

Rhino Conservation Education in West Bengal: fulfilling my commitments

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As the fulfilment of the commitment that I made during the ZOO's Rhino conservation education training workshop and in response to the invitation of the Gorumara Wildlife Division, an awareness programme was conducted on 19 October, 2014 for 40 students (age 15-16) and 11 teachers of Delhi Public School, Biratnagar, Nepal who had been at Gorumara Tents at Moorty Beat under North Range of Gorumara Wildlife Division. The venue itself was very attractive to the students group as it is situated at the bank of Moorty River with the Gorumara National Park and designed with all facilities of camping and educational activities exclusively for any kind of students group.

We started the programme at 8.30 am with know each other activity. Though the students knew each other learning through a game with funny activities attracted them and generated lot of interest for the entire program.

Assessment of the participants using attitude tool

Although the time was limited but still considering the importance the attitude tool was introduced which helped me to understand the group's attitude on Rhino.

Introduction of the species (Know your species-starting with Big-small game)

Knowing the species was introduced with very simple and attractive game 'Big & small' and they enjoyed the game a lot. The teachers also actively involved by judging and declaring prizes for the winning participants.

Description and differences

In this session the description of all five species of Rhino was covered along with the differences, characteristics and patterns. The taxonomy was taught to them without much difficulty. The students as well the teachers showed keen interest to know more about Rhino. It was an interesting interactive programme.



Rhino outdoor education programme at Gorumara National Park



Rakhi tying

Historical and present distribution of Rhino (using Maps)

Through this activity they understood the entire history of rhinos and its habitat in India and Nepal. All of them enjoyed the entire part of the event and at the end a great impact was created among the whole team. I also tried to make them feel among themselves about their

responsibility towards conservation of the species 'Rhino' because they are from such a nation which is one of the last two Nations who can claim of still having few 'Greater One Horned Rhino' with them and to feel proud about it.

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The author introducing Asian rhinos

Present species status & cause of extinction (Dancing rhino game)

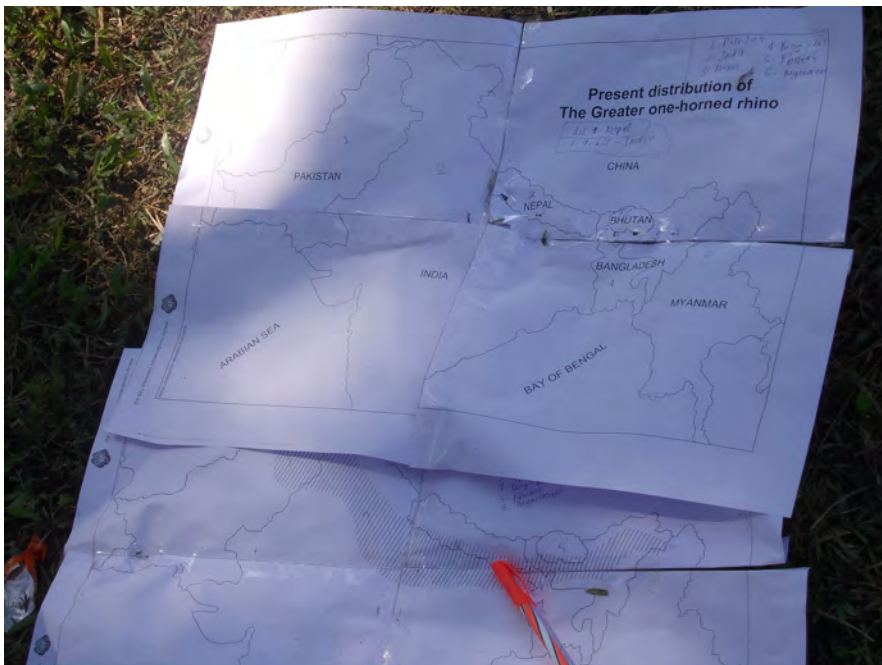
This simple newspaper game created lot of interest among them. After describing the actual aim of the game they could easily relate the habitat loss with the species sufferings. I was encouraged to reply to the questions that they asked that helped them to understand the species problems.

Rhino packets, pledge & rally using the packets

Finally the Rhino packets developed by ZOO, sponsored by Ocean Park Conservation Foundation was distributed to the students. They enjoyed wearing masks, headband and *rakhi*. They took pledge and made a rally wearing the same with slogans for conservation of 'Rhino'.

Though the programme came to an end, the interaction continued for a longer time. They enjoyed the programme and appreciated a lot as the whole concept of the programme was very new to them. The teachers including the Principal appreciated the method and tools used for the entire programme and thanked specially the 'ZOO' and its sponsors. This made me really feel proud for being able to conduct such successful programme which was only possible for me due to 'ZOO' and the uniqueness of their entire module, training process and Trainers which is worth to mention. My sincere thanks are due to Ocean Park Conservation Foundation, for sponsoring ZOO's Rhino education project.

It is also worth to mention that a few weeks after the programme while I happened to meet the liaison officer of Gorumara Wildlife Division, I got to know that the Principal of the said school had conveyed special thanks to the division for including this programme of ZOO in their camping schedule and also booked for such a camping & excursion programme again early next year for the students of other classes with the demand of the inclusion of 'ZOO's Awareness Programme as mandatory and may be for a slightly bigger group.



Rhino historical and present distribution maps



Rally to save Rhino