

Press Release

58 Human-Elephant Conflict-affected villagers from Garo hills receive training on poultry farming

Guwahati, August 8: Availability of alternative livelihood options is a powerful tool to facilitate human elephant coexistence in a conflict zone.

Fifty-eight beneficiaries from Jamdamgre, Borogobol, Bandukmali, Photamati, Bordubi, Darenchigre, Lower Kharsindap villages in Garo hills areas of Meghalaya attended a training workshop on poultry farming that was organised by Aaranyak and British Asian Trust with support from Darwin Initiative, Meghalaya Forest Department and BDO Office, Tikrikila, on 7th and 8th August at the conference hall of BDO Office, Tikrikila, West Garo Hills district.

About 60 per cent of the trainees were women. The beneficiaries learnt effective farming techniques for raising free-ranging chickens, as they demand better prices, to maximise the benefit for villagers from these villages in West Garo hills which are affected by human-elephant conflict (HEC).

Aaranyak has been working with the local communities and other stakeholders to promote coexistence by supplementing livelihoods of local communities, educating villagers about elephants, HEC, monitoring elephant movement and supporting them with effective mitigation tools, such as solar-powered fences, solar streetlights, rechargeable torchlights, bio fencing to protect crops, people and elephants. By supplementing livelihoods, Aaranyak and its collaborators have been working towards offsetting the losses incurred because of HEC incidents.

Dr. Surajit Hajong, a veterinary doctor, who was the resource person in the training sessions, highlighted that the Garo hills region was a suitable area for poultry farming.

He further mentioned how poultry farming may help boost village economy as it can be easily practised by the villagers, including students and elderly with minimal investment.

However, he emphasised “Selection of sites to raise the chickens is crucial as it needs to have proper drainage to avoid water logging, and the poultry should be regularly vaccinated to prevent diseases and mortality.”

The participants interacted with Dr. Hajong to understand what sort of veterinary care is needed for better survival of the poultry.

Dr. Alolika Sinha, a conservation biologist in Aaranyak who moderated the workshop, mentioned, “Building capacity of local communities and active participation from all the stakeholders can go a long way in enabling human-elephant coexistence”.

The training workshop began with a welcome note by Dr. Sinha, followed by felicitation of Dr. Hajong and Range Officer from Wildlife Division Tura, Ms. Annie Marak.

The training programme was graced by the Range Officers, Ms. Jezebeld Areng and Annie Marak on 7th August.

Aaranyak's staff members Anjan Baruah, Abhijit Boruah, Vendo Theodore, Nipul Chakma, and Subash Rabha played a vital role by facilitating interaction among the participants and the resource person. Pradip Barman, an assistant working with Aaranyak helped in organising the event.

*Press statement issued by Dr Alolika Sinha, Publicity Secretary, Aaranyak. Contact No. 9435021312,
Email ID: alolika@aaranyak.org*