

Project Update: March 2011

Firstly, I visited the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) of Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation, Nepal. I went to Chitwan National Park office and offices of Buffer Zone Management Committee, Buffer Zone User Committees and collected information regarding Conservation Education and Outreach Program being conducted by these offices. Besides, I also visited Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) project of the National Trust for Nature Conservation and Terai Arc Landscape Project (TRCP) of the World Wide Fund for Nature Nepal which have been actively involving in conservation field in the study area.

I interviewed Park Warden, Buffer Zone Management Committee and Buffer Zone User Committee members, local people, BCC and TAL project personnel during this visit. The main intention of the visit was to find out necessary information regarding conservation education programme that they have been carrying out and to identify gaps in order to meet conservation goals. The following are some queries I put to the respondents.

1. What is the main aim of conservation education programme?
2. What are the subjects covered by the conservation education?
3. Who are the target audience?
4. Who participate in the programme most?
5. How is the conservation education programme conducted?
6. Are there other organisations doing conservation activity in the study area?
7. When is the education programme conducted?
8. Where is the conservation education programme implemented?

Workshop

A workshop was conducted in the study area on March 15th 2011.

Objective of the workshop

- To better understand the existing conservation education programme.
- To assess sufficiency, efficiency and effectiveness of the existing conservation programme.
- To recommend appropriate conservation education to reduce human wildlife conflict issues.

Participation

There were 28 people who participated in the workshop - Park Warden, Chitwan National Park, Chairman, Ex-Chairman of BZMC and Chairmen of Buffer Zone User Committees (BZUC), Major and Captain from the Army Protection Unit, representatives from BCC and TAL, teachers from Schools, representative from Eco-club, youth members engaging in anti-poaching and awareness activities, victims, local people from vulnerable areas.

Focus of discussion

- Existing conservation education programme.
- Wild animals' behavior and ecology/habitat (Bear, elephant, rhino and tiger).
- Situations of attack on human beings by wild animals.
- Reasons of attack on human by wild animals.
- Tactics to be safe from wild animals.

Workshop Proceeding

In the workshop, I presented the information and responses that I collected during my preliminary visit and meetings with park personnel, local communities and other organisations. I presented the existing activities being conducted by the park management authorities and other organisations. I also presented a big gap of missing human-wildlife conflict issues in the existing conservation education activities and publications. The discussion was focused on four wild animals namely tiger, rhino, bear and elephant as the first project found that these animals are the most responsible to cause human death and injury in the study area.

Conservation Education Programme

1. Conservation education programme being conducted by the Park and Buffer Zone Management Committee

Conservation education for the community is one of the many programmes of park management being undertaken through buffer zone management committees and the underlying buffer zone user committees. Each buffer zone user committee set their annual plans that are planned by the user groups under those committees. This is then presented in the meeting of the chairmen and secretaries of the committees. The activities are then selected on the basis of priorities. This will then approved by the BZMC and then send to the department. The department then sends it to the respective ministry. This will be then sending to the Ministry of Finance which releases a budget according to the plan.

The 50% revenue generated by the park is ploughed back to the community through buffer zone programme. The fund is then spent under the following main five activities:

- Community development 30%
- Conservation programme 30%
- Income generation 20%
- Conservation education 10%
- Administrative expenses 10%

Thus there is regular activity regarding conservation education and activities.

The main activities being carried out by the park/buffer zone are as follows:

Conservation Education	Conservation Programme	Gaps
Exposure and Observation visit	Plantation	No address of human-wildlife conflict issue as per need. Conservation education had not reached to the vulnerable community (victims) as desired.
Radio programme	Grassland management	
Calendar, pamphlets, etc. publication	Interaction program on conservation of rhino and tiger	
Eco clubs	Electric/solar fencing and repairmen	
Hoarding board	Grant for installing biogas plants	
Conservation song competition	Stipend for education	
Cultural sites management	Salary for Forest guard	
Marking Conservation events such as Wildlife week, Environment Day etc.	Grants for building toilets	
Community forest management		
Training on forest management		

2. Conservation education programme being conducted by Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC)

The Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) has been conducting conservation education programme through various activities. Environmental awareness, school endowment fund, conservation awareness camps, capacity enhancement (training for school teachers), school greenery programme (plantation in the school area), conservation radio programme (conservation based songs, poems, interviews and project updates), signposting, environment day celebration, conservation education publication (posters, pamphlets etc.), establishment of wildlife museum, nature guide training, support for alternative energy are major activities conducted by the project in the study area.

3. Conservation education programme being conducted by Terai Arc Landscape Project (TAL)

Another project, TAL of the WWF Nepal also has been actively involving for conservation of wildlife in the study area. Conservation games, conservation songs, non formal conservation education for women, 50 hours in school, eco clubs, youth network (CBAV), radio programme, notebook (tiger), brochures (Ghadiyal) publication, APU-material support and alternative energy support are some activities being conducted by the project for the conservation of wildlife in the study area.

Conclusion

Many activities in relation to conservation of wildlife have been carried out by the park, buffer zone management authorities and other organisations in close collaboration with each other. However, the existing conservation education programme has not yet covered human-wildlife conflict issue precisely in the programme. Likewise, there were many hoarding boards and poster, pamphlets prepared but these are focused on rhino and tiger focusing basically about

their features and importance. So, I see major gap in the content and the target audience in reaching the conservation education to the target group.

The participants accepted the gaps that I presented and agreed on incorporating this issue in the upcoming conservation education activities. Moreover, the Park Warden noted and expressed that he would discuss the issue in the regional planning meeting which is going to be held the next day of the workshop.