



**IUCN Pench-Bor corridor project
September 2018 activity report**

Mandar Pingle – *Conservation Officer*

Nilesh Telang – *Field Assistant*

Highlights:

- *Assisted Forest Department staff in leopard rescue operation*
- *2 training programmes on paper bag making organized for self help groups from Telgaon and Bidgaon*
- *One meeting of self help group organized in Bidgaon to monitor accounts and book-keeping*
- *Officers of Panchayat Samiti Saoner along with 4 farmers of Umari visit mushroom cultivation plant in Telgaon*
- *Attended Gram Panchayat meet of Telgaon regarding formation of Dr Shyama Prasad Jan Van Yojna committee*
- *2 classroom education programs organized in high schools of Telgaon and Umari*

Activities:

On 11 September, a leopard, aged around 4-5 years, fell into an 80-foot deep well in the farm of Mr. Bhansinge of Kocchi village. This village is in Khapa Territorial Forest Range of Saoner taluka. Mandar and Nilesh assisted the rescue team during the operation.

The rescue started after sunset. Police force was deployed to control the mob of curious onlookers and maintain law and order. As it was dark and the leopard seemed uninjured, the rescue team decided to prepare and lower a ladder to allow the cat to climb out of the well on its own.

By 11:30 pm, an 80-foot ladder was prepared and lowered into the well. The area was cordoned off and a team comprising Mandar Pingle and 4 Forest Department staff members stayed overnight in a closed vehicle at a safe distance to monitor the movements of the leopard.

At around 4:00 a.m., the leopard got out of the well using the makeshift ladder and dashed towards the scrub forest nearby. The monitoring team heard alarm calls of spotted deer confirming the direction of movement of the leopard. Later, the rescue team along with Range Forest Officer Mr. Naik confirmed the safe escape of the leopard.

The Forest Department has now installed camera traps in the area and deployed patrol teams to monitor the movement of the leopard. The rescue operation turned out to be a success without any injury or loss of human life. The villagers provided co-operation to the Forest Department staff during and after the rescue operation.



Patrolling to check for leopard pugmarks (left); Team after successful rescue of leopard (right)

On 20 September, Nilesh organized a meeting of members of Jai Seva Mahila Bachat Gat of Bidgaon. During the meeting, Nilesh asked the members to check the accounts and record books provided to them under the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM). The members found minor errors in the accounts and records which Nilesh helped rectify.

Nilesh further gave information about paper bag business to the members.

During the meeting, the members discussed problems related to health of family members. Nilesh provided the information on Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya scheme under which free medical treatment is provided by Maharashtra State Government. He also requested the members to ensure cleanliness in and around houses to prevent health issues and diseases.



Nilesh providing information regarding health scheme during SHG meeting

On 22 September, Satpuda Foundation organized a programme to train members of Jai Seva Mahila self help group (SHG) of Bidgaon in making paper bags. Mandar and Nilesh taught the members to prepare paper bags from old newspapers and brown paper. Bags of various sizes were prepared by the ladies during the training. Along with bags, they also learnt to prepare envelopes from the left over paper. Satpuda Foundation also assisted the SHG with market linkage by providing them orders for 700 bags from a store in Pune. They were able to earn 4200/- from their first order.

A similar training programme was organized for members of Gayatri Mahila Bachat Gat from Telgaon. The group has received an initial order for 600 paper bags as well.



Nilesh teaching members of Jai Seva Bachat Gat to make paper bags (left); members with paper bags after training (right)



Mandar teaching members of Gayatri Bachat Gat to make paper bags (left); members with paper bags after training (right)

On 18 September, Mr. Roshan Lakadkar, extension officer for Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission (MSRLM) for Panchayat Samiti, Saoner, and 4 farmers of Umri village visited a mushroom cultivation unit in Telgaon, set up with our assistance.

Nilesh Telang provided details regarding setting up of such units.

In August, Satpuda Foundation had assisted two unemployed youths -- Shubham Gaidhane and Suchit Thakare -- in setting up a mushroom cultivation unit in Telgaon village. Shubham and Suchit were trained by us in July in cultivating mushrooms. A unit with a production capacity of 100 kg was set up by the youths.

Satpuda Foundation team also assisted them in marketing the mushrooms. They have received orders for their mushrooms from super markets and vegetable vendors from Nagpur.



MSRLM officer and farmers during visit to mushroom cultivation unit set up in Telgaon village



Mushroom crop grown in the unit

On 16 September, Mandar addressed villagers during a Gram Panchayat meeting in Telgaon. Mandar explained that it is necessary for the village to ensure that the local environment and forest area is improved. He explained that socio-economic condition can be improved by ensuring better forest and environment. In order to achieve this, Maharashtra State government is implementing Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Jan Van Yojana in villages located near Tiger Reserves and in tiger corridors. Mandar provided details of the scheme and urged the villagers to implement this scheme in their village.



Mandar addressing Gram Panchayat meeting in Telgaon

On 5 September, Mandar arranged environment education programmes for students of high schools in Telgaon and Umari villages. During these sessions, Mandar made students aware about the grave issue of water pollution.

Mandar explained to the students that water, being a precious resource, needs to be used judiciously. He told students that there should not be any wastage or pollution of water. Mandar explained that human and cattle feces, plastic waste, residue of chemical fertilizers, idol immersion, etc cause water pollution and impacts human health.

Emphasizing the issue of idol immersion, Mandar urged students to shun the practice of use and immersion of idols made from plaster of Paris in lakes and rivers during the Ganesh festival.

90 students and 5 teachers of Narendra High School, Telgaon and 110 students and 3 teachers of High School, Umri were present during the sessions.



Mandar addressing students of Narendra High School, Telgaon