthen the efforts for global conservation of the Cheetah but also the reestablishment of this species in its historical age.

From the 10 potential sites evaluated for the feasibility of establishing cheetah populations in India, the Kuno National Park in the state of Madhya Pradesh was considered as suitable site for Cheetah introduction.

The objectives of the reintroduction of Cheetahs are as follows:

- I. Re-establish the functional role of the Cheetah in representative ecosystems within its historical range. Here the cheetah will serve as a flagship to save not only its prey-base, but also other endangered species of the grassland and semi-arid ecosystems. Resources invested in these highly exploited and neglected systems will ensure better management and restore their ecosystem services for the country.
- II. Contribute to the global effort towards conservation of the Cheetah as species.
- III. Additionally, Cheetah introduction is likely to improve and enhance the livelihood options and economies of the local communities.

Under the guidance of Ministry of Environment and Forest Climate Change, Government of India, Gujarat Cleaner Production Centre (GCPC)-ENVIS Resource Partner is part of a drive to sensitize the young minds on “Reintroduction of Cheetah in India”.

The drive is one of the initiatives taken-up as “Cheetah: A fastest terrestrial flagship species” is being reintroduced in India to rekindle the ecological dynamics of the landscape. This drive involved conducting workshop/interactive session using videos, posters, activity sheets and other aids with the school children.

To support the initiative, GCPC-ENVIS RP team under the guidance of Dr. Bharat Jain, Member Secretary, GCPC and Project Coordinator, GCPC-ENVIS RP conducted the events at certain schools in Gandhinagar. Moreover, GCPC-ENVIS RP team including Dr. Khushboo Bhavsar (Programme Officer), Ms. Priyanka Joshi (Information Officer), Ms. Divya Prajapati (IT Expert) and Mr. Nikunj Choksi (Assistant Project Engineer) conducted sessions both in English as well as Gujarati language for the better understanding of the concept.

The series of sessions were successfully accomplished for the students of 6th, 7th and 8th standard at the schools namely, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Vidyavihar (Government Pay-centre Central School) on 14th September, 2022; Shri J. M. Chaudhari English Medium School, Shri J. M. Chaudhary Sarvajanic Prathmik Vidyalaya on 15th September, 2022; Swami Vivekanand Vidhya Vihar and Government Primary School, Pethapur on 16th September, 2022 at various locations of Gandhinagar.

The events were initiated by Ms. Priyanka with the identification activity of cheetah from other animals and followed by showing the children video on history and reintroduction of Cheetah in India. In addition, Dr. Khushboo explained the children about the physical appearance (spots, size of the face, tail, etc), habitat and hunting patterns, basic facts of cheetah including the prey animals, distribution of the animal world-wide and importance of reintroduction in India most desired one to be the revival of grasslands/bushlands and the imbalanced food chain. Lastly, the event was wrapped up with the poster presentation by the team members.

Overall, 995 students were sensitized by GCPC-ENVIS RP team. Principals as well as the teachers of all the schools were supportive and took a keen interest for the effective completion of the motive.

Date	Name of School	Total Students Participated
14/9/22	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Vidyamandir, Gandhinagar	120
15/9/22	Shri J.M. Chaudhari English Medium, Gandhinagar	115
15/9/22	Shri J.M. Chaudhari Sarvajanic Prathmik Vidyalaya, Gandhinagar	445
16/9/22	Govt. Primary School, Pethapur	200
16/9/22	Swami Vivekananda Vidya Vihar, Gandhinagar	115
Total		995



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