STUDY ON COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN TOLERANCE TOWARDS WILDLIFE IN COIMBATORE DISTRICT (KARAMADAI, THONDAMUTHUR & PERIYANAICKENPALAYAM), TAMIL NADU

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ABSTRACT

Human Wildlife conflict is an emerged problem in wildlife today. Our study deals with assessing the tolerance level of human towards wildlife by taking some parts of Coimbatore like Karamadai, Thondamuthur and Periyaickenpalayam as study area. These are areas where human conflict with wildlife and wildlife conflict with human are often seen. Conflict with animals like wild boar, peacock, elephant and deer are seen here. The aim of our study is to analyze the original tolerance level of people towards human wildlife conflicts, to compare the tolerance level of people towards different animals, to compare the tolerance level of on comparing with different groups on basis of age, gender, occupation, forest area coverage and losses faced. Our study was conducted on December 2018 and about 48 peoples are investigated in our study area. The voices of people were recorded in phone and tolerance percentages were given. The mean tolerance level of the people was found to be 58.75%. About 23% of people showed 90% level of tolerance. The comparative tolerance levels between different groups of people were discussed. The reasons behind the factors which determine the tolerance level of groups were also discussed.

Keywords: Human wildlife conflict, Tolerance level towards wildlife, Coimbatore.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human wildlife conflict is now an emerged problem in wildlife. Human wildlife conflict (HWC) is defined as occurring whenever an action by humans or wildlife has an adverse effect on the other (1). However since conflicts cannot occur between people and animals as animals cannot consciously engage in such conflicts (2) suggestions have been made to define HWC more broadly and consisting of two components. Impacts that deal with direct interactions between humans and wildlife; and Conflicts that centre on human interactions between those seeking to conserve species and those with other goals (i.e. biodiversity conflicts) (3). Biodiversity conflicts and HWC are predicted to increase globally. The main cause for the human wildlife conflict is the overlapping of human population with the wildlife. The several other reasons for human wildlife conflict are: Deforestation, Loss of habitat, Decline in prey, Injured or old animal and growing human population.

Human wildlife conflict is present all over the world and it affects people irrespective of caste, sex, nation, rich and poor. It is to be understood that every organism in the world has a specific duty and occupies its own place. Biodiversity conflicts and human wildlife conflict are predicted to increase globally (4). They pose a challenge for conservation managers particularly in light of the rapid of biodiversity loss and the political consequences of failing to achieve millennium development goals (5).

Human wildlife conflict has occurred throughout man’s prehistory and recorded history. Amongst the early forms of human wildlife conflict is the predation of the ancestors of pre historic man by a number of predators of the Miocene such as Saber-toothed cats, leopards, spotted hyenas amongst others (7). Historical records from Nile delta revealed that hippopotamuses raided crops while crocodiles attacked livestock. Egypt while elephants have been raiding crops across Africa and other parts of the world (8).

The famous Taung skull discovered in South Africa in 1924 belonged to a child victim of an eagle attacked that occurred some 2 million years ago (9). Such conflicts have negative impacts on conservation of wildlife populations are of their environment and social economic or cultural life of humans (10). Species involved may vary from grain eating sparrows or rodents to man eating...
tigers affecting from marginal agro pastoralists of developing countries to elite section of the developed world. Recovery of declining population of many large mammals due to efficient wildlife management and large network of protected areas worldwide has also lead to increase the conflicts (11). Stochastic events such as fire and climatic change also augment conflicts situations. E.g. Higher numbers of crisis of livestock depredation by wild predators during seasonal rains in Kenya while during dry season in Zimbabwe (12).

1.1. The Outcomes of the conflict are

(a) Injuries to people (b) Injuries to wildlife (c) Loss of human life (d) Crop damage (e) Livestock depredation (f) Animal deaths (g) Some of the Solutions advisable to manage conflict are: Fencing, Land use planning, Livestock protection, Avoid stepping out after dark and Human wildlife conflict in India. The drivers of these conflicts are well recognized (13), however the solutions are less apparent and depend on disciplinary focus areas and the methods used within frameworks. For example ecologists and wildlife managers typically prioritize management of wildlife populations and their impacts using scientific knowledge and ecological principles rather than focusing on the human dimensions (14). Ecologists and wildlife managers make three assumptions when managing HWC impacts: The level of wildlife damage is directly related to the level of conflict, the level of conflict elicits a response proportional to the level of damage, mitigation activities appropriate to the level of conflict and damage will result in proportional support for conservation (15).

