

# Human-Elephant Interactions in Asia :

A Select Scientific Bibliography

Rakesh Kumar Mohalik | Tuhinansu Kar | Prem Kumar Jha | Manoj V. Nair

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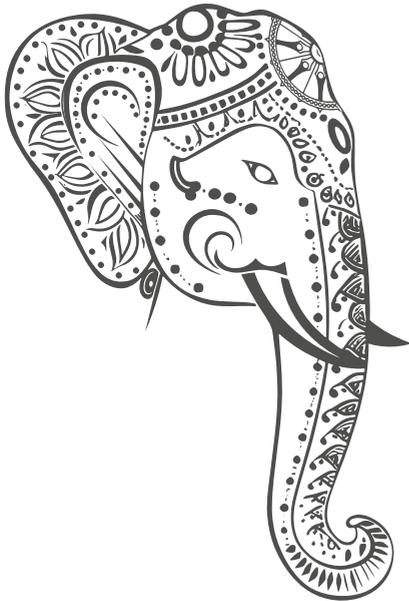
Rakesh Kumar Mohalik  
Tuhinansu Kar  
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Manoj V. Nair



State Wildlife Organisation,  
Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department  
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Bibliography



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Dedicated To  
*People Of Odisha*  
For Their Love Towards Elephants

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Our appreciation is due to the academic institutions, research organizations, and conservation agencies across Asia, whose open-access platforms, archives, and databases significantly facilitated the compilation and verification of the bibliographic entries presented herein.

We seek apology if anyone has been left out inadvertently. Last but not the least, the authors would also like to offer their heartfelt thanks to their respective families.

Authors

# Preface

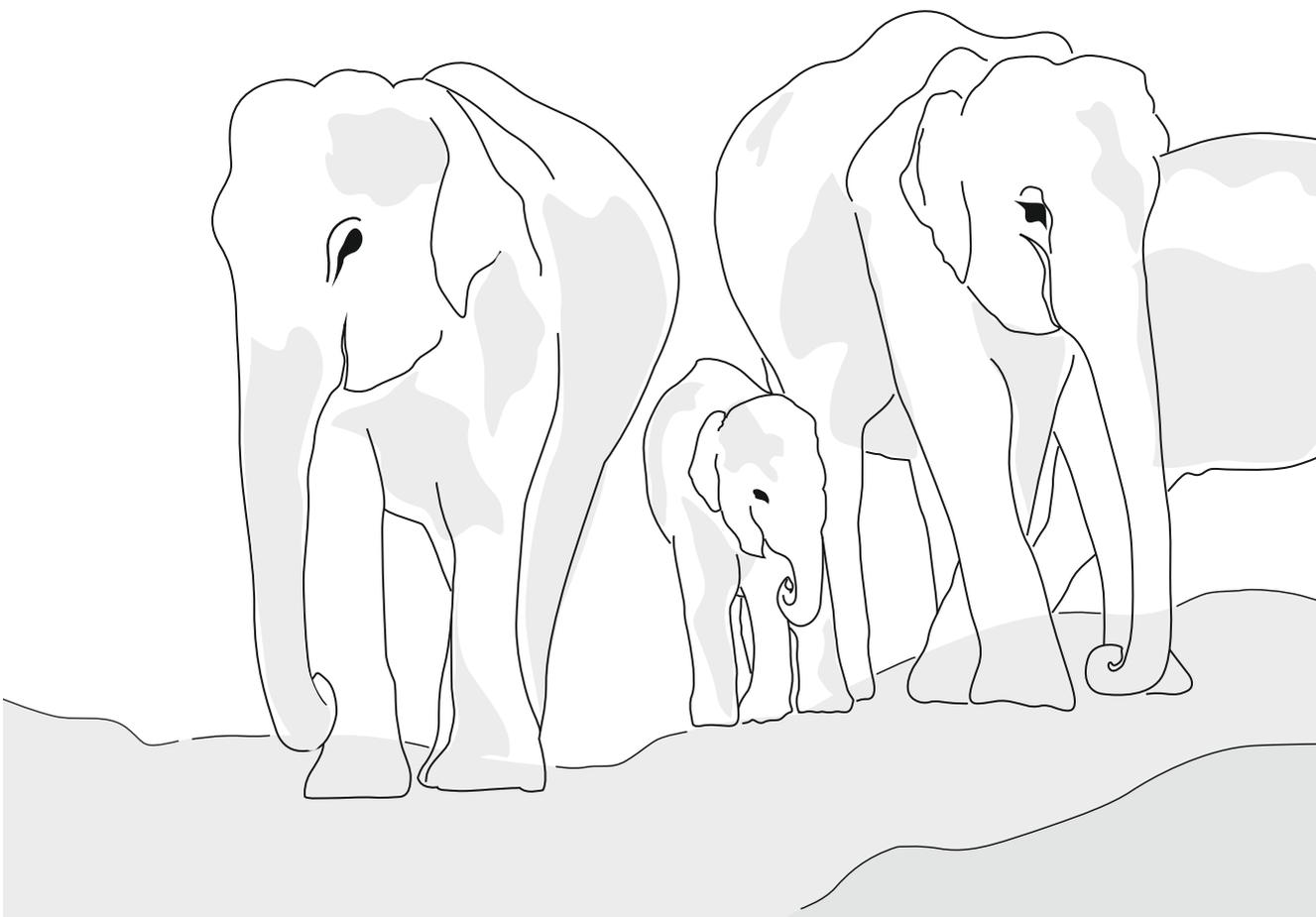
Asian elephants (*Elephas maximus*) have been an integral part of human civilizations in Asia since centuries ago. Once this relationship was pure and intricate in many forms of ancient art, from stone carvings to different rituals and realities. Elephants often stood as symbols of strength, wisdom, and divinity, but these days they are infamous for negative interactions with human beings, often known as Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC). This stands as one of the most complex and urgent conservation challenges across Asia, which needs knowledge of wildlife ecology, land-use policy, and human socio-economics, demanding solutions that are both scientifically and socially sound.

