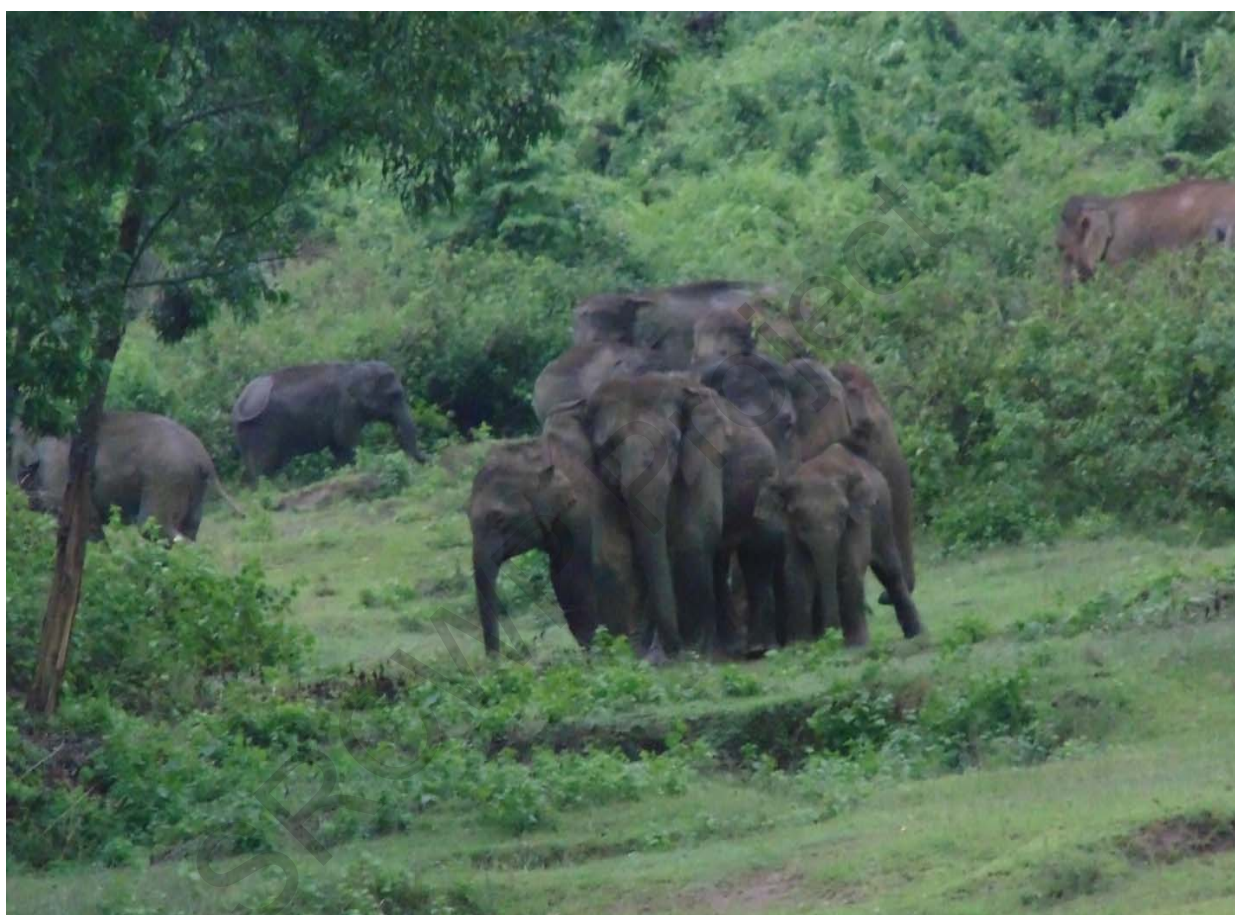


Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection Project
Bangladesh Forest Department

Report on Safeguard of the sub-project

Titled: “Human-Elephant Conflicts (HECs) Management in the Trans-boundary Area of Northern Part of Bangladesh”



May 17, 2015

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Social safeguard format

Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Wildlife Protection (SRCWP) Project of Forest Department

Sub-project: Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) Management in the transboundary area of Northern part of Bangladesh implemented by HEDS (Human Economic Development Society)

1. Introduction

The sub-project is basically a research project. However, there are training and awareness program; and other activities include preparation of a training module, a Habitat Management Plan for elephant conservation and a Mitigation Protocol.

