

A programme for the students of Residential Balakiyara Baal Bhavan, part of Amphibian Ark - India campaign

S. Mamtha*

The Baal Bhavan is run by the State Government, the Women & Child Welfare Department in Karnataka State, India.

Dr. Krishnan, a participant in an earlier programme entitled "Teachers for Tigers", is one of the volunteer Educators and as per his invitation Amphibian ark program was conducted. Forty-five students got the benefit of this programme. These children are enthusiastic learners, but they do not have access to hand on materials to support their learning.

The programme was conducted at Balakiyara Baal Bhavan on Lalithamahal Road, Mysore on 22 May for 45 girl students aged 10-17 years. Objectives of the programme were as follows:

- a) to understand the meaning of amphibian, chytrid sickness, endemic, etc
- b) to understand the difference between frog & toad.
- c) to recognize three groups of amphibians.
- d) to understand, why do frogs matter so much?
- e) to know why should we worry about frogs?
- f) to know the Indian Amphibian status and
- g) to encourage the learner to be part of AArk!

To start with, "rain clap" game was played as an energizer. This led to talk on rain and the scene after the rain. Children talked about the smell of soil after rain, as well as windy breeze, hail stones, pearly water droplets etc, and finally about croaking and leaping frogs.

Sixth grader, Latha, confessed that, she used to catch tadpole thinking them as baby fishes. Sudha, 4th grade student said, 'I have seen frogs at night too, sometimes when I wake up to use rest room'. This led to speaking about nocturnal behavior in frogs by the facilitator. Students were told about three groups of Amphibians, their habit and habitat, frogs' role in the food chain, etc. Children were also made aware of deforestation, pollution and pesticides, fragmentation and chytrid sickness.

AArk packets issued by ZOO was distributed. The children were happy to receive Amphibian Ark tool kits. They were asked remove the *Rakhi* (wrist bracelet) and to tie it on the wrist of their beloved pal. The girls were further divided into junior and senior groups to have different activities according to their understanding level. Junior students had activities like frog race, drawing, and skit 'frog talk'. Senior students played role-play having roles as researcher, conservationist, farmer and frog.

Passing the message was the next game to tell them how Amphibian Ark India campaign can be successful if they too become part of Aark! Soon

after this game students, in order to be a part of AArk, did the signature on the AArk petition form prepared by Zoo Outreach Organisation. The senior students had Frog quiz as assessment tool. Their active participation was appreciated and amphibian sticker-bookmarks were given as a token of appreciation while the juniors had attitude assessment.

Finally students expressed what they learnt through a wall drawing. As an organizer, I enjoyed materials and could meet my objectives having these tool kits as teaching aid. Intern kids were very happy to have hand on materials.

I thank Dr. Krishnan for his kind invitation. My gratitude to Zoo Outreach Organisation for providing education tool kits free of cost and kind support and guideline to conduct this program. I take this opportunity to thank international sponsors for their kind support, namely Sea World / Busch Gardens, USA and Amphibian Ark as well as CBSG WAZA and ASG SSC IUCN.



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Conservation Education: Building on existing platforms at Don Bosco School

In the course of our conservation education-awareness programmes with Don Bosco school we have nurtured an amiable rapport with concerned teachers. One day one of them came saying that an exhibition was planned at Saiha and the onus of representing the school fell on his shoulders; besides Don Bosco being the host had to do well. This was the SCERT annual science exhibition and he asked me to suggest possible avenues of participating in an apt fashion. We read the document together and it immediately struck me that we could work under the theme "Conservation of Natural Resources". This also would be tantamount to taking our ongoing programme with Don Bosco to the next stage. It also occurred to me was what while I have been talking of generating synergies with state agencies as also working in a reactive mode, this was a good opportunity.

We discussed undertaking a survey focusing on Hoolock gibbons in Saiha involving a small group of students and sharing of the process and findings as the model we would display in the exhibition. The survey, which would reveal people's awareness and perception of this rare primate, would have multiple choice questions and be undertaken within Saiha town. A few phone calls and a meeting later we had 50 copies of the questionnaire and an outline of the method lay in front of us. Time at disposal being short the survey began.