As the pressure on landscapes increases, the need for an evidence-based approach to foster coexistence and minimize negative interactions is the need of the hour. This book “*Human-Elephant Interactions in Asia: A Select Scientific Bibliography*” emerges from the urgent need to organize and synthesize the growing body of research that addresses these interactions. This compilation was undertaken to provide a systematic and analytical overview of the scientific literature, creating an empirical foundation for future research, policy, and conservation practice.

This book is more than a simple bibliography; it is an attempt to prepare a compendium of published literature from peer-reviewed journals, scientific articles, Ph.D. theshis, Master's dissertations, government and non-government organization reports, and dedicated elephant journals from all thirteen Asian Elephant Range Countries from the late 1950s to date. All grey literature, newspaper articles, and articles from unverified sources were not considered. Hence, this book furnished a comprehensive, thematically and geographically structured bibliographic resource: a compilation of 752 scientific and technical publications dedicated to HEC in Asia. While searching for the literature, we focused on key themes such as conflict dynamics, mitigation strategies, movement ecology, socio-cultural aspects, and governance. We paid special attention to regional coverage, ensuring representation from all Asian elephant range countries. We have considered all literature published only in English.

This compilation is intended as a foundational resource for wildlife researchers, scientists, graduate students, conservation practitioners, NGOs, and policymakers. By systematically mapping what has been studied, where, and how, we aim to help and guide future research priorities, avoid redundant efforts, and highlight the thematic and geographical areas that require the most urgent attention.

Though utmost care has been taken not to omit any authentic source from the internet, the massive task makes such omissions unavoidable. We request our readers to kindly bring to our notice any such instance. We sincerely hope that this work will serve as an effective tool to facilitate more targeted and collaborative efforts towards achieving sustainable human-elephant coexistence across Asia.