Since last 17/18 years (late ninety decade of last century) wild elephants (estimated about 125 elephants under this sub-project) have been visiting the reserved forests of the Garo hills of Bangladesh and causing damage of crops, houses, fruits, bamboos and also causing deaths of human lives. On the other hand, rate of deaths of elephants in the site seems high (4 elephants died/killed within last one year) in the location. The elephants in the site cannot have as usual movements between the forests of Bangladesh and India crossing the border due to the barbed wire border fence constructed by India.

2. Socio-economic information

The location of the sub-project includes the reserved forests in the northern forest belt of Mymensingh Forest Division. Administratively, the location is within Sherpur and Jamalpur districts. The location has international border on the northern boundary with India. The size of the reserved forests is around 12 thousand hectares and about 125 elephants live in the forests, and sometime travel to the forests of India. There are settlements in the reserved forests and obviously on the edges of the forests within Bangladesh. This situation of living wild elephants and human communities leads to conflicts.

The issues of conflicts between human communities and elephants have been confined in 41 villages located within and on its (location) southern edges. Statistics of the socio-economic information of the site are as under:

Unions, Villages and Human population of the Upazilas of the study area

The accounts of Unions and villages including human population include

1. No. of Unions = 8 (Nalitabari -3, Jhnaigati-2, Sreebordhi-2 and Bakshiganj-1)
2. Total no. of villages: 143
3. Total no. of households: 45,474 (Nalitabari-13,328, Jhenaigati- 11,430, Sreebordhi-15,008 and Bakshiganj-5,708)
4. Total no. of tribal households: 1422
5. Total population: 203,739

6. No. of elephant affected villages: 41
7. Size of elephant-affected population (estimated): about 60,000

Rich and educated people are few in the HEC affected location.

3. Consultation with community, ethnic community and NGO groups (meetings of the meeting to be attached)

Three different kinds of meetings and workshops (sensitization, knowledge sharing decision making) were conducted with the stakeholders, however, meetings with villagers led to the following purposes:

- a) Information regarding size and composition of the population in the villages
- b) Wild elephants in the location
- c) Areas and sizes of HECs
- d) Measures the communities undertake when elephants raid crop fields and houses
- e) Suggestions (what kind of assistance or help they require for mitigation of conflicts)
- f) Suggestions from the team of the sub-project regarding mitigation of HECs

Except a few, most of the HEC affected villages are located within the forests. The villages on the edges of forests have conflicts basically with the paddy damage during growing seasons only. And majority of the affected villages have both tribal and muslim populations but hindus are rare.

The staff of the sub-project used to visit the HEC affected villages mainly for conducting meetings for two purposes:

- a) Scheduled visits for awareness raising as well as to share/exchange knowledge on elephants and on HECs
- b) Visits for collection of information after elephants' raids on the damages done by elephants

Almost all of the elephant affected villages have been visited by the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator along with his Research Assistants and implemented community meetings. As mentioned earlier the issues of the meetings were to

- a) raise awareness among the communities
- b) gather knowledge on HECs and elephants including elephants' movements particularly movement routes, corridors, feeding and indigenous measures the villagers undertake during raiding by elephants in the villages and on network of communication between the villages, etc. and
- c) to provide guideline to save their lives from elephants

About 150 formal and informal meetings have been implemented with the communities. Photographs of meetings are attached.

