

DEATH OF TIGERS – HUMAN CONFLICT IN INDIA: SPOTLIGHT ON CONTROVERSIAL CONSERVATION - A CASE STUDY

Alexander CVJ Victoria¹, P. Arockia Mary Fernandez², D. Vasumathi², R. Niranjani³

S. Lok Kirubahar², D. Manikandaraja² and S. Lingathurai^{2,}*

¹*Kalpatharu Breweries and Distilleries Limited, Bangalore, Seshadripuram, Bengaluru, Karnataka 560020.*

²*Department of Zoology and Research Centre, Aditanar College of Arts and Science, Tiruchendur, Tamil Nadu – 628216*

³*Department of Zoology, Sethupathy Government Arts College, Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu – 632 502*

**Corresponding Author, Dr. S. Lingathurai, lings02@gmail.com*

Abstract

Ferocious, beautiful and strong, tigers rule the jungle; the tiger density in some of the reserved forest areas was much higher than that of some Indian tiger reserves. “Humans and tigers share the same landscape with its amenities. The population of the tigers is increasing, and the habitats continue to remain what it was when the tiger conservation programme began,” said Sengupta. He pointed out that the increasing instances of cattle kills in the territorial forests of district – which has a high density of tigers – indicates that there is an imminent threat of tiger-human conflict waiting to erupt. Does the project “Become a WWF Supporter: Join the Tiger Brigade” gives the setback for scientist and officials long-term viability do the people around the forest area really welcome the project if it is yes, what about the poaching and deaths? Do the lives of tigers in India is successful or deaths of human a rise, This paper studies and recalls about the recent spotlight on tigers, Yes, lets over-come a conflict on controversial conservation.

Key Words: *Tiger, Conservation, Brigade and Habitats.*

Introduction

A setback last month when it emerged that three relocated animals, and three of their cubs, had died in the space of eight months. The scientists and officials behind the 500-million-rupee (US\$6 million) conservation project, which was launched with great fanfare and the support of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, say they will carry on with the

project. But several independent scientists question whether this is wise and the project's long-term viability.

Conservation of Tiger in India

In the year 1900, more than 100,000 tigers existed on the planet, but by 2010 the numbers had fallen to a record low of 3,200. Of all the Tiger species that exist, Bengal tigers are the most numerous subspecies. The general decline in tiger population prompted India and 12 other countries to sign a conservation agreement in an attempt to redouble their efforts to protect the species and aim to double tiger populations by 2022. Modi said India has achieved its goal four years ahead of schedule. Despite the progress, Valmik Thapar, a prominent Indian naturalist and a wild tiger specialist said that some parts of Eastern India are still losing tigers.



Figure 1. Copyright Subjected to ForumIAS Blog

“While an adult male tiger needs a 100 square kms area as its territory, an adult female needs about 30-40 sq kms area. Given the increasing population of tigers, the habitats are shrinking for them,” said Sengupta.

Legal Status

Since 1994, WPSI has made a concerted effort to gather accurate information on tiger poaching occurring throughout India. A total of 1,148 tigers are known to have been killed from 1994 to 2017. These figures, however, are reported cases and represent only a fraction of the actual poaching activity in India. Despite these problems, India still holds the best chance for saving the tiger in the wild. Tigers occur in 19 states within the Republic of India, with 8 states reportedly having populations in excess of 100 tigers. There are still areas with relatively large tiger populations and extensive tracts of protected habitat. Adequate funding and international pressure will help. But probably the most effective way to implement tiger conservation action in India today is to enhance NGO participation. There are a number of dedicated organisations that are effectively involved in hands-on tiger conservation. They keep the issue energized on a national level and tenaciously try to increase political will to

secure the tiger's future. The Indian conservation and scientific community is now a proven force. It needs to be strengthened, (WPSI).

Legislation

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, as amended in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation, as per powers and functions assigned to it under the said Act.

NTCA has been fulfilling its mandate within the ambit of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 for strengthening tiger conservation in the country by retaining an oversight through advisories/normative guidelines, based on appraisal of tiger status, ongoing conservation initiatives and recommendations of specially constituted Committees.

