

Ethics and Conservation



Vivek Menon

Executive Director & CEO, Wildlife Trust of India
Chair, AsESG, IUCN SSC
Sr. Advisor to President, IFAW

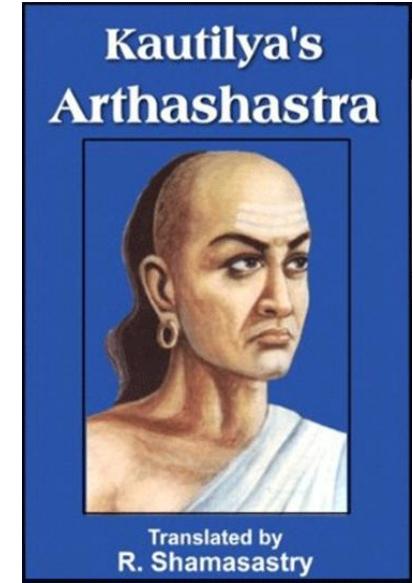
A thought for us to consider today

- The decision “to conserve” depends on societal values, attitudes & objectives...in short, on ethical choices.
- Societal values, attitudes & objectives (and needs) vary from place to place & from time to time.

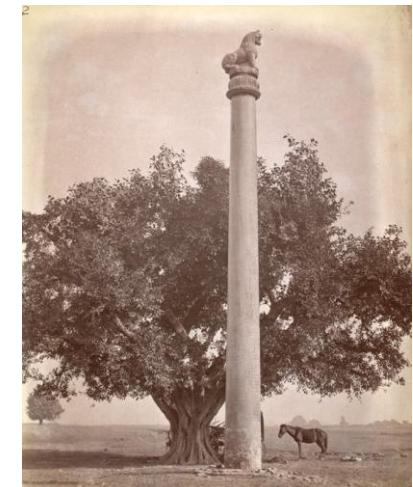
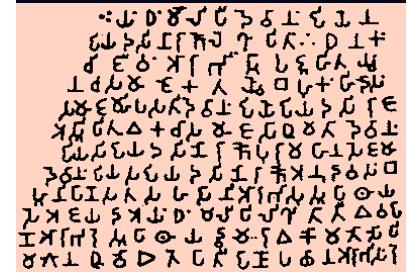
Worcester; Lynn; Menon & Lavigne 2014

Conservation in Ancient India

- The first PA in the world is not the Yellowstone National Park, USA (1872)
 - The 1822 British Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle is not the first animal protection law of the world
 - The Gajavanas of Arthashastra by Kautilya (300 BCE) were the first mapped out PAs in the world. 2300 years ago!
 - The edicts of Asoka the Great (272-231 BC), were the first wildlife and animal welfare laws of the world

