

Human Elephant Conflict In Madhya Pradesh

By Siddharth Jalan



In another example of human-elephant conflict, a herd of elephants has been wreaking havoc on the villagers of Raitrai for the past 10 days. These 21 families have been rendered homeless, after the elephants destroyed 17 homes in a fit of rage. The tiny hamlet has been forced to relocate itself to the neighbouring village of Poriya Panchayat Bhavan.

Every day these villagers traverse a kilometer and a half back to their village, which falls in the forest division of Boro in Dharamjaygarh. They tend to their young and old, as they go about trying to repair their lives. But another aspect of nature comes in the way - water. These villagers need to cross the Samarsuta river every time they head back. Erratic rainfall can lead to severe floods, thereby leaving them to brave the elements out in the open. It has created chaos for the villagers as they gather their belongings and travel between villages, sometimes having to spend the night in broken huts.

Sajal Madhu, our project leader, was there at the scene to understand the issue and console the locals of Raitrai. The DFO Pranay Mishra, was immediately informed and reached the location to take stock of the situation. He spoke to the villagers and they were assured compensation for their losses. Rice was distributed to the villagers as a form of immediate compensation, to help them tide over their current predicament. The villagers were explained how to handle any situation arising with elephants in the future. They were given instructions on how to save themselves, on why elephants get agitated, and why it is important to never instigate elephants.

Human and elephant conflict has steadily been on the rise as human settlements increase, thereby changing migratory and feeding patterns of elephants. There is a dire need to educate people on the correct handling of elephants, and to create a deeper understanding about these majestic creatures.