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The Business Model Canvas (BMC) Approach for Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) Strategy and Business Transformation in Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR), Tamil Nadu, India

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Abstract

Alexander Osterwalder's Business Model Canvas (BMC) is one of trusted and used business frameworks among entrepreneurs, strategists, start-ups, large corporations, and innovators. The BMC in fact, has created ample opportunities to usher in business transformation and help leverage organizations of all hues to greater heights. The framework has used in the manufacturing, services and even the social sector which has ensured its applicability and acceptability. In the current research the BMC is being applied on the tourism sector, with specific reference to Community-based Ecotourism (CBET), wherein a community, in a heavily forested tribal area, have adopted a business model under the guidance of the Forest Department (FD) of the state of Tamil Nadu and have made the best of efforts to i) create livelihood options, ii) capacity building for tourism and hospitality activities, iii) preservation, protection, conservation of the forest area which is part of a UNESCO designated Biodiversity site (Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve (NBR), iv) promote Ecotourism, which has its impacts on the Environment, Society (Social) and Economy (Economic); thereby creating ample opportunities for business transformation. The CBET model has in fact, created benchmarks through the Ecodevelopment Committees (EDC) and Ecotourism Management Committees (ETMC), which are managed at the grassroot level. Every business no doubt requires and plan and strategy, the EDC and ETMC business models have transformed and showcased to the world, what can be done by a community who are not exposed to the world of business, but are affluent about their existence and contribution to protection, preservation, and conservation. The authors have worked with the community over a period, are juxtaposing the thoughts as propounded in the BMC, which will further support in helping in the business transformation of the Community and its tryst with Ecotourism.

Keywords: Business Model, Business Model Canvas (BMC), Business Transformation Entrepreneurship, CBET.

1. Introduction

Bruce Gitlin, a mentor and business development expert mentions, may start-ups, entrepreneurs and small businesses are too busy trying to get started and survive, that they spend little time, planning. And when they do, they are often confused and do not know where to start [1-3]. The Business Model

Canvas (BMC) helps business segments to address specific risks and acquire information about competition, costs, customer and even niche markets [4]. The BMC sets an overarching framework for developing a business strategy, a detailed business plan and yes, places an action plan in the perspective



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(Score, 2024)." Ziemba (2022) blogsite, speaks of BMC as originally devised by Alexander Osterwalder in 2005, the basic model is described in his 2010 book Business Model Generation, written with Yves Pigneur, his Research Guide [5-7]. Although numerous specialized versions of the canvas have since been devised (including a lean version) the

basic template remains a simple document with nine boxes representing the core elements of any business model or idea: customer segments, value propositions, channels, customer relationships, revenue streams, key resources, key activities, key partnerships, cost structure (Illustration 1).

Key Partners	Key Activities Key Resources	Value Pro	opositions	Customer Relationship Channels	Customer Segments
Cost Structure			Revenue	Streams	

Illustration 1 Business Model Canvas (Strategyzer, 2024, Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010)

2. Business Model Canvas, A Framework for The New and Old Businesses

One needs to know that a business model defines the rational of how an organization creates, delivers, and captures value (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010). Clearly nine building blocks (Illustration 1), will make all out efforts to ensure the growth and development of the organization. Whilst working on the current research, the authors got to meet with Mr. Mohammed Khalid, a person qualified in Tourism Management, who had worked in Tourism Research, Supply Chain Management, and contemplated to start a tour operations business that would help him to work on the dynamics of Pilgrimage Tourism to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and take Indians who would be interested in the Haj and Umra offerings. The authors shared with Khalid, the BMC and engaged him for about twenty-four hours over a two-week period and Khalid had this to say (Khalid, 2024). "I had heard about the BMC, but not dabbled with it for a business opportunity. It took me at least three-days to realize the value that BMC would attach to my prospective business. Just mapping the nine boxes helped me to ascertain the dos and don'ts, finding the partners with whom I must work with, the Airlines, the hotels in KSA, food for the pilgrims, the issue of Visa; the nine boxes and the inputs that I provided brought about a deep-dive to understanding and helped me to gauge possibilities for creating a business opportunity and