In contrast, a development paradigm that typically prioritizes human well-being highlights the costs associated with conserving biodiversity (16) and emphasizes solutions that primarily focus on increasing human well-being. More recently, inter-disciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches, which recognize the complexity of social-ecological systems (SES) (17), have been proposed (18). Understanding the attitudes of stakeholders living in proximity to wildlife are recognized as essential for informing the design of wildlife management and HWC interventions (18). Accordingly, the attitude concept has been at the centre of attempts to predict and explain human behaviour (19). Although attitudes do not always predict behaviour because an attitude seldom includes all the specific characteristics of a specific situation (19), positive attitudes towards an object or behaviour are necessary conditions for behaviour. For example, people who have a positive attitude towards hunting may not always partake in hunting but people with a negative attitude towards hunting will never hunt (19). In HWC attitude research provides insight on stakeholder preferences for diverse management options; indicate support for desired population sizes for a species, the extent of damage stakeholders are willing to tolerate and the desirability of different species on private or communal land (20). With such information conservation managers can predict and design interventions more likely to be supported by stakeholders thereby preventing or reducing the emergence of potential conflicts. In addition, when the drivers of these preferences are understood, interventions can be more appropriately designed (19). Some of the animals which are often indulged in the conflict in our area with the human are discussed below. They are: (a) Wild Boar, (b) Elephant, (c) Peacock and (d) Deer.

1.1.1. WILD BOAR

The wild boar belong to genus Sus and species scrofa i.e., Sus scrofa. It is a very big menace for agricultural lands that it totally destroys the land by damaging the total tilling of land as its dentition are well adapted for it. It mainly feeds on grasses and some cereals. The farmers reports that wild boar is big menace that it totally destroys the crop and the crop touched by wild boar is not even eaten by the cattle due to its characteristic smell. It has always been associated itself with man and successfully utilises the human altered landscape.

1.1.2. ELEPHANT

Elephant is a keystone species, In India elephant belongs to genus Elephas and species maximus Elephas maximus. It is an endangered species where they are poached for ivory and for other reasons. It has been working animals since at least the Indus valley civilization. It is also seen that elephants are used in warfare too. Elephant disperses the seeds, provides path for animals in the forest and many other ecological niches. There are only 27,312 numbers of elephants in India by 2017 (Synchronised elephant population estimation in 2017 August conducted by Ministry of environment, forest and climate change by Govt. of India). They also infest the crops or sometimes kill the human when they arrive into residential area.

1.1.3. PEACOCK

They are of about three species and of them 2 are Asiatic species one belonging to Indian sub-continent Pavo cristatus and other is green pea fowl Pavo muticus. Both are endangered. This species are also poached or hunted for its colourful
feathers. This species are also killed by destroying its natural habitat. They also feed on agricultural lands and sometimes they are killed by using the poison due to its loss inflicted on crops. It is also a devotional animal and national animal of India. They are omnivorous in feeding habit.

1.1.4. DEER

Deer is a type of animal which show highly diversified. Sambar deer and the spotted deer are which predominantly found in our study area. It is also considered as Keystone species since its habitat directly affects the plants and animals. They bite the plants stem and sometimes seed on fruits found in it. They are also affected by poaching for its horns and destruction of habitat.

OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the original tolerance level of people with wildlife.
- To compare the tolerance level of people towards different animals.
- To compare the tolerance level of people affected by the following factors: Age, Gender, Occupation, Forest area coverage and Losses faced

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

We directly investigated the rural peoples of our study area and their information is recorded in a voice recorder in the phone. The people were chosen at random within our study area. The individual of every village was investigated directly. Their investigations were recorded in cell phone using voice recorder app. Then it is heard again and the tolerance level was given on the basis of (i) The way he responded to us when the question about wildlife is asked (ii) The way he considers the wildlife (iii) The protection measures adopted by him for agriculture and household areas (iv) The steps taken by him against or in accordance with wild animals. As we investigated people directly, no ethical clearances were required. The tolerance levels were collected and the results were compared.

2.1 Study area

We conducted our studies inside Coimbatore. We chose 3 panchayat unions namely Karamadai, Thondamuthur and Periyanaickenpalayam. Among these 3 panchayat unions, 15-20 persons were investigated in a minimum of 3 villages per panchayat. These panchayat unions and the village were chosen on the basis of its vicinity to the forest and arrival of conflict with wild animals there.

