

Man-Animal Conflict Need for new protection measures

Man-Animal conflict

Man-animal conflict simply refers to the interaction between man and animal and resultant negative impact on man and his resources or animal and its habitat. Conflicts between the man and animal have occurred since the dawn of humanity. However, it has come to light ever more frequently in recent times.

With changing times and an ever-increasing population, the lines between human settlements and forests have started to blur, resulting in more number of conflicts. The result of this conflict is severe which result into the loss of crops to farmers, human beings getting injured or killed and concerns for wildlife conservation as well.

Often many strategies have been employed by people to minimize their losses. Administrative agencies have also been using different tactics to minimize these conflicts. However, the most of these methods and strategies have been proven to be ineffective in minimizing the conflict.

This has necessitated a need to understand why and how such conflicts ensue and what can be done for minimizing these conflicts and protection of both man and animal.



Kinds of Man-Animal conflicts

According to TERI University, the incidents of Man-Animal Conflicts can be categorized into following major types:

- Human beings get killed or injured by wild animals in Man-animal Conflicts.
- Livestock/Cattle reared by man get killed or injured in Man-animal conflicts.
- Crop cultivated by man get damaged in Man-animal conflicts.
- Wild animals get killed or injured in Man-animal conflicts.

Causes of conflict

Fragmentation and shrinking of habitat In modern era, rapid urbanization and industrialisation have led to diversion of forest land to non forest purposes, as a result the wildlife habitat is shrinking. This makes that landscape unviable for wild animals as their needs are not fulfilled. This results in animals straying out of habitat in search of food, water or shelter bringing them in conflict with humans.

Road Kills - In recent times, expansion of road and rail network through forest ranges has resulted in animals getting killed or injured in accidents on roads or railway tracks.

Land use transformations in recent times due growing demand for food there is rapid conversion of forest lands into farm fields for cultivation. Also forest is being cleared for mining and developmental activities resulting in destruction of habitat of wildlife. This results into herbivores straying out of the forest and causing depredation of crops.

Infestation of wildlife habitat - Infestation of wildlife habitat by the invasive exotic weeds like Lantana, Eupatorium etc. have resulted in decreased availability of edible grasses for the wild herbivores. As a result, herbivores come out of forest area and cause depredation of agricultural crops on the fringes

Impact of human activities - The increasing population has also led to many human settlements coming up near the peripheries of protected areas and encroachment in the forest lands by local people for cultivation and collection of food and fodder etc. thus increasing pressure on limited natural resources in the forests.

Livestock grazing livestock grazing in the forest areas has increased man-animal conflicts as carnivorous are attracted to easy prey thus becoming the direct enemy of man. Livestock grazing has also led to the shortage of food for wild herbivores as they have to compete with livestock for food.

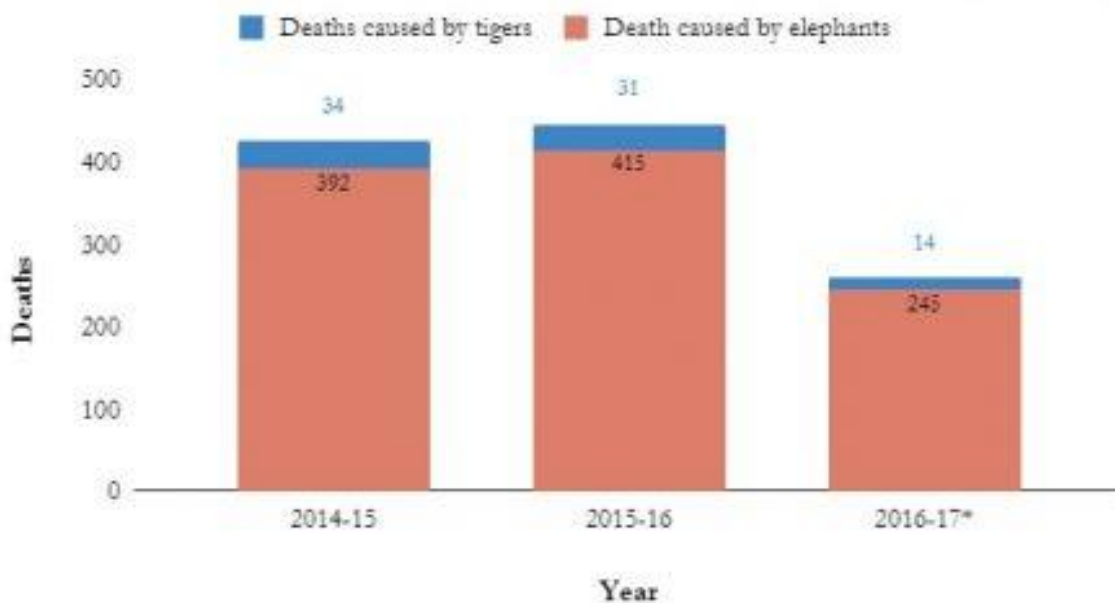
Decreased prey base caused by poaching of herbivores due to illegal poaching in forest areas the prey base is on the decline as a result carnivores are forced to roam into nearby villages in search of food. This leads to the killing of cattle by these carnivores, thus bringing them into conflict with humans.

