

## Human Elephant Coexistence-Participant's follow-up programmes

### Conservation of elephants in Trans-boundary (West Bengal-Nepal) region and mitigation of human-elephant conflict – local awareness camp at Panighatta Range.

An awareness camp on Human-elephant conflict (HEC) mitigation was held on 16th May 2013 at community hall near Chenga Junior High School, Panighatta in West Bengal. WWF-India, WBSO organized this camp in a location close to Indo-Nepal border, which is also a zone of intense HEC. The camp was attended by 81 participants from local communities including frontline staff of Forest Department, 10 members of forest protection committee, 40 school students, 2 representatives from tea garden, local villagers and also representatives from "Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha", a state level conservation cum activist group.

The objective was to sensitize the community about the mitigation measures and minimize the conflict in the peak harvesting seasons. The programme was conducted by Sangita Mitra, Coordinator WWF-India, West Bengal State Office with assistance from Panighatta Range office under the Kurseong division. It started with a welcome note and followed by three introductory speeches by Beat Officer, Panighatta Range; representative from "Paschim Banga Vigyan Mancha" and Marapur Tea Estate respectively. Meanwhile a set of drama and educational kits were distributed among the students for use in the schools and to perform a play in today's programme. They were also given four sets of different storyline on which group of students acted under the guidance of 4 facilitators. Facilitators were selected from the senior participants who supervised the drama activities.

To understand the mindset of local communities towards elephants and the related conflict, a simple feedback form was used among the working groups involving students and other participants. Eight such teams responded by filling up those feedback forms. A film by Earth Care on "The Elephants - God or Destroyer" was screened for sharing the experiences of similar conflict incidents across India and the means of mitigation.



A scene from the HECx drama



Children tying rakhi with the commitment to coexist with elephants



**Mr. James conducted programme at Peddathalapalli**

A special activity on problem solving was the final task given for the participants. This was also conducted among four working groups who contributed their viewpoints on four specific situations assigned to them based on socio-economic issues and its relationship with elephants. Zoo Outreach Organization developed the educational kits used here under the sponsorship of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, USA.

WWF-India handed over display boards with conservation messages to the local beat officer and distributed handouts for each participant. Finally the programme ended with a vote of thanks to all the invitees with a special mention of local Forest Ranger Mr. Bhupen Biswakarma who has been an exemplary source inspiration to local communities in mitigating the HEC problem in the trans-boundary region.  
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**HECx programme at Panjaliyur arranged by G.J. Venkatesh**

**HECx follow-up programmes of US Fish and Wildlife Service in Krishnagiri District, Tamil Nadu**

The Krishnagiri HECx participants conducted awareness programmes to fulfill their commitments, which they made during the workshop, conducted for Human Elephant Coexistence from 18-28 May 2013. On 18 May, the first awareness programme was held at Moramadugu village and Smt. N. Tamilselvi conducted the programme. A total of 100 participants, from the village, self help group members and their children participated in the event. Mr. V.T. Ramasamy arranged a programme at Vengilikanapalli on 19 May for about 45 villagers.

Mrs. N. Mayil conducted another awareness programme at Panajliyur on 20 May. Fifty participants took part. Forth awareness programme was conducted at Peddathalapalli on 22 May by Mr. M. James. About 100 participants joined in this. Mr. G.J. Venkatesh conducted the last programme at Ondiyur and 50 participants took part.



**Children posing with ele-kit items at Moramadugu HECx programme**

The participants of the above programme were self-help Women Group members, villagers and their children. These were arranged according to the convenience of the participants. Mr. Jalaluddeen, Director, SWORD presided over the programmes



**Self help group women members and their children were taught about HECx in Ondiyur programme**

and guided the organizers. The Adhiyaman Arts team also involved.