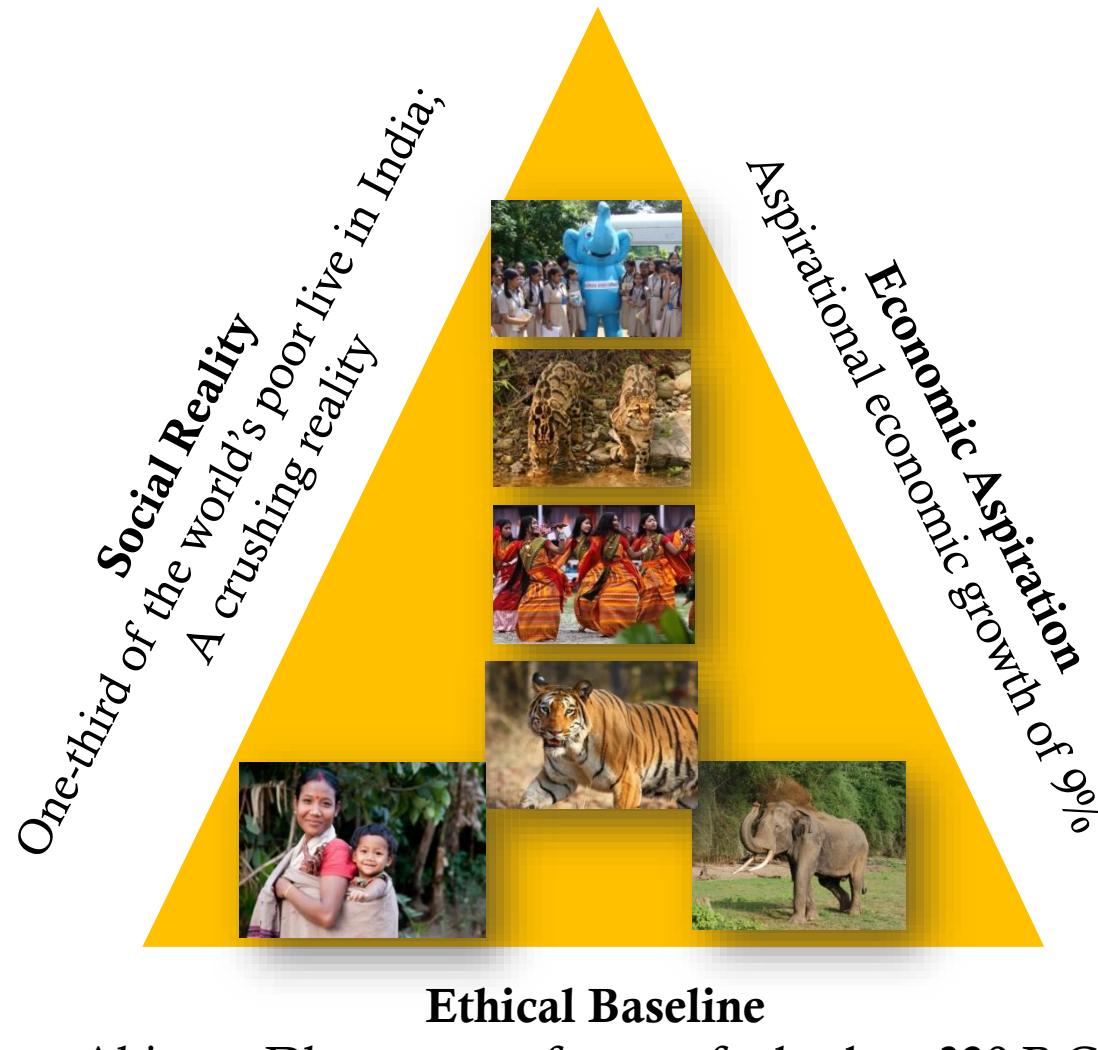


Translated by
R. Shamasrastry



Conservation reality in today's India

A triangular paradigm of conservation



(Menon, 2013)