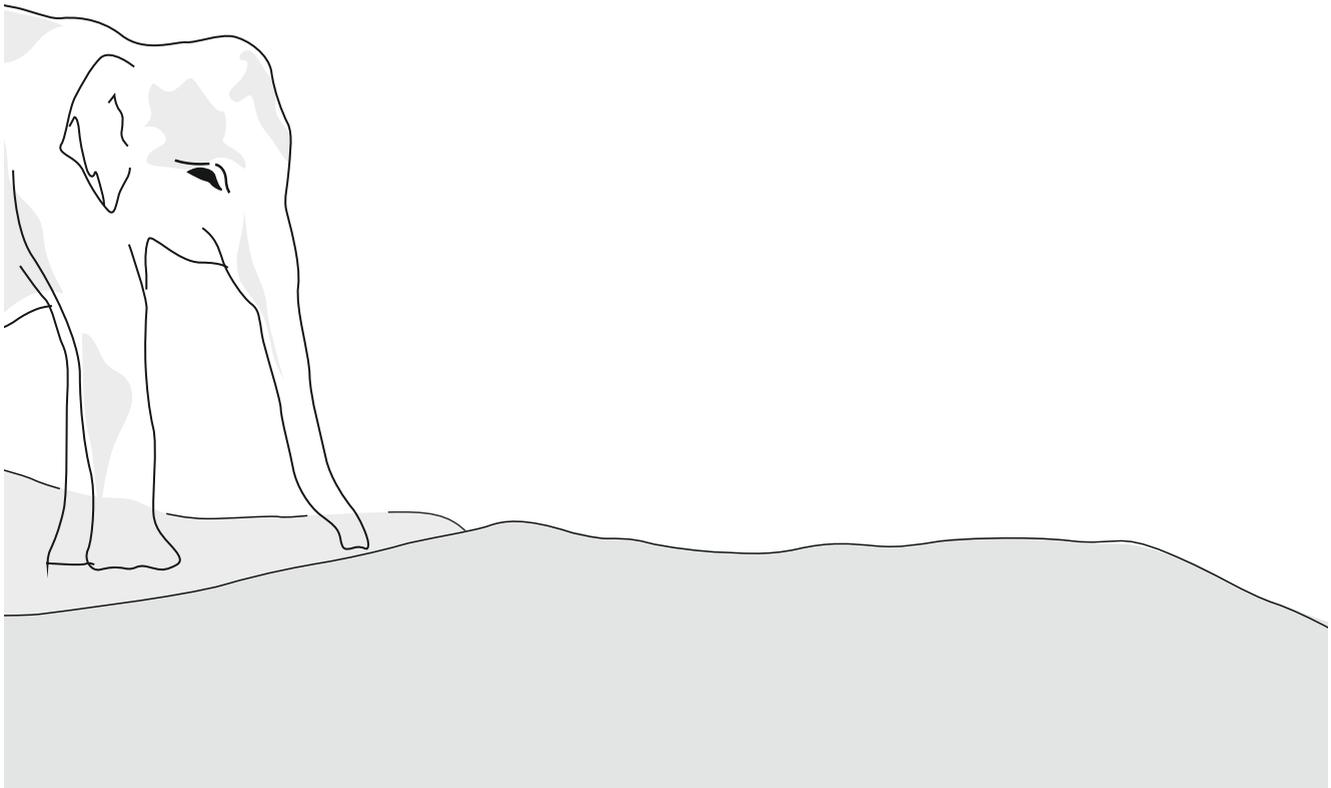


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# Introduction

## The Asian Elephant: A Species at a Crossroads

The Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is enlisted as an Endangered species as per the IUCN Red List and a keystone species, vital to the health of forests, scrubland and grasslands in Asia. As megaherbivores, they are crucial seed dispersers and known as "ecosystem engineers," creating habitats for many other species. These intelligent animals have complex social structures and migrate across large landscapes. However, the expansion of human settlements, farms, and infrastructure like roads and railways has fragmented these landscapes, which forces elephants into closer and direct contact with people, leading to conflict over space and resources. This conflict can range from raiding crops to the loss of both human and elephant lives. Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC) has become a major emerging threat to long-term biodiversity conservation. So, management and reduction of these incidents has become challenge for the all thirteen Asian elephant range countries, where many of them are densely populated.

## A History of Shifting Coexistence

Elephants are associated with people culturally, historically, and in many religious beliefs of Asian countries. For centuries, this created a safe and harmonious environment where humans and elephants shared landscapes, often with cultural respects and living in separate areas. Even in 1927, elephants were very inoffensive individuals (Champion, 1927). This dynamic changed dramatically during the colonial era, which introduced large-scale farming of crops like tea, coffee, and rubber. This began the widespread fragmentation of elephant habitats. After the colonial period, rapid human population growth and development further damaged and broke up traditional elephant corridors, shrinking their habitats. This has intensified the competition for land and resources and has turned historical coexistence into modern conflicts. This conflict not only causes economic loss but also has become a major threat to the survival of the species. As a result, fewer than 50,000 Asian elephants remain in the wild. The species has lost over 95% of its historical range across thirteen countries. The remaining population is highly fragmented and surrounded by farmland and hundreds of millions of people (Motaleb et al. 2011).