2.1.1 Karamadai

Karamadai is a very big panchayat union on population with 1,37,448 peoples by census report of 2011 (21). It accommodates about 17 villages. Among them 3 villages namely Marudhur, Nellithurai, and Thekkampatti are considered for our study. Marudhur has a population of 9491, Thekkampatti with 12,414 and Nellithurai with 2518. These areas where selected on the basis of its proximity to forest and occurrence of wildlife animals there. (Fig 1)

![Fig. 1. Study area showing Karamadai Village](image)

2.1.2 Periyanaickenpalayam

Periyanaickenpalayam is situated in the Mettipalayam road. This panchayat union consists 1,01,930 peoples by census report of 2011. It accommodates about 9 villages. Among them 3 villages namely Pannimadai, Somayampalayam and Veerapandi are considered for our study. Pannimadai has a population of 13,785, Somayampalayam with 14,787 and Veerapandi with 7528. These areas where selected on the basis of its proximity to forest and occurrence of wildlife animals there. (Fig.2)

![Fig. 2. Study area showing Periyanaickenpalayam Village](image)

2.1.3 Thondamuthur

Thondamuthur is a suburb of Coimbatore city. This panchayat union consists of 10 villages with a total population of 66,080 by census report of 2011. Among them 3 villages namely Inkkaibooluvampatti, Madavarayapuram and Narasipuram are considered for our study. Inkkaibooluvampatti has a population of 6,361, Madavarayapuram has a population of 6,365 and
Narasipuram with 3078. These areas were selected on the basis of its proximity to forest and occurrence of wildlife animals there (Fig 3).

Fig. 3. Study area showing Thondamuthur Village

3. RESULTS

The study was conducted in December 2018. We interviewed about 48 individuals. The sex, occupation, area, age and finally the tolerance level in percentage were listed as follows: (Refer the below.

Table 1. Showing tolerance level of people, age, occupation, and gender and area.

| S NO | AREA                        | AGE (inYears) | SEX M-Male | OCCUPATION | TOLERANCE LEVEL IN% |
|------|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------------|
| 1    | Madavarayapuram            | 35            | F          | Shopkeeper | 80                  |
| 2    | Narasipuram                | 32            | M          | Farmer     | 30                  |
| 3    | Narasipuram                | 32            | M          | Shepherd   | 80                  |
| 4    | Narasipuram                | 58            | F          | Shepherd   | 90                  |
| 5    | Narasipuram                | 72            | M          | Daily wage | 80                  |
| 6    | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 29            | F          | Washing clothes | 80                  |
| 7    | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 67            | M          | Shepherd   | 90                  |
| 8    | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 48            | M          | Farmer     | 20                  |
| 9    | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 25            | F          | Farmer     | 20                  |
| 10   | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 62            | F          | Homemaker  | 70                  |
| 11   | Madavarayapuram            | 20            | M          | Daily wage | 80                  |
| 12   | Ilkaraibooluvampatti       | 45            | M          | Washer man | 80                  |
| 13   | Narasipuram                | 65            | M          | Farmer     | 70                  |
| 14   | Madavarayapuram            | 34            | M          | Hotel      | 70                  |
| 15   | Madavarayapuram            | 28            | M          | Mason      | 80                  |
| 16   | Pannimadai                 | 25            | M          | -          | 50                  |
| 17   | Pannimadai                 | 27            | M          | -          | 50                  |
| 18   | Pannimadai                 | 52            | F          | Daily wage | 80                  |
| 19   | Pannimadai                 | 40            | F          | Shopkeeper | 80                  |
| 20   | Pannimadai                 | 75            | F          | Farmer     | 60                  |
| 21   | Pannimadai                 | 35            | M          | Tailor     | 70                  |
| 22   | Veerapandi                 | 35            | F          | Homemaker  | 20                  |
| 23   | Veerapandi                 | 40            | M          | Daily wage | 20                  |
| 24   | Veerapandi                 | 68            | F          | Shopkeeper | 70                  |
| 25   | Veerapandi                 | 50            | M          | Farmer     | 30                  |
| 26   | Veerapandi                 | 75            | F          | Shepherd   | 50                  |
| 27   | Veerapandi                 | 85            | F          | Shepherd   | 50                  |
| 28   | Veerapandi                 | 50            | F          | Homemaker  | 50                  |
| 29   | Somayampalayam             | 25            | F          | Farmer     | 90                  |
| 30   | Somayampalayam             | 67            | F          | Shepherd   | 60                  |
| 31   | Somayampalayam             | 33            | M          | Ironing man| 80                  |
| 32   | Somayampalayam             | 43            | M          | Shopkeeper | 70                  |
| 33   | Somayampalayam             | 40            | F          | Homemaker  | 60                  |
| 34   | Marudhur                   | 65            | F          | Homemaker  | 70                  |
| 35   | Marudhur                   | 45            | F          | Homemaker  | 90                  |
| 36   | Marudhur                   | 70            | M          | Farmer     | 30                  |
| 37   | Marudhur                   | 45            | M          | Daily wage | 50                  |
38  Nellithurai  48  M  Farmer  50  
39  Nellithurai  52  M  Daily wage  20  
40  Nellithurai  20  M  Daily wage  70  
41  Nellithurai  51  M  Daily wage  40  
42  Nellithurai  57  M  Farmer  30  
43  Thekkampatti  38  F  Homemaker  70  
44  Thekkampatti  65  F  Farmer  60  
45  Thekkampatti  70  M  Farmer  60  