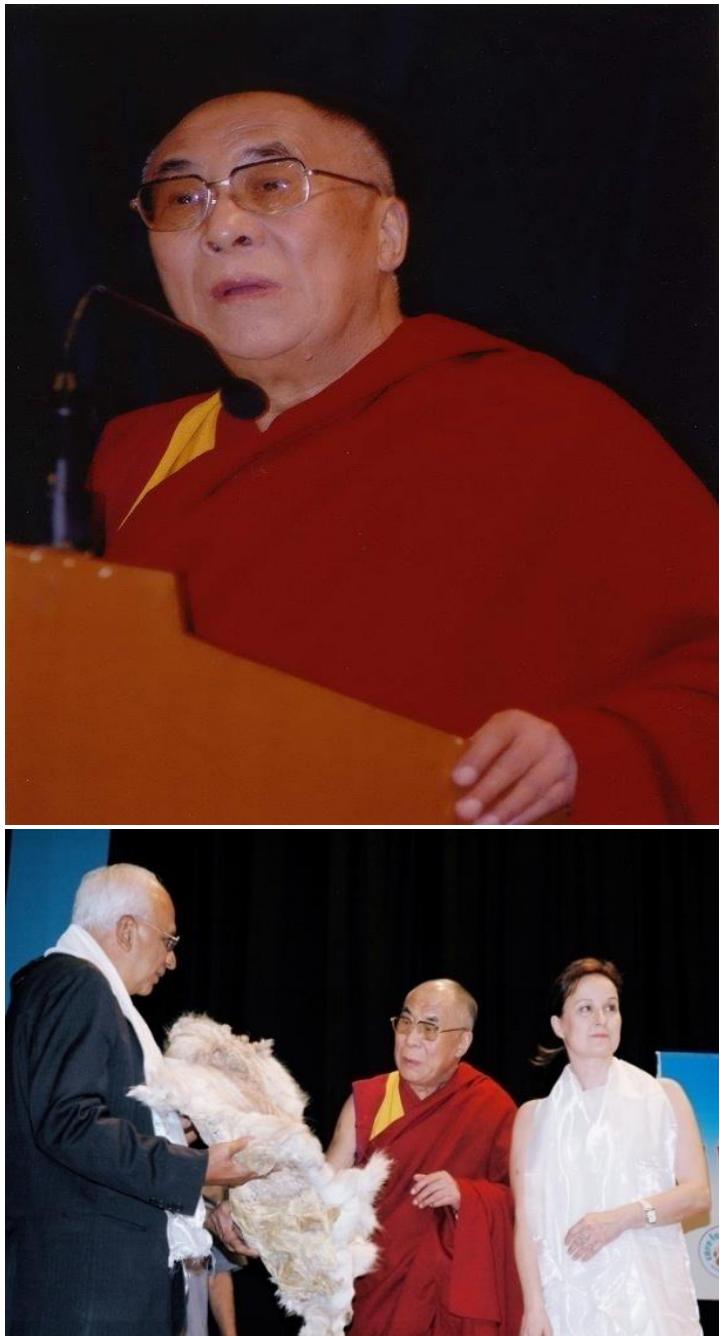
Example I – The Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign



Tibetans believed wearing wild animal skin as their traditional dress, (Chuba) is a symbol of bravery



A majority of wildlife seizures in Northern India had Tibetan connections to the illegal wildlife trade



In April 2005, Tibetan Conservation Awareness Campaign (TCAC) was launched by Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) and Care for the Wild International (CWI) with the blessings of His Holiness The Dalai Lama to spread awareness on endangered wildlife in Tibetan communities all over India



