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“Development on the margin”

## Managing Kaziranga as a Tiger Reserve: A Landscape Perspective

PHUONG HOANG THI

*Georg-August Universität Göttingen, Tropical and International Forestry, Germany*

### Abstract

Kaziranga National Park, Assam in the Brahmaputra floodplains has been managed for the endangered Greater One Horned Indian Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*) since its establishment. Recently the park along with adjacent managed forests and other lands has been declared as a Tiger Reserve as newly demarcated landscape harbors a considerable population of tiger. This study attempts to assess the relevance, adequacy and appropriateness of the landscape management approach adopted for conservation of tiger in the region. The methodology included reconnaissance of the area, review of literature, visit to representative sites and field verification, and interaction with forest/park officials. Study reviewed landscape boundaries, adequacy and management of core, buffer and other areas including corridors, habitat conditions, distribution and abundance of Tiger, its prey and co-predators. An understanding on the dependence of local people on the natural resources within the landscape was also developed. Kaziranga National Park (KNP) within the larger Kaziranga Tiger Reserve (KTR) has potential to serve as core area or as a ‘source’ population and the spillover populations of different wild animals including tiger can disperse in the neighbouring forests/grasslands and agriculture/tea estates dominated matrix. Although at present the management authorities are paying adequate attention to the protection of tiger within the Kaziranga NP but the sink populations require greater attention and protection as the park interface is experiencing all round rapid development. Study concludes that the complex and dynamic landscape of this Tiger Reserve needs a holistic approach and integrated planning for long term conservation and viability of tiger in the region. Several other recommendations for the protection and management of tiger and also improvement of its habitat at the landscape level are being discussed in the paper.

**Keywords:** Kaziranga National Park, landscape management, population, tiger, tiger habitat