## Research in Human-Elephant Conflict: Past to Present

The scientific understanding of HEC in Asia has been built over decades. The earliest research in the 1950s and 1960s laid the foundational groundwork by describing the problem of crop protection (Poulier, 1955) and the status of elephant populations (Singh, 1969). In the 1960s to 1980s, crop raiding was reported from India, China, Sri Lanka, and Burma. After 1974, in North Bengal (India), 20-25 people began dying each year, along with increasing crop and property damage (Olivier, 1978). Pioneering work by Prof. Dr. Raman Sukumar in the early 1980s established an ecological basis for HEC. Over the next few decades, researchers and scientists were addressed and explored slowly but steadily studied various aspects of the conflict. The era of 2000s marked a turning point with a clear increase in research. An exponential surge began in 2010, and over 75% of all cited literature on the topic has been published since then. This recent burst of research shows the urgency of the problem. The focus has shifted from simply documenting the conflict to using advanced technology, analyzing complex social & ecological causes, and creating policies to help humans and elephants coexist.

## Mitigation, Policy, and Governance

With the rise in Human-Elephant Conflict, research on mitigation strategies, policy and governance also undergoes sophisticated evolution from reactive defense to proactive, integrated management. Therefore, a significant portion of the literature is dedicated to mitigating HEC. Research on physical and biological barriers, such as electric fences, elephant proof trenches, and natural deterrents like beehive fences are common. Similarly, the application of technology and early warning systems using GPS collars, AI, and remote sensing is a rapidly growing field. In terms of policy, studies frequently analyze compensation and insurance schemes as tools for promoting tolerance, alongside the development of national conservation action plans and HEC mitigation guidelines. However, the effectiveness and cost of these strategies depend on how they are designed and implemented. The universal conclusion is that top-down policies are ineffective without the deep involvement of local populations through community-based management and genuine stakeholder participation. The ultimate goal is to shift from conflict to managed coexistence.

## Future Directions for Human-Elephant Conflict Research

Future HEC research must be focused on feasible, sustainable, and equitable solutions. It will be achieved by incorporating advanced cutting-edge technologies. AI-powered Early Warning Systems (EWS) that combine real-time data with animal and human behaviour patterns can help predict and prevent Human-Elephant Conflict. Future research must also prioritize studies that look at the long-term effectiveness and economic sustainability of different solutions. It is also important to measure the "hidden costs" of conflict, such as the impact of constant stress and fear on the mental and physical health of communities. More research is needed in under-represented areas like Cambodia and Lao PDR, as well as on conflicts that involves transboundary areas.

Finally, a key future direction is to break down knowledge barriers. This requires a global effort to translate and combine the large amount of important research that is currently only available in the national languages of the elephant range countries. This will ensure that local knowledge incorporate global policy and prevents researchers from constantly reinventing solutions.