A National campaign among the faithful started up



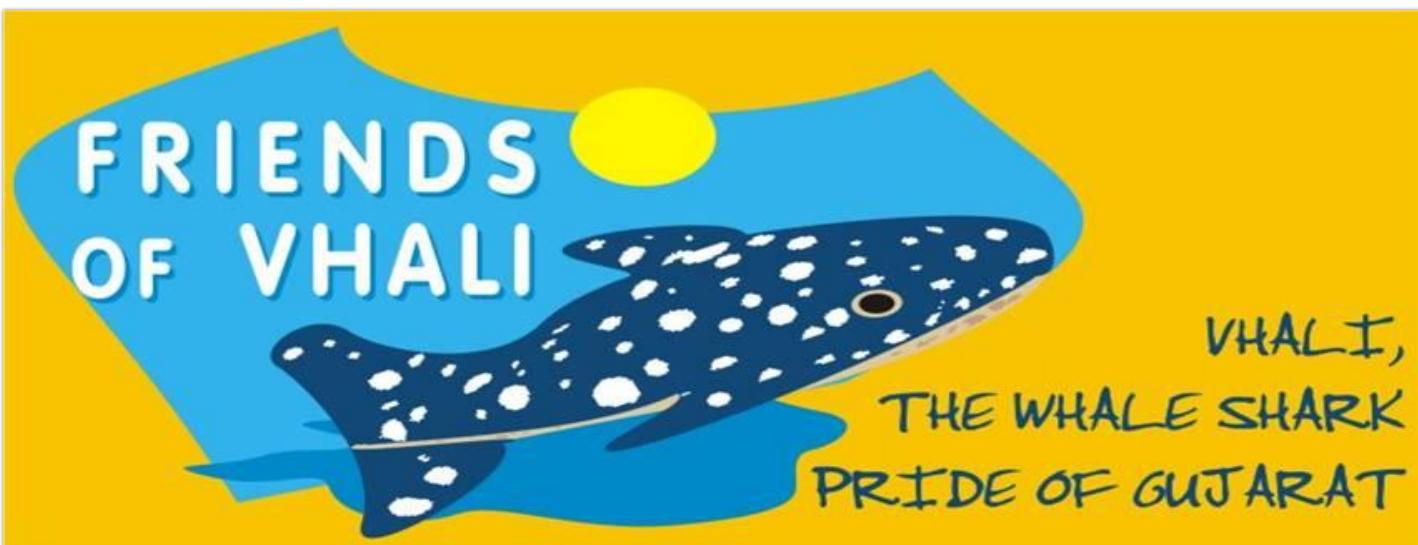
February 2006

Thousands of Tibetan in India, Nepal and Tibet burnt their animal skin chubas as a result of the campaign