be successful." In a lighter vein, Khalid expressed to

the authors, "Besides the SWOT Analysis, BMC helped me to ascertain a multitude of views, I only hope I was aware of this framework a few years earlier [8]." J., Dewagar (Dewagar, 2024) a leader with an Indian Automobile manufacturer, mentions, "BMC, is an excellent tool where anyone can put in his/her ideas covering all aspects required to start a business or improve an existing business. Since BMC would display everything on the positive side although cost structure can be a negative based on perception. Thence, it would be an added advantage to combine BMS and SWOT in understanding all aspects and leveraging with BMC and vice versa as to analyse all ideas of BMC using SWOT." Dewagar further adds, "personally, BMC is easier to visualise our ideas hence can be much more effective during brainstorming sessions. example, a company taking on a project can brainstorm to capitalize their potential to the maximum, as we did during our Commercial vehicle service campaigns in our region to maximise the revenue by up to 50% in comparison to the previous year service campaign. But we did not use the BMC model back then [9-11]. If we had used, possibly the growth would have been more." Speaking about Strategic Management and BMC, Hamdana (2021) mentions, it is about the actions and decisions that will determine long-term business performance.



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The business model, by itself, defines the overall business logic of a company at the strategic level. Small business enterprises, like the large corporates, also need a business model to gain competitiveness and performance. Small business enterprises need to have a good business model to overcome the "grow and die" scenario. BMC as a tool, no doubt has become one of the most used and cited frameworks among entrepreneurs and innovators (Lima & Baudier, 2017); but has not caught on the imagination of the academia and/or business in India from a generic purpose, i.e., for the various business segments or for Tourism, Travel and Hospitality (TTH) ecosystem [12]. A Professor of Management in a Deemed-to-be-University in Bengaluru, who wanted to remain anonymous stated, "the number of frameworks we study for implementation in the corporate/business world are at least forty to fifty years old. BMC and the contributions of Alexander Osterwalder, are now being looked up by a generation that wants to move to new frameworks, but will take some time." The Professor rightly mentioned that, "the BMC as a framework is promising, no doubt in the USA and other developed economies corporate and academic it has been accepted as a framework, in India, it is a matter of time, when all stakeholders showcase a form of acceptance." Pankaj Kumar (Kumar, 2018) a Senior Manager with an Automobile manufacturer, on being queried about the adoption of BMC, stated, "having studied Michael Porter and his Five Forces, Value Chain and Diamond Models as part of Engineering and Management Programs, besides the Balanced Scorecard of Kaplan and Norton and the most famous of them all, 'SWOT Analysis.' At this juncture, in the middle of my career, understanding BMC and looking at the way to implement is something that one can say, brings in a unique understanding to the world of management." It is not that, BMC is not without criticism, Euchner & Ganguly (2014) mention, strong business models cannot be generated by brainstorming the elements of a business model using tools like the BMC. BMC does not represent well the coherence or relationships among the elements (of business). It fails to represent strategic items such as the competitive position of the firm and

the economic and the economic leverage pointers. Even if a few were pessimistic about BMC and its efficacy, De Reuver et al., (2013) noted that BMCs simplicity is both a strength, because it is readily applicable, and weakness because it provides little detail about each variable. Pankai Kumar (Kumar, 2018) when questioned on the same states, "BMC is simplistic in nature, it creates avenues for the user to understand the nuances and dig deeper." It is here that one needs to usher in the thoughts of Gunzel & Holm (2013) who mention that the multifaceted structure of the BMC may create "perplexities and complexities" in the business model innovation process. An answer that Khalid (2024), an entrepreneur in the business of Tour Operations and Pharma world, readily provides by stating, "that one needs to understand the complexities of the business (s); it only then that we realize what should the current/present and the future course of action look like and thence, we unlearn/learn, we plan and create those strategic options, that will lead the business in a direction of innovation and profitability." Playing devil's advocate, Eppler et al., (2011) state that whilst BMC will enhance collaboration, I will also have a negative impact on the perceived creativity during the ideation process due to the fixed structure of the template. But then the point made by Pankaj Kumar (Kumar, 2018) comes out clear and states, "the idea of the nine-boxes is to adopt and ensure the success of the business, the enterprise, and/or a Strategic Business Unit (SBU). It is a good start point; it is a basis for all other facets to fall in place." Fritscher and Pigneur (2009) recognize that highly structured templates such as the BMC (which they earlier called Business Model Ontology Canvas (BMO) (illustration 2) must be carefully designed to offer enough specialized functionality to emphasize general thinking guidelines without compromising free thought and creativity. These objections and limitations do not seem to affect the growing popularity of the BMC. Despite such widespread adoption, however, there have been no systematic attempts to measure its perceived usability (Illustration 2). It is clear at this juncture that the evolution of BMC to become a much sought after framework for augmenting a better business



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construct and to help in evolving a strategy is what all investors, managers look for. One needs to focus on the efficacy of the framework and ensure the factors

of utility to oneself and the business that one is propagating [13-17].

