

**Role of Mass Media in Protection and Promotion of
Wildlife Conservation: A Study with Special Reference to
Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh**

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ABSTRACT

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Introduction

The term “*wildlife*” was first appeared in the year 1913 in a book “*Our Vanishing Wildlife*”, which was written by William Temple Hornaday, an American zoologist, conservationist, author and the director of New York Zoological Park. The main highlight of the book was the awful treatment of birds, animals and fishes, and the hunting of the birds which cannot be harvested for enjoyment or commercial purposes. The Webster's dictionary defines wildlife as “*living beings that are neither human nor domesticated,*” (Rajvaidya, N. (2005), Sinha, U. P. (2007), & Mohanka, R.. (2008)), while the Oxford dictionary refers to wildlife as “*the native flora and fauna of a particular region*” (“Ecosystem Degradation and Wildlife”, n. d.) The term wildlife is usually refers to as “*non-domesticated vertebrates*”, but it has also refers to “*the entire wild plants, animals and the other organisms too*” (Sinha, C. (2001) & Usher, M. B. (1986)). We often hear or read about word “*conservation*”, people from various fields such as the ecologists, scientists, journalists, architects, social activists or common man all talk about conservation. Conservation has different meanings to different people. In present context, conservation refers to “*the preservation of wild plants, and animals in natural ecosystems or even in gardens or zoos, detached from their natural environment*” (Wiens, A. John. (2016)). Today wildlife conservation is a total concept and it not only involves plants and animals, but

also the microorganisms, soil and the environment of the other physical elements in which they live or where they depend on.

Wildlife conservation is an act to save endangered plants and animal and to preserve their natural habitats. The main aim of wildlife conservation is to make certain that the nature will be all through for future generations. Many nations have different government organizations devoted to wildlife conservation which help to execute the policies intended to protect the wildlife. Several independent, non-profit organizations, agencies, groups promote various wildlife conservation issues. Due to the negative impacts of human activities, wildlife conservation has become an increasingly important exercise. An endangered species is defined as *“a population of a living being that is at danger of becoming extinct because of several reasons, either they are few in number or they are threatened by the varying environmental or predation parameters.”* (Agrawal, A., & Gopal, K. (2016)). Wildlife needs to be conserved for maintaining ecological balance for life, preserving different kinds of species, i.e., biodiversity, preserving economically important plants and animals, conserving the endangered species. Wildlife contributes to the maintenance of different cycles such as the carbon cycle and the nitrogen cycle, for enhancement and advancement in agriculture, animal husbandry and fisheries. The Wildlife Conservation Act was enacted by the Government of India in the year 1972 (Environmental Legislation. (2017)). The World Conservation Strategy (WCS) was developed in the year 1980 by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and in association with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (World Conservation Strategy. (1980)).

The Study Area

Dudhwa National Park is a National Park, located in the Terai terrain of Uttar Pradesh, India; it covers an area of 490.3 km² and a buffer zone of 190 km². It is located at the Indo-Nepal border in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh. It has a buffer of reserved forest areas on the northern and southern sides. (Mathur, P. K., & Midha, N. (2008)). It represents one of the few excellent examples of an extremely diverse and productive Terai ecosystem, it preserves a large number of endangered species, sustains the compulsive species of giant wet grasslands and confined distribution of species (Kumar, S. (2009)). Dudhwa National Park is a part of the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a protected area of Uttar Pradesh, which principally extends in Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich districts of Uttar Pradesh and includes Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Kataranghat Wildlife Sanctuary (Jha, R. N. (2000)). It covers a full area of 1,284.3 km² and includes three large forest segments dominated by agricultural lands. Dudhwa National Park was established in the year 1958 as a Wildlife Sanctuary for the Swamp Deer (Kumar, S. (2009)). On January 1977, it was notified as a National Park. In the year 1987, it was declared as a Tiger Reserve under the Project Tiger (Mathur, P. K. & Midha, N. (2008)).

Statement of the Research Problem

- Destruction of the natural habitats, wildlife poaching activities, illegal wildlife trade, over exploitations of the natural resources, human-wildlife conflicts etc., are primarily responsible for the negative impact on the biodiversity and the ecosystem.
- Human-wildlife conflict is a matter of major global concern because it threatens the survival of many wildlife species.

- Poaching of wildlife is a matter of core concern for the wildlife conservation and management.
- Illegal wildlife trade puts the local ecosystem under threat and it directly affects the biodiversity and the ecosystem, such as ecological imbalance, pollution, destruction of the natural habitat, deforestation and the other types of devastations.
- Dudhwa National Park often faces poaching activities and the illegal wildlife trade; it is because the boundaries of Dudhwa National Park are attached to the Nepal's borders. In recent years, Nepal has been known to be a significant center for the poaching activities and the illegal trade in wildlife.
- The agricultural lands and the human populations are located around Dudhwa National Park, which causes human-wildlife conflicts.