We then met at the school to collate the findings. Students had done a neat job, from writing the numbers on each questionnaire to getting the crux of the findings. Since the questionnaires were filled using 2 languages depending on the respondent we took note of all the responses after translating the ones in Mizo to English. In course of this we discussed the experience of the students and I realized that while they were enthused none of them had seen a Hoolock gibbon. In the next preparatory meeting I screened the film "A Hunter's Tale" to enable them to see the Hoolock gibbon, hear it and get a glimpse of where it lived. This would make it easier for them to talk of the primate. After this we set out to discuss how we would share the findings, the charts we would display and the design of posters. At this stage we realized that we had not coined a name for our project and subsequent scratching of our heads resulted in the project title being "**Pride of Maraland**".

A day before the event when we were allotted space to showcase our project I went to the school to give my limited inputs in last minute fine tuning. We discussed the need to clean the space as also the height at which we would put up the posters. We also got some copies of the questionnaire and the "process" ready in case people attending wanted to know more. The team was busy with the

ongoing registrations of the event; schools from all over the state were participating.

While we were not selected for the national level exhibition we had achieved what we had set to do and had achieved it well. We got students involved in an action of conservation education and awareness by way of doing surveys and collating the findings. This was a step ahead of our regular interactions with them wherein most cases they received information. We got to know how people perceived Hoolock gibbons in a district which has troops of the primate in community-owned lands, which is referred to as having the best remaining rainforests in north eastern India. Most importantly we spread two critical messages to students of almost all schools in Saiha who attended the exhibition, that is that Hoolock gibbons need to be conserved and there are efforts ongoing, towards this, in Saiha by way of conservation education awareness.

Thanking the teachers, students in the team and Don Bosco school Saiha. These efforts are undertaken in collaboration with the Mara Autonomous District Council (MADC) and educational institutions & youth associations active in the region.

Also thanking Kalyan Varma and Aparajita Datta for sharing the film and Zoo Outreach Organization for sharing material on Hoolock gibbon. *Submitted by Nimesh Ved (nimesh.ved@gmail.com), Samrakshan Trust. Check their blog <http://mizoram-samrakshan.blogspot.com>*



Hoolock gibbon pair as depicted by the team

Keeping Hoolock gibbons as pets is a big threat, a month before the exhibition the team had come across one freshly taken as pet in Saiha



Report of using the Amphibian colouring book for education

S. Mamtha*

On May 16 2009, twenty two students of various grades took part in this Amphibian Ark art activity. Sethu Bandha Trust had arranged a free summer camp for these economically backward students of 8-14 years of age to provide free education on various topics. The author was invited to give a programme on the Amphibian Ark. The programme was held in Simha Bhavan, Mysore West.

The materials utilized were Amphibian colouring books and the Amphibian Ark tool kit produced and provided by Zoo Outreach Organisation. The objectives for the exercise included learning the meaning of amphibian, endemism, understanding differences between frogs and toads, knowing the three groups of frogs and their habitats, understanding the important of frogs and their role in the food chain.

A "Rain" game was perfect to play and introduce the theme of amphibians. The students sang folk song related to frogs and shared their knowledge about them. Frog wedding incidents in their grandparent's village amazed me! Songs, stories, and myth...! The students seemed to know much about frogs but not about all three groups of amphibians.

With the help of the drawing book and Amphibian Ark tool kit, it was easy to teach them the facts about amphibians. Kids were encouraged to sign the AArk petition form to be part of AArk. After signing the petition form children promised to raise awareness among their fellow students and parents about amphibians and the extinction crisis they face.

One of the most popular games, the frog race or hopping race was conducted for the small children. Children were asked to go through the drawing book to read what they have learnt. Finally, kids selected their favourite page to colour. While colouring, they were allowed to narrate 'frogs talk' as assessment tool.

As an educator, I would always look for informal playtime approaches to impart the subject, as well to create interest towards daily life wildlife. The Amphibian Ark drawing book is wonderful teaching aid to impart the subject effectively.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to ZOO for publishing Amphibian colouring book a novel drawing book to impart the amphibian subject in play-way approach, and also to Busch Gardens, Sea World sponsors of the materials provide by ZOO, AArk, SAN-IZE.



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Report on Nature Guide Training in Nepal

Yogendra Lama*

The National Trust for Nature Conservation NTNC, a leading NGO in Nepal dedicated to the conservation of nature and natural resources by balancing human needs had set up the Biodiversity Conservation Center (BCC) a major undertaking of NTNC. Before January, 2002, BCC was known as Nepal Conservation Research and Training Center (NCRTC) but renamed to BCC to expand its scope into holistic biodiversity conservation within the Terai region of Nepal. The overall objective of BCC is to support NTNC in its mission of conserving biological diversity.