| S.NO | TOLERANCE LEVEL IN % | NUMBER OF PEOPLE |
|------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1    | 10                    | 0                |
| 2    | 20                    | 5                |
| 3    | 30                    | 5                |
| 4    | 40                    | 2                |
| 5    | 50                    | 7                |
| 6    | 60                    | 5                |
| 7    | 70                    | 9                |
| 8    | 80                    | 11               |
| 9    | 90                    | 4                |
| 10   | 100                   | 0                |

46  Thekkampatti  28  M  Farmer  40  
47  Thekkampatti  70  F  Farmer  80  
48  Thekkampatti  72  F  Farmer  30  

**Mean Tolerance Level = 59.375%**

**Fig. 1.** Showing frequencies of people exhibiting different tolerance level

**Table 2.** Showing mean tolerance level of 3 different panchayat unions.

| S.NO | PANCHAYAT UNION          | MEAN TOLERANCE LEVEL IN% |
|------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | KARAMADAI                | 52.65                     |
| 2    | PERIYANAICKENPALAYAM     | 57.77                     |
| 3    | THONDAMUTHUR             | 68                        |
Fig. 2. Comparing mean tolerance level of 3 different panchayat unions.

![Bar chart comparing mean tolerance level of 3 different panchayat unions]

Table 3. Showing mean tolerance level of male and female

| S.NO | GENDER | MEAN TOLERANCE LEVEL IN% |
|------|--------|--------------------------|
| 1    | Male   | 55.3                     |
| 2    | Female | 64                       |

Fig. 3. Comparing mean tolerance level of male and female

![Bar chart comparing mean tolerance level of male and female]

Table 4. Showing mean tolerance level of two different age groups

| S.NO | AGE               | MEAN TOLERANCE LEVEL IN % |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | BELOW 50 YEARS    | 60.75                     |
| 2    | ABOVE 50 YEARS    | 57.75                     |
Fig. 4. Comparing mean tolerance level of two different age groups i.e., above 50 years and below 50 years.

Table 5. Showing mean tolerance level of different occupations

| S.NO | OCCUPATION                                      | MEAN TOLERANCE LEVEL IN % |
|------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | FARMERS                                        | 46.65                     |
| 2    | OTHER OCCUPATION (HOME MAKER, WASHERMAN, etc.,)| 65.15                     |

Fig. 5. Comparing mean tolerance level of different occupations

Table 6. Showing mean tolerance level of area at distance from forest

| S.NO | AREA AT DISTANCE FROM FOREST | MEAN TOLERANCE LEVEL IN % |
|------|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1    | LESS THAN 5 Km              | 53.2                      |
| 2    | MORE THAN 5 Km              | 64.62                     |
Fig. 6. Comparing mean tolerance level of area at distance from forest A - less than and about 5 Km; B - more than 5 Km

Table 7. Showing mean tolerance level of people towards different animals

| S.NO | WILD BOAR | PEACOCK | DEER | ELEPHANT |
|------|-----------|---------|------|----------|
| 1    | 20        | 30      | 30   | 30       |
| 2    | 80        | 80      | 80   | 80       |
| 3    | 30        | 80      | 60   | 60       |
| 4    | 30        | 80      | 60   | 60       |
| 5    | 40        | 40      | 40   | 40       |
| 6    | 10        | 40      | 40   | 10       |

Fig. 7. Comparing mean tolerance level of people towards different animals
4. DISCUSSION

We have interviewed about 48 individuals on December 2018 and gathered the above data. From the above results, it is found that tolerance level is affected by the following factors:

- Gender
- Age
- Occupation
- Forest area coverage
- Animals
- Human and economic loss