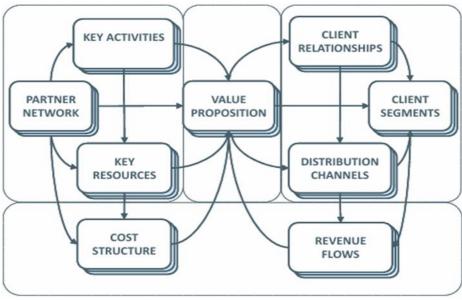


Illustration 2 Business Model Ontology Canvas (Fritscher and Pigneur, 2009)

It is clear at this juncture that the evolution of BMC to become a much sought after framework for augmenting a better business construct and to help in evolving a strategy is what all investors, managers look for. One needs to focus on the efficacy of the framework and ensure the factors of utility to oneself and the business that one is propagating [18].

3. Community Based Tourism Enterprises (CBTE) and the Business Models

Community based tourism enterprises (CBTE) are initiatives that are economic-based, entrepreneurship-oriented initiatives that generally views for the purpose of enhancing Sustainable Tourism Development (STD) (Ngo, et al., 2018). CBTEs have three principles viz., i) local community members who are owners of the business, ii) full community involvement in the business management and operation, and iii) the community is the main beneficiary from the business (Spenceley, 2008; Zapata et al., 2011). A few note and compare the theoretical facets to the actual administration implications on ground in India is that the Forest Ecosystem is managed by the Government in the provincial set-up [19]. Hence, even if the community is part of the same, they are there not as owners, but

as partners. Hence, the Forest Departments (FD) create the SPVs that will ensure a direct management by the forest administration, the bureaucracy with the support of the local community [20-23]. Though community members participate in large numbers, the ultimate control mechanism rests with the FD officers. The community, the forest, the ecology. the environment, the flora, and fauna are no doubt the ultimate beneficiaries. It should be noted here that the Local-self-government (LSG) mechanism of the Gram Panchayat, the taluk Panchayat and the Zilla Panchayat is a well-established set-up. The SPVs that have been created over a period, as seen in the later part of the research, is worth noting, and one can see the utilization of the forest resources by the community and the administration in a way as propounded by Nobel Laureate in Economics (2009) Elinor Ostrom who spoke about the common-pool (finite) resources (CPR) and the eight principles for how the commons (community, its people) can be governed sustainably and equitably. The following are the eight principles (Walljasper, 2011) [24].

- Define clear group boundaries
- Match rules governing use of common goods



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to local needs and conditions

- Ensure that those affected (impacted) by the rules can participate in modifying the rules
- Make sure the rule-making rights of the community members are respected by outside authorities (in the case of the India ecosystem, it is the FD, who comes as an outsider, but works along with the community)
- Develop a system, carried out by community members, for monitoring members' behavior
- Use graduated sanctions for rule violators
- Provide accessible, low-cost means for dispute resolution
- Build responsibility for governing the common resource in nested tiers from the lowest level up to the entire interconnected system [25]

A Senior officer of the FD in Karnataka, with whom the authors work on a regular basis, but wanted to remain anonymous quoted, "the aspects and thoughts provided by Elinor Ostrom are no doubt outstanding, but as a forester, we want to ensure that the community in the forest area, the flora, and the fauna are well protected, preserved and conserved and we make all out efforts to ensure the same. We work with the local-self-government institutions, and other administrative bodies, besides, the SPVs that we create to support the community and bring about a collaboration. The community no doubt accepts the interventions, and the failure rates across my area of work have been very few."

