

CERD Green Chronicles

JOURNEY FOR CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Tapan Adhikari
Jai Narain Vyas University, Jodhpur, Rajasthan-342001
tapanedu@gmail.com

It is a lovely evening, Dhruva Jyoti Deka, founder, Brahmaputra Fables and Kaustoo Gopal Goswami, founder, AxomUrja are sipping on a hot cup of coffee in a stall outside the Manas National park talking about the park. The greenery adorns in the wildland of Manas National park of Assam, every year in the autumn with bright red flowers makes it an astonishing sight to watch. The beauty of the bright wings of Peafowl and the innocent looking wild deer are always there to welcome you at the doorstep of the park. The park is home to the beautiful dancing bird, *Houbaropsis bengalensis*, commonly known as Bengal florican. On a sad note, as per the IUCN red list the bird has already justified its position for the critically endangered list. Along with all these, this park harbors mesmerizingly beautiful big cat species like Tiger, Leopard, and Panther (Melanistic Leopard). Clouded leopard, leopard cats, etc. are other such alluring smaller cat species. Many other endangered primates like Capped langurs, golden langurs, Assamese Macaque are the jewels of this park. The Big bodied animals like Bear, Asian elephants, Indian gaur, and water Buffalo has add in glory of the park. With a large gradient of floral and faunal diversity, the park has entered in the list of UNESCO world heritage site. Suddenly, they listened to the trumpet blown by the mighty *Gajraj* to which a known face is walking towards them from the nearby tea gardens saying, "*Dada, Hati Ahise, bolok yar pora*" (Brother, an elephant is approaching, and let's go from here). On the way back to the hotel the guy from the tea garden started a story, and they are all ears.

Do you know these human-elephant conflicts are in a surge? The guy from the tea garden asked Dhruva and Koustav. Dhruva and Koustav nodded blindly as they were visiting the place as tourists. Dhruva and Koustav are successful entrepreneurs. They thought of spending their leisure hours in nature to refresh themselves, away from mechanical interactions. The guy again started with his narration of elephants, saying the elephants are not always like that. They roam freely in jungles without harming any individuals but in turn the individuals greedily continuously hollowed out their territories, scaring them into minor patches. Now, these elephants started taking revenge. They are growing into intelligent rebels and mighty beings that don't even bother electrical fences. The storyteller left Dhruva and Koustav spell bound with his story and asking them, Sir, can you do something about these elephants?

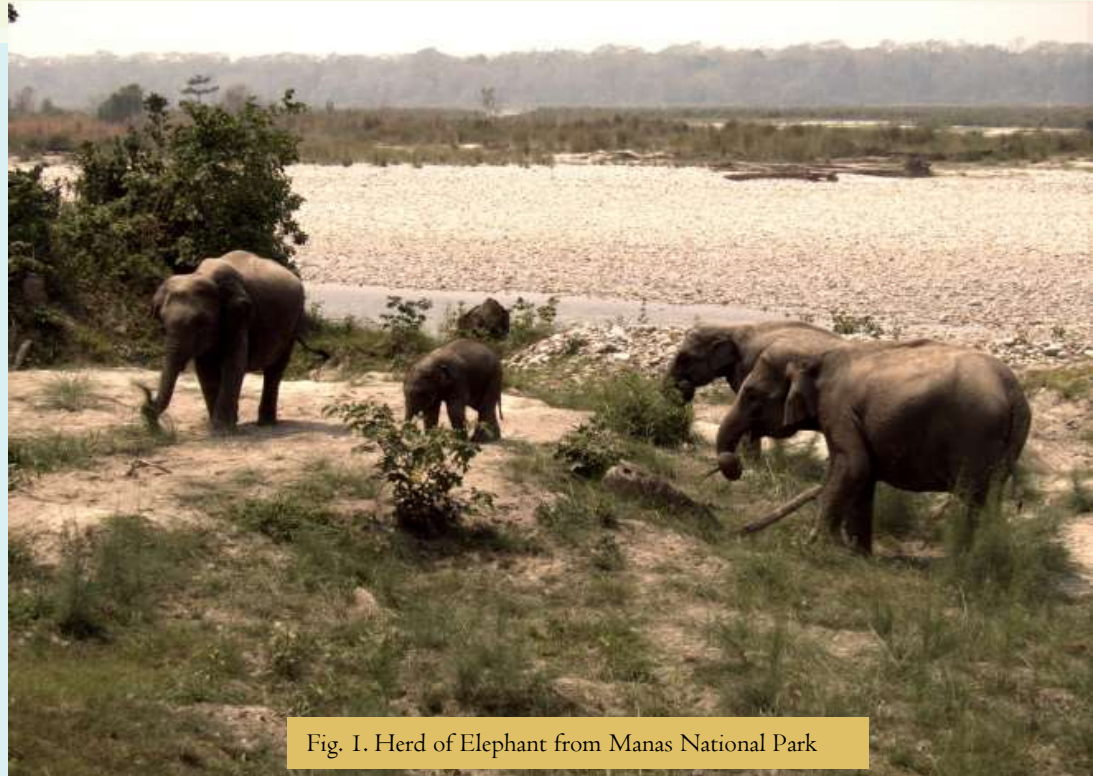


Fig. 1. Herd of Elephant from Manas National Park

As they have already reached the hotel they thought of doing something about this. Dhruva remembers the story that resembles an incident that happened to them during their journey to Guwahati from Goalpara. They are traveling in a Gypsy with a piece of light music hitting their ear alongside gusty wind and sleepy mind. Suddenly, the car driver keeps his leg on the brake pad and everyone wakes up suddenly. Koustav got mad at the driver. The driver said to them, Can't you listen to the noise? Dhruva and Koustav started looking carefully at respective sides from their open roof gypsy. Suddenly the driver saw a huge crowd shouting and running with flames and spares towards their car. The driver hurriedly pointed his finger towards the crowd and asked Dhruva to look at them. Out of nowhere a herd of elephants is on sight and an injured guy. This injured guy was then hurriedly taken in their gypsy to the nearby hospital for the treatment.



Fig. 2. Bee Growing Process

Both of these guys are now in the search for solutions to the human-elephant conflict in a sustainable way. In this regard, they have spoken to different subject experts. The research yields a thought-provoking database.

According to the Times of India (a leading national), from 2015-2019, a total of 2000 individuals have died from human-elephant conflict with an average of 1 person per day. Both of them spoke with Dr. Lucy E Kings, a renowned conservationist. Dr. LE Kings stated that "Fences made with hanging Bee Hives can reduce man-elephant conflict with 88% effectiveness" in a leading journal "Biological Sciences review September 2015".

The same kind of project has been reinstalled by them with the name IndiLuv has been started on a pilot basis in the Manas National Park with the help of a NGO working for wildlife. The statistics of the above-mentioned pilot project are incalculable until now. The bee-fences are growing and will be ready to be installed within July 2020. The project is running under a strict schedule.

These kinds of stories are rare and successful. Development never thought to coincide well with the ecology and environment of an area and neither with the wildlife. A bee fence not only gives livelihood to the local peoples but saves these mesmerizing big-bodied animals and their conflicts. Two persons without a professional background in wildlife are trying to mitigate human-elephant conflict in a sustainable way giving an insight into development and wildlife coexistence is alluring.

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