4. Livelihood and Resource Management (a) Alternative livelihood opportunities

Primary livelihood of most of the muslims are agriculture mainly paddy cultivation. They also grow vegetables, keep cow for milking and selling through fattening and now-a-days social forestry with the Forest Department in the degraded reserved forests. Livelihoods of ethnic groups are also the same, however, they have fruit gardens in the homesteads. Livelihoods of ethnic groups probably might have supported by international NGO particularly World Vision in the location. World Vision usually gives more attention to the Catholic Christian communities.

(b) Others if any

Youths mainly girls from very poor particularly tribal communities have jobs in Dhaka or other big cities. There are activities of Christian Missions in the tribal villages.

5. **Selection of project beneficiaries:** Not applicable for the sub-project
6. **Social impact assessment:** Implementation of the sub-project had no negative impacts on the people. On the other hand, however, there will be positive impacts through mitigation of HECs: training of VERTs members and implementation of Habitat Management Plan for elephants and HEC mitigation Protocol of the sub-project will help, through undertaking and implementing long-term and permanent protection measures, reduction of crop and house damage by elephants.
7. **Mitigation Plan:** The following three documents have been prepared under the sub-project:
 - a) Training module on HEC management and mitigation (100 community people and 20 Field Forest staff have been trained).
 - b) Habitat Management Plan for mitigation as well as for conservation of elephants
 - c) HEC Mitigation Protocol

The documents have already been submitted to PMU and other concerned good offices and ready for printing for distribution.

8. **Status of drinking water and use of water for other sector:** Drinking water is available through or from tube wells and ring wells and water for bathing, domestic and irrigation purposes are available from surface water sources: reservoirs (ponds/ditches), rivers and streams, etc.
9. **Cultural and institutional aspects:** Two very different cultures exist in the location: Muslims and Ethnic communities. They live together in the same village though there are small exclusive ethnic villages. However, muslim communities live in the distal end of the village from forests. There are two ethnic groups: Garo and Koch. Garos are now converted catholic Christians but Koch have been known to maintain their original culture (could be studied separately). The ethnic communities are more culture/education oriented but muslims are agriculture oriented. There are Christian missions as well as Islamic centre in the location. World Vision has been known to be quite active in the location for the welfare of the ethnic communities. There are quite a significant number of educational institutes in the location.

10. **CMC formation:** As per inclusion/provision in the project proposal, 21 Village Elephant Response Teams (VERTs) have been formed in the location under the sub-project.
11. **Communication accessibility:** During dry season, remote villages in the location are easily accessible by motor bike or on foot. Communication of villagers through cell phone is better.
12. **Benefits provided to the community:** Not applicable
13. **Training and awareness for the community:** More than 100 people including field forest staff have been trained on HEC Management and Mitigation. The villagers have been met by the staff of the sub-project for HEC purposes in uncountable numbers. Workshops and sensitization meetings and workshops have been implemented upto district level.

Abdul Wahab Akonda

Principal Investigator

Deterrence practices of elephants by local people using locally devised weapons





Annex- 1: Photographs of meetings with villagers

A workshop meeting at Modutila in presence of PD



A workshop meeting at Bokshegong in presence of PD & DC-Jamalpur ,UNO







Photo of Training program VERT & FERT group.



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Annex-2: List of vulnerable villages due to elephants in the forests Sherpur and Jamalpur districts visited by PI

