

Content Module 7

Holistic, Effective and Ethical Communication on Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation: Taking a Harmonious Coexistence Approach

A Holistic Approach to Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Mitigation in India

Training Resource Material



Imprint

Training Resource Material: A Holistic Approach to Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC) Mitigation in India

Module HWC-01:	An Introduction to Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation: Taking a Holistic and Harmonious Coexistence Approach
Module HWC-02:	The Overall Context: Understanding HWC in a Development Context
Module HWC-03:	Legal, Policy, and Administrative Framework for HWC Mitigation in India
Module HWC-04:	Tools and techniques for effective and Efficient Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation
Module HWC-05:	Strengthening Community Engagement for Effective and Sustainable Mitigation of Human-Wildlife Conflict
Module HWC-06:	Operationalizing the Holistic and Harmonious coexistence Approach to Mitigate Human-Wildlife Conflict through Cross-sector Cooperation
Module HWC-07:	Holistic, Effective and Ethical communication on Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation: Taking a Harmonious Coexistence Approach
Module HWC-08:	A Primer on Developing Leadership and other Non-technical Competencies for HWC Mitigation
Module OH-01:	An introduction to the One Health Approach, Zoonotic and Other Emerging Diseases

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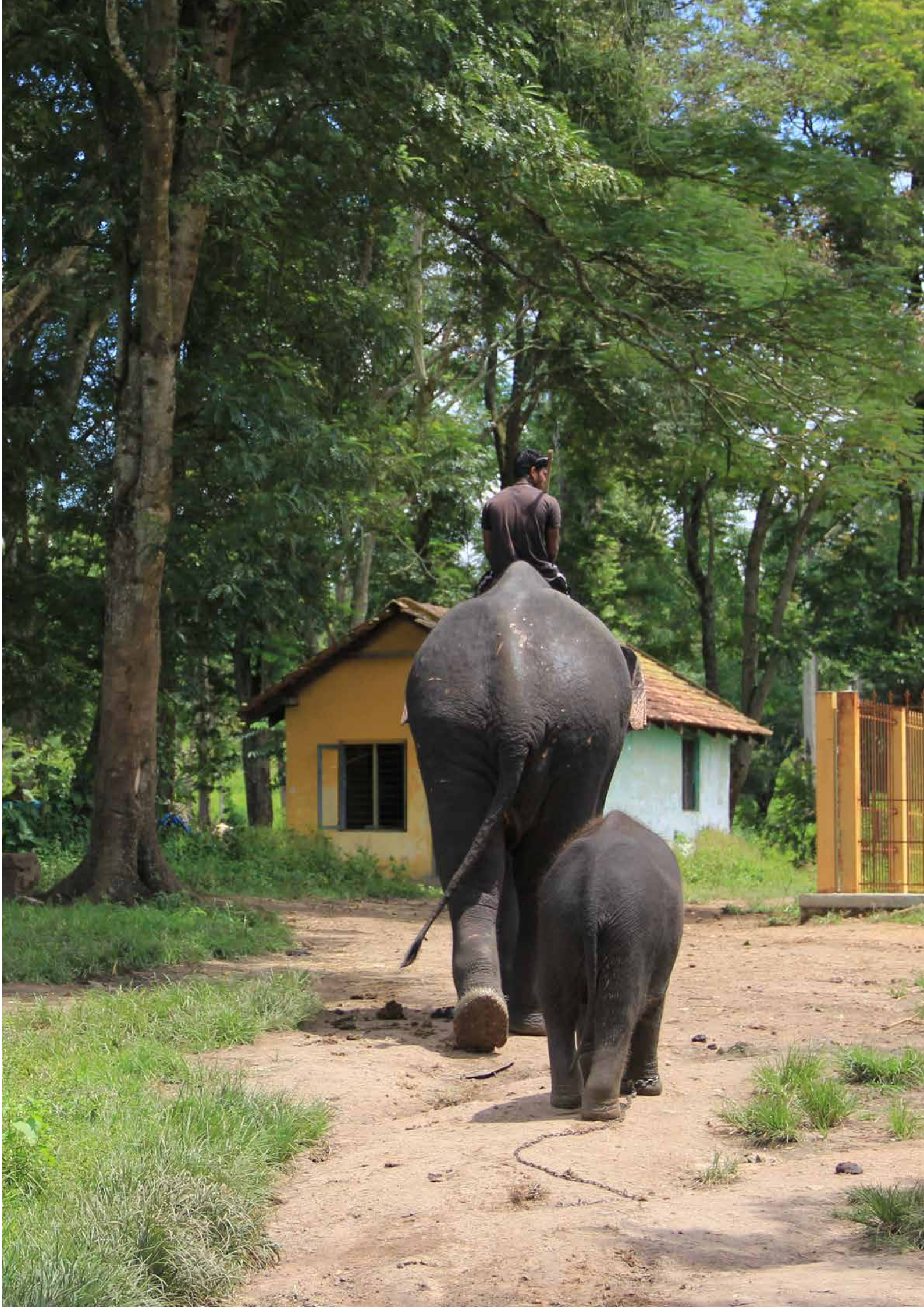
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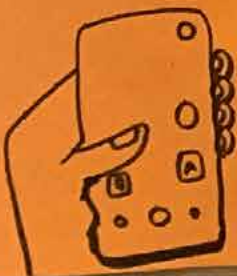
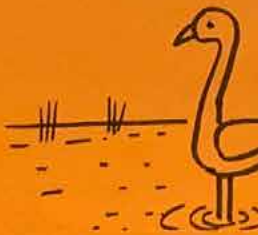
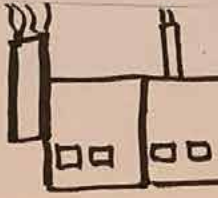
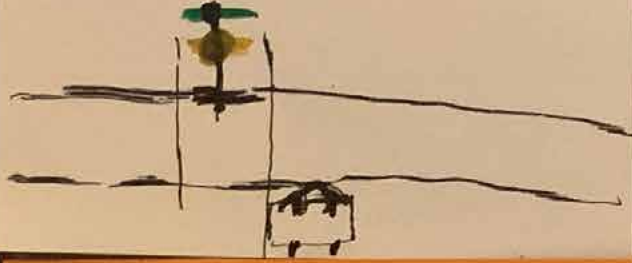
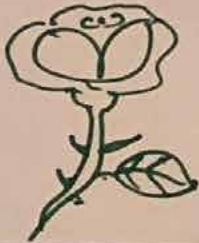
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How do I



