

“Managalmai” shanti jaal / Web of harmony / a web of life



The March of the Hargila army



Purnima Devi Barman, Ph.D

**Greater Adjutant Stork or
Hargila**



**Greater Adjutant
Stork (Hargila)**



Hargila is an endangered species

Global population is much lesser than rhino, tiger and elephant

Global population is approx. 1200 birds

Habitat loss, poaching, and poisoning are the major threats

This majestic bird was treated as a disease carrying pest; a bad omen; or an unhygienic bird

Once distributed in South and South east Asia, now this bird is confined to three major global populations



Major global population is in Assam

Assam has to take the lead for conservation

The Greater Adjutant stork has been called
an ugly bird by the nineteenth century
ornithologist



Why hargila is important



Carnivores and scavengers - feed on carrions

Hunting fish, frogs, and small snakes in open areas or mud flats

An important role for keeping a landscape disease-free

Over the course of 15 years, we increased the nests numbers and converted this bird to a cultural icon



**Back then in 2007, I went to village to do my Ph.D
but an incident changed my life and I became a
community member /a manager/.....**

My Ph.D got a backseat.....



The Conservation Problem



This colonial nesting bird makes nesting colonies in privately owned trees.

Only willingness and support of tree owners/ communities can save the bird from extinction

Breaking the prejudice: Developed a PR Plan

Motivating nest tree owners

Educating School students

Educating women group
and capacity building

Motivating police and local
administration

Approaching Local Forest
Department

Motivating local youths

Integrating religious traditions

Motivating fishermen



Motivating nest tree owners

Form friendships, based on listening and understanding their concerns: consistent engagement and work

Encourage and felicitate their efforts in public meetings

Provide education to help them understand the importance of Greater Adjutant in the environment



Initiated Greater Adjutant awareness programmes in the area.....



We organised World wetland day, World Earth Day, World environment day and made them understand the importance of food web

Integrating culture



Hargila Panchamrit (Hargila baby shower) and happy hatching every year



Panchamrit, in Assamese, refers to a porridge prepared by mixing five ingredients that are considered *manna* for the body

The porridge is especially fed to expecting mothers, in a ritual celebrating it through "naam" (Assamese prayer songs) and termed the same as the porridge - *Panchamrit*.

The *panchamrit* signifies the event which rejoices the coming of a new baby in the family.







**Formed a all women Army called Hargila Army
among the rural women**

Our work is an integration of science, education, awareness, pride, empowerment, protection and tradition



Over 10,000 women joined as *Hargila* army

Communities teaching communities





A community led school for women and children





Hargila Rally in *Geeta Bhagawat* (the Holy Book) procession







Pride campaign was a great effective tool too



WiNN India 2019

4th Annual Global Women in Nature Network (WiNN) Event
Venue : Hotel Radisson Blu, Guwahati, India
January 28-31, 2019

Organisers:
Aaranyak and Women in Nature Network (WiNN)
in collaboration with Kamrup Police
Assam Forest Department and Kamrup District Administration

Aaranyak

KAMRUP POLICE

Assam Forest Department

GLOBAL WILDLIFE CONSERVATION

With generous support from:

pet Trust, C Wildlife Conservation (GWC), International Finance Corporation (IFC)

WiNN India 2019





**This work is not only saving this bird
but also empowering women and
social changes in these villages**













**Women prepared masks
with motifs of Hargila and
rhino, elephant**



INR (₹) ▾


 Search Product/Animal/Bird




Greater Adjutant Stork J...

₹795.00




Greater Adjutant Stork G...

₹695.00




BLINGY Cushion Cover - ...

₹835.00




Greater Adjutant Stork St...

₹835.00



BLINGY Cushion Cover - ...





Securing the future



We partnered with a local school, adopted their environment education”

Education program for people and living on Garbage dump



We have a hargila learning center at the village to mould our young stars into Hargila lovers



Through Hargila Learning & Conservation Centre we are working with underprivileged children



Supported by Alice C Tyler Perpetual Trust , Rewild and WINN

Be Period Positive



Menstrual hygiene, Health and environmental awareness go hand in hand





MEET DIYA THE GREATER ADJUTANT



Meet Diya The Greater Adjutant

Script- Dr. Purnima Devi Barman
Ferdousi Choudhury
Drishana Kalita
Illustrations- Naba Pratim Das

Hi, I am Diya, a Greater Adjutant. We are locally called as 'Hargila' in Assam. Today I will tell you the story of how I was saved by a little girl.

