



Strengthening tribal/forest dependent community action for conservation of elephant, management of habitat & Telkoi- Pallahara elephant corridor

BACKDROP AND CONTEXT

The applicant Subhransu Bhusan Swain a committed conservationist one of the co-founder of Paribartan was leading this project as team leader and successfully implemented the project in partnership with RSGF (2nd small Grant) for mobilizing tribal community, forest administration and other stakeholders to chalk out long range strategic plan emphasizing public, private, community partnership approach for conservation of elephants and their habitat “Telkoi Pallahara elephant corridor”.

Habitat loss and degradation is a significant issue for reduced elephant population in Odisha as increasing amounts of natural habitat particularly identified corridor is being incurring loss of vegetation due to developmental activities. The Malyagiri mountain region holds a core population of elephant/seasonal movement of elephant, therefore has critical importance for the long-term viability of this species. But to date there has been few targeted conservation efforts with participation of tribal community and forest dependant community .The goals of this project undertaken by Paribartan were to establish environment for human elephant co-existence related awareness activities, planting of alternative crops (unpalatable to elephants),development of alternative livelihood options with changed in cropping pattern coupled with strategic revamp of policy for management of elephant corridor Action Plan for ensuring conservation efforts of this core elephant population more - strategic, effective and adaptive. Since 2009, Paribartan dedicated to protecting endangered species, preserving their habitats, and defending biodiversity. The Paribartan team fosters an entrepreneurial spirit in conservation and partners with community-based tribal women group, conservationists & forest administration to develop solutions for human-wildlife coexistence, especially to mitigate man-elephant conflict.

The project put emphasis on the following components:-

- ❖ *Telkoi – Pallahara elephant corridor and Habitat Protection*
- ❖ *Capacity Building of tribal community to function as tracker*
- ❖ *Changed in cropping pattern with non-lure crop variety*
- ❖ *Sustainable management of forest, reserves, and water bodies through regeneration, conservation and judicious use and management practices*



Plantation besides elephant corridors by villagers

GRANT RECIPIENT DETAILS

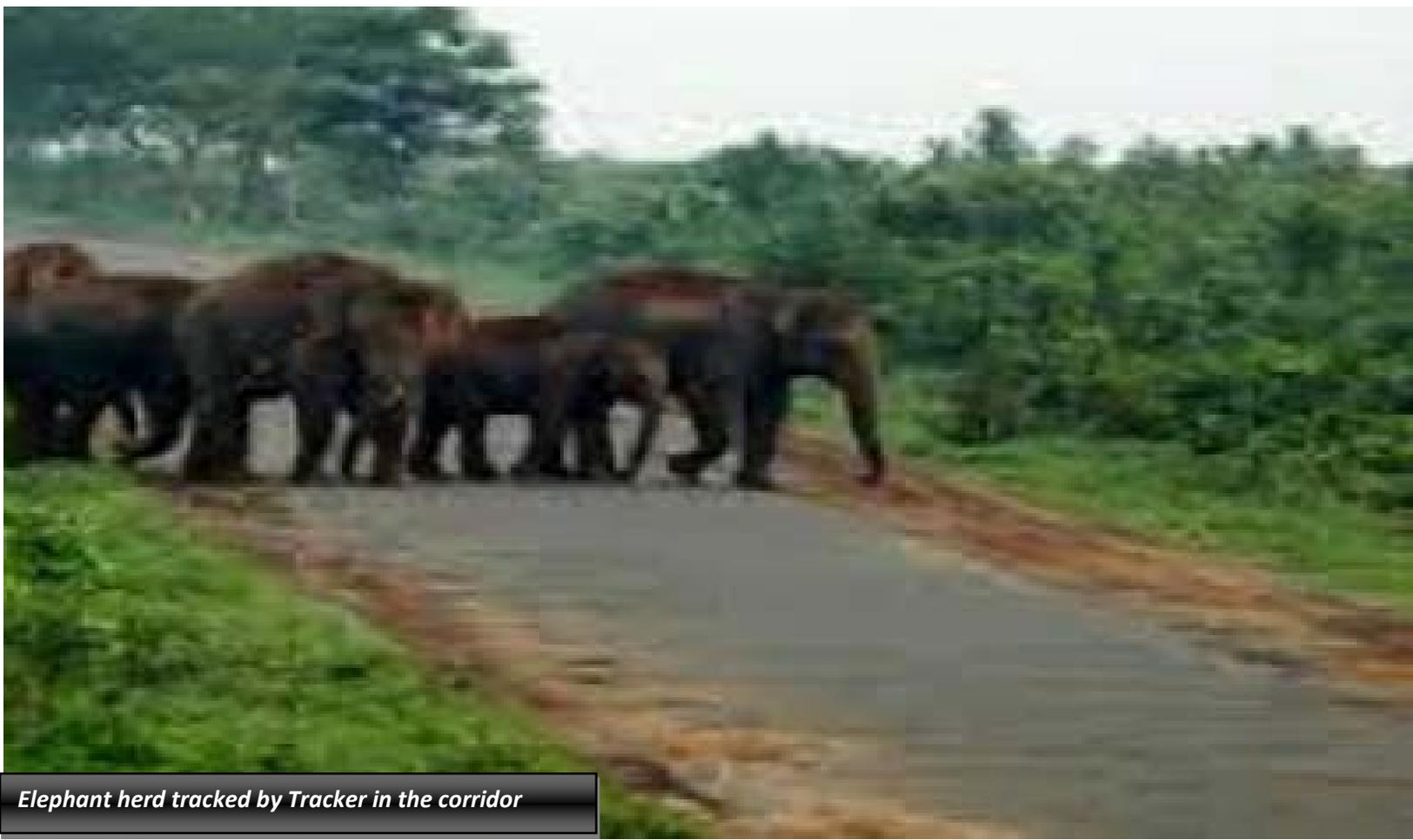
Name	:	Subhransu Bhusan swain
Organization	:	PARIBARTAN
Title of the Project	:	<i>Strengthening tribal /forest dependant community action for conservation of elephant, management of habitat & Telkoi – Pallahara elephant corridor</i>
RSG REF/Project Code	:	Ref: 13676-2
Project sanctioned on	:	22nd November 2013
Project Duration	:	1. 12 .2013 – 30. 11 .2014
Reporting Period	:	December 2013 to 30th Nov 2014
RSGF, UK, Financing	:	£ 6000 /
Your email address	:	subhransu1963@yahoo.com
Date of this report	:	16th March 2015