The illegal demand for body parts and derivatives of tiger outside the country continues to be a serious threat to wild tigers. Therefore, protection is accorded topmost priority in Project Tiger / NTCA. The States are engaged in an ongoing manner through the NTCA Headquarters as well as its Regional Offices, while issuing alerts, besides closely working with the CBI, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau and the Police Departments. The following actions are taken in this context:

1. Alerting the States as and when required
2. Transmitting backward / forward linkages of information relating to poachers
3. Advising the States for combing forest floor to check snares / traps
4. Performing supervisory field visits through the National Tiger Conservation Authority and its regional offices
5. Providing assistance to States for antipoaching operations
6. Using information technology for improved surveillance (e-Eye system) using thermal cameras launched in Corbett
7. Launching tiger reserve level monitoring using camera trap to keep a photo ID database of individual tigers
8. Preparing a national database of individual tiger photo captures to establish linkage with body parts seized or dead tigers
9. Assisting States to refine protection oriented monitoring through monitoring system for tiger's intensive protection and ecological status (M-STriPES)
10. Providing grant through NTCA for patrolling in tiger rich sensitive forest areas outside tiger reserves
11. Assisting States to deploy local workforce in a big way for protection to complement the efforts of field staff.
12. Supporting States for raising, arming and deploying the Special Tiger Protection Force

3.2 Important thrust areas

1. Stepped up protection/networking/surveillance
2. Voluntary relocation of people from core/critical tiger habitat to provide inviolate space for tiger
3. Strengthening of protection infrastructure and habitat management as per Tiger Conservation Plans of tiger reserves
4. Use of information technology in wildlife crime prevention
5. Addressing human-wildlife conflicts
6. Addressing the issue of resource dependency of local people through sustainable livelihood options
7. Capacity building of frontline personnel
8. Developing a national repository of camera trap tiger photographs with IDs
9. Active management for rescuing moving tigers from human dominated landscape
10. Conducting the next round of country level assessment of tiger, co-predators, prey besides habitat status monitoring
11. Conducting the next round of the independent management effectiveness evaluation
12. Strengthening the regional offices of the NTCA
13. Declaring and consolidating new tiger reserves
14. Fostering awareness for eliciting local public support
15. Fostering Research

Tigers – Human conflict in India

Encounters can often turn ugly with both tigers and humans having to possibly face negative outcomes. Tigers are often villainised in such cases and even face retaliatory attacks which can turn fatal. Situations can escalate for the worse when people themselves become aggressive toward the authorities and officials. Such behaviour appears to happen often when one goes through the data of tiger attacks in the state. Madhya Pradesh recorded 17 instances of tigers attacking humans in 2020, compared with 10 incidents in 2019. Out of all the tiger reserves, Kanha experiences the highest frequency of conflicts as the buffer zone is not exactly free from human disturbance, closely followed by Pench Tiger Reserve. However, such a high frequency of tiger attacks also tests the patience of local communities who are co-living with the apex predator of the jungle.

In the heat of the situation, sometimes a tiger has to face the brunt of a retaliatory attack from locals. In one such case in March 2021, the Wildlife SOS team based in Van Vihar, Bhopal was involved in the treatment of a male tiger rescued from a retaliatory attack. The tiger was brought to the Wildlife Hospital inside Van Vihar National Park after it sustained life-threatening injuries on his forehead from a brutal assault of pickaxes. The tiger was critically injured and the trauma of the attack was so severe that he was unable to even stand properly, let alone hunt.

Intensive medical treatment by the veterinary team led to the recovery of his fractures and considerable improvement of his wounds. Wildlife SOS is always at the forefront of such critical medical interventions. However, treatment itself is not the solution to mitigating human-tiger conflict. Sometimes, reaching a certain location on time and rescuing the animal from a huge swarm of crowd to ensure that the animal is not under too much stress plays an equal role. For instance, when in March 2022, Wildlife SOS and the Uttar Pradesh Forest Department rescued a tigress from a cattle shed in Nagla Samal village of Etah district.

Recent Case Study

27-March-2023: *“Tiger-Human Conflict In Maharashtra: The Controversial Killings Of Avni And Other Man-eaters”*

The tiger population in Maharashtra is on the rise. These carnivores are moving out of the reserved forests and roaming in areas close to human settlements. As instances of tiger-human conflicts are on the rise, wildlife conservationists blame the shrinking tiger habitats for the mishaps. Though wildlife conservationists feel that the attacks on humans are accidental, the increasing number of such incidents has become a matter of grave concern, said sources in the forest department.

Though there have been many, it is the story of T1 or Avni, a six-year-old tigress, mother of two cubs, that gripped the nation’s interest and stoked heated debates. While there were 13 human killings in the state’s Yavatmal district that were attributed to Avni, evidence from thermal cameras and tests of the mauled corpses put the number at six. Even the Supreme Court was petitioned by civil society to bring a stay on the shoot-at-sight orders issued for Avni by the state’s forest department.

The shoot-at-sight orders issued in October 2018 for Avni, led to a heated debate between the government and members of civil society who were of the opinion that Avni may be sent to a zoo at best. However, it was public pressure which made the forest department issue the shoot-at-sight order.