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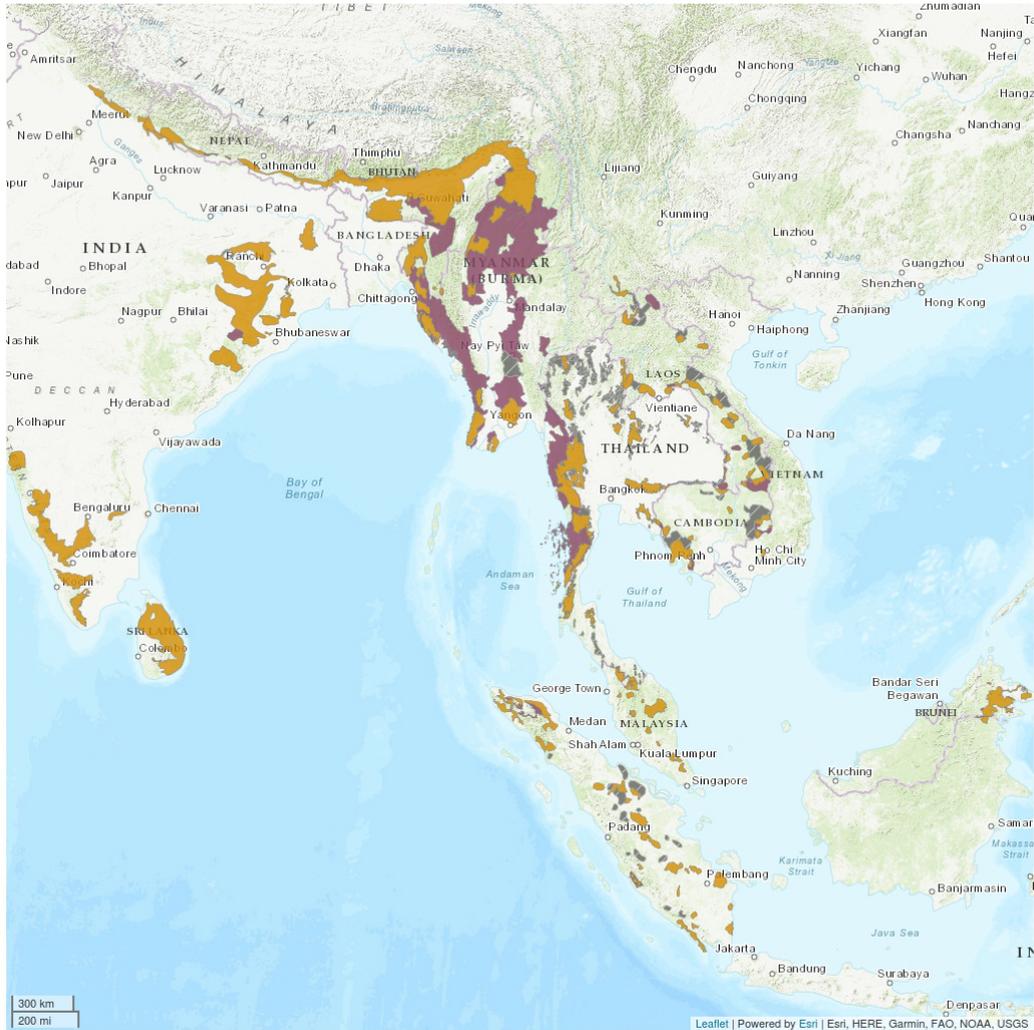
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## Distribution map of Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*)



### Legend

- EXTANT (RESIDENT)
- POSSIBLY EXTANT (RESIDENT)
- POSSIBLY EXTANT & ORIGIN UNCERTAIN (RESIDENT)

Compiled by:

IUCN/SSC AsESG, WCS, WWF 2020



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply any official endorsement, acceptance or opinion by IUCN.





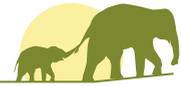


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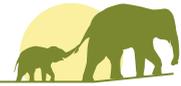
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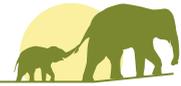
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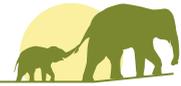
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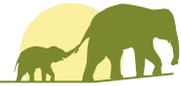
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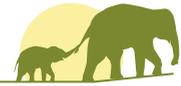
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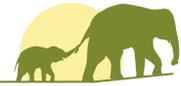
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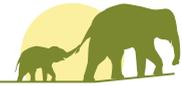
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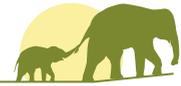
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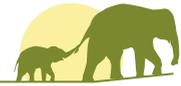
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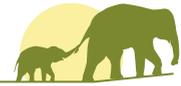


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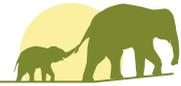