The location of your project

The project will cover 60 villages of Pallahara Block coming under malyagiri mountain of eastern Ghats Mountain region of Angul district Odisha India.

Specific Locality: - Pallahara Block of Angul district, Odisha

(Longitude: 85° 10' 59.88" (E) Latitude: 21° 27'0" (N))



Elephant herd tracked by Tracker in the corridor

OBJECTIVE

- A. To strengthen the knowledge, attitude, behavior and practices of existing 120 community based elephant trackers through advanced 5 days refresher training on management of habitat, how to watch elephant movement and defensive measures to drive out elephant herd
- B. To organize training for 180 tribal farmers on cultivation and marketing of non lure crops – this provides alternative incomes and reduces the dependency on subsistence crops that are prone to damage by elephants.
- C. To undertake plantation (150000 seedlings) with elephant’s favorite fruit bearing plants and fast growing bamboo species and digging of elephant trench around 60 villages coming in the vicinity of elephant corridor.
- D. To generate awareness among tribal and forest dependent communities on re-creation of lost transit paths and training villagers by trained elephant trackers on consequences of unsustainable natural resource use and options for communities to support elephant corridor (spread over 56.61 sq km and 23.8 km long having width from 0.08 to 4.6 km.) conservation efforts furthering mitigation of man elephant conflicts.

SECTION -1

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN & THEIR RESULTS IN DETAILS.

Village level sensitization and advocacy meeting

It is a fact that Line forest department is suffering with perhaps inadequate manpower and capacity to implement conservation programs, as a result loss of vegetation and elephant conservation initiatives is progressing slow furthering threatening for co-existence, and rising of man–elephant conflict. Villagers were imparted with information by the help of resource map and micro corridor map on Human-Elephant Conflicts depicting villages as per previous reports of elephants raiding their crops, this included severely affected villages where elephants destroyed crops and garden and dwelling units, and villages



where villagers reported their insecurity and psychosis about their safety including life. Communities now have a better understanding of the distribution of Human - Elephant Conflicts in the adjacent villages of Telkoi –Pallahara elephant corridor. We plan to analyze this data and try to organize village level meeting for mitigation of conflicts and for more strategic intervention Paribartan continuously organized village level meeting involving trained trackers, farmers. The project team of Paribartan

