

HUMAN ELEPHANT CONFLICTS: A STUDY IN GOLAGHAT DISTRICT OF ASSAM:

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Introduction:

The survival of Elephant is very important for healthy ecosystem. Elephant is an endangered species which has been listed in schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. Assam is the key conservation region of Asian Elephant (Chaudhury, 1999). There are about 5200 Elephants as assessed in the year 2005. According to the record of Forest Dept. of Assam Government, Golaghat district of Assam is the home of about 500 Elephants. In the Golaghat district and adjacent Karbi-Anglong district there are seven reserve forests viz. Diphu Rengma, Doyang, Nambor North, Nambor South, Upper Doigurung and Lower Doigurung. These reserve forest have a good link with the Kaziranga National Park. These reserve are the main habitation of elephant in Golaghat district. Numbor Reserve Forest is the oldest elephant habitat. Gradually the forests are destroying in Golaghat district and the number of elephants are declining. The forest reserves in Golaghat district which are known as home of elephant are destroying in an alarming rate and due to shortage of habitation the elephant come out from forest in search of their food and water. As a result conflict between Human and Elephant take place and day by day elephants are in intense conflict with human. In this paper an attempt is made to analyze the causes of Human Elephant conflicts and try to find out some suggestions for reduction of human elephant conflicts in Golaghat district of Assam.

More affected by elephant forest beats in Golaghat district are Numaligarh Forest Beat, Bokial Forest Beat, Juriadolong Forest Beat and Murphuloni Forest Beat. The affected villages in Numaligarh forest beat are Borsapori, Kuruabahi, Madhupur, Behora, Lakhojan, Dhodang, Napather, Numaligarh pipe line, Kalionigoan, Mikirchang, Bormohoripathar and Panka. Under the Bokial Forest Beat Gobinpur, Buragohainkhat, Bokial, Sofala, Bogidhala, Narayanpur, Modhupur, Dhalaguri, Gutibari, Udayan Prajabasti, Telgaram, Parbotipur, Teliagaon, Pat Kotia, Kordoiguri, Aborghat, Marangi and Miripather are the most affected villages. Madhuban, Likson, Thuramukh, Puspaban, Juriadolong, Kowanighat, Rangajan, Garigaon, Dogaon, Rupkelia, Sagunpara and Ulutoli are the disturbed villages under Juriadolong Forest Beat. Murphuloni No.1, Murphuloni No. 2, Satiyana pather, Shyamraipur, Naharchola, Naharbari, Abhoijan, Falangani, Fulbari, Dakhorapathar, Kathani, Kuwani Pathar and Kolbari etc. are the villages affected by elephant under Murphuloni Forest Beat. House and crop damaged by Elephant are increased. On the other hand death of elephant has been increased in these areas. Death of people has been raised. In fact, the Human- Elephant conflict create a very intense situation in Golaghat district of Assam.

Causes of Human Elephant Conflict.

Elephant are in intense conflict with human in the Golaghat district of Assam. There are many causes for Human-Elephant conflicts. The main causes can be discuss as follows.

1. Deforestation is the major causes of Human Elephant Conflict in Golaghat district. This district witnessed thoughtless deforestation. The Doyang and the Nambor South, Diphu and Rengma Reserve forest have been totally deforested and practically there is no in that areas. Remaining Reserves Viz. Lower Doigurung, Upper Doigurung and Nambor North are facing huge anthropogenic pressure. Here is a table showing the forest and deforested area in Golaghat district prepared by the Forest Department of Assam for the period 1993-1995.

Table No.- 1

Sl. No.	Name of the Reserve forest	Original forest Area	Deforested Area in K.m	Percentage of Deforested Area
1	Diphu	183.63	180.50	98.29
2	Rengma	139.12	110.50	79.37
3	Doyang	246.36	230.00	93.35
4	Nambor North	154.10	80.00	51.91
5	Nambor South	272.40	250.00	91.77
6	Upper& Lower Doigurung	42.23	19.00	44.99

From the above table it can be said that due to the shortage of habitation and large scale deforestation of the forest the human elephant conflict is happened.

2. Establishment of the Numaligarh Refinery (2001) in Telegram area is an another course for Human Elephant conflict in Golaghat district. Deopahar and Telgaram areas are the home of elephant since time immemorial. The Numaligarh Refinery covers 1000 acres areas by destroying Numaligarh and Bokial Forest Beat.
3. Widening of the National Highway is also responsible for human elephant conflict. The 39 No. National Highway starts from Numaligarh to Dimapur of Nagaland. This Highway has widened in many times and it has destroyed the forest and corridor of the elephant. As a result human elephant conflicts are increased.
4. Increasing areas of tea gardens has contributed to the intense of Human Elephant conflict in the Golaghat district. Increasing areas of tea gardens has fragmented the elephant habitats and blocked the natural corridors of elephant.
5. Growing human population is an another main cause for human elephant conflict It demands for more cultivable lands and converse the forest habitat to human habitat. As a result human elephant conflict has occurred.

From the above observation it can be said that the development activities of the government have played a very significant role in destruction of forest and disturbed the traditional migratory routs of the Elephants. It compels elephant to fight against human. The elephant are forced to come out of the jungles and roaming in the forest fringe villages and tea gardens for food and shelter. This results in gradual increase in human elephant conflict in Golaghat district.

Suggestion for reduction of Human Elephant conflict:

People have a crucial role for conservation of elephant and for a healthy ecosystem. For that people must take a co-existence policy. Masses must restrict the degradation of forest. Golaghat district is a home of more than 500 Elephants (record from Forest Dept. of Assam Govt.)

In Golaghat district generally September to January is the crop-raiding period. During this period the Elephants visit the nearest villages in search of their food. The villages are facing difficulties. They have lost crops as well as house hold also. So, the crops patterns of the villages should change to safe period.

Awareness of the people is another way of reducing Human Elephant conflict. People should enhance their capacity to protect yourself. People should not destroy the habitats of

Elephants. In this context, NGO'S have a big role. Destruction of the corridors of Elephant must be stopped. Govt. as well as people should identify the corridors of the Elephants. Corridors must be preserved. If possible, govt. should build flyover over the Elephant corridors. It will save the Elephant from accident.

Conclusion: Elephant is an endangered species. It is also treated as Threatened Animal. For our development we destroy the forest without giving importance to the ecosystem. Animal also have the right to live. Let them live. For the protection of Elephants we all have the responsibility.

References:

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3. Aaranyak's final report on Human Elephant conflict in Golaghat District, Assam.
4. Field studies