

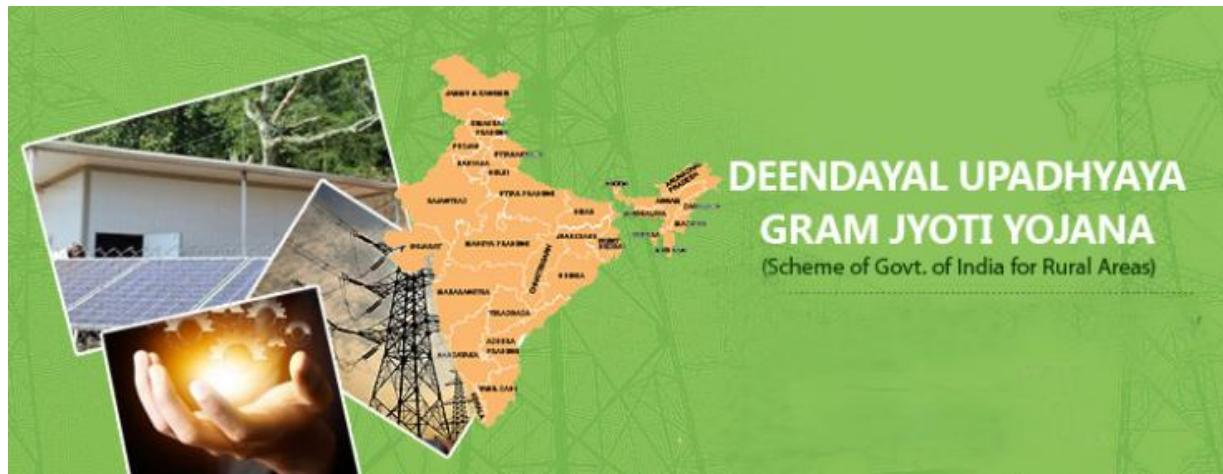
Flicker that transformed into a Beacon



The cool allure of Lung Pung, a remote village nestling at the foothills of Kondoli hillock of Nagaon District, Assam, is deceptive. Endless green forests on the hillock and gurgling streams dot the landscape. But this breathtaking beauty comes at a steep price. The hills of Kondoli are home to several wild animals.

The biggest menace is the herd of wild elephants which descend upon the village and destroy its paddy fields. And then, there are wild animals like tigers and leopards, as well as poisonous snakes, and the villagers live in constant fear of these wild beasts.

For Aayu Barua, a farmer, life had been a constant struggle against the wild animal menace. *"Thrice my paddy fields have been destroyed by the wild elephants that come down from the hills. Not only were my paddy fields completely destroyed, but also two of my children died of snake bite,"* he says bitterly. Today, however, Barua has reason to be happy, though he is yet to cope with the loss incurred year after year – both in the agricultural as well as the family front. Electrification of Lung Pung under **DDUGJY** has given a new life to this village and its residents.



They no longer have to live in fear of wild animals. Electric fences are being erected to curb the menace of intrusion of elephants into paddy fields. Also, women and children feel more secure; thanks to the electric lights in their houses.



Before DDUGJY, electricity was a far-fetched dream for the villagers of Lung Pung. Nobody had seen a fan or a TV set – or any other electrical appliance, for that matter. Those who travelled to neighbouring cities would come back and regale the villagers with tales of magical “movie boxes” (TVs) and fans. The villagers depended totally on fuels such as kerosene and diesel for their day-to-day activities. Moreover, because of the remote location of the village, the residents had to cover long distances on a regular basis to purchase fuel for lighting and cooking. The dependency on kerosene and other fuels took a huge toll on their health.

Besides, not everyone had the means to purchase fuel; they had to make do with firewood. To irrigate their fields too, the residents were forced to rely on diesel pumps – a costly affair.

After the village was electrified under DDUGJY, there has been a dramatic change in the lives of the villagers. They are reaping the benefits of electricity every day. Fans, lights, television sets and mobile phones have become part of their daily lives. Mini-irrigation is being carried out by many farmers with the help of electricity. Most important, students do not have to rely on kerosene lamps or lanterns to study at night.



Moreover, the younger generation of the village can now reap the benefits of modern technology, such as computer and the internet. Electricity has brought a new brightness into their lives, lighting up a better future. *“My three children are delighted. We just have to turn the switch on and the whole room is full of light. Even if a small sound comes from outside our house, we don’t have to go out to find what it is. We just switch on the light and we can see if there are wild wolves or other dangerous animals lurking outside,”* adds Barua.

Courtesy: <http://darpg.gov.in>