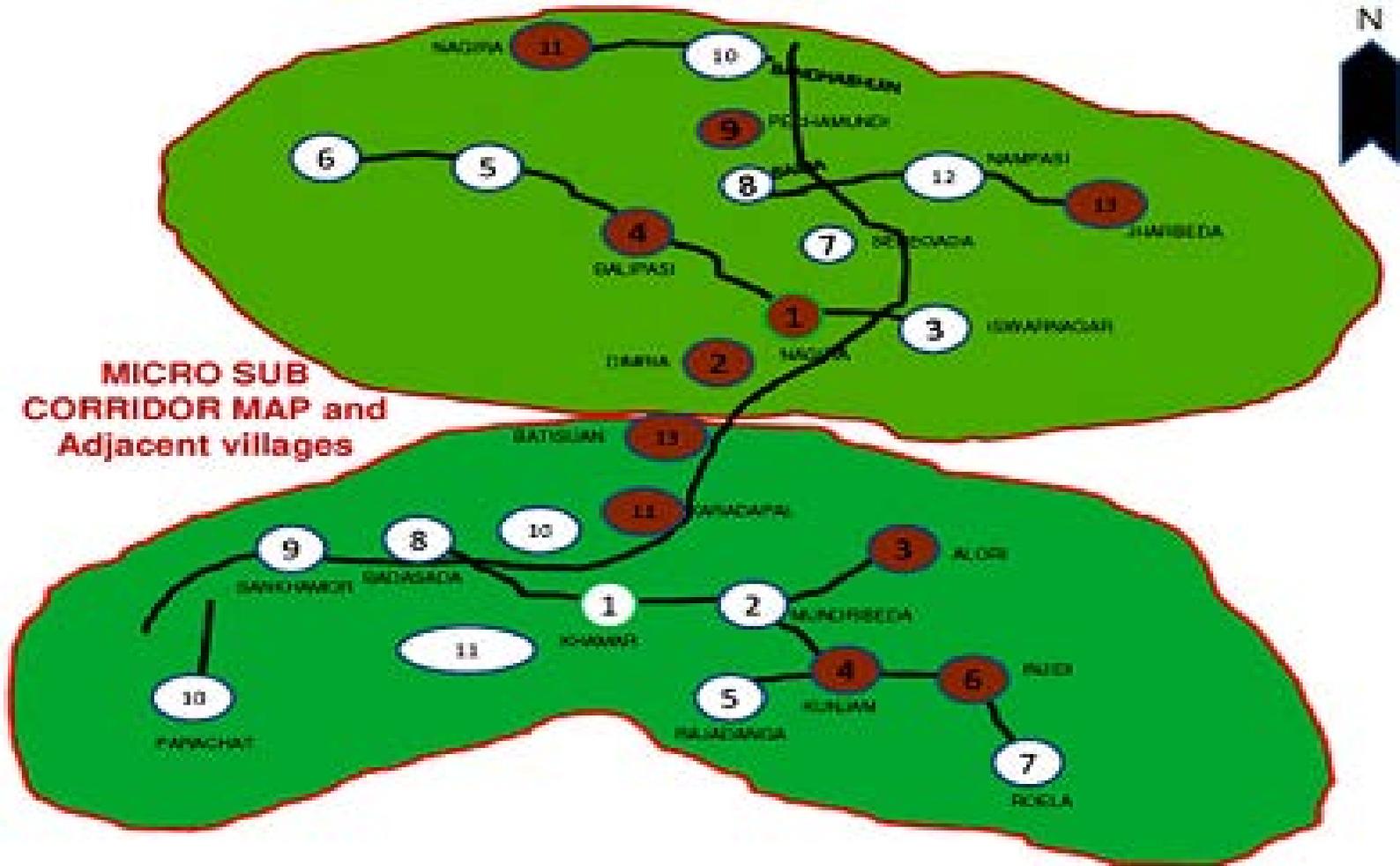


sensitized the villagers on sustainable and judicious use of common resources including forest and its produces, vegetative propagation of Telkoi- Pallahara elephant corridor, strengthening of community based forest protection squad and measures to check grazing of domestic animal inside elephant corridor, erection of elephant proof trenches and how to check timber smuggling. Villagers were also warned against storing "Handia"/country alcohol - a rice based country liquor, in their houses because elephants are believed to be fond of this and are attracted by its smell. People are also warned against moving around in intoxicated condition after sunset because they cannot protect themselves against the elephant in case of attack.