Communicate

1. About this Module

1.1 Learning outcomes

Learning outcome for forests sector participants

After completing this module, the participants can:

- - Outline the most relevant media for communicating human-wildlife conflict mitigation issues
- - Analyse the potential impact of different types of media in putting forward information on human wildlife conflict
- - Demonstrate the application of HWC mitigation knowledge and skills to communicate effectively while engaging with media
- - Demonstrate an approach to receive practical cooperation from media in long-term
- - Demonstrate the application of HWC mitigation knowledge and skills to communicate effectively while engaging with media
- - Demonstrate the development of an institutional communication and media strategy to ensure practical long-term cooperation from the media
- - Appreciate the need for specialised communication training for front-line staff
- - Appreciate the role that media can play in mitigating human wildlife conflict through creating mass awareness
- - Empathise with media professionals and identify key synergies to be developed with the media for the betterment of people and wildlife

Learning outcomes for media sector participants

After completing this module, the participants can:

- - Debate and discussion on media ethics of reporting and writing on HWC in a constructive manner
- - Appreciate the importance of media interventions in creating awareness and policy changes
- - Outline key elements of successful pitching/ anchoring of holistic HWC stories effectively
- - Be open to different viewpoints on HWC
- - Appreciate the role that forest sector personnel can play in mitigating human-wildlife conflict despite logistical constraints and uncertainties inherent to the nature of the work
- - Empathise with forest sector professionals and identify key synergies to be developed with the forest sector for the betterment of people and wildlife

1.2 Summary

This module sets the base by providing basic information on how media works, an indication of the challenges faced by the media and forest sector in cooperating with each other. The module further facilitates a constructive debate and discussion on holistic, effective and ethical communication on HWC mitigation among participants, in line with a harmonious coexistence approach. The module provides the required information and case examples for the participants, from the forest as well as from the media sector, to identify the right media for the right message and the right audience, questioning and breaking the stereotypes and clichés and pitching HWC mitigation stories effectively. The central focus of the module is the ethical reporting and writing of the media regarding HWC and tools that aid ethical reporting and crisis communication.

Media

Guidelines for Me

Challenges in engaging Media

MISREPRESENTATION OF FACTS / DISTORTION OF INFORMATION
OVER-ENTHUSIASTIC & ADVENTEROUS MEDIA PERSONS

Sensationalizing the issue

Last word comes from Media

Reporting without taking inputs from FD.

Part report & mis-quotes

Guidelines for speaking to media by govt. personnel → West Bengal Service Rules

Circular for West Bengal for making statements to Media

DESIGNATED PRO (A/PCCF/NB) TO INTERACT WITH MEDIA (CIRCULAR OF GOWB)

National level → guidelines framework & guidelines for use of social media for govt. organizations

EWLW, ADDT. PCCF, NB. MINISTER-IN-CHARGE ONLY PERSON AUTHORIZED TO ENGAGE MEDIA

* KARNATAKA - NOT AWARE OF ANY EXISTING GUIDELINES

KARNATAKA DFO in normal situation can interact with the media.