4. CBTE and the Indian Community Based Ecotourism (CBET) Models

When we speak about Ecotourism (ET), one links the tourism product to forests, ecology, and environment, which is the sole management domain of the Government of India and the State Governments and Union Territories (UT) in India [26-29]. This clearly means, the Forests come under the administrative jurisdiction of the Government at the Centre and the State Governments. From Constitutional Perspective one needs to consider the following: Forests (Entry 17A) (Forest as an Entry was transferred from Entry 19 of the State List to the Concurrent List by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, s. 57 (w.e.f. 3-1-1977) and Protection of wild animals

and birds (Entry 17B) (Forest as an Entry was transferred from Entry 20 of the State List to the Concurrent List by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, s. 57 (w.e.f. 3-1-1977), wherein both the federal and state governments have ambit of law-making, management, regulation (Swarna & Khan, 2022). This clearly meant the Government at the Federal and State levels would administer the forest and hence, anything product of the forests that would be created [30]. If this is the Constitutional mandate, there are other laws in place that do have to be adhered to. Ritwick Dutta, well known Indian Environmental Lawyer summed up eloquently in regards to ET, "firstly, eco-tourism is not a permissible activity under the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA) 1972 or the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) 1980. Even to Build basic concrete structures in a wildlife reserve or national park, the permission of the National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) is mandatory. They (Central Government) can do these ET activities outside the national parks. Why do they need to set up inside? Even with ET pressures outside parks one needs to look at the condition of places like the Corbett Tiger Reserve and other Tiger Reserves (TR). If you start opening and breaking forest land there will be nothing left of our wildlife reserves and forests anymore [31-33]. Already projects are wreaking havoc in protected areas. Tourism even with tents has a huge footprint," (Nandi, 2021). There are a multitude of arguments for having interventions in the forest areas and the peripheries, yet the federal and state governments in India, have been sustainably promoting ET, through various purpose vehicles (SPV) viz., special development committees (EDC) and Ecotourism Management Committees (ETMC). One needs to know that, the Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) was created as a democratic, decentralized, and transparent local institution of forest and forest fringe dwelling communities, that is part of the Gram Sabha fully or partially and set up as per the provisions of applicable Joint Forest Management (JFM) rules/guidelines of the state much earlier than all the SPVs for eco-tourism (Sharma, n.d.,). D.K., Sharma (Sharma, n.d.,) in his epic Joint Forest



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Management, for front line staff of Forest Department and JFMC members, augments the best of information that has been considered as a start point to any forester and even the members of the non-governmental organizations (NGO) besides the community members. A clear-cut analogy lays down the way we need to ensure the sustainable options for the forests through the community members under the watchful eyes of the FDs.

4.1.Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC)

A Joint Forest Management Committee (JFMC) is a democratic, decentralized, and transparent local institution of forest and forest fringe dwelling communities, that is part, of the Gram Sabha, a constitutional body, fully or partially and set up as per the provisions of applicable JFM rules/guidelines of the state. Typically, there is one JFMC in one revenue village. However, in special situations, e.g. historical collaboration between neighbouring villages, or where it does not make sense to divide the forest, a JFMC may cover two or more villages. On the other hand, especially in tribal areas, there may be situations where one village may have several dispersed hamlets, JFMCs may be set up at subrevenue village or hamlet level. The intent of having these JFMCs is to ensure that the community in the village are able to:

- Discuss and understand the history of the forest in and around the vicinity of the village,
- Enumerate the forest condition, demand, and supply of the forest produce,
- What the JFMC can do to ensure the management and sustaining of the forests in the village vicinity [34].

With the Forest officers in the District where the JFMC is located and their involvement, the opportunity to ensure for the community, the forests and its management takes pole position in leading to protection, conservation, and preservation [35].

4.2.Eco-Development Committee (EDC)