When I was just 3 months old, I fell down from my nest in a Kadam tree. I was badly hurt.

A little girl named Diya* from Dadara village saw me and saved my life. And I was named after the 4 years old Diya.

Do you know? I am a rare species of bird. Only 1200 of us remain in the whole world which makes us endangered.

Dadara-Pachariya-Singimari villages in Kamrup, Assam is the largest Hargila breeding colony in the world. Our conservation journey is very challenging and there is always a conflict with people due to many reasons.

It pains me to hear that we were treated as bad omen, pests and messy birds. But I am very proud to share that the villagers have started 'Save Hargila' a people's movement to save us from extinction.

If big trees are cut down the Hargila cannot breed. To protect our nesting trees, the village women formed the 'Hargila Army'. That is why, the number of nests and Hargila chicks have increased manifold.

Did you know? Stork chicks have high mortality due to falling from nests.

Almost half of the chicks fall down from nests and die. But with timely action a few of them at least 10% of them could still be saved.

On 22nd January, 2016, when I was a chick, I too fell down from my nest on top of an 85 feet tall kadam tree.

Luckily for me, four year old Diya saw me on the ground.

Diya has a deep connection with Hargila since my birth and she fell in love with my family.

She ran to call her parents. Diya's parents called up Hargila baideo*, a lady biologist, who has been tirelessly working to save Hargila in our village.

Hargila baideo rushed to help me with a veterinary doctor. They took me to the nearest Forest Beat Office for the primary treatment.

Later, I was taken to the Assam State Zoo. There I got medical care and was hand raised for 28 days.

I was heartbroken to know that my brother who had also fallen down from the same nest couldn't survive his injuries.

The kind villagers always bury the dead Hargila chicks with prayers and traditional rituals.

17th February 2016 was a happy day when I was released at Boregaon Garbage Dump in Guwahati to join my 300 family members who live there!

I was given a ring on one of my legs, through which the scientists, biologists could further monitor me.

The Police officials, Forest Officers, Diya and her parents along with many Nature lovers joined me in this Hargila rescue mission!

The Kamrup District Administration, Assam Police, Assam Forest Department, Assam State Zoo, Aaranyak, The Hargila Army, Local Schools, villagers and many supporting organizations were a part of this incredible journey.

A Big Thank You to all of them!

*Diya Dorsiana Kashiyap

*Dr. Purnima Devi Barman



**We work closely with District
Administration and Police**

Rescue and rehabilitation of nest fall chicks









400 chicks successfully released

Be experimental, Be innovative



First experiment of assisted breeding platform of Greater Adjutant



First experiment nest platform of Hargila



Result are rewarding

Tree owners Developed “ownership feeling”

Dadara Pachariya Singimari colony of Assam became globally recognized as safe heaven for this birds.



