

Chembakolli

A forest home

Some conservationists say that the Adivasis should leave the forest and live in new homes in towns and villages. They say they are harming the forest and destroying the natural environment by living there. They believe that the forest should be preserved for trees and plants, animals and birds.

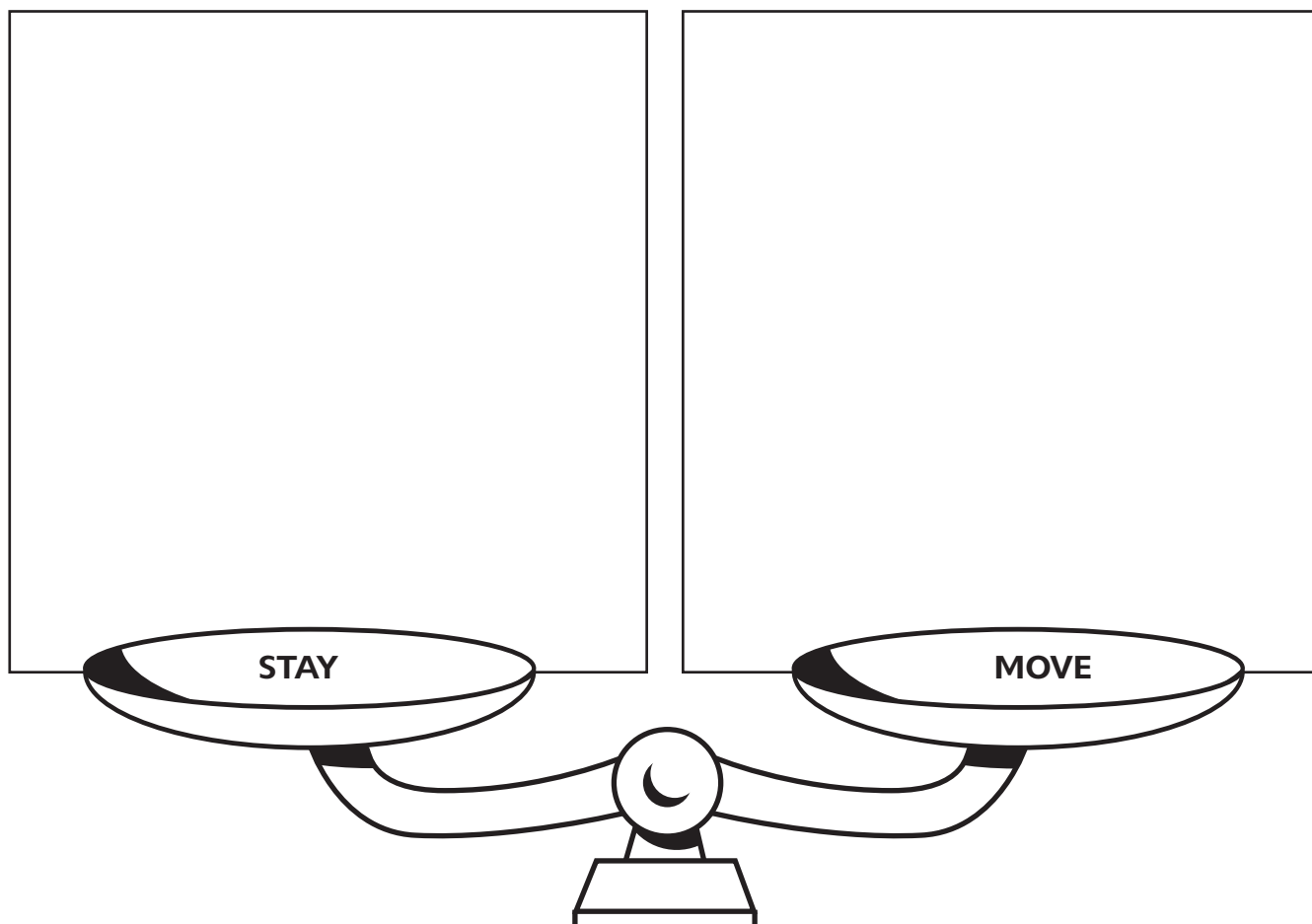
Something to think about...

Question 1. Do you think that people are part of the natural environment, as well as animals, plants and trees?

Question 2. Do you think that the Adivasis look after the forest?

Question 3. Do you think that the Adivasis harm the forest environment?

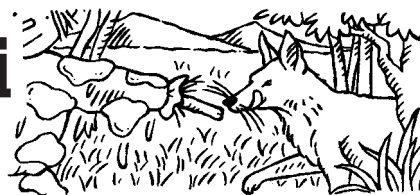
Weigh up the arguments for each question, then write down all the reasons why the Adivasis should stay in the forest on one side of the scales, and why they should move on the other.