Karnataka → DFOs can make statements (Practice)

Only 2 persons can speak to Media →
1. A/PCCF, NB
2. CWLW, (S B)ret

Uttarakhand
- No information about guideline
- Practice of media engagement by Director/DFO for Schedule I and II & critical issues
- Media engagement at ACF/RO level
- Less practice of access to technical

MoEFCC → Media Cell & 3 persons (Media Cell DS)

Strategy

Media Engagement

Challenges in
engaging Wildlife
Managers

HIDING FACTS

NON-CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE

NO ENTRY IN PROTECTED AREAS

ASSUMPTIONS
Wildlife forms
Restricted Access to Places

No specific information provided by FD referred to research organizations

Reluctance of officers to talk to Media
escapism

Hiding facts

PRESS NOTE

Social Media,
Press release,
telephone

1.3 Key messages

- The National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan of India (HWC-NAP) highlights the role of media as a key stakeholder that can play a significant role in taking the desired message on HWC mitigation to the public. It further states that even though there has been a shift to issue-oriented media coverage over the last decade, the media largely covers HWC only when an incident occurs. Constructive dialogue between forest department personnel and media professionals, agreement on guidelines and identification of anchoring points for engaging media as partners in HWC mitigation would be prioritised.
- The media can play an important role in HWC mitigation, as it not only reports on the conflict but also creates awareness of what is the holistic approach to HWC mitigation, what is already being done and what more needs to be done if provided with the relevant information. Media can highlight how wildlife and humans can co-exist with mutual benefits and how conservation interventions are crucial for maintaining a healthy ecosystem and resulting ecosystem services that are the foundation of livelihoods and the overall well-being of humans. It can influence and shape the perceptions and opinions of the public.
- Currently, while reporting and communicating on wildlife, media largely focuses on current crisis events deemed 'news-worthy' by them, such as emergency situations arising due to the conflict between humans and wild animals. This, sometimes, induces the public to develop negative sentiments or opinions towards wildlife. With its wide reach, the media can help create a positive attitude towards the issue and help stakeholders collectively arrive at sustainable and holistic solutions for HWC mitigation. Therefore, media should report on human-wildlife conflict mitigation, and not only on human-wildlife conflict
- Media personnel can use the opportunity to highlight the HWC mitigation measures being planned and implemented by the forest department and/or other agencies to address the situation and also disseminate the information on 'Dos and Don'ts' for the public to prevent accidental encounters between humans and wildlife.

- Filmmakers and photographers may follow an ethical code of not sensationalising issues related to HWC and ensure that they take a holistic and balanced approach while presenting the central theme of their films/ products. They can also take the opportunity to highlight the importance of HWC mitigation in conservation and emphasise why wildlife conservation is so vital to the ecosystem and overall well-being of humans.
- The media possess certain strengths, but it also has limitations in other aspects. Negative headlines can be very damaging to the conservation and protection of the habitat. Sensationalism in its unwanted form should be avoided. Terms like 'crop raiding', 'rouge elephant', 'killer leopard', 'conflict tiger', 'livestock killing'/ 'livestock depredation', 'killing by an elephant'/ 'killing by leopard', etc., should be replaced by the terms like 'crop foraging', 'animal-in-conflict', 'elephant-in-conflict', 'tiger-in-conflict', 'livestock loss/ injury in an HWC incidence', 'harmed in an HWC-related incidence', etc., to provide a balanced picture.
- Media ethics play a crucial role in the effective mitigation of HWC. As a media professional, one should be aware of animal behaviour and how it brings about conflict. By engaging with forest department officials, media professionals can get ecological and sociological aspects of conflict and be able to report the story in an unbiased way.
- There is a growing trend of people venturing too close to a wild animal for photographs, even in a conflict situation, which can be a grave danger to the person taking the selfie as the wild animal can show aggression on being provoked to defend itself. Media personnel should avoid engaging in acts like this for their own safety and well-being. Media personnel should get themselves informed on the occupational health and safety aspects, the concept of zoonotic disease prevention and the overall concept of One Health. This will help them get better prepared for any possibility of zoonotic diseases when working closely with wild/ captive animals and take all necessary precautions such as wearing masks, sanitisation etc.
- As the media actively shapes public opinion, it is necessary that the right information is sent out and gossip and conjecture do not become news. This is precisely why forest department personnel must have open communication with the media, as they are an important partner in awareness building and other campaigns.
- The forest personnel may use appropriate platforms and applications to share timely updates with the media personnel to facilitate fact-based communication. A press release may be issued as early as possible, not only to make it easy for media coverage but also to avoid any wrong information getting into media stories. Efforts may be made to release any major information through a public press conference, which gives an opportunity for hosting all media persons equally. Also, if a press conference is not possible, it may be useful to send a common press release to the media or make the same public. The forest personnel may explain everything in detail while keeping it simple with the explanations and avoiding technical details to the media personnel to avoid errors in reporting.
- Regular interaction with media, interviews, press releases, media workshops and expeditions are some of the ways to maintain the engagement between forest and media personnel.
- Whenever forest officials detect fake news or doctored news, they should immediately refute it with evidence using social media handles. This is crucial as the news would otherwise gain credibility. Today, technology is easily available that can spot news and doctored photographs.
- It is important that the field officers are trained in crisis and mob management and that a crisis plan exists.
- To develop a common understanding among forest and media personnel on human-wildlife conflict, its drivers and pressures, its status and impacts and the desired mitigation measures, it is critical that HWC mitigation is included in the course curriculum of media students at national and state-level media training institutions, and into the agenda of the professional training workshops of media personnel.