An Eco-Development Committee (EDC), is like the JFMCs, but meant for villages in Protected Areas (PA) and their buffer zones. Their setup, working, role, responsibilities, powers, funds etc. are as per the state level orders [36]. Their area of operation is

restricted to PAs, and forest and non-forest areas near protected areas. EDCs are set up with twin objectives – to protect wildlife and other biodiversity, and undertake eco-development activities in the villages. As mentioned by Biologist, M., Parthiban (Parthiban, 2018) attached to the Grizzled Squirrel (Ratufa macroura) Wildlife Sanctuary (also known as the Srivilliputhur Wildlife Sanctuary), Srivilliputhur, Tamil Nadu, who was instrumental in organizing the ETMC (EDC) at Sasthakovil and Kovilar Dam site, "the ETMC (EDC) mechanism create a unique ecosystem for the local community and/or the peripheral villages to participate and ek out livelihood options through the forest ecosystem. Since, the various forest laws, forbid the communities to venture into the forests, the SPVs become a critical lifeline for the communities, to be close to the forest, participate along with the Forest Staff in not only managing but also protecting the forest resources." Parthiban, adds, "the community members involved in the ETMC feel empowered and proud to work along with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department (TN FD) and live behind a legacy that is worth noting. At times, I find, that the second generation of individuals also want to get involved in the working of the ETMC, which will ensure them a status in the society." Sharma (n.d.,) clearly enumerates the rationale of the creating and sustainably conducting the JFMC and EDCs for the following reasons:

- Communities as equal partners in the protection and management of forest ecosystem,
- To ensure an investment climate in forestry sector is enhanced as communities participate in forest protection and its management,
- The communities to get a say in the objectives of management of their local forests,
- To contribute the communities time, effort, and knowledge through the JFMC/EDC,
- To derive direct benefits from sustainable use of the forests and the resources that are available,
- To develop local leadership, who will work



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along with the FDs.

Dr Dilip Kumar (Kumar, 2014) in his seminal monograph, Managing India's Forests: Village Communities, Panchayati Raj Institutions and the State clearly puts forward an alternative, and has brought about local evidences in support of this position and tries to take it beyond. Thus, he visualizes the conversion of a bipartite model into a tripartite model. To introduce the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into the JFM model, he argues that decentralisation need not end with the Gram Panchayats, but must be further inclusive and anchored on smaller institutions like village forest protection committees and their umbrella organizations as it is done in the JFM model. He also draws support from the work of Elinor Ostrom, who recommends a series of nested institutions which facilitate the face-to-face building of trust and confidence in the community, as well as effectively utilize the larger legal and judicial apparatus of the state in the instituting of sustainable natural resource management regimes. Kumar (2014) further speaks about the village and the community as a 'little republic,' as understood by Mahatma Gandhi who got the ideation from a study of the same colonial sources, originating in the words of Sir Charles Metcalfe in the British Parliamentary report of 1810. When we juxtapose these thoughts and bring in the erudite scholarship of Elinor Ostrom on the same platform, there is an opportunity to bring in a community based, community led, community managed tourism product, which the FD will be able to oversee and ensure compliance as per the laws that are in vogue, get the community on the side of the FD and help in the protection, preservation, conservation, and usher in an economic activity which the community will endear.

5. CBET, BMC, Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR)

Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) [Latitude: 11° 31' 54.9" to 11° 42' 18.5" North, Longitudes: 76° 21'28.9" to 76° 45' 21.5" East] (Illustrations 4 and 5); which is part of the UNESCO designated Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve (NBR) is a unique ecosystem that is located at the Tri-junction of the states of Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu and was the first

Sanctuary to be set up in India (Nilgiris District, n.d.,). MTR is in the Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu and is spread over 688.59 sq.km. MTR is 240 Km from Bengaluru, 90 Km from Mysuru, 68 Km from Udhagamandalam (Ooty) and 124 Km from Calicut (Kozhikode) by road. The reserve straddles the Ooty - Mysore interstate national highway (NH 181), roughly midway between the two cities and thus could be approached with equal facility either way. From Ooty, another approach is through extremely steep ghat road via Kalhatti having 36 hair-pin bends on a narrow road, but with a truncated distance of approximately 40 Km. This is one road, that the adventurer in a visitor would like to take, but the steep hair-pin bends and the fauna that one may encounter creates an opportunity of suspense. Travelling from Theppakadu to Ooty via Kalhatti is a better way to travel, rather than the return. In fact, most of the times, the authorities (forest and police) desist visitors from taking the route to Theppakadu on account of the steep bends and probability of accidents. The nearest railway stations Mudumalai are Mysore, about 100 Km and Udhagamandalam about 68 Km by Hill track. The nearest airports are Mysore (90 Km), Calicut (124 km), Coimbatore (160 Km) and Bangalore (240 Km). The nearest town for medical facility, petrol bunks and with telephone networks are Masinagudi (7 Km) and Gudalur (18 Km). The nearest township from Karnataka is Gundlupete, about 32 Km from Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, n.d.,). NTCA (n.d.,) states, MTR is rich in floral and faunal diversity and is a good source area for tigers, co-predators, and prey species. terrain in MTR is undulating with the elevation ranging from 960m to 1266m. Many Corridors are to be found in the MTR area, hence, making it a unique zone to ensure qualitative movement of the fauna. The major corridors are:

