

67

SHORT NARRATIVE ON
PROPOSED MITIGATION PLAN FOR WILDLIFE CLEARANCE
for Double laning/Improvement of Hukanjuri-Khonsa Road NH-315 A
(Stretch 0.00 Km to 10.611 Km).

The MoRTH (Ministry of Road Transport and Highways) in 2012 had decided to declare two existing roads as National Highways for speedy development of the area through trade and commerce. Hukanjuri-Khonsa Road (NH-315 A) is an ambitious double laning project which will connect the south-eastern part of Arunachal Pradesh with Assam in particular and the rest of India in general. This road starting from Hukanjuri (0.00 Km) upto chainage 10.611 Km comes under the territorial jurisdiction of Deomali Forest Division and the rest of the stretch of 17.3527 Km shall pass through Khonsa Forest Division.

The total geographical area of Deomali Forest Division after the bifurcation of Longding Forest Division in the year 2008 remains 447 Sq. Km. This area under this Division is covered with sub-tropical rainforest along the varying topographic landscape with hills in the eastern part and plains in the western part of the Division. This forest is rich in various flora and fauna with flourishing wildlife activities seen after the banning of timber operation by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the year 1996. It is home for wildlife like elephant, hog deer, bear, stag, wild dog, amphibians, rodents along with varieties of birds, native as well as migratory.

In order to preserve and scientific management of wildlife especially wild elephants, the MoEF&CC (Ministry of Env. Forest & Climate Change) vide approval No. 7-2/2000-PE dtd. 05/10/2007 and State Govt.'s Notification No. CWL/D/21(14)06-07/517-67 dtd. 29/02/2008, had declared an area of 1957.50 Sq. Km as Southern Arunachal Elephant Reserve along the Southern part of the State. Out of which, 217.50 Sq. Km comes under Deomali Forest Division located mostly in the north-western part of the Division. The above mentioned stretch of road passes through this area which was constructed prior to the enactment of FC Act, 1980. The present project involves widening of the existing dilapidated road into NHDL specification. Hence, exploration of alternate road is not viable since it shall involve fresh cutting and huge destruction of virgin forestlands. On the other hand, this road is a lifeline for the rest of Tirap and Longding districts of Arunachal Pradesh and it is strategically very important from defence point of view.

Contd..

Therefore, wildlife mitigation plan as per the guidelines drawn by the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun is necessary while executing the project and as per requirement, a joint-survey was conducted by the Forest Department along with the User Agency on 03/10/2019, (a copy of the joint-survey report submitted by the Range Officer, Borduria enclosed for ready reference as Annexure -I).

PROPOSED MITIGATION PLAN

1. Bridge for safe passage of elephants at corridors :-

The team had identified three major corridors through which wild elephants pass across the road. To avoid untoward incidents, the UA have proposed to build bridges having enough span and height for swift movement of wild lives like deers, bears, stags, dogs etc., apart from elephants. The details of the proposed bridge are furnished below :-

- i) 1st Corridor at Chainage 2.834 Km having span = 25 mtrs & height = 6 mtrs.
(Geo-ref : N 27° 07' 02.8" E 95° 24' 49.0")
- ii) 2nd Corridor at Chainage 7.640 Km having span = 60 mtrs & height = 7 mtrs.
(Geo-ref : N 27° 06' 20.3" E 95° 25' 01.3")
- iii) 3rd Corridor at Chainage 10.252 Km having span = 10 mtrs & height = 5 mtrs.
(Geo-ref : N 27° 04' 34.0" E 95° 26' 55.1")

Detail DPR as submitted by the UA for bridge construction enclosed as Annexure II, II(a), II(b) & II(c).

2. Culverts (Slab) for safe passage of small animals :-

There are provisions for safe movement of small animals like rodents, amphibians, aquatic species etc., through culverts instead of the more dangerous option of crossing through the road. The details of proposed culverts is enclosed as Annexure III. Culverts upto Sl. No. 67 in the Annexure comes within the Divisional jurisdiction. The joint field survey team had identified 7 (seven) Nos. of culverts (Geo-references indicated) to be ideal spot for animal movement which have to be given special importance.

Contd..

3. Prominent Speed-Breakers at elephant corridors and normal breakers at periodic intervals :-

The UA have also been advised to build speed breakers (rumble strips in series across the road) before and after crossing of the bridge at the three above mentioned elephant corridors to avoid any sudden collision with wildlife by the speeding vehicles. Also, there is a requirement of speed-breakers/humps after every 100 mtrs to slow down speeding vehicles to avoid untoward collision with wildlife along the road.

4. Installation of night vision signages and hoardings:-

Posters and billboards play an important role as an early warning system in human psychology while in constant movement. Therefore signages having night vision properties should be installed along the roadside in the areas where animal frequents. Signages indicating speed limit to avoid collision, animal crossing warning, reduce excessive honking etc., may be applied.

5. Reduction in noise pollution:-

Unlike other parts of India, this stretch of the road passes through Borduria VFR, hence devoid of any huge noise emitting agencies like factories or human settlements. Hence, noise pollution is very limited. Moreover, the high vegetation density along the roadside will act as sound barrier for the majority of the wildlife.

6. Impact of human pressure:-

As stated above under SI No. 5, the area is devoid of human settlements barring some labour barracks in patches, there is minimal chance of having adverse affect on the wildlife owing to human pressure.

7. Canopy connectivity for animal crossings:-

The UA have been advised not to disturb or destruct the areas wherever there is canopy connectivity so that the small arboreal and mammals can use it as a means of passage for their crossings. The team had located two over road canopy connectivity spot which needed to be preserved:

a) N 27° 05' 41.4" E 95° 25' 56.9" and

b) N 27° 05' 24.4" E 95° 26' 12.6".

Contd..

The distance of Dihing-Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary of Assam is about 400-550 mtrs away from the project site. The wild elephants from Assam may cross over to the Southern Arunachal Elephant Reserve, for which Wildlife Mitigation Plan is proposed to have minimal adverse affect on wildlife without hampering the road construction which is needed for the overall development of the region. The wildlife Mitigation Plan as mandatorily required may be borne by the User Agency in Toto and subsequent maintenance thereon. Hence, the User Agency may be advised to give an Undertaking to the effect that they shall undertake the wildlife mitigation plan during the construction of the project and make necessary provision for future maintenance.


(J.K.Hipoh) DCF

**Divisional Forest Officer,
Deomali Forest Division,
Deomali**