1.4 Key terms:

News: News is an account of what is happening around us. It may involve current events, new initiatives or ongoing projects or issues. But a newspaper does not only print news of the day. It also deals with background analysis, opinions and human-interest stories. The reporter chooses stories from the flood of information and events happening in the world and their community. Stories are normally selected because of their importance, emotion, impact, timeliness and interest. Note: all these factors do not have to coincide in each and every story!

#Hard news: Hard news is news that is happening and developing. For example, if a poacher has injured an elephant on a particular day, it is hard news when reported that day.

#Soft news: soft news, on the other hand, is not time-sensitive. It can be about something that happened earlier. For example, writing about how poachers have been operating in the forests for the last year is soft news. Soft news also refers to things that are not very important, like a tiger giving birth to four cubs. It could also be interviews of experts, wildlife enthusiasts or profiles of them.

#Features: A news feature takes one step back from the headlines. It explores an issue. News features are less time-sensitive than hard news but no less newsworthy. They can be an effective way to write about complex issues that are too large for the terse style of a hard news item. A story about how a community is looking after sarus cranes that descend on their fields can be an example. The stories of different species and their peculiarities can be reflected in a longer piece. Features require more work in terms of research. It digs deeper into the story than the news, which merely tells you what happened. It, therefore, entails meeting more people to get their views, get different perspectives, look at different narratives and also adopt a racy style of writing. It will have more descriptions, anecdotes and examples. A good feature is about the people in a community and their struggles, victories and defeats. A feature can be sharply focused on an issue and take a stand or angle. The writer takes an important issue of the day and explains it to the reader through comments from people involved in the story. Ideally, both sides of the story should be resented. The writer here pays more attention to detail and to the way the story is narrated.

#Newsroom: A newsroom is the heart of a news media organisation. It is a place where media professionals, editors, producers, graphic artists and designers sit to produce the news. News meetings are held there to decide on the day's news. The assignment desk in the newsroom assigns work to media professionals and photographers.

#Desk Editor: A desk editor can be a person who edits copy sent in by correspondents or stingers and can also be an assignment editor who assigns stories to the staffers. They constantly monitor the news as it happens. Desk editors are usually well connected with sources, political leaders, community organisations and others, as they have to keep a tab on the news all the time as it happens. Desk editors may check stories, edit videos and check facts. They finally decide the layout of the stories depending on their importance. They also decide which stories to drop and which ones to highlight by analysing their importance.

#Stringers: Stringers refer to freelance media professionals, photographers or videographers who are not full-time employees of a media organisation but are only paid for what they contribute and what is published or broadcasted. They do not get a regular salary. Most stringers manage by working for multiple news organisations from small towns, as media organisations cannot afford to hire full-timers everywhere. Stringers come on the scene when news breaks in smaller towns and villages and where it is difficult to immediately send a staff reporter or a photographer to the location.





2. Significance of media for effective mitigation of human-wildlife conflict

The National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan of India (HWC-NAP) highlights the role of media as a key stakeholder that can play a significant role in taking the desired message on HWC mitigation to the public. It further states that even though there has been a shift to issue-oriented media coverage over the last decade, the media largely covers HWC only when an incident occurs. Constructive dialogue between forest department personnel and media professionals, agreement on guidelines, and identification of anchoring points for engaging media as partners in HWC mitigation, would be a priority.

The media can play an important role in HWC mitigation, as it not only reports on the conflict but also creates awareness of what is the holistic approach to HWC mitigation, what is already being done and what more needs to be done if provided with the relevant information. Media can highlight how wildlife and humans can co-exist with mutual benefits and how conservation interventions are crucial for maintaining a healthy ecosystem and resulting ecosystem services that are the foundation of livelihoods and the overall well-being of humans.

Media can play a key role in raising awareness of wildlife issues. It can influence and shape the perceptions and opinions of the public. Stories, news and information about the wildlife living in natural and human-dominated landscapes, or even wild animals that have adapted to living near urban areas, are widely read in newspapers and also watched with keen interest when reported by electronic media. The news about highly sensitive HWC scenarios garners greater attention from the public. As a reaction, the public gets polarised over 'human versus wildlife', both in the online world and at the community level.