Training to trackers on elephant corridor and management

This apart during village level meeting, the women groups were encouraged to draw resource map of elephant corridor/sub-corridor and transfer related information to their fellow members, so that they can assessed the health of corridor regularly and community members will monitor the corridor. It is observed community initiated action for protection, conservation and management of elephant corridor/sub corridors. There were 735 number of meeting organized during 12 months period and about 12345 tribal women attended the meetings.



Capacity building of trackers

117 elephant trackers of 60 villages were attended the refresher training programme on conservation of elephants and their habitat including sustainable forest management and regular village level meeting besides took lead role in preparation of resource map with community participation and updating of the same. Community based elephant trackers were provided input on application of indigenous knowledge on biodiversity conservation including management of elephant corridor and sub corridor, protection of perennial water resources, regeneration of elephant friendly vegetation in and around the corridor and in fallow forest land and on community involvement in management of forest health including watch and ward. During training programme the trackers were critically imparted with elephants' roles to sustain our ecosystem and bio-diversity and on forest protection and it is expected they will be the change agent for their community for conservation initiatives of the elephants.

The team of Trackers received with elephant conservation and Leadership Development training that has been specially designed for the trackers

- Trackers were provided with precise information about patrol coverage and the location of poaching activity.
- Provided with provision of compensation those who victimized/incur loss of crop /house by elephant attack and on Wild Life Act and the legal aspect for illegal wild life related activities

- Tracking elephant herd movement during seasonal migration and prompt dissemination of messages to villagers for safety and preventive measures to avoid casualty and loss of property, farming and farm produces,
- Use of indigenous techniques like chili, wild ant and other scientific equipment to drive back elephant herd to forest.
- Imparted with knowledge on how to monitor corridor

Diversification of cropping pattern like adopting non-lure crops

Paribartan was initiated activities to generate awareness and to change perception, behavior and agricultural practices of the farmers residing in the vicinity of elephant corridor, transit path and habitat. It was observed that the extent of depredation by elephants reduced by adaptation of non –lure crops .Farmers were advised not to grow bamboos, bananas, jack fruit and all fruits bearing plants very close to their houses as may attract elephants. During Training at village end farmers were educated regarding farming of non elephant lure crop with cost benefit analysis and explained on the other benefit associated with the farming activities and how it will reduce the raid by elephant herd. Villagers are also advised to

keep the hedge/trench around their houses/areas where crop depredation by elephants is a regular problem, villagers are advised not to grow paddy or maize but to go for turmeric, zinger, potato and any crop as per advice of tribal community having experiences which is not eaten by elephants. This apart villagers were also exposed to indigenous know how regarding fixing of wild ant in their garden so that there will be less attack (because it was experienced that elephant are scared about wild ant and will enter in to their trunk) on existing orchard (Indigenous techniques used by tribal farmers. Out of 180 trained tribal farmers only 79 farmers were adopted the farming activities with non lure crop as because the implementing agency was unable to mobilise adequate resources for this, as most of the intended partners are earning less than 1 pound sterling per day. Interestingly if continuous hand holding support will be extended to farmers then within 4- 5 years time span there will be complete adaptation of the new farming practices and directly it will support for causing injury to elephant and their conservation will be ensured with community participation



Discussion on non lure crop farming

Construction of trench fire lines in and around forest areas and village boundary

Man-elephant conflict is basically a man-made problem. Paribartan with the support of project team mobilized community support to take suitable precautionary measures like digging of elephant proof trench in the vicinity of forest coverage. It is expected that man and elephant can live in peaceful co-existence without trespassing to habitat. Suitable on field training on elephant proof trench was given to them coupled with management input for maintaining the same .Out of identified passes 10 villages only able to dig trench however attempt is going on to dig trenches in all villages as a measures to protect elephant attack on habitat thus it will minimize the man elephant conflict.



Strengthening community based forest protection squads and vigil huts

Forest degradation had manifold impacts on the socio-economic life of the communities. The ecological fallout of such degraded surrounding forests negatively affected the local agriculture, practices and completely shattered the forest based livelihood of tribal and forest dependant community furthering regular attack of wild life including elephant on settlement. In such circumstances villagers of 60 villages gradually initiated protection measures to restore back the forests and local livelihoods and for habitat protection measures. With the support of trackers and young people at village end community based protect squads were formed. They undertake regular watch and ward monitor elephant corridor's health, placing wild ant nest in possible entry point/passage of elephant to villages and regularly informed the villagers on community-based forest protection squad are on the frontlines of the fight against wildlife crime and the project team extended all possible hand holding support. Trained trackers are leading the team in elephant monitoring to mitigate conflict with elephants. The trackers and the squads members developed micro action plan, which is being followed by the community based squads for protection and conservation activities.