- Moyar Valley Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve - Biligiri Ranganatha Temple Tiger Reserve - Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary and the
- Mudumalai Mukurthi National Park -Silent Valley National Park linkages. Besides, there are four small corridors in the



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Buffer zone of the reserve along the Moyar Valley-Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary which facilitate seasonal movement of elephants between Western and Eastern Ghats, viz., Singara Mavanallah, Kallahatty-Sigur, Mavanallah-Chemmanatham and Moyar-Averallah.

Speaking about the floral and faunal diversity NTCA (n.d.,) mentions of the habitat ranges from semievergreen, moist deciduous, dry deciduous to scrub forests. There are several wild relatives of cultivated plants, viz. wild rice, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, solanum, guava, mango, and pepper which serve as a gene pool for the cultivated varieties. The habitat also has swampy areas (Vayals) and grasslands. The faunal assemblage include: elephant, gaur, sambar, four homed antelope, spotted deer, barking deer, blackbuck, wild pig, mouse deer and predators like tiger, leopard, and wild dog. Clearly one of the finest of opportunity to promote Sustainable Ecotourism. One needs to record that the Tamil Nadu Forest Department (TNFD) found the Mudumalai Tiger Conservation Foundation (MTCF) Trust in 2008 (was registered as a Trust in 2010 and reconstituted in 2015) as per the provisions of Section 38x of the WPA, 1972 and various laws as applicable with the following activities (Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, n.d.,):

- Management of the Tiger Reserve and its protection from all the threats as per the approved Tiger Conservation Plan by the National Tiger Conservation Authority.
- Habitat Improvement for enhancing prey base for tiger and other sympatric carnivores in the Reserve.
- Welfare Measures for staff of the Reserve including staff on daily wages.
- Awareness Programmes for diverse stakeholders.
- Maintenance of infrastructure of the Reserve.
- Conducting Wildlife population estimation programme as per NTCA protocols.
- Income Generation activities to enhance the livelihood options of the tribals and other fringe forest dwellers.
- Incurring expenditure for scheme work in

anticipation of the sanction of schemes/ Letter of Credit and recouping the amount back to the Foundation on receipt of Government Order and funds for the respective schemes.

The Trust envisaged the following objectives which would ensure success to the SPVs that were identified to function in the fragile forest area (Mudumalai Tiger Reserve, n.d.,):

- To facilitate and support the management for conservation of Tiger and Bio-diversity and to take initiatives in Eco-development through involvement of people in such development process.
- To conserve the valuable biodiversity and the natural resources of MTR for posterity.
- To protect Tiger and its co-predators and make efforts for improvement of its prey base in the MTR.
- To reduce biological interference and reducing the bio-degradation through Ecodevelopment programmes.
- To improve livelihood options of the Forest dependents and reduce their forest dependency by providing alternative employment opportunities.
- To integrate community development effects with natural resources management.
- To promote awareness among local people in the conservation and augmentation of wildlife through imparting nature education and ecological research.
- To provide financial support to the Tiger Reserve Management in absence of budgetary support in furtherance of tiger protection works and habitat management to protect other wildlife at times of crisis.

The MTCF operates through the EDCs in the area, which are managed by the local community members and the officers of the TNFD. The Tribes (illustration 3) found in the MTR area the Badagas, Kattunayakas (Kattunayakan, Jennu Kurumbar), Kurumbas, Todas (though largely found in the Ooty area), Kotas, and a few Irulas and Paniyas (Bala, n.d.,). Refer Illustration 3 to 7.