Both filmmakers and photographers also play a significant role in disseminating information on wildlife and conservation issues. The medium they use to tell stories is very powerful and can create a lasting impression. When it comes to wildlife, films and visuals, have a greater impact than words. Films and photographs allow people to see the beauty of nature up close and evoke their love and passion for it, all from the comfort of their homes.

Box 1: Documentary Films Which Made a Difference

Mike Pandey's 'Shores of Silence: Whales Sharks in India', which documented the mindless killing and harvesting of the world's largest fish, brought about major legislative changes to protect whale sharks across the world. The film, shot on the coasts of Gujarat, jolted the Indian administration. Consequently, laws to ban hunting and declare the whale shark an endangered species were introduced. Further, the whale shark was included in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international agreement between governments to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.


The Last Migration - Wild Elephant Capture in Surguja, another Mike Pandey film, revealed how massive deforestation led to human-elephant conflict in the Surguja district in Chhattisgarh (then eastern Madhya Pradesh). The film went on to win several awards showcasing how an elephant herd got displaced and got into conflict with people who never had elephants in their neighbourhood.

Krishnendu Bose's 'The Tiger Who Crossed the Line' documents the lives of big cats outside the protected area network (Tiger Reserves / National Parks) in human-dominated landscapes. The film brings to light the conservation challenges India faces and what causes human-wildlife conflicts. The documentary won a national award.

'The Ridley's Last Stand' is a documentary film directed by Shekar Dattatri that portrays the plight of Olive ridley turtles as they come to the Odisha coast to mate and nest and how they face conflict with humans. During the production of the film, it was discovered that more than 75,000 dead ridleys had washed ashore on the beaches of Orissa, highlighting the urgent need for conservation efforts.

Dattatri's 'Race to Save the Amur Falcon' showcased how a small team of conservationists discovered something that was both enthralling and alarming. In the winter of 2012, they stumbled upon a vast congregation of Amur falcons around a remote reservoir in Nagaland. Simultaneously, they also witnessed local hunters capture and slaughter tens of thousands of the little raptors for consumption. This is the story of the investigative documentation that followed and the campaign that was launched to save the migrating falcons.





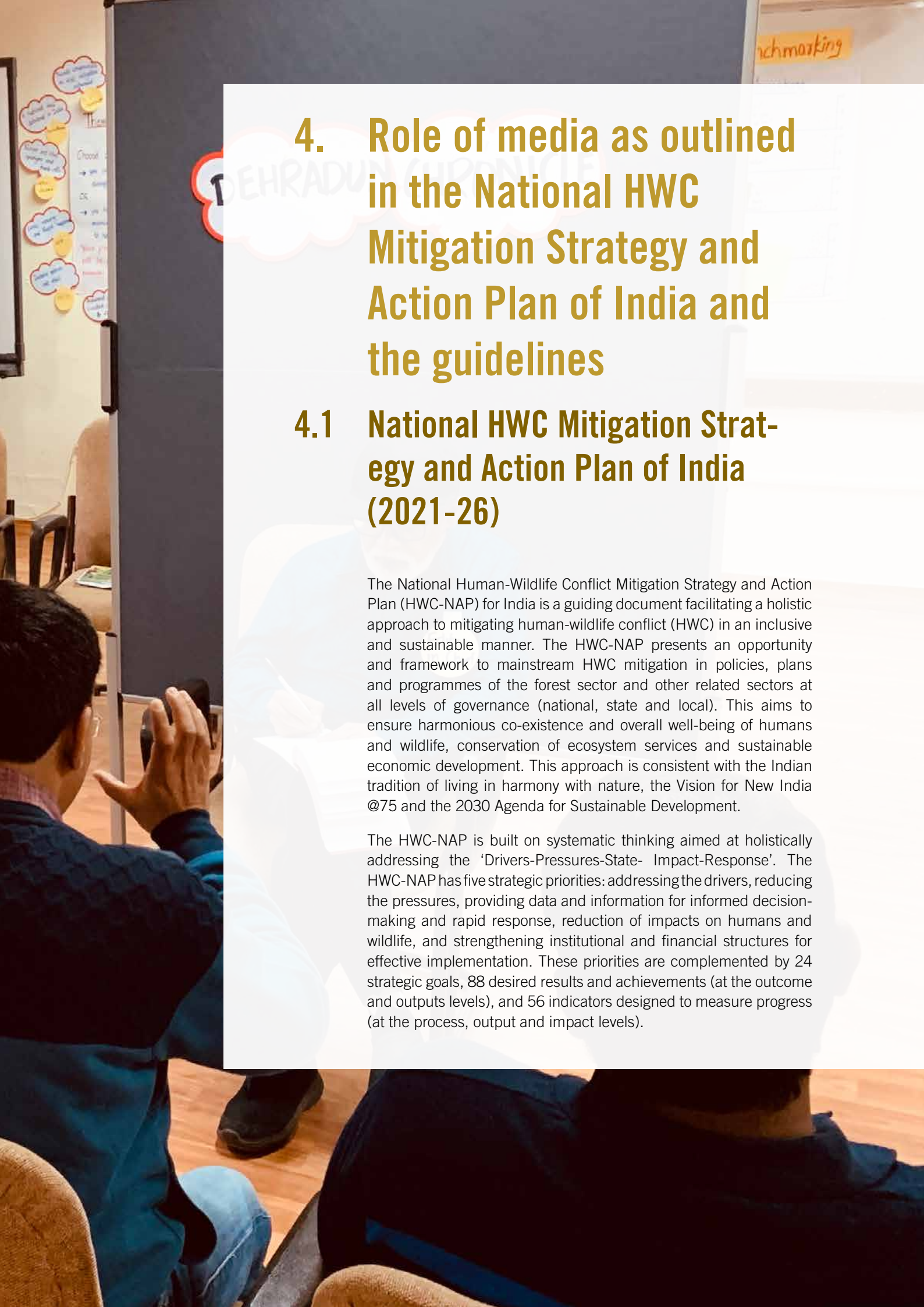
3. What is the current scenario vis-à-vis media coverage on HWC?