Significance of the Study

In recent years, the biggest threat to Indian wildlife and ecosystems is constantly neglecting deforestation, human-wildlife conflicts, poaching activities, illegal wildlife trade and negligence towards wildlife, ecosystem and biodiversity. Due to the large scale poaching activities, illegal trade, habitat destruction and human-wildlife conflicts has resulted in a rapid decline in the population of most of the wild animals, birds and plants. Several national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and protected areas have been set up to overcome the consequences of human encroachments. To protect the tiger and wildlife in India, Project Tigers and Wildlife Protection Act were started. It has been observed that the lack of communication activities with tribal people and other local people living near protected areas often leads to the destruction of human habitats, poaching, deforestation, and human-wildlife conflicts in and around protected areas. Media can communicate with the tribal and other local people and inform them about the

advantages and disadvantages of wildlife conservation and management. Media can contribute to reducing human-wildlife conflicts, promoting public support for wildlife conservation and management, and reducing destruction caused by conflicts and poaching activities in protected areas. Media can apply the benefits and significance of wildlife conservation, to the tribal and other local people living near protected areas by using various means of communications like print media, radio, television, cinema, traditional media, internet etc.

Aim of the Study

The main aim of this research study is to know how media is contributing towards the wildlife conservation and management in and around Dudhwa National Park. What is the role of the media to overcome the human-wildlife conflicts happening around Dudhwa National Park? How far media is helpful in controlling poaching and illicit trade activities in and around Dudhwa National Park? This research is also about to find out how media is contributing towards the preparation of news related to wildlife conservation, poaching activities, illicit trade and human-wildlife conflicts. What is the role of media in increasing awareness about wildlife conservation among tribal and other local people living around Dudhwa National Park?

Objectives of the Study

- To study the role of media in estimating the intrusion of tribal and other local people in buffer zone and core zone of Dudhwa National Park.
- To study the role of media in highlighting and solving the conflicts between human and the wildlife around the Dudhwa National Park.
- To study the role of media in examining the poaching and illicit trade activities in the Dudhwa National Park.

- To study the role of media in the conservation and management of wildlife habitat in and around the Dudhwa National Park.
- To study media habits of tribal and other local people living near Dudhwa National Park.

Hypotheses

- Role of the media is significant in resolving human-wildlife conflicts around the Dudhwa National Park.
- Role of the media is significant in controlling illegal wildlife trade activities in and around Dudhwa National Park.
- Role of the media is significant in spreading awareness about conservation and management of wildlife in and around Dudhwa National Park.

Methodology

On the basis of the objectives of the present study descriptive research and analytical research were applied during the process of research investigation. The descriptive research is used to study the population or phenomena. It does not answer the question of how / when / why the characteristics came, rather it addresses the question what. The main purpose of descriptive research is to explain what exists with relation to variables or conditions in a situation. The present research study is based on both survey method and observational method. A structured interview schedule was prepared and data was collected from 500 respondents. The researcher has spent considerable time in the study area to closely monitor the activities of people living near Dudhwa National Park. Analysis of data was done using suitable statistical methods.

Universe of the Study

Dudhwa National Park is situated in the Terai belt of Uttar Pradesh, India. It covers an area of 490.3 km² (189.3 sq mi), with a buffer zone of 190 km² (73 sq mi). It is located on the Indo-Nepal border in the Lakhimpur Kheri District of Uttar Pradesh. The present research study is based on Dudhwa National Park. Dudhwa is situated in Palia Kalan Tehsil of Lakhimpur Khiri District, Uttar Pradesh. Palia Kalan Tehsil is the universe of this research study. Palia Kalan Tehsil comprises 155 villages; these villages are situated around Dudhwa National Park. Out of the 155 villages, 10 villages namely, *Atareya, Farsaheya, Fulvareya, Jay Nagar, Patwara, Puraina, Ram Nagar, Ramgarh, Singahiya, and Surma* were selected by Simple Random Sampling, using Lottery Method. Out of these 10 villages, 50 respondents from each village were selected by Systematic Sampling. A pilot study was carried out before the research design was finalized in order to assist in defining the interview schedule and to test the feasibility, reliability and validity of the proposed study design. The pilot study helped the researcher to equip with an understanding of the questions and what it is trying to measure precisely and enable easy and convenient explanations of information from the selected sample. A sample size of 10% was chosen for pilot study for improving and rebuilding interview schedule.