Example II

Turning the Tide: Saving the world's largest fish

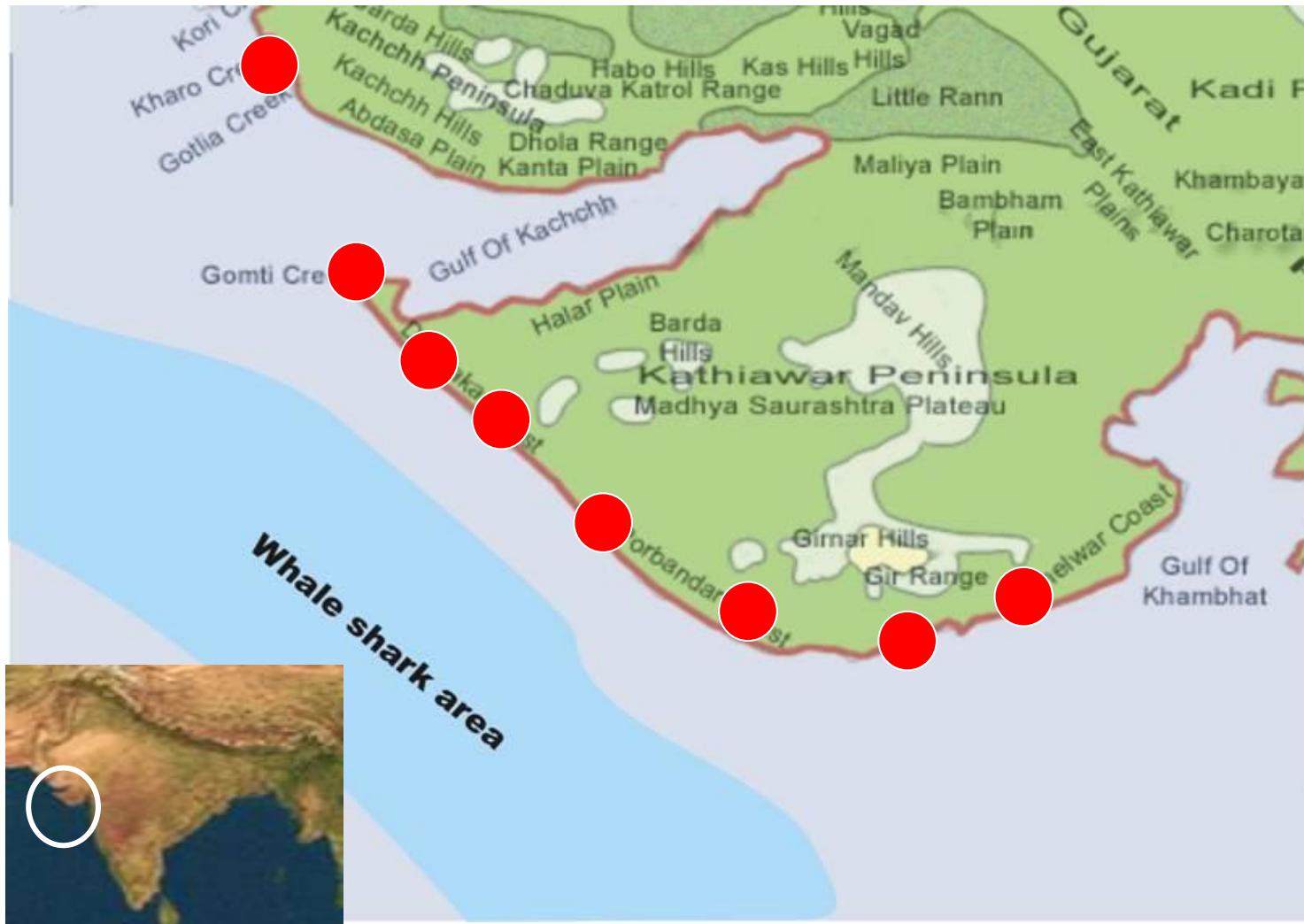


Wildlife
Trust
of India



Whale Shark Range along the Gujarat Coast

Fishing towns and villages where whale sharks were harvested prior to 2001



Blood on the beach

Many fish-workers from villages along the Gujarat coast near Dwarka, Veraval, Rupen and Okha were engaged in hunting of whale sharks

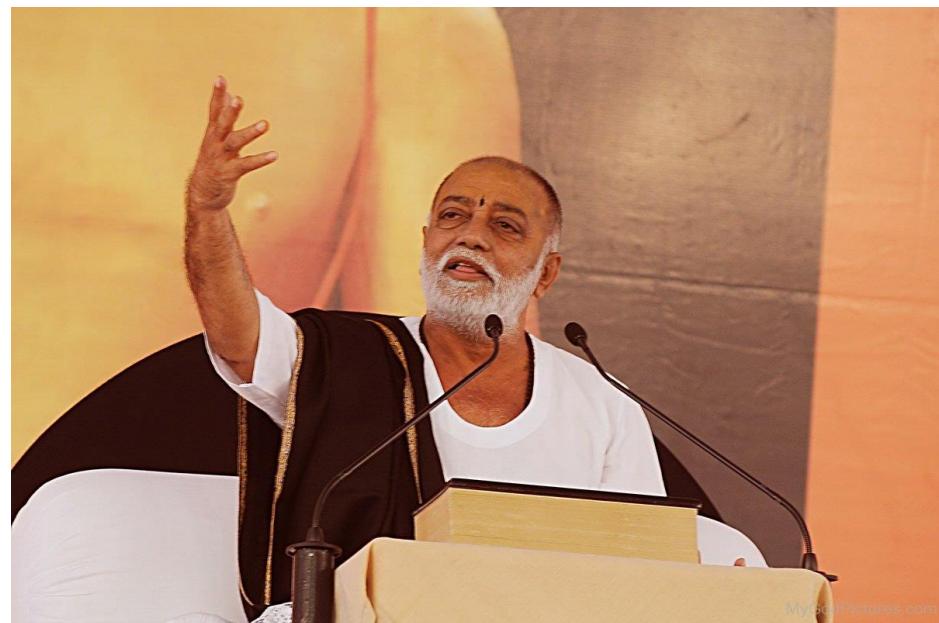


2001-2009: The Wins...