The horror ended on November 02, 2018, when Avni was shot dead by an independent professional hunter, An uproar by the civil society led to the appointment of two committees, by the state and central governments. In their probes, both the committees had listed violations in Avni’s killing under various Acts including Arms, Narcotic Drugs, and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) and Wildlife Protection.

Other related cases

In October 2020, tiger RT-1, which had reportedly killed eight people and 25 livestock in 21 months in the state’s Chandrapur district is spending the rest of its life in captivity in a zoo in Nagpur. In September 2022, the state forest department was on the lookout for another maneater CT-1 in the Gondhia district of Maharashtra. This tiger had killed 13 persons in three districts of the state’s Vidarbha region in 10 months. It was captured by the forest department in October 2022 and has now been relocated to a zoo.

Controversial Conversations

Whether, it has been in social media or live in public courts and general debates, The Project Tiger in India has been Successful or need to be focused on more the hot conversation lead to questions through the officials and public'

1. Tigers can reach top speed of 49-65km per hour (35-40 miles per hour); Whether it has been allowed to walk?
2. Tigers are excellent swimmers, it comes out on top because it is better equipped to propelling its body for stronger muscles; in a day how many hours do the officials allow them to swim underwater if yes, is it possible in all reserved forest areas?
3. Do they prey their enough food or flesh for tigers if yes on what basis?
4. Do the tigers made to roam lonely in night which they love more if they are under surveillance security how poaching is happening?
5. Wild animals should be maintained in jungle for their reproduction, whether they allow them?
6. Tigers love hunting other big-cats do they allow tigers to hunt? In such cases, whether tiger in hunger hunt humans?
7. How many of them have become a WWF Supporter: Join the Tiger Brigade member and what about their contributions, if yes; how the funds are executed for tiger life protection in India.

Conclusion

As, we discussed above in the abstract, the lives of tigers in India is successful at the same time deaths of human has become a rise, This paper studied and recalls about the recent spotlight on tigers, and to over -come a conflict on controversial conservation. The Central and State government has to schedule eyes on Tracking, tracing, and monitoring the big cat, Empowering governmental agencies, Reducing negative human-tiger interaction, Working with local communities, Securing critical wildlife corridors and Curbing illegal wildlife trade in India to avoid tigers hunting on humans and their live stocks.

References

1. Messmer TA. Human-wildlife conflicts: emerging challenges and opportunities. *Human Wildl Confl.* 2009;3:10–7.
2. Madden F. Creating coexistence between humans and wildlife: global perspectives on local efforts to address human-wildlife conflict. *Human Dimens Wildl.* 2004;9:247–57.
3. Distefano E. *Human Wildlife Conflict Worldwide: Collection of Case Studies, Analysis of Management Strategies and Good Practices.* South Africa: FAO; 2010:1–34.
4. Press Information Bureau, Government of India. Man animal conflicts in India. 2011. Available at: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=76176>. Accessed January 12, 2014.

5. Chatterjee SS, Mandal P. Man and animal conflict in Northeast India. 2011. Available at: <http://www.assamchronicle.com/node/43>. Accessed January 12, 2014.
6. Choudhury A. Human–elephant conflicts in Northeast India. *Human Dimens Wildl.* 2004;9:261–70.
7. Mishra C. Livestock depredation by large carnivores in the Indian trans-Himalaya: conflict perceptions and conservation prospects. *Environ Conserv.* 1997;24:338–43.
7. Ogada M, Woodroffe R, Ouge N, Frank G. Limiting depredation by African carnivores: the role of livestock husbandry. *Conserv Biol.* 2004;17(6):1521–30.
8. Madhusudan MD. Living amidst large wildlife: livestock and crop depredation by large mammals in the interior villages of Bhadra Tiger Reserve, South India. *Environ Manage.* 2003;31(4):466–75.
9. Chauhan NPS. Man-eating and cattle-lifting by tigers and conservation implications in India. In: 8th European Vertebrate Pest Management Conference, Berlin, Germany. 2011. [Abstract book, 178–179]. Available at: <http://pub.jki.bund.de/index.php/JKA/article/viewFile/1609/1943#page=182>. Accessed January 12, 2014.
10. Neuman-Denzau G, Denzau H. Examining certain aspects of human-tiger conflict in the Sundarbans forest, Bangladesh. *Tiger Paper.* 2010;37(3):1–11.
11. Reza AHMA, Feeroz MM, Islam MA. Man-tiger interaction in the Bangladesh Sundarban. *Bangladesh J Life Sci.* 2002;14:75–82