In all the programmes participants were taught about how to coexist with elephants. They were also told about the tips on do's and don'ts in elephant areas to avoid dead and injury. In addition to that elephant's behavior, the elephant facts such as their kinds, all physical features and past and present elephant range countries were also taught. USFWS sponsored ZOO ele-kit extensively used in all the programmes. The participants went through the booklet, they tied rakhi each other with a commitment to coexist with elephants, put up the elephant mask, tied head band and hold the placard and went for a rally with slogans pertained to elephant conservation and human elephant coexistence. **Submitted by: Mr. V.S.S. Jalaluddeen, Director, SWORD, Krishnagiri. Email: vssjsword@rediffmail.com.**

**Arulagam's HECX Programme in Elephant and Vulture areas of Western Ghats**

Elephant movements are usual in Arulagam's field areas of Siriyur, Thengumarada, Anaikatti and Allimayaru. Elephants are closely related with people live in these areas. People know much about elephants



**Mrs. Tamilselvi leading the oath taking session at Moramadugu**

and its behavior and they have wealth of knowledge on this species. However, we wanted to share the some scientific informations and human elephant coexistence with their children.

If you hadn't given some useful information about elephants they would not take the programme very seriously, so we took notes to talk with them on the subjects of recent changes in agricultural crops pattern, changes in elephant corridor and the advantages and disadvantages of

digging trenches in elephant areas. Since we are already working on these areas on vultures, we designed our programme on the topic 'Elephants and Vultures'. Dead elephants are one of the main food resources for the vultures in the areas.

The programme was held at 27 March 2013 in Thengumarada and Allimayaru schools. Mrs. Sridevi, Asst. Headmistress, Thengumarada School presided over the function and G.



**Students were told about the eco-link between elephant and vulture**

Angamuthu, Forest Ranger was the special invitee.

Mr. Angamuthu shared the students with the difference between Asian and African Elephants and do's and don'ts in when we see elephants. Ms. Revathi, Coordinator, Arulagam told the story of elephants and six blind men and taught the students how to develop a vulture mask. Then Mr. Bharathidasan, Secretary, Arulagam discussed with the students. He asked the students, when they happen to meet an elephant on the way what they will immediately do and most of them said in chorus, we will run away very fast. But a playful student said I put a ant in its ear, another said climbing on the wall and watch its beauty and one more said I will give them Sugarcane and Jack fruit.

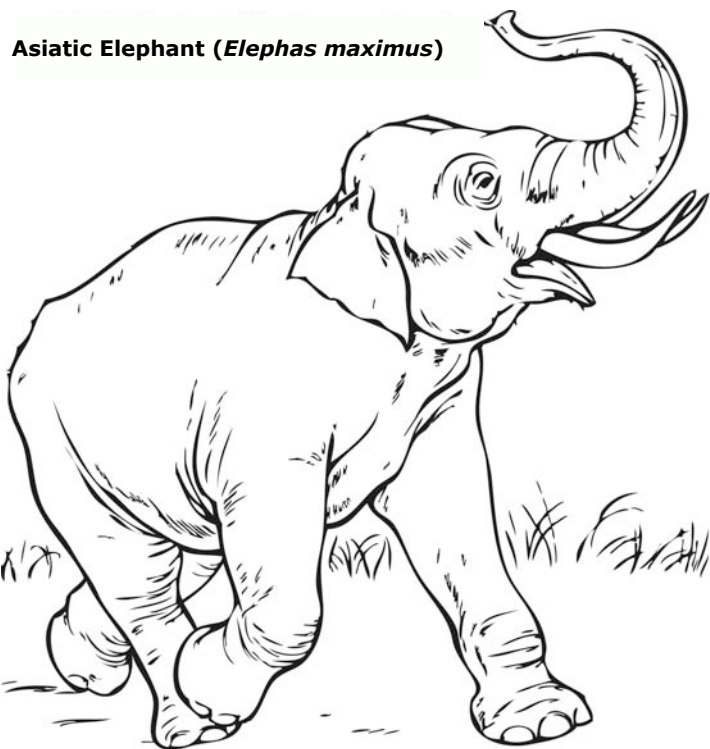
When you go back home, if you meet an elephant on the way what you would do?, one said that very casually I have an alternate route to reach my home so I will take that way. This is also one of the tips to avoid confrontation with elephants. It is good if we know different routes to reach our destination and I said that it is very useful.

Mr. Venkatachalam, Researcher gave a talk on the relationships between elephants and vulture and the how the

dead elephants take a part in vulture food. The Asst. Headmistress opined that she was happy to know about the association between elephants and vultures. She made a request to conduct the programme again in her school. We supplied elephant

illustrations and they enjoyed coloring it. Students also requested us to come again to their school.

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**Asiatic Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)**

*An environmental education initiative by Arulagam.*

**Elephant illustrations given for colouring**