Bakshiganj Upazilla, Jamalpur district

1. Sangnathpara
2. Digolkona

Sribordhi Upazilla, Sherpur district

3. Megadol
4. Hariakona
5. Kharamora
6. Jhulgaon

Jhenaigati Upazilla, Sherpur district

7. Kangsha or Chota Gazni
8. Bara Gazni
9. Gandhigaon
10. Gomra
11. Haldigram

Nalitabari Upazilla, Sherpur district

12. Somaschura
13. Burunga
14. Khalchanda
15. Dalukona
16. Daodhara
17. Nalkugaon
18. Kalakuma
19. Tarani
20. Panihata

21. Mayagachi

Annex-3: Ramchandrakura Union, Nalitabari Upazila, Sherpur

1. Mayagachi
2. Panihata
3. Tarani
4. Kalakuma

Nayabil Union, Nalitabari Upazila, Sherpur

5. Nakugaon
6. Katabari
7. Daodhara

Poragaon Union, Nalitabari Upazila

8. Dhalukona
9. Andaropara
10. Khalchandra
11. Kalapani
12. Porabari
13. Somaschura

Nolkura Union, Jhenaigati Upazila, Sherpur

14. Haldigram
15. Gomra

Kangsha union, Jhenaigati Upazila, Sherpur

16. Naokuchi
17. Nakshi
18. Halchati
19. Bara Gazni
20. Chota Gazni
21. Bakakura
22. Gandhigaon

Ranishimul Union of Sribordhi Upazila, Sherpur

23. Rangajan
24. Agor Bagan, Jhulgaon
25. Rajapahar
26. Kharamora
27. Chandapara
28. Megadal
29. Haluhati

Shingabaruna Union, SribordhiUpazila, Sherpur

30. Kumargati
31. Chandapara
32. Bablakona
33. Hariakona
34. Christanpara




Dhanua Kamalpur Union, Bakashiganj Upazila, Jamalpur

35. Tilapara
36. Digalkona
37. Hati Berkona
38. Sangnathpara

Annex-4: The safeguard poster

বন্যপ্রাণী সংরক্ষণে আঞ্চলিক সহযোগীতা জোরদারকরণ প্রকল্প (SRCWP)
বাংলাদেশের উত্তরাঞ্চলীয় সীমান্ত বনে মানুষ-হাতি বিরোধ ব্যবস্থাপনা উপ-প্রকল্প
(HEC Management)
বন্যহাতির আক্রমণকালে নিরাপত্তা এবং সম্পদ রক্ষায় করণীয়

- ১। বন্যহাতির আক্রমণ থেকে নিজেকে রক্ষা করুন।
- ২। দলবদ্ধ হয়ে বন্যহাতির আক্রমণ প্রতিরোধ করুন।
- ৩। আপনার এলাকায় হাতি আক্রমণের সম্ভাব্য সময়ে পাহাড়ার ব্যবস্থা করুন।
- ৪। তাড়ানোর সময় বন্যহাতির দল থেকে নিরাপদ দূরত্বে অবস্থান করুন।
- ৫। বন্যহাতি তাড়াতে ঘরের ভেতর থেকে চিৎকার না করা ভাল।
ঘর থেকে চিৎকারের কারণে হাতি বিরক্ত হয়ে ঘর ভাঙতে পারে।
- ৬। বন্যহাতি দৌড়ে এসে আক্রমণের সময় বামে মোড় নিয়ে দৌড়াবেন।
বন্যহাতির বামে মোড় নিতে বেশী সময় লাগে।
- ৭। বন্যহাতি তাড়ানোর জন্যে শক্তিশালী টর্চ ব্যবহার করুন।
হাতি আহত হতে পারে এমন অস্ত্র ব্যবহার করা থেকে বিরত থাকুন।
- ৮। কাঁটাওয়ালা গাছ (লেবু, কুল, মনকাটা, বেত ইত্যাদি) বাড়ী ও ধান জমির
চারপাশে রোপন করে বন্যহাতি থেকে জান-মাল রক্ষায় সচেষ্ট হোন।
- ৯। বন্যহাতির আক্রমণে জান-মালের ক্ষতি কমাতে বন্যহাতির বাসস্থল রক্ষা
ও উন্নয়নে বন বিভাগকে সহযোগিতা করুন।
- ১০। বন্যপ্রাণী সংরক্ষণ আইন মেনে চলুন।

সহযোগীতা ও বাস্তবায়নে:-বাংলাদেশ বনবিভাগ ও হিড্‌স/HEDS, অর্থায়নে: বিশ্ব ব্যাংক