Sample Size

According to the population of the study area a sample size of 500 respondents were taken for data collection. Out of the selected 10 villages, 50 respondents from each village were interviewed by using structured interview schedule for data collection.

Sampling Techniques

Samples were collected by following sampling techniques:

- Simple Random Sampling
- Systematic Sampling

Tools and Techniques of Data Collection

The researcher used primary sources of data collection method such as survey method and observation method in the process of collecting data and information. A well structured interview schedule was designed and administered.

Primary Data

A structured interview schedule was prepared and interviews of 500 tribal and local people were taken to collect primary data. The structured interview schedule included both close-ended and open-ended questions.

Secondary Data

For the collection of secondary data reference books, journals, articles, magazines, newspaper, government records, published and unpublished research works, internet and web sources such as ministry and forest department websites were consulted.

Non Participant Observation

Each and every kind of information cannot be surveyed. So, in order to cross check the information obtained from survey and discussions, researcher spent ample of time in the study area to closely monitor the activities of people living near Dudhwa National Park.

Analysis of the Data

To achieve the objectives of the research study and to derive inferences, analysis of data and test of hypotheses was done using suitable statistical methods such as percentage, tabulation, cross tabulation, t test, correlation and other appropriate techniques with the help of Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) Version 16.0.

Variables

Keeping in mind the nature of the research study, following variables were selected:

Independent Variable

- Media Performance in Wildlife Conservation

Dependent Variables

- Promotion and Protection by Media
- Coverage by Media
- Awareness by Media

Findings of the Research Study

The researcher has collected data with the help of structured interview schedule. In the structured interview schedule the researcher has added both close-ended and open-ended questions. With the help of tables and graphs the collected data has been arranged in a systematically manner. The placement of data in the table will help in providing quick review for

the collected data. With the help of graphs one can understand the relationship between the different collected data. Every close-ended question has been explained with the help of tables, graphs, and interpretation. The open-ended question has been presented in a summarized manner since it includes the views and thought of the respondents. Collected data were analyzed using SPSS software package.

The researcher has collected the data from 500 respondents. A total of 23 questions including both close ended and open ended form and demographic details were asked. The chapter has explained every question one by one with table and graphs. The researcher got the findings and results in the form of numbers and percentages. In order to find out the understanding level of wildlife conservation of the respondents, it is important to know their age. The researcher has made a sincere attempt to classify the sample of respondents on the basis of their age group. It is observed from result that the majority of the respondents belong to the age group of 31-40 years, whereas only 1% respondents belong to the age group of 61-70 years. According to the Census 2011, female sex ratio is 943 per 1000 males, female sex ratio in Uttar Pradesh state is continuously declining, same situation was found from result number of women is less in comparison to the number of men in selected villages. It is observed from the result that the male respondents are more in comparison to female. Result shows that the majority of the respondents are married representing 85.20% of the sample and 14.80% are unmarried. It is clear from the result that 57.60% of respondents are engaged in the agriculture work, 23.20% respondents are engaged in business, 13.20% respondents are doing jobs and 6% of the respondents are unemployed. It is clear from the result that 40.40% of the respondents have education up to the secondary level, 32.2% of the respondents have education up to the higher secondary level, 19.8% of respondents have no education and 7.6% of respondents have

education up to graduation level or above. In order to understand the importance of wildlife conservation around PAs, it is important to know that whether the tribal and other local people are aware of the concept of wildlife conservation or not. Result shows that 69% of respondents are well aware of the term wildlife conservation. It is very important to find out, what are the sources from where the tribal and other local people are getting information result shows 26.4 % respondents receive the information on wildlife conservation from their friends and relatives, 23.8% respondents receive from forest department, 15.2% respondents receive from journalists and 3.2% respondents receive from N.G.Os. Result indicates that 75.6% of the respondents agree that there is always a situation of Human-Wildlife Conflict around DNP. 75% respondents agree that they have faced Human-Wildlife Conflicts around DNP. Respondents said that building homes around forests, illegal logging (cutting) of trees, poaching of wild animals and lack of food availability for wild animals are the reasons behind Human-Wildlife Conflicts around PAs. 57.4% of respondents said that people living near forests are mainly responsible for the Human-Wildlife Conflict. Respondents believe livestock death, loss of crops, death of humans' and loss of home are the losses people face after Human-Wildlife Conflicts. 83% of respondents are well aware of various Mass Media forms, such as Television, Radio, Cinema, Newspaper, Internet etc. Most of the respondents in the study area are familiar with Radio but least familiar with Internet. 70% respondents agree that journalists provide information to them related to Wildlife Conservation. 70% respondents believe that journalists play crucial role in the prevention of the Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trade. Most of the respondents said that the railway line passing through the center of Dudhwa National Park should be removed. At the same time, quite a number of respondents also suggested the proper fencing around the Dudhwa National Park.

