

Teachers for Tigers: Training trainers for tiger conservation at Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh

Rengasamy Marimuthu

US Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored a project on “Conservation education and capacity building on Tiger conservation in the protected areas of Arunachal Pradesh” is intended to provide Conservation education training to groups of teachers, non-governmental organisations, volunteers and capacity building training for forest front-line staff in Arunachal Pradesh. This report is about the trainers training programme for the educators.

Zoo Outreach Organization (ZOO) of Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu executed the training with the support and coordination of Namdapha Tiger Reserve; ZOO with the sponsorship of USFWS had conducted several teacher training workshops for tiger conservation named “Teachers for Tigers” in India and Bangladesh.



Mr. Sangay Dorji, Deputy Director, Namdapha Tiger Reserve inaugurated the training



Attitude assessment one of the methods to assess participants knowledge



**Principal Investigator, ZOO, Coimbatore.
Email: marimuthu@zooreach.org**



Mini dramas on tiger courtship behaviour

The goal of the training was to create awareness on tiger conservation through education and training and the objective was to train educators to promote tiger conservation in Arunachal Pradesh especially in forest fringe areas of Namdapha Tiger Reserve. To fulfil the objective a three-day teacher training workshop for teachers, forest personnel, NGOs and interested individuals was conducted.

The tiger conservation education training was held on 11-13 December 2017 at Forest Rest House, Deban, Namdapha Tiger Reserve. A total of 33 teachers, Ngo's and forest departmental staff participated. Mr. Tajum Yomcha, Research Officer, Research Officer & local

focal person welcomed the gathering. Mr. Sangay Dorji, Deputy Director inaugurated the training and in his inaugural address he mentioned that this kind of training is the first of its kind in Namdapha history and appreciated ZOO's efforts for planning a training in Northeast and requested the trainees to take part in the training passionately and learn the module and

then take the training to your audiences both students and community who live in and around the tiger reserve. Mr. Hangkam Tungkhang and Mr. Mr. Likha Obi, Forest Range Officers also participated in the inaugural.

The "Teachers for Tigers" manual developed by Wildlife Conservation Society, Bronx Zoo was revised and used in the teacher training workshop. Tiger education packets were also developed which contains a booklet, mask, sticker, placard and wristband (*Rakhi*). The teacher training workshop predominantly used mini drama, games, academic activities, maps, personalities, stories,



Understanding tiger's historic and current ranges through maps



Observation game-participants comparing their jumping with tigers

debates, demonstrations, arts, and mock conferences to convey pertinent information on wildlife conservation, specifically tiger.

After the inaugural the three day training started with an ice breaking activity called “sound off”. Then moved on to tiger manual activities one by one covering the three days programme. The first activity was assessment strategies which includes concept map, attitude assessment and content survey method both pictorial and written. These methods are used to assess how the training program affects the

trainees knowledge on tigers and their attitude about tiger before and after the training. All the assessment methods were used.

To introduce the aspects of tiger biology and conservation mini dramas

were conducted. The participants were divided into four groups and each group provided with a script and explained about the rules they would follow during the performance. This was a miming drama. Only animal sounds were



Tiger timeline history posters drawn by participants put up in exhibition

ZOOREACH Activities



Role play-farmers presenting their grievances to the politicians

allowed not human sounds. The themes of the dramas were courtship, hunting, poaching and parental care. Enough time was given for the preparation of property and rehearsal. They also provided with a drama kit which contains tiger and its prey animal mask to use in the drama. Once they were ready called to perform the drama. All the groups did well.

Followed this a map activity was done to understand historic and current tiger ranges. They were provided with maps of major habitats of Asia, historic and current tiger range maps and asked them to assemble it in proper way. After assembling they were asked to make a list of different countries that tigers were

found in 100 years ago and list of the countries tiger are found today and also the different types tiger habitats and list out the tiger subspecies.

The next activity was from little cats to big cats to know about tiger adaptations and behaviours by comparing the domesticated cats which make convenient models for studying some

of the characteristics of tigers. The observational activities include body size and height, jumping, hunting, climbing, camouflage, eating, tail, speed, territoriality and communication. Each activity was explained to the participants and volunteers tried the activities by comparing them with that of tigers.

The history of tigers taught to them through an activity called Tiger Timeline. The tiger date cards which has historic and current events was given to each participant and blank paper and colouring materials. They were asked to illustrate the data card event in the given paper as a drawing and colour it. After done,



Demonstration of utilisation of tiger education packets

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each one of them explained to the other participants what the message their drawing trying to convey. Later all the drawings put up in chronological order as an exhibition. The exhibition says about the illustrated history of tigers from early 1700 to 2050.

The manual deals in unit 2 about global perspectives of tiger which includes tiger in our culture, tiger mythology, tiger in arts and global perspectives role play. To encourage participants to explore the perspectives on tigers around the world differs in their culture, as a first activity, was done. Many cultures around the world used the tiger as a powerful symbol. They used the tiger name in advertising, sports, stories/movies, songs, literature, animal and plant names. The participants were divided into different groups and asked them to explore the examples of above categories. We made this as a competition and announcing that group come up with more examples got rewarded in order to get more examples.

Really the groups came up with more and more examples which shows the role that tigers have played in their culture. Then the participants went through the manual to know about tiger mythology, stories and tiger in art.