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Illustration 3 Pictures from Theppakadu Forest Area (Pictures by The Authors)

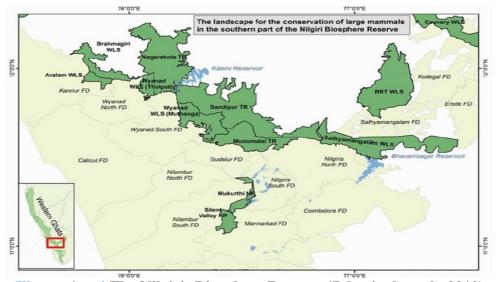


Illustration 4 The Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve (Johnsingh et al., 2010)

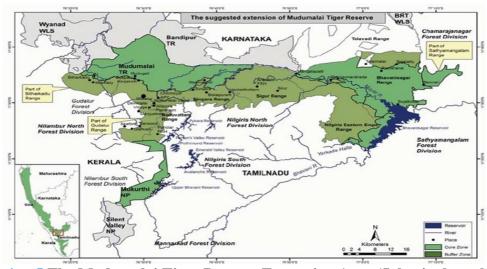


Illustration 5 The Mudumalai Tiger Reserve Expansion Area (Johnsingh et al., 2010)

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Key Partnerships	Key Activities (vi)	Value Propositions (ii)	Customer	Customer
(viii)	*Safari	*Part of the UNESCO	Relationships (v)	Segments (i)
*Forest Department	*Birding	Biosphere Reserve	*Repeat Visitors	*Domestic
*Tour Operators	*Nature Walks	*Flora and Fauna at its	*Social Media	*International
*Travel Agents	*Educational Tours	best	*Impact through	*Civil Servants
*Educational	*Elephant Camp	*Tribes of the Area	Social Media	on tours
Institutions	*Interpretation	*River Moyar and the	*FAM Visitors	*FAM Tourists
*Walk-ins	Centre	Gorge	(Familiarity Tours	*Scientists who
*Other resorts in the	*Accommodation	*MTR and its environs	for Tour Operators	come to study
vicinity for Safari	*Restaurant	*Agricultural produce	and other	*Anthropologists
tours and other	*Souvenir Centre	*Medicinal Plants and	stakeholders)	*Film makers
products of MTR		Nature based cure		
*Government and	Key Resources (vii)	*Nature Guides from the	Channels (iv)	
Private Vehicles	*Safari	local Tribal community	*Sales through	
moving through the	*Elephant Camp	*Domestic visitors, love	Forest Department	
MTR for restaurant	*Interpretation	the Safaris and elephant	www	
usage	Centre	camp	*Walk-ins sales	
	*Existing	*International visitors	*Social Media	
	Infrastructure of	want the solitude of	*Documentaries	
	Accommodation and	MTR	and films	
	Restaurant	*Film makers focus on		
		documentaries or even		
		regular film shoots		

Cost Structure (ix)

*Salaries to the Mahouts, drivers, the Forest Staff, and others employed as contractors in the MTR ecosystem *Vehicle maintenance *Loans to the members of the

ETMC/EDC
*Maintenance of the Elephants

*Regular maintenance cost for accommodation and other facilities

Revenue Streams (iii)

*Income from Safaris

*Income from Elephant Centre

*Income from Accommodation facilities

*Income from Restaurant

*Interest income from loans to EDC members through Revolving funds

*Income from Vehicle Parking area

*Income from charges for Film Shooting and general photography and for Professional Wildlife Photographers

*Research Teams and Organizations that invest in Forest, Ecology and Environment activities

Illustration 6 Business Model Canvas Mapped on the SPV at MTR (Created by the authors)

When we deep-dive into the nine postulates (Blocks) of the BMC constructed on MTR, that CBET ecosystem gets to know a multitude of aspects that will enable the destination to move ahead qualitatively. It brings about a new dimension to the understanding of the SPV that has been created not only for the benefit of the local community, who were otherwise dependent on the forest and its resources, the visitors who want to get to know a new destination, and the TNFD who make an all-out effort to protect, preserve and conserve the area with the support of the community and the visitors. By understanding the BMC blocks the MTR ecosystem

can bring about a mitigation in the damage impact, conserve the natural resources of the area, and ensure qualitative visits that will have an engaged visitor for the present and the future. Based on the Customer Segments, the Value Propositions, the Key Resources and Key Activities one can initiate the way to work and create a better tourism product with an engaged community, a people who have inhabited the area for eons. Aptly stated by Setiawan et al., (2021) any areas should ensure, natural conservation of the area with native ecosystem, which is used for research, science, education, culture, tourism as well as recreation.