Conclusion

The research study will contribute immensely to the wildlife conservation and management of Dudhwa National Park. The research study will highlight the role of mass media in the protection and promotion of wildlife conservation, the role of mass media in controlling the poaching and illegal wildlife trade activities, role of media in sensible reporting of human-wildlife conflicts of DNP, and also highlight the media reach among tribal and other local people. The final research study will definitely help to find out the understanding level and knowledge of wildlife conservation and the media habits of tribal and other local people living near DNP. The research study helps in understanding the causes behind human-wildlife conflicts and will also highlight the level of poaching activities and illegal wildlife trade near DNP.

The objectives of the research study were evaluated and examined by the researcher. The objectives of the research study were:

- 7.3.1.** To study the role of media in estimating the intrusion of tribal and other local people in the buffer zone and core zone of Dudhwa National Park.
- 7.3.2.** To study the role of the media in highlighting and solving the conflicts between human and the wildlife around the Dudhwa National Park.
- 7.3.3.** To study the role of media in examining the poaching and illicit trade activities in the Dudhwa National Park.
- 7.3.4.** To study the role of media in the conservation and management of wildlife habitat in and around the Dudhwa National Park.

7.3.5. To study media habits of tribal and other local people living near Dudhwa National Park.

Major findings of the research study “*Role of Mass Media in Protection and Promotion of Wildlife Conservation: A Study with Special Reference to Dudhwa National Park, Uttar Pradesh*” are:

- Research findings suggest that people living around Dudhwa National Park are well aware of the Wildlife Conservation.
- Human-wildlife conflict around the Dudhwa National Park is a matter of concern because it is a threat to the existence of many wildlife species.
- Excessive interference of humans in the protected area, construction of homes around the forests, poaching of wild animals, lack of food availability for wild animals, etc., are the major reasons behind Human-Wildlife Conflict around Dudhwa National Park.
- Poaching is a matter of major concern for wildlife conservation and management in Dudhwa National Park.
- The Dudhwa National Park is facing extreme poaching and illegal wildlife trade activities, due to the interconnected boundaries between Dudhwa National Park and neighboring country Nepal.
- In the last few years Nepal is in the limelight because of these poaching and illegal trade activities.
- Tribal and other local people living around the Dudhwa National Park are familiar with the use of different mass media, especially the Radio, Television and Newspaper.

- Media effectively plays a pivotal role in communicating with the tribal and other local people about the advantages and disadvantages, tools and techniques of wildlife conservation and management.

Recommendations

In the light of the above findings and conclusions of the research study, the following recommendations are formulated by the researcher:

- To mitigate the Human-Wildlife Conflict, tribal and local people should be educated about the consequences of the problem.
- Workshops should be organized and booklets on control measures to mitigate the Human-Wildlife Conflict should be produced and distribute to the affected people indicating the behavior of wild animals.
- People should be educated about the need and importance of wildlife conservation. Children and youth should be motivated to love nature and wildlife.
- For this, awareness campaigns should be organized by media persons, forest department, and N.G.Os etc.
- In order to better understand the level of difficulties faced by people during and after the human-wildlife conflict, the media should interact more with the tribal and other local people.
- There is a need to check and control tourism in protected areas.
- Wildlife should be preserved in the natural habitat without any external interference.
- There is a need to prevent livestock grazing in protected areas to save grassland and natural habitat and to avoid conflicts.

- There is a need to build a fence around the protected area to stop the interference of human in the protected area as well as wildlife to the human population.
- There is need to build a fence around the protected area to prevent poachers and illegal traders to enter in the areas.
- The international trade of wildlife and their products should be controlled by strict laws.
- There is a need to organize workshops for the media people on the importance of reporting during and after human-wildlife conflict.
- It is because the media is a key stakeholder in conservation issues, as they are the one who can broadly disseminate information.
- The media should avoid the sensitivity of the news; the sensitivity can ruin the situation and reduce the level of tolerance of the people.
- There is a need of sensible reporting of wildlife related issues; it is the need of the hour after Human-Wildlife Conflict.
- There is a need of correct and truthful coverage of the Human-Wildlife Conflicts and it is important to emphasize the significance of wildlife.
- The government should implement effective strategies for conservation of wildlife in protected areas.
- There is a need of more check points near protected areas and the recruitments of more forest guards are must.