Chembakolli

The greedy fox



The language and culture of the people of Chembakolli were not respected in the past – either by the European settlers who arrived to set up tea plantations in the forest or the other non-tribal Indians who lived in the area. But once the children started going to school – where both their language and their culture were encouraged – people began to learn that they had a rich tradition of stories, music and dance. This is one of their stories:

There was once a man who had a small piece of land in a clearing in the forest. He was a very poor man because he had a wife and five children to feed. Although he often dreamed of growing exotic crops like juicy vegetables, sizzling hot spices, sweet-smelling herbs or delicious fruits – all he was able to grow was rice, and more rice.

One day, while the man was working on his land, a very sly old fox came walking through the forest. The fox loved playing tricks on people. He was also very greedy. Suddenly he had an idea about how he could treat himself to a fantastic banquet at the poor man's expense. He greeted the man cheerfully and asked him if his rice was growing well.

'As well as can be expected,' said the man. So the fox declared: 'I know how to make your rice grow twice as fast – just put some prawns on top of the plants each night.' The man didn't know what to do. Finally, he took all of his money to the market, bought some prawns and scattered them over the land – but when he came back the next morning, all the prawns had gone.

Realising that he had been tricked, the man decided to punish the fox. He made a scarecrow, covered it in honey and then stuck on some tasty dosars*. Early next morning, he heard the fox shouting and screaming. The dosars had all gone but the fox's tail was stuck fast to the scarecrow by his tail. 'Help me,' he cried. So the man cut off the fox's tail and let him go free.

The fox never tried to cheat anyone again.

(* little pancakes)

Think about the story you have read and answer the following questions:

- Does this story remind you of any other stories that you know?
- Why do you think so many traditional tales have similar characters and storylines whichever country or culture they come from?
- Why do you think so many traditional stories have a moral?
- What is the moral of this story?
- If you rewrote this story in your own words, what food would you choose to tempt the fox?
- Get into groups and retell this story using role play.

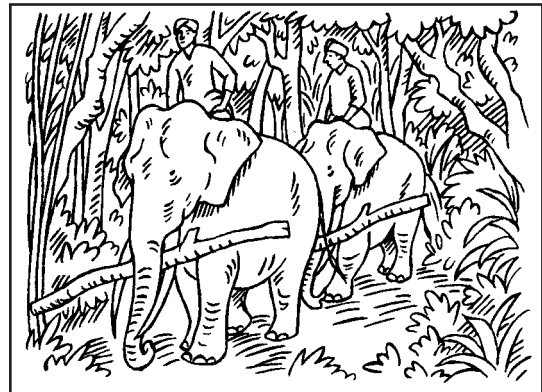
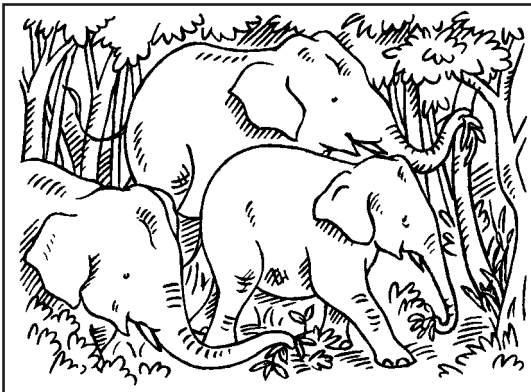


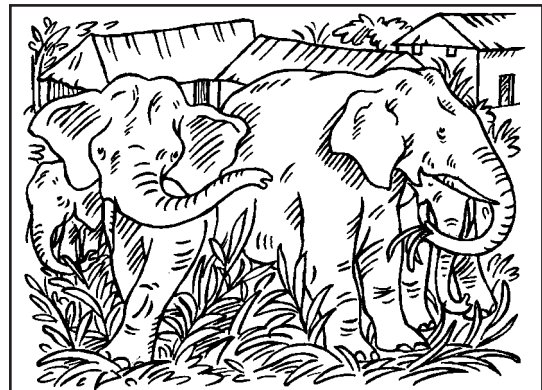
Chembakolli

Living with elephants

One of the Adivasis' greatest fears is the wild elephants in the forest around Chembakolli. In the past, the elephants had plenty of space to roam and enough to eat, so they didn't pose a threat to anyone. In fact, the Adivasis built up such a good understanding with the elephants that they became expert at training them to work in the forest. But as the forest started to be cut down, the elephants found it harder and harder to find the huge amounts of food they needed each day. Desperate and hungry, the elephants headed for the Adivasis homes, trampling the few meagre crops they managed to grow – even attacking people if they tried to shoo them away.

This story shows just one of the disasters that happens when the natural environment is destroyed. Cutting down the forest has affected the lives of both the elephants and the people of Chembakolli. Write captions for this storyboard in your own words. If you want to, you can also enlarge the illustrations on a photocopier and add speech bubbles.







Chembakolli

Tree of wishes

With help from friends in organisations like ActionAid and ACCORD, the Adivasis of Chembakolli have a brighter future to look forward to. How do you think their lives will change? Fill in this wishes tree, writing down what you hope and wish their lives will be like in the future. When you are thinking about what to write, remember that the Adivasis have their own definition of wealth, which guides the way they live their lives:

Our community, our children, our unity, our culture and the forest.

My wishes for the Adivasis of Chembakolli

