Man-Animal Conflict

What is the issue?

\n\n

India is witnessing a rise in human-animal conflict. It is time to devise strategies to deal with the issue.

\n\n

What prompted this recent debate?

\n\n

\n
- A tiger was crushed by a JCB near Corbett after a mob demanded ‘justice’ for deaths.
\n
- Two people from a labour camp working in forests near Corbett died after being reportedly attacked by the tiger.
\n

\n\n

Is it a Mobocracy?

\n\n

\n
- In the encounters between a wild animal and a group of people, there are casualties on both sides.
\n
- In several cases of conflict this year, it has been noted that **group of people have prevented the forest department from carrying out its duties.**
\n
- Rather than only focussing on a wild, snarling animal, a greater understanding of crowd dynamics is also called for.
\n
- In the case of elephants in Athgarh, conservationists have documented a mob of people attacking the elephants almost daily.
\n
- Activists say **this is a form of entertainment for the people concerned**, as the elephants are not always harming people.

\n
- Other mobs that have gathered around wildlife have clamoured for instant ‘justice’, gratification or resolution — in the form of killing the animal, beheading it, or parading it after its death.
\n
- The symbolic control of an animal by killing it and then parading the carcass has not escaped judicial attention.
\n
- A December order of the **Uttarakhand High Court said that if animals were (legally) put down, their dead bodies could not be displayed or shown in the media.**
\n

\n\n

What is going wrong?

\n\n

\n
- When going into an area inhabited by an obligate carnivore like a tiger, very few precautions are taken.
\n
- **Most labour camps are not provided with protocol,** proper toilets, or monitoring to avoid work in the early morning or late night, and to move about only in groups.
\n
- Many cases of conflict or aggression towards animals are **exacerbated by carelessness and existing human-human conflict or tensions.**
\n
- The question is also linked to control and which groups or classes are interested in being dominant.
\n
- The discourse around a wild animal, especially as it comes closer to people or human habitation, is that it is a criminal, a rogue, a stray, or a killer.
\n
- **There is, however, very little reflection on the role of people in inciting a wild animal.**
\n

\n\n

What is the way ahead?

\n\n

\n
- We need solutions rather than revenge.

\n
- We need **proper cordoning off of areas** when wildlife comes close to people, with animal capture being done with full police involvement and not just with a helpless forest department.
  \n
- We need **investigations and action against groups** that deliberately incite a panicked wild animal.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n