4.1. Gender

Out of 48 people surveyed, 26 of them were females and 22 were males. It is found that males possess a low level of tolerance than females i.e., mean tolerance of males are 55.3% and that of females are 64%. This may be due to the psychological difference between the sexes and also may be due to the lack of awareness of wild animal's arrival in females than males. Losses also playing role in creating this difference. (Table 3)

4.2. Age

Out of 48 people surveyed, 26 of them were aged less than 50 and remaining 22 were aged above 50. When we compare the tolerance level between two different age groups, it won't differ much (less than 50 years - 60.75%, more than 50 years - 57.75%). This small variation is due to the fact that people of all age groups are exposed to same problems, they all are facing same problems. We could also say that tolerance level is not affected much by age. (Table 4)

4.3. Occupation

Out of 48 people surveyed, 15 of them were farmers and remaining 33 belongs to various occupations like washing clothes, shepherd, etc. Occupation plays a very important role in determining the tolerance level of individual that too it differs much between farmers and others. Loss is the factor playing an important role here in determining the tolerance on the basis of occupation. Farmers play a tremendous loss when their crops are raided by elephant or any other wild animals. It is very big for them to earn the investment and next only they thinks of profit. It also found that lots of Farmers have sold or left their land as such as they are unable to take out their investments. A farmer said that "If an Elephant comes to his land, about 20,000-30,000 rupees were lost". Another farmer said that "A wild boar came and raided his cropland and all the crops have been destroyed. I face total loss since cattle even won't touch the crops left by wild boar." We also heard a farmer saying that they are using some sort of explosives to kill wild boar. A lot of farm land has been left as such without doing agriculture due to the losses created by wildlife in agricultural land. Hence from the above statements and incidents, the highest variation of tolerance between farmers and others is inferred i.e., farmers possess a mean tolerance level of 46.65% and that of other workers were 65.15%. (Table 5)

4.4. Forest area coverage

Out of 9 villages surveyed 4 villages namely Nellithurai, Veerapandi, Mathvarayapuram and Ikkaipooluvampatti are situated at less than or about 5 Km from forest area comprising of 22 surveyed people, 5 villages namely Somayamplayam, Thelkkampatty, Pannimadai, Narasipuram and Marudhur are situated at more than 5 Km from forest area comprising of 26 surveyed people. People who are near to forest face lots of conflict due to the frequent arrival of wild animals and the abundant amount of loss inflicted on them and therefore they possess lower amount of tolerance than those who are far away from forest areas. When we analyze the data it is also found that mean tolerance level of people in distance of less than 5 Km to the forest is 53.2% and that of more than 5 Km are 64.62%. (Table 6)

4.5. Animals

The main cause of difference in mean tolerance level between the different animals is losses caused by them. For Eg: wild boar causes more loss than peacocks and deer, therefore tolerance level greatly differs between them. Another cause for this variance is Religious beliefs. Though wild boar and elephant causes same amount of loss, elephant is considered as devotee or any other symbol which represents the shrines. Therefore people are more tolerant to elephant than wild boar: The above said is seen in also the case of deer and peacocks. Peacocks are considered as symbol of Lord Muruga in Tamilnadu. Therefore people are more tolerant to peacock than deer. Another cause for these variances is appearance of an animal. For Eg: Though deer causes heavy loss somewhat near to wild-boar but their tolerances differ much. This is due to the appearance of deer is considered beautiful or attractive than wild boar: The other cause is ability to prevent the animal. The loss of peacock is not much cared as there is no effective measure to prevent the entry of peacock. (Table 7)
4.6. Losses faced

Losses faced by the concerned people are the key factor or stimulant which derives other factors. Losses play a huge backdrop in all of the above factors.

5. CONCLUSION

We found in our project that people's tolerance level towards different animals are totally different and the people possess good tolerance level compared to the tolerance level which is shown by the medias. The media are exaggerating or magnifying the people's intolerance level. By our project finding we also conclude that this type of census must be carried out before displacing or transporting or attacking the animals present there, by the government. Government should take some adoptive measures to prevent wildlife as well as the farmers, they could use to alternative option like bio acoustics to prevent the entry of wildlife into resident areas which is effective and safe.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study formed a part of the B.Sc. project work of the third year. My sincere thanks are also due to the Supervisor and Head of the Department of Zoology, Kongunadu Arts and Science College (Autonomous), College of Excellence (UGC), Coimbatore 641029, for their valuable suggestions and generous help of this project.

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