Currently, while reporting and communicating on wildlife, the media largely focuses on the current crisis events deemed 'newsworthy' by them, such as emergency situations arising due to the conflict between humans and wild animals. At times, this can lead to the public forming unfavourable attitudes or opinions towards wildlife. With its wide reach, the media can help create a positive attitude towards the issue and help stakeholders collectively arrive at sustainable and holistic solutions for HWC mitigation.

At present, most of the good practices in forest-media cooperation on HWC mitigation largely exist due to individual efforts. To ensure that forest-media cooperation is institutionalised, a systematic strategy for engagement is required.

Indo German Technical Cooperation
**Human Wildlife
Conflict Mitigation in India**





4. Role of media as outlined in the National HWC Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan of India and the guidelines

4.1 National HWC Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan of India (2021-26)

The National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (HWC-NAP) for India is a guiding document facilitating a holistic approach to mitigating human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in an inclusive and sustainable manner. The HWC-NAP presents an opportunity and framework to mainstream HWC mitigation in policies, plans and programmes of the forest sector and other related sectors at all levels of governance (national, state and local). This aims to ensure harmonious co-existence and overall well-being of humans and wildlife, conservation of ecosystem services and sustainable economic development. This approach is consistent with the Indian tradition of living in harmony with nature, the Vision for New India @75 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The HWC-NAP is built on systematic thinking aimed at holistically addressing the 'Drivers-Pressures-State- Impact-Response'. The HWC-NAP has five strategic priorities: addressing the drivers, reducing the pressures, providing data and information for informed decision-making and rapid response, reduction of impacts on humans and wildlife, and strengthening institutional and financial structures for effective implementation. These priorities are complemented by 24 strategic goals, 88 desired results and achievements (at the outcome and outputs levels), and 56 indicators designed to measure progress (at the process, output and impact levels).

The National Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan of India (HWC-NAP) highlights the role of the media as a key stakeholder capable of effectively spreading the desired message on HWC mitigation to the public. It further states that even though, over the last decade, there has been a shift to issue-oriented media coverage, the media largely covers HWC only when an incident occurs.

Strategic Goal 4 'Humans are enabled in working on their risk perception, improving their tolerance and enabling co-existence with wildlife in the same landscape.' of the HWC-NAP states, 'Media is a key stakeholder that can play a significant role in taking the desired message on HWC mitigation to the public. Even though, over the last decade, there has been a shift to issue-oriented media coverage; the media largely covers HWC only when an incident occurs. Constructive dialogue between wildlife managers and media professionals, agreement on guidelines, and identification of anchoring points for engaging media as partners in HWC mitigation, will be a priority.'



Strategic Goal 19 Institutional capacities in forest and other key relevant sectors are strengthened for effective implementation of HWC mitigation in the country' provides the basis for capacity development measures for media students and professionals on the issue of HWC mitigation. To make this transformational process successful, a National Working Group on Capacity Development towards HWC Mitigation is being established to facilitate interventions, including mapping the competencies of professionals and expert institutions/ organisations, developing competency-based nationally-standardised and locally-customised curricula and participatory training method, to be eventually integrated into the regular curriculum of all national and state-level training institutions of the forest, veterinary, administrative, rural development and Panchayati Raj institutions, police, disaster management, media and other relevant sectors.

The HWC-NAP proposes to form a National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication with members from the media and communication domain to facilitate overall steering of the communication and awareness agenda, and especially the implementation of Strategic Goal 4 and other interventions where communication and awareness of key stakeholders, especially of the local community plays a key role.