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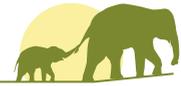
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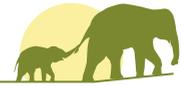
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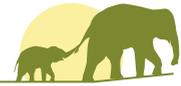
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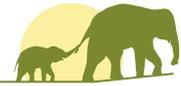
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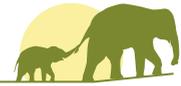
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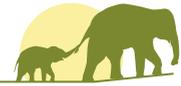
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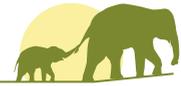
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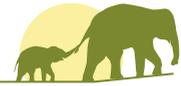
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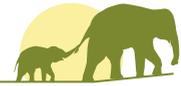
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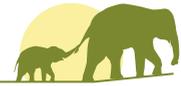
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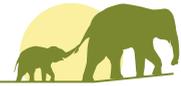
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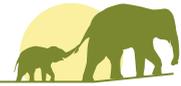
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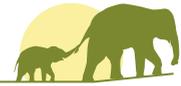
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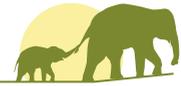
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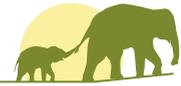
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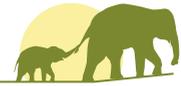
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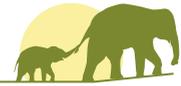
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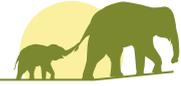
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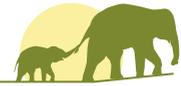
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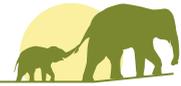


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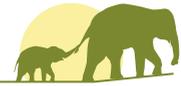
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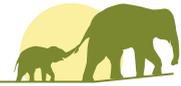
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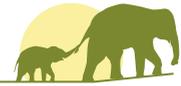
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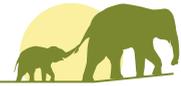
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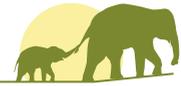
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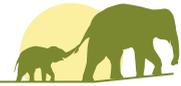
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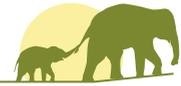
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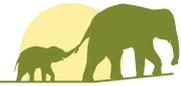


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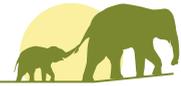


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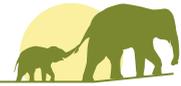
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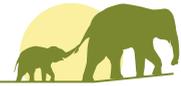
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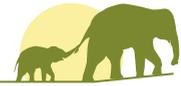
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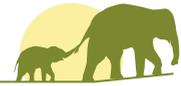


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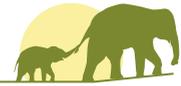
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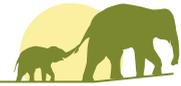
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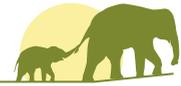
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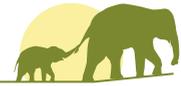
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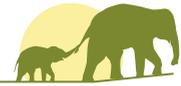
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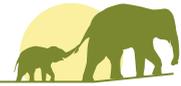


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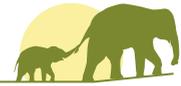


