

## **Project Update: August 2018**

The eastern India population of Asian elephant in Mayurjharna Elephant Reserve and its 'Zone of Influence' has increased from 118+ in 2012 to 194+ in 2018 (Ref. All India Synchronised Elephant Population Estimation 2017). During this project period, we have studied vulnerability of four identified inter-state migratory corridors, among which only Dalapani (Jharkhand)-Kalrajhore (West Bengal) needs high priority of conservation as almost >92% migratory population uses this route to enter West Bengal. The corridor has a continuous forest with more than 37 species of elephant fodder.

The community capacity building programme conducted till date were focused on HEC mitigation techniques like low cost crop guarding system, fore-alarm system, alternate livelihood practices, crop alteration, save period of cultivation of cash crops, unpalatable long awned (bristles) paddy, chilli etc. through training and field verification in corridor dependent villages to mitigate human-elephant hostility. The project has an important role in communication and confidence building of stakeholders to minimise retaliatory attitude. During community interaction, we explained 'how we can change the conflicts to coexistence' through few precautionary activities.

During first 6 months we have reached five colleges, seven schools and several villages to conduct the awareness/capacity building programmes. At least, 5,300+ people got opportunity to interact or take part in the programme through institutional participation and indirectly 30,000+ people got aware about the problem. We are developing local conservation stewards through to monitor the elephant population migration and human-elephant hostility.

During the long way towards human-elephant coexistence we are successful to bring a change to the retaliatory attitude of villagers and achieve zero retaliatory killing of elephant in last 2 years, but we will also need to focus on zero human casualties in coming years. We have also done capacity building programme and provided field support to an Early Response Squad to minimise the depredation during elephant migration in human dominated landscape.

The YouTube link for upload as update is: <https://youtu.be/AvLQ-76SgbY>

Though we have reached zero retaliatory killing for last 2 years but the accidental death in rail tracks started to happen in the study area. We are working on the precautionary measures to prevent it in future and will send you the details soon as update.



Left: Samya Basu discussing on the alternate livelihood. ©Arunima Roy. Right: Tracking and following an elephant herd of 43 individuals at MER. ©Samya Basu.



Left: Measuring footprint to estimate elephant height during tracking. ©Arunima Roy. Right: Plantation in degraded forest land in elephant corridor. ©Samya Basu.