Consequences for humans

The aftermaths of the human-wildlife conflict are more serious in the tropics and in developing countries where livestock holdings and agriculture are an important part of livelihoods and incomes of people in rural areas.

- **Injury or loss of human lives** people living near forest areas and buffer zones are mostly at risk of attack by carnivores, straying out of forest areas in search of food.
- **Crop depredation** the destruction of crops by wild animals like wild boar etc. can result in loss of income of rural households and it can also threaten the household's food security.
- **The killing of livestock** the killing of livestock by carnivores can destroy income source of agro-pastoralists who depend exclusively on cultivation and production of livestock. The loss of a family's small herd of cattle to predators can effectively destroy that family's wealth and way of life.
- **Damage to human property**

Deaths Due To Human-Wildlife Conflict In India (2014-17)



Credit: <http://www.firstpost.com/>

Consequences for wildlife and environment

- **The killing of wild animals** - The killing of wild animals in retaliation for incidents of human-wildlife conflict is a common reaction, even though the identification of the real culprit is seldom possible. This has also resulted in wiping out of the whole population of some species from certain areas and also endangering their existence.

- **Destruction of habitat** due to increase in demand for land for housing and cultivation, forest lands are increasingly being transformed into farm fields and housing projects etc. resulting in the destruction of habitat for wildlife.
- **Destruction of an ecosystem** due to the killing of wild animals and diversion of forestland for non-forest purposes many ecosystems across the world are on the verge of being destroyed.

Preventive measures

Man-animal conflicts have bad consequences not only for the mankind and the society but also for the wildlife. Though we cannot completely avoid the man-animal conflict, it can be minimized and controlled to a large extent if some of the following measures are adopted sincerely.

To control poaching - poaching of wild animals should be stopped so that the number of wild animals can be stabilized and equilibrium between the numbers of prey animals and predators in the forest ecosystem can be maintained.

Wildlife corridors wildlife corridors will provide a safe pathway to animals in the human-inhabited and developed areas. This will not only protect the animals from road kills but it can also steer them away from the human population thus prevent the man-animal conflict.

Awareness Programmes it is important to create awareness among people and sensitize them about the Do s and Don ts in the forest areas to minimize the conflicts between man and animal.

Solar Fencing around agriculture fields Agriculture fields situated near wildlife habitat/forest areas can be protected by stone fencing or solar fencing.

Paying Compensation to the people compensation should be paid promptly to the victims of wildlife attack so that the people will not become enemy of the wild animals.

Eco-development activities - eco-development activities in villages around Protected Areas to elicit the cooperation of the local community in the management of the Protected Areas can also help in minimising the conflict.

Eco-Tourism Eco-Tourism in the wildlife areas can help create an alternate source of income for local people and boost the local economy thus it can help in minimizing man-animal conflict on account of crop depredation or livestock killing.

Use of ICT some Information technology tools like GPS, high-frequency radio collars etc. can help track the movement of animals and warn the local population. It can also monitor hotspots of man-animal conflict. Identifying conflict hot spots helps to pinpoint ranger manpower and funding to proactively address the issue of man-animal conflict.

WWF Report

The WWF report Common Ground identifies themes that can be used to compose a common ground or a basic list of available and tested solutions. This is about finding solutions that lead to mutually beneficial co-existence. These include:

A united effort- In order to be truly effective, prevention of human-wildlife conflict has to involve the full scope of society: international organizations, governments, NGOs, communities, consumers and individuals. Solutions are possible, but often they also need to have financial backing for their support and development.

Land-use planning - Ensuring that both humans and animals have the space they need is possible. Protecting key areas for wildlife, creating buffer zones and investing in alternative land uses are some of the solutions.

Community-based natural resource management - The local community is key since they are the ones who may wake up in the morning with a tiger or bear in their back yard. But they are also the people who can benefit the most from this. If people are empowered to manage their relationship with wild animals, these "unwanted" neighbours can become allies in bringing income and promoting a better quality of life for all.

Compensation / insurance - Compensation or insurance for animal-induced damage is another widely accepted solution. There are different ways this can be done. In Namibia, for example, community-based insurance systems exist for damage done to livestock. The Nepalese government pays compensation in areas around national parks.

Payment for Environmental Services - Payment for Environmental Services (PES) is a concept that has recently gained popularity in the international development and conservation community. The most popular of these is the financial reward for the sequestering of carbon, but it is also seen as a potential solution for the human-wildlife conflict.

Wildlife-friendly products - Consumers in distant countries also have a role to play. Always look for products that are environmentally friendly and recognized by serious organizations.

Field-based solutions - there are a number of practical field-based solutions that can limit the damage done both to humans and human property, and to wildlife, by preventing wildlife from entering fields or villages. However, such solutions can only be applied on a case-by-case basis. What people see as a solution in one place, they may resist in another. And what works in one place, may have the opposite effect somewhere else.

Conclusion

Increasing man-animal conflict is an outcome of shrinkage, fragmentation and deterioration of habitats, it has caused the destruction of wildlife and generated animosity against wild animals and protected areas.

While adopting the above-mentioned strategies to minimise the conflict, it is also important to develop a culture of tolerance among humans as viewing elephants, tigers, and leopards as pests or threats will only escalate the human-wildlife conflict.

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