

## **Gujjar Community Rehabilitation from Rajaji National Park: Moving Towards an Integrated Approach for Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) Conservation**

Ritesh Joshi<sup>1</sup> and Rambir Singh<sup>2</sup>

*1. G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Garhwal Unit,  
Srinagar-Garhwal, 246 174, Uttarakhand, India*

*E-mail: ritesh\_joshi2325@yahoo.com*

*2. SERC Division, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India,  
Technology Bhavan, New Mehrauli Road, New Delhi, 110 016, India*

*E-mail: rambir@yahoo.com*

**KEYWORDS** Asian Elephant. Conservation. Gujjar Rehabilitation. Rajaji National Park. Wildlife

**ABSTRACT** Rehabilitation of Gujjar community from the Rajaji National Park area is a persistent and better effort in the direction of wildlife conservation in India. On one hand it has provided the better opportunity for livelihood to pastoral Gujjars and on the other hand it has promoted the regeneration of forest wealth along with movement related activities of wildlife. The major objectives of the study are to generate the database of impact of Gujjar rehabilitation on frequent movement of wildlife. Eight forest ranges were surveyed for about seven years before and after the resettlement of Gujjar and all the data on animal sighting, movement and vegetation component were recorded. Currently wild animals are utilizing whole of the forest area frequently for their routine activities whereas before the resettlement of Gujjars wild animals generally used the water points after sunset. The undisturbed conditions created as a result of the resettling of the pastoral Gujjars, have had a noticeable effect on the elephant and tiger population of the forest area. As per the records of 1998 a total of 1390 families were existing in the park area and after the commencement of the programme 512 families were resettled at Pathri area and 613 were relocated at Gaidikhatta area. Presently 265 families are to be relocated who are residing inside the national park area. After the establishment of state Uttarakhand the rehabilitation programme has conducted very rapidly and over the past six years five forest ranges of the park are freed from the Gujjars.