'The working group on HWC Mitigation Communication, with specialist members drawn from wildlife, communication and media sectors, will be responsible for steering the implementation of interventions related to communication and awareness, to achieve the intended outputs and goals. Innovative instruments such as web-based knowledge platforms will be used. This will act as a focused portal for all information and documents on HWC mitigation, such as strategy and plans, guidelines, good practices, case studies, training materials, toolkits etc. It will also facilitate an efficient mechanism of multi-stakeholder dialogue on key issues of relevance via moderated online discussion forums.'

The HWC-NAP also provides the basis for forming state-level working groups on HWC mitigation communication in each state.

The Strategic Goal 4 has specific expected results relevant to media or where the National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication is responsible for implementation.

- A communication strategy at the national and states level is operationalised to facilitate the dissemination of HWC-relevant information to key stakeholders using innovative and effective communication tools.
- Integrating awareness and understanding of wildlife behaviour and ecosystem services that wildlife provides into national educational curricula.

- Systematic engagement between media and forest department personnel to bring media on board as a strategic partner in raising awareness on the behaviour of conflict-prone wildlife species, and other HWC mitigation approaches, for which both MoEFCC and National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication are responsible.

Strategic Goal 4 will be assessed using the following indicators:

- Trends in risk perception of inhabitants in HWC hotspots, to be assessed every five years by state forest departments and National Working Group ‘HWC Mitigation Communication.’
- Proportion of HWC hotspots with functional HWC helplines, to be assessed annually by SFDs and National Working Group’s HWC Mitigation Communication
- Trends in a number of media products that are in line with the holistic approach towards HWC are to be assessed every five years by the state forest departments and the National Working Group ‘HWC Mitigation Communication.’

Strategic Goal, ‘Efficient and effective response teams are developed in each forest division and protected areas at the HWC hotspots in India’, has a specific Indicator relevant to media/where the National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication is responsible for implementation.

Trends in public recognition of the impact of response teams are to be assessed every five year, by SFDs and the National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication.

Strategic Goal 15, ‘Reduced vulnerability of humans,’ has a specific Indicator relevant to media/where the National Working Group on HWC Mitigation Communication is responsible for implementation.

People’s perception of their vulnerability is to be assessed annually by SFDs and the National Working Group on ‘HWC Mitigation communication’.

4.2 Guidelines to facilitate effective cooperation and a common understanding on HWC mitigation between forest and media sectors

To facilitate the cooperation and a common understanding between forest and media sectors, 'Guidelines for cooperation between the forest and media sector in India: towards effective communication on human-wildlife conflict mitigation, taking a 'Harmonious Coexistence Approach' provides the required guidance to facilitate a constructive dialogue between forest department personnel and media professionals. This approach can help establish guidelines and set agreements and identify anchoring points for engaging media as partners in HWC mitigation.

- These guidelines intend to facilitate a systematic engagement between media and the forest sector in terms of dialogue and joint capacity development measures at the institutional level, subsequently working towards a common goal of harmonious coexistence between humans and wildlife in the country. Realising the significance of effective and clear communication on the issue of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) mitigation, appreciating the significant role that media plays, and recognising the need for cooperation between forest and media sectors, these guidelines aim to facilitate a common understanding of human-wildlife conflict mitigation communication and reporting in a holistic manner.



- This holistic approach involves media professionals reporting not just the emergency situations arising due to HWC but also the approaches and measures to address the drivers and pressures that lead to HWC, the establishment and management of prevention methods, and measures to reduce the impact of HWC on humans and wildlife in their media products.
- The guidelines provide advice on the development, assessment, customisation and evaluation of instruments and processes that ensure effective cooperation between forest and media sectors.

5. Forest-media cooperation: measures to be implemented by the media sector

5.1 Challenges in engaging with media –forest perspective

The forest officers find that media coverage is usually reduced when the escalation of a conflict situation is successfully averted by the forest department using effective mitigation measures. But if the same had failed and the situation had worsened, it would have hit the headlines. This is largely because news is all about something 'exciting' happening. This is a challenge that has to be met with effective communication from the media to ensure effective and holistic coverage of not only HW- related emergency situations but also the overall picture of HWC mitigation in the landscape.

Media should report on human-wildlife conflict mitigation and not only on human-wildlife conflict. Sometimes, media reports place the entire blame of an HWC incidence on wild animals rather than explaining the underlying drivers and pressures that may have caused the emergency situation. This leads to widespread negative perceptions against the species concerned. This could lead not only to retaliatory killings but also reduced public support for the overall wildlife conservation agenda.

Empathise with
the stakeholders
HWC

Another challenge is that in the absence of such holistic media coverage, the underlying causes of HWC do not get the desired attention and remain unsolved. Media may take the opportunity to present the HWC situation in a holistic way by focusing on the causes of HWC in the landscape, thus contributing to addressing HWC in a systematic manner.