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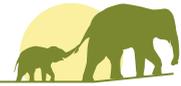
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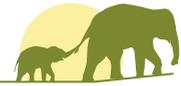
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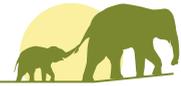
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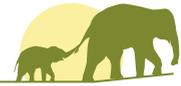
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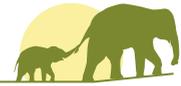
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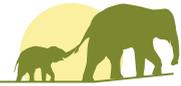
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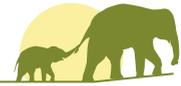
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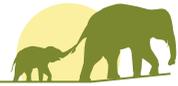
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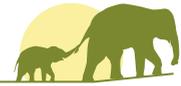
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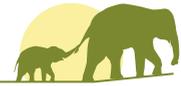
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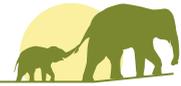
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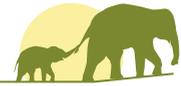
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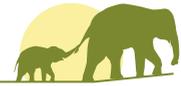
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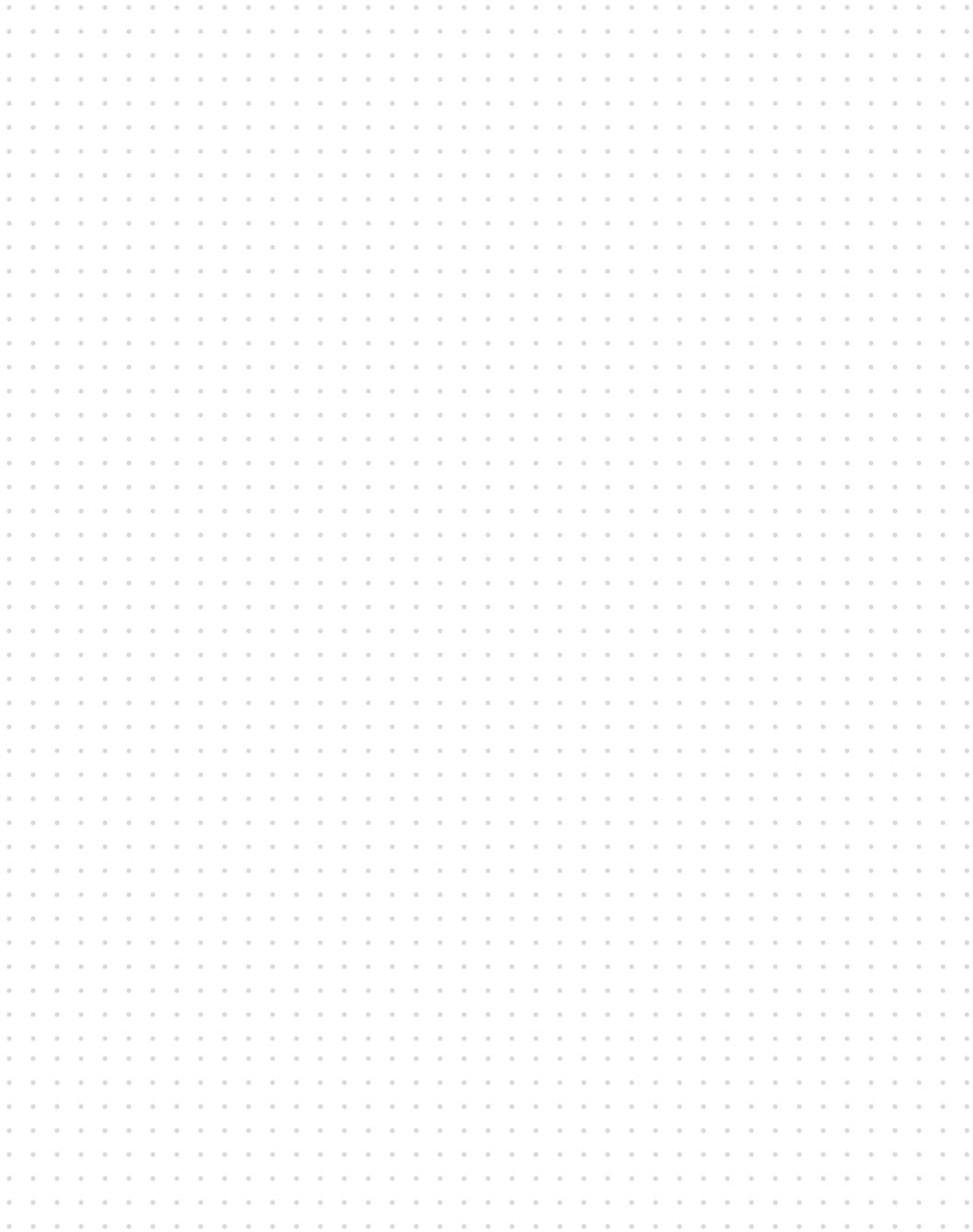
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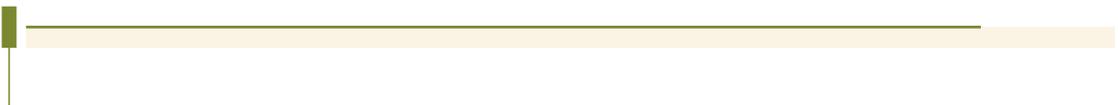
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# Notes

A large grid of small dots for taking notes, consisting of 20 columns and 30 rows.









The book "Human-Elephant Interactions in Asia: A Select Scientific Bibliography" emerges from the urgent need to organize and synthesize the growing body of research that addresses these interactions. This compilation was undertaken to provide a systematic and analytical overview of the scientific literature, creating an empirical foundation for future research, policy, and conservation practice. This book provides an account of selected published scientific literature from 1950s to date, from all Thirteen Asian Elephant Range countries.



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Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department,  
Government of Odisha