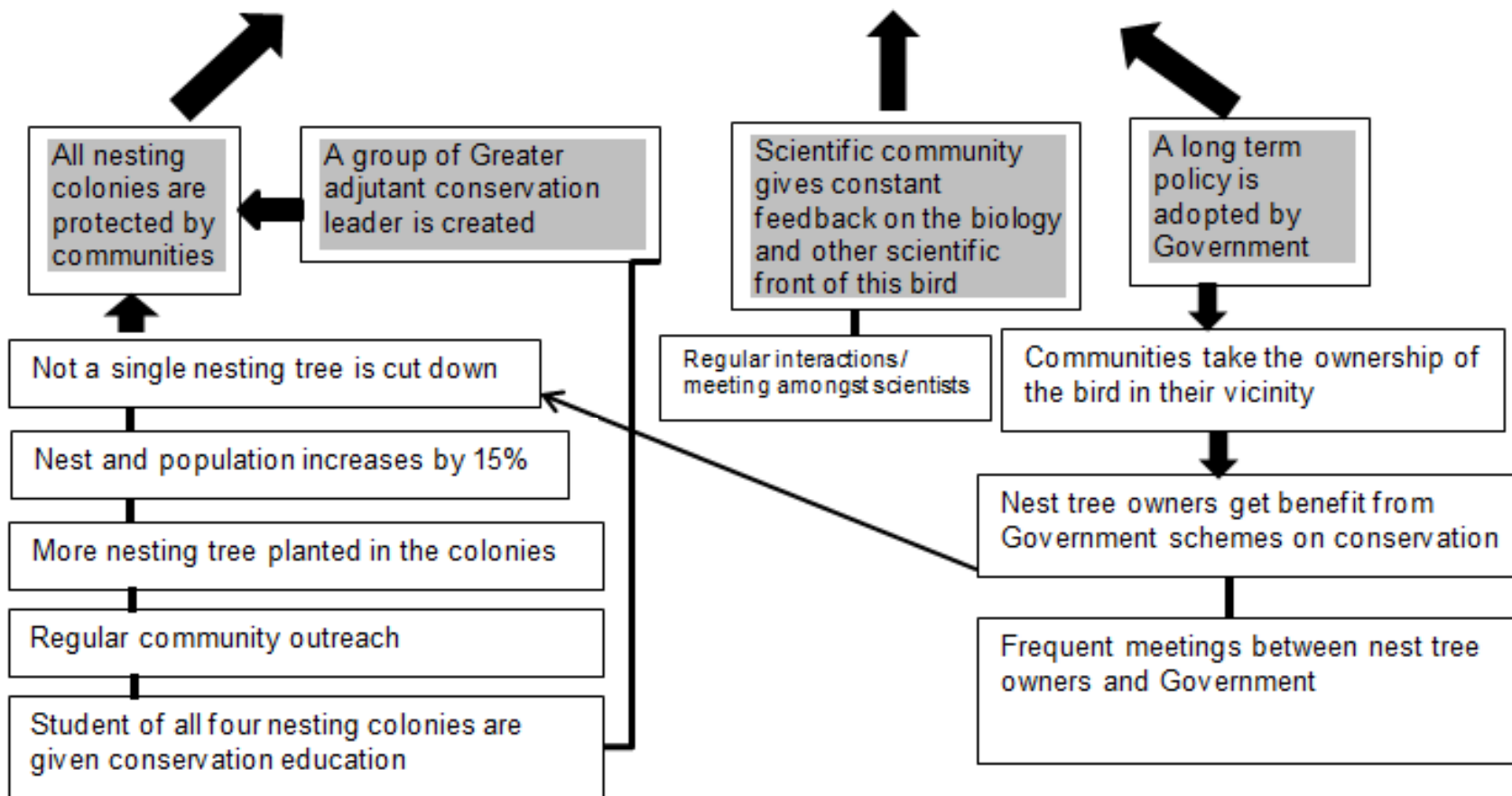
**Nests numbers increased by 10 folds.
From 2010 not a single tree was cut down**

It is all about people, building ownership among them to love nature nature nature



Conservation Action Plan for Hargila

Future of Greater adjutant is secured in Assam landscape



Assumptions

1. All nesting tree plantation is well maintained and survived for next 25 years
2. No epidemic causes severe damage to the population
3. Unplanned future development works don't destroy major nesting colonies

Lessons learned

Consistency is the key

People believe in actions not in words

By incorporating tradition and culture, we can change the fate of a species

Communities have the power to change the world

Rural women are the solution - enhance their leadership and involve them in decision making



**Community conservation is
a never ending process**

**Empowering women = Healthy
Planet**

Social media

@Storksister

@Womeninnaturenetwork-
India



(Hargila army facebook
page)

Purnima.aaranyak@gmail.com

We offer our sincere thanks to all who helped
us....



**Kamrup District
Administration**



Kamrup Police



SIRD

Local villagers of Dadara, Pachariya, Singimari

Local schools and NGOs

Media houses

Kamrup Police

Veterinary College

Bombay Natural History Soc

Colleagues in Aaranyak



Assam Forest Department



Thanks to all the donors , collaborators, Mentors and villagers, colleagues and friends for supporting this endangered species



*Jai Aai Axom
Jai Hind.*

Thank You All