BCC has been conducting various alternative livelihood programs to the community living in the periphery of Chitwan National Park. Among one, the capacity building endeavors, BCC has provided nature guide training to more than 900 local people in order to cater to the growing number of tourist visiting to Chitwan National Park.

Training Rationale: International Tourism is expected to increase well into this millennium, with growing focus on the developing world. Nepal is known as one of the best destinations for nature based tourism. Properly enacted nature tourism can safeguard protected areas by providing revenues to local communities as an incentive to respect the protected areas. Furthermore, eco-tourism goal is to capture a portion of the global travel market by attracting visitors to natural areas and using the revenues to fund local conservation and fuel economic development. Nature guides are explicitly linked with tourism activities in natural areas, where if they are properly trained can stimulate conservation and development activities. Thus, Nature Guide Training was organized by NTNC Biodiversity Conservation Center to the youths from Chitwan and Nawalparasi Districts of Nepal.

Objective of the training

The primary objective of the Basic Nature Guide Training is to impart the knowledge about flora and fauna of CNP and guiding knowledge as well to the local youths. There are excellent opportunities for wildlife viewing and promoting the concept of community-based biodiversity conservation. The development and implementation of tourism initiatives under the "incentive principle" presumes that communities are more likely to embrace biodiversity conservation if they derive tangible economic benefit from nature guiding, jobs with travel companies, guesthouse operations, or rental services, etc. However, this requires that such incentives are not only carefully developed but also perceived as being implicitly linked with conservation action in the eyes of the beneficiaries. Local people need to be given job skills training in order to raise service standards and compete more effectively with outsiders, and the locally provided

nature guide services must be suitably marketed among local and outside travel agents.

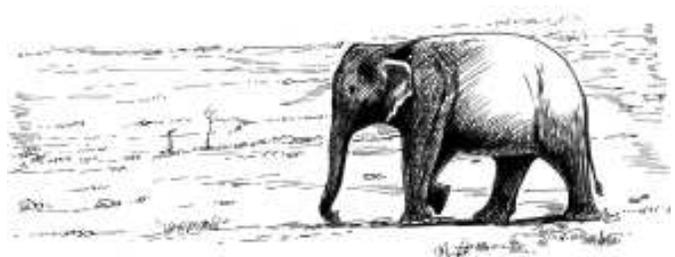
The overall objective of the training programme is to provide local employment opportunity in tourism of Chitwan National Park to develop tourism quality and to promote awareness of the biodiversity of Chitwan National Park to youth and involve them in community conservation. The 6 day - training was scheduled from 23 – 28 March, 2009 in Biodiversity Conservation Center, Sauraha, at Chitwan district. There were 21 young participants. The training was very productive. It has provided a wide spectrum of culture, tourism, and biodiversity knowledge to the participants.

Among many themes and sessions such as ethics, role and responsibility of nature guide, protected area management, wetland conservation and management in Nepal, role and importance of invertebrates, birds, and other wildlife, plants, observation techniques there was a two hour session on Human Elephant Coexistence HECx.

As guided by HECx curriculum and taught by Zoo Outreach Organisation during the training held at Chitwan earlier in March, I introduced the several topics which were covered in the Nature Guides Workshop, teaching and leading discussion. Trainees enjoyed the information and activities and energetically participated. Due to the limited time in the session, we could not cover as many topics as expected but it was, nevertheless an engaging and effective experience for me and the participants. The topic utilized for this module of the Guides training were:

- The meaning of Human - Elephant Co-existence and mitigation of conflict
- Elephant status and distribution in the World and Nepal: Past and Current
- Asian Elephant in Asian Culture
- Mini dramas

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Session on community and wildlife coexistence