Effect of community based forest protection squads:

Forest Benefits

- ❖ Supply of forest produces for food, house construction, agricultural implements
- ❖ Opening of livelihood opportunities for tribal thus minimize dependence on reserves
- ❖ Restoration of forest streams at least up to end of summer.

- ❖ Opportunities for elephant herd to travel freely and perhaps will appease their food requirement within the forest (It can be assessed only after 4/5 years)
- ❖ Regular supply of fuel wood from cleaning of regenerating forests
- ❖ Strengthening of local institutions with Action Plan and resource map on elephant conservation
- ❖ More vegetative propagation in the elephant corridor.

Field Visit by OPTIONS, UK TEAM

Paribartan, the Project Partner of RSGF, UK was fortunate to receive a team of delegates consisting **Allie Barter**, Deputy Managing Director ,Finance, **Sherice Sorhaindo**, Financial Accountant, from Options, UK. and **Krishna Sharma**, Head of programme Options Nepal for appraisal of Self Help Group – Participatory Learning and Action programme to be implemented in all 8 blocks of Angul district Odisha.

On 2nd April 2014 the team arrived at the campus and the Options team was welcomed warmly by the team members and volunteers of Paribartan. At 9 am interaction was made and they critically reviewed approach and process of the programme and the financial management and adopted administrative procedure and monitoring. After listening about the RSGF, UK supported project “*Strengthening tribal /forest dependant community action for conservation of elephant, management of habitat & Telkoi – Pallahara elephant corridor*” the team shown their interest for a field visit of the project area.

1. Visited one village (*Chandpank*) of the project area.
2. Interacted with the Tribal community and intended partners.
3. Interacted with the Women group and saw the resource map.
4. Interacted with the project team and volunteers.
5. Discussion with intended partners on future perspective including sustainability issue beyond the project cycle.



Drawing of Resource map including sub path of elephant movement by women group

Field visit:-

Options, UK, was welcomed by the women groups as well as by the tribal community. Physically the Team saw the condition of the tribal community and discussed regarding their livelihood option, gender equity, forest protection and conservation initiatives and Man – Elephant conflict issues. The women groups described regarding their initiatives on protection conservation and management of forest area and described about the progress of the project. This



Scene of elephant raid in crop field

apart the women groups shown their records and other documents and told how they are participating in the project implementation and monitoring. Women representatives demonstrated the *Rangoli* on village based forest resource map and boldly spelt the available resources existing, explained regarding management plan, watch and ward etc. The tribal women invited the team for a visit to their forest that they conserved but due to time constraint it was not possible. The Option Team UK shared her purpose of visit and personally interacted with the tribal women. Being impressed with the women group involvement in programme and maintenance of record **Allie Barter**, Deputy Managing Director, Finance encouraged the women group with a cash incentive of INR-1000 (£ 100).

SECTION -II

FINANCE

The detail expenditure incurred during the period **1st December 2013 to end of Nov - 2014** is depicted with minute details in the statement of expenditure of the allocated funds.

Project cost, disbursements, contribution, and conformance to schedule (as relevant to project performance).

As originally envisaged, the RSGF, grant was used for intervention of planned activities, for procurement of materials .programme implementation cost and service cost. Paribartan and local community contributed significantly towards communication materials, monitoring and for community level events. Paribartan has mobilized support from Government - kind contributions viz visual Aids, Siren. Search Light and manpower and technical expertise during capacity building, advocacy and campaign activity.

Regarding release of Funds finance department of RSGF released funds in time as per the direction of, Jane Raymond, Trust Administrator, RSG, UK. Paribartan the implementing agency is successful for timely submission of the interim report as well as



Micro resource map on existing water

audited financial report (till 30th Nov 2014) in detailed for record and reference. Internal audit was conducted regularly by the account officer followed by cross checking by core team members and the team leader on quarterly basis and as per the recommendation corrective measures were taken. Accounts officer is capable in handling financial mater and involved in designing quarterly action plan and booked budget accordingly at par with activity schedule for approval of executive body. Financial transparency has been maintained to the maximum extent and check and balance is incorporated all along programme and financial matter. The details of expenditure are presented below for record and references of RSGF, UK.

