

Project Update: April 2015

We feel happy to inform that we have selected our first lot of four villages where preparatory work of developing community mangrove forests has commenced. These villages have been hand-picked on the basis of their proximity with the tiger reserve and the results of our first survey reports on the number of tiger victims, tiger widows, person's dead in tiger attacks. These include the villages of Patharpara, Annpur and Chorgheri under Lahiripur Panchayat of Gosaba block in the district of 24 Parganas South. In fact, in Patharpara and Annpur, there are even areas called Bidhoba Para meaning locality of tiger widows. "*Bidhoba Paara*" (meaning locality of widows)

Identification of First Lot of Three Villages

As per our on-going door to door survey report for the period from 2011 January to 2015 (continuing), Chorgheri has the highest of 51 persons dead in tiger attacks along with eight injured. Next is the village of Annpur with 46 persons dead in big cat attacks while leaving 9 injured. Patharpara has 43 dead tiger victims with 24 injured.



These figures however do not tally with that of the forest department's as most of these entries in the forest were unauthorised and the news of deaths / injuries in tiger attacks are confined to the respective villages, getting conveyed by word of mouth of the villagers.

Our work has begun with mobilisation of the local communities in each village for the project activities.

Identification of Barren Land

We have identified the *chor* land (barren land by the river banks) in the three villages. While Chorgheri has the highest of about 12 ha, of which 1.5 ha is in a critical state by broken embankment, Annpur has 4.5 ha of land where plantation work can be undertaken. In Pathorpaara we have identified 3.5 hectares of such land by Pathor River that branches out from the Garan River.



Identification of silted pond

We have also identified a silted pond in Pathapara of about 5-5.5 kathas. After restoration of the pond we will introduce fingerlings and ducks, to promote fish culture as an alternative source of livelihood.

Mangrove Seed Collection

The tiger widows from the selected villages have already been engaged in collection of mangrove seeds, which will henceforth be nurtured in mangrove nurseries.



Cleanliness drive

In the course of our focus meetings in the respective villages, the villagers pointed out that tourists are not acting responsibly and often litter the place with poly packs, throw away plastic packets etc. Such waste clogs the soil preventing the sprouting of mangrove seeds. We discussed with the core members of Sundarban Rural Development Society, discussing on our target areas where such drives need to be undertaken.



Rapport Building with local administration

It is important to develop a rapport and working relation of the local villagers with the field forest personnel. The villagers are getting involved in local meetings/ conferences on environment protection/ government meetings etc. to enable them to speak out on the proposed work and its utility.

Forthcoming Activities

Raising Mangrove nursery; 2. Creating plantation Sites; 3. Desilting of pond; 4. Next selection of villages