Practical session on plant identification



Certificate presentation



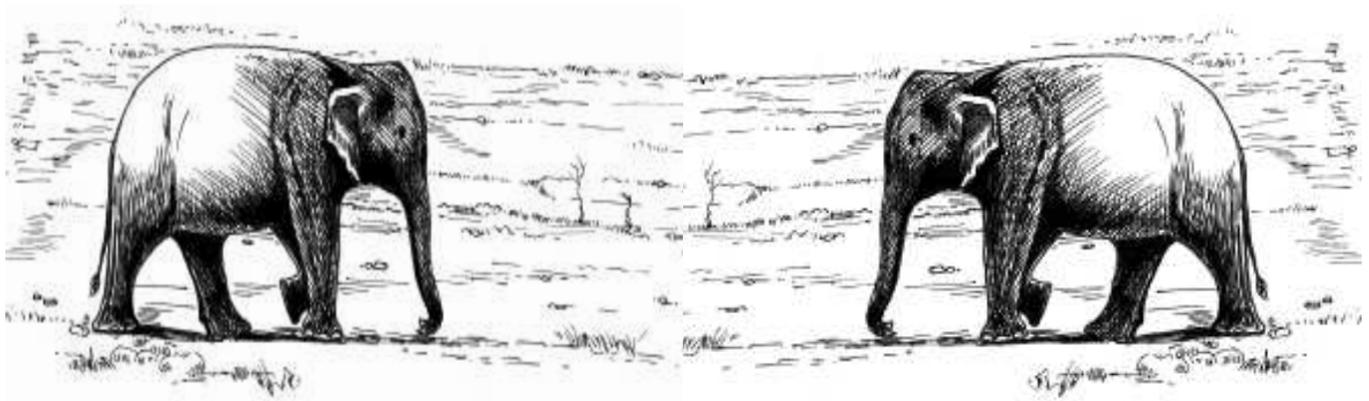
Participants of the training



Working group exercises



Dramas on Human elephant coexistence



HCEX –Education Report from Central Zoo, Nepal

Arun Narsingh Rana*

The Conservation Education Section of National Trust for Nature Conservation, NTNC/ Central Zoo has organized a two-day program entitled “Wildlife Excursion Tour to Shivapuri” held on 7-8 May, 2009. There were 40 students from different schools. This Program was based on two themes in two parts:

a. Biodiversity and b. Human Elephant Co-existence HECx. It was conducted by CE Officer Rachana Shah, and CE Assistants Matisara Dahal and Arun Rana.

Participants were given a hearty welcome and then briefed about the program by Rachana. The programme included these sessions:

- Importance of biodiversity in environment (Rachana);
- Know each other with animal sounds (Rachana, Matisara and Arun);
- Protected Areas of elephant in Nepal (Arun);
- Do’s and Don’t’s of humans in respect to elephants (Arun);
- Difference between Asian and African Elephant (Arun);
- Elephants in culture (Arun)
- Drama (Matisara)

The dramas were based on these themes

- a. Human Elephant Conflict
- b. Poaching and hunting
- c. Why does my village attract Elephants?
- d. Rescuing elephant but avoid dangers.

There was a field visit with student’s rally and reach to Hattisar. Also we identify some differences between Asian and African elephant with the help of Pawankali who is the Asian elephant of Central Zoo.

On the second day all the students who participated were

taken to Shivapuri National Park, Kathmandu Information Sheets were given to the students: 1. Elephant Etiquette and 2. Differences in African and Asian Elephants.

1. Elephant etiquette and philosophy for survival of man and animal

Do’s

1. If you have to run from an elephant, do so in zig-zag path.
2. Use terrain (especially very steep slopes) to discourage the elephant.
3. Cooperate with forest department when they are driving elephants in the forest.
4. Cultivate crops that are not liked by elephant.
5. Learn more about elephant behaviour.
6. Carry torch or other light during at night .
7. Listen for elephant presence in the forest- branches breaking, snuffling etc.
8. Share your techniques for avoiding and other useful

information about elephants with others.

9. Follow the rules in a Protected Areas and other wildlife agency rules.

Don’t’s

1. Don’t block elephants while driving in the forest.
2. Don’t leave food in the open, particularly smelly food.
3. Don’t take elephant fences (or any one method) for granted.
4. Don’t go close to wild elephants.
5. Don’t walk or stagger in the forest while drunk.
6. Don’t walk in the forest while smelling alcohol.
7. Don’t walk on traditional elephant paths.
8. Don’t wear white or bright cloth.
9. Don’t use flash camera, this annoys elephants.
10. Don’t smoke- this annoys elephants.
11. Don’t disturb feeding elephant in the forest.

	African Elephant	Asian Elephant
2. How do African and Asian elephant differ?		
Weight	4000-7000 Kgs	3000-6000 kgs
Shoulder height	3-4 metres	2-3.5 metres
Skin	more wrinkled	smoother
Highest point	on the shoulder	on the back
Size of the ears	bigger, reach up over the neck	smaller, don’t reach over the neck
Shape of the back	Concave	Convex
Shape of the belly	diagonally downward direction of hind legs	-
Shape of the head	No dent	Dented

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**Drama
on
Stage**



View on Elephant in Culture



**Big Rally with Elephant
conservation Slogan**



Express Their View



Final Point of Elephant Culture



Keeping Good Friendship



Drama Prepration