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Besides protection and preservation, Conservation Areas, one needs to ensure people participation, which enable a better quality of life for the community and the visitors, besides in the case of MTR, the TNFD, who have stood tall as protectors of a space which is sacrosanct to one and all. The story of Bomman and Bellie (of the Kattunayakan Tribe), a couple South India, writes Imdb (n.d.,), devoted their lives to caring for an orphan baby elephant name Raghu (and later Bommi (Narendra Modi, 2023) forging a family like no other that tests the barrier between the human and the animal world. Yes, this was the description about 'The Elephant Whisperers,' a short documentary that won at the Oscars in 2023 (The Hindu, 2023), created a buzz about MTR, where the documentary was filmed. As mentioned by a regular visitor to the forests of NBR, Karthik, (Karthik, 2024), "MTR is already known to the locals

in Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, not there will be an influx into the area with the Elephant Whisperers being watched by one all on the OTT Platform available Netflix on (https://www.netflix.com/search?q=The%20Elepha nt%20Whisperers&jbv=81312835)." further adds, "true there will be a buzz, but we will need to watch out for the carrying capacity of the area. Bomman, Bellie, Raghu and Bommi are 'rock stars,' now, they even got to meet with Mr. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India (Illustration 7) when he visited the camp (Prashant & Sebastian, 2023) and the State Government of Tamil Nadu, gave the couple INR 2,00,000 as a gift and a job to Bomman. Well, that the best came to MTR and its tribe, MTR now needs to manage the visitors."



Illustration 7 PM Modi, Meets with Bomman, Bellie and the elephants (Narendra Modi, 2023)

The Theppakadu Elephant Camp established as a rehabilitation camp in 1927 (Byjus, n.d.,) and the microcosm at MTR lives up, another day to ensure tourism activities and a business, that will ensure a livelihood for the ancient tribes, some of them with the nomenclature of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) and the excursionists/visitors who will get a slice of forest life and the what nature has provided for, besides, the TNFD ensuring in their mandate of protection, preservation and conservation, through a corporate measure, the

measure of the SPV, the EDC, that have proliferated into the life of the community and encouraged, community-based ecotourism tourism (CBET).

Conclusion, BMC, and Small Enterprises

CBET and the SPVs that have been discussed, may sound small and miniscule in comparison to the Corporate World, where large corporations use various Managerial frameworks, that will help to assuage opportunities and help in scaling up the operations of the organizations. However, if one were to focus on Small and Medium Enterprises



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(SME) and Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and help them to adopt to the Management Frameworks, it clearly augurs well for the business at ground-zero, which will lead to qualitative impacts on the Communities and their way of life, leading to Economic, Social and Environmental impacts and changes that are the need of the hour. Clearly it can be seen that SME/MSME, which are too small to even start with a management framework, can look at BMC as a surprise package to evolve, grow and develop further. Ahluwalia (et al., 2022) elaborate on the fact that MSMEs are a pillar of the economy of any country, and the main challenges faced by the MSMEs are bringing in effectiveness and efficiency of their business management. It is here that frameworks and business models like BMC play a vital role to engage the business internally and externally, that will keep the MSME/SMEs in good stead. Whilst Hernawan (et al., 2024) agree on the fact that BMC has been widely applied in various business segments, its application in the context of MSMEs is still an untouched area of study and research. Franca (et al., 2017) categorically accept the fact that BMC offers a visual approach that allows business to detail the key elements of a business, helping them design and develop a solid business model; which is the clear intent of bringing in the CBET model under the BMC sphere; which will further add value to the simplistic business model that has been evolving. As Slavik & Bednar (2014) have stated, visualization, analysis, reconstruction of the business model are strategic processes that should be created before the formulation of strategy. True to these words, BMC has created an opportunity for SMEs/MSMEs and the SPVs like Mudumalai Tiger Reserve community to organize themselves into a better business opportunity and benefit from the business models.

Notes:

ontological Ontology (meaning): An formally represented in a computer-readable format allows known facts or assumptions to be used to derive a conclusion or to make inferences (i.e., reasoning). It helps with the formal description of knowledge as a set of concepts within a domain and the relationships that hold between them. It ensures

a common understanding of information and makes assumption domain thus organizations to make better sense of their data.

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