- In 2001, Whale Shark was the first fish to be protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972
- In 2002, the Whale Shark was listed under Appendix II of CITES (India was a co-proponent with the Philippines)



2002: Social reformer and guru Morari Bapu takes on the cause of the shark, terming killing it, deicide: The killing stops instantly



A mass campaign engages the entire state



The Wins – Vhali's young supporters



The Wins...the biggest of them all



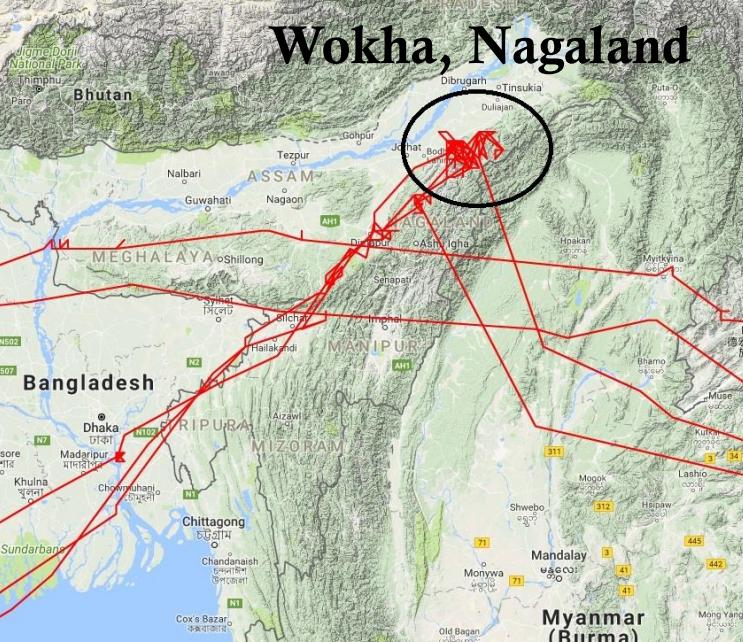
Releases of Whale sharks
begin, within a year of the campaign's start

Example III: Amur falcon (*Falco amurensis*)



An autumn migrant to India, Amur falcon undertakes an incredibly long journey from parts of Russia and China, all the way across Asia, over the Indian Ocean to their wintering grounds in Southern Africa.

Wokha, Nagaland

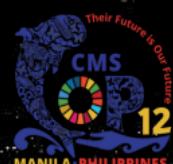


Amur falcon migratory route

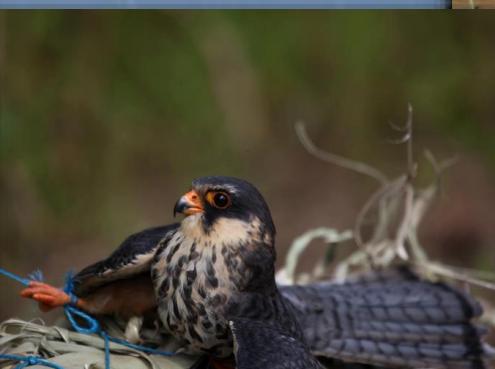


Doyang reservoir Nagaland

“Falcon capital of the world”



In 2012, large scale hunting of Amur falcons (over 100,000 killed annually) was highlighted





Wildlife Trust of India (WTI) collaborated with Nagaland Forest department, local conservation bodies and most importantly the Baptist Church and the community



Hunters Turned Protectors

– 24x7 watch squad formed (and equipped) from within the hunters to patrol the roosting sites during the migratory season

Conservation Impact

As a result of this multi-pronged, approach including several NGOs, State government, Village councils... and critically the Church

Ensured ZERO mortality of Amur falcons during the last 3 roosting seasons in Doyang, Nagaland



But when we talk ethics, remember.....

Conservation is not a dilemma between science, ethics and morals...its ethics itself that is a dilemma. Science is the same in different countries but ethics is not. In the ethics world there are so many different schools of thought and there are dilemmas among them. Different countries have different moral standards and they too have a dilemma.

paraphrasing Prof. Zhao Nanyuan

Qing Hua University

China

Thank you. In India,
anything is possible