The next activity was global perspectives role play. In this activity participants took different roles of different people and view tigers in their perspectives. They were divided into advertising executives, biologists, farmers, newspaper reporters, politicians and song writers. Then sufficient time provided to prepare the role play. Then each group performed. The advertising executives presented their new product which carrying tiger name and promoted their product. The biologists read the letter which written to conservation organisation for funding for their tiger research, farmers made the grievance to the politicians to save from tiger conflict, newspaper reporter made a report to make people



Participants posing with certificates during validictory

aware of the major issues surrounding on tiger conservation based on his interview. Politician made a speech advocating a tiger conservation. And songwriters wrote a song on tiger conservation and sang with music. In the tiger conservation biology, they were told about feeding ecology of tigers and the problems tiger facing such as poaching and illegal hunting of tiger prey as people in tiger range countries should aware protecting prey species is critical to tiger survival. Moreover, they were taught about tiger conservation in India especially launch of Project Tiger, its history and current status, probably the largest and most ambitious conservation efforts in india and in the world and also counting tigers-census techniques such as pugmark method, camera trapping, genetic method and studying the home ranges of tigers by radio tracking method in detail.

As a last activity a mock exercise on International Tiger Conference was held. The participants were divided into different groups. Each group provided with seven tiger conservation strategies and 100 points. The group will assign the points equally to all actions or only selected actions according to their wish. The major actions include 1. conduct studies to monitor the size of the tiger populations and its prey in different regions of its range 2. Create new laws and policies to protect tigers on the ground 3. Reduce human impacts on tiger habitats 4. Create new laws and policies to reduce and control the trade in tiger parts and products 5. Implement and enforce laws restricting trade in tiger

populations 6. Train people and build capacity for long-term management and 7. Promote education and public awareness. Each major actions has more secondary actions. This exercise helped them to know how the species management strategies were drafted in international conferenes with the help of all the stakeholders.

One hundred tiger education packets were given to the participants in order to practice what they learned out of the training by conducting tiger conservation education programme at the school or with the community. A demonstration was done by the trainers how to utilise the materials effectively at their audience. At the end the participants were pledged to help to save tigers by doing two education programmes within six months and they written it in a pledge card. At the validictory the participants received participation certificate.

The resource persons were Rengasamy Marimuthu, Senior Education Officer, Zoo Outreach Organization, Dr. B. A. Daniel, Scientist, ZOO, Mr. Shaik Hussain, Wildlife Consultant, Kothagudem, Andhra Pradesh and Tajum Yomcha, Research Officer, Namdapha Tiger Reserve.

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Participants of the training

Mr. Khumlem Khilak

Junior Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Miao Singpho
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Saipa Khomrang

Assistant Teacher
Government Primary School
New Yum Chum, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Vizum Yomgam

Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Miao Town
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Pramod Kumar Singh

Junior Teacher
Government M.E. School
Songking, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Chanlung Mossang

Assistant Teacher (SSA)
Government Upper Primary
School, M.Pen, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Chau Newata Khen

Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Phup, Lewang
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Gumshowng Lagang

Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Phup, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mrs. Jafa Singpho Lowang

Government Primary School
Kamlapuri, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mrs. Odi Tamut Singpho

Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Miao Town
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Ongla Goju Singpho

Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Namphai - II
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Kamtong Chema

Junior Teachers (SSA)
Government Middle School
Upper Miao, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Likrim Mossang

Junior Teacher (SSA)
Government Upper Primary
School, Miao Town
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Nyachoi Mossang

Assistant Teacher (SSA)
Government Middle School,
Neotan, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Meykho Mossang

Junior Teacher (SSA)
Govt Upper Primary School
M'Pen, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Julia Taikam

PTI (work education)
Govt. Upper Primary School
Miao Town, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Gracy Mossang

Warden (SSA)
Government Secondary
School, Namphai-I
Namphai-I Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792122

Ms. Nukom Macha

PTI (work education)
Government Secondary
School, Namphai-I
Namphai-I Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792122

Ms. Moinem Chithan

Junior Teacher (SSA)
Government Middle School
M' Pen, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. P. Kanmai
BEO & BRCC
Block Education Office
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Tajum Yomcha
Research Officer
Namdapha Tiger Reserve
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Sukra Kr Chakma
NGO Teacher
Universal Education School
Alice Project, Bodhisatta
Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Sunil Kumar Chakma
Private Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Deban
Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Chottimoy Chakma
Private Teacher
Government Primary School
Anandapur - II, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

**Ms. Shanthi Jeevan
Chakma**
Private Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Mangal Jyoti Chakma
Private Teacher
Universal Education School

Alice Project, Bodhisatla,
Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Sanjit Kumar Chakma
Private Teacher
Government Primary School
Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Hibu Tatu
Trained Graduate Teacher
(TGT), Government
Secondary School,
Hong, Ziro Post
Lower Subansiri Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-791 120

Mr. Pura Tarma
Assistant Teacher (Rtd)
Chairman, Ngunu Ziro (NGO)
Hija, Ziro Post
Lower Subansiri Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-791 120

Mr. Likha Obi
Range Forest Officer (RFO)
O/o. Field Director
Namdapha Tiger Reserve

Miao Post, Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mr. Sanjit Kumar Chakma
Private Teacher
Government Middle School
Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Ms. Punyo Chada
Junior Teacher
Government Middle School
Siro, Ziro Post
Lower Subansiri Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-791 120

Mr. Akhija Yobin
Assistant Teacher
Government Upper Primary
School, Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

Mrs. Chelik Messang
Assistant Teacher
Government Middle School
Deban, Miao Post
Changlang Dist.
Arunachal Pradesh-792 122