Media personnel can use the opportunity to highlight the HWC mitigation measures being planned and implemented by the forest department and/or other agencies to address the situation and also disseminate the information on 'Dos and Don'ts' for the public to prevent accidental encounters between humans and wildlife.

Media organisations may make efforts to use the opportunities to get their personnel trained on HWC mitigation to facilitate them in communicating effectively and holistically on this complex issue.

Media persons, especially photo-videographers, reporting on HWC-related emergency situations may work as partners in addressing HWC mitigation by adhering to the field protocol set out by the forest department for such situations, as sometimes it may not be advisable for them to go closer to the HWC incidence site for their own safety or for the safety of the wildlife animal.





5.2 Pointers on ethical reporting and communication

Responsible reporting

- Media professionals must be responsible to their readers and viewers by giving them a holistic and accurate picture.
- They must refrain from any kind of sensationalism.
- They must present both sides of the story.
- They should rigorously research their stories to establish the truth and check all the facts.
- They must ask thought-provoking questions to those in positions of power and responsibility.
- They must find out who is accountable and obtain their perspective on the matter.
- They must not allow advertising or other commercial considerations to influence them.
- They should never undermine accuracy, fairness or independence. It must also not impact the way they shape their coverage.

Accuracy

- People reach out to the media as they want accurate and reliable accounts of events.
- The prime responsibility of a media professional is to convey information to the public, and,
- in doing so, they must try to unravel the truth.
- In disclosing all essential facts, media professionals will report and interpret them honestly and accurately.
- Editorials, analyses and commentaries should be held to the same standards of accuracy as applied to news reports.
- Relevant facts will not be distorted.
- Personal opinions will not creep into news stories.
- Captions must accurately describe the images.
- Use images only to tell stories better and not to make subjects look better or worse.

Objectivity

- Objectivity is most crucial while reporting. The goal is to find the truth and present it as it is without any bias, prejudice or colour.
- Ensure that an interviewee's statements or comments are not wrongly portrayed or used. Mischievously edited comments can be damaging to the story.
- While presenting two narratives, ensure that both sides are allowed to present their point of view.

Accountability

- Media professionals have to be accountable to portray the right perspective and not fall into the trap of gossip and fake news.
- The credibility of both the reporter and the organisation is at stake if there is no accountability.
- Examine your videos, audio, text and photographs to ensure that it is not distorted.
- Verify assumptions or rumours.

Honesty

- Media professionals who conduct themselves honestly prove themselves worthy of public trust. Over a period of time, it builds credibility.
- Avoid the wrong ways to collect information, as sources will clam up if you do that.
- If your report has wrong information, correct it immediately and admitting that a mistake was made makes the reporter and the media organisation transparent.
- Identify yourself and the news organisation you represent before asking for information or images.
- Do take permission before recording a conversation.
- Photographs should be technically enhanced only to correct colour and contrast.
- Never ever stage a scene or event just to make it newsworthy.


Independence

- A Media professional must carry out professional duties without allowing third parties to interfere.
- Do not allow government officials or any other bodies with a vested interest to alter the content of your content or writing.
- Resist those who attempt to restrict your independence in any way.
- There must be a clear distinction between editorial content and advertising. If the content is paid for or sponsored, it should be clearly labelled as such to ensure that the reader or viewers can make an informed judgement.

Sources and confidentiality

- Pledges of confidentiality to news sources must be followed. Confidential sources have to be protected.
- Identify all sources of information. Some sources who do not want to be identified will have to be anonymous as they have to be protected. Do not give a pseudonym to an anonymous source.
- As far as possible, media professionals should persuade sources to come on record.
- Do not do a one-source story. It will not have credibility. Strong stories have multiple sources giving different views and perspectives.
- It is good to spell out the credentials of the sources so that audiences can judge their statements accordingly.
- If you are using file images, give the date and other details so that audiences know that it is an old image and should not be confused with what is presently happening.





Audiences' rights

- Media professionals should take full responsibility for their work.
- Any clarification sent to an editor must be published or broadcasted with a note bearing the author's identity.
- The editorial staff is free to publish or broadcast the clarification or even to refuse to use it.
- Media professionals must be cautious not to publish reader's letters or clarifications that bear information defaming a third party.
- An editorial staff must give an interested person a chance to reply to accusations against him or her.

Privacy

- Media professionals must respect the private life of an individual and the social environment he or she lives in.
- Media professionals will strike a balance between the right of the public to information and the right of individuals to privacy. They will not exploit the vulnerable.
- However, if an action of a certain individual is connected to the public interest, media professionals may make exceptions, taking caution not to violate the rights of other interested individuals.
- Reporting subjectively on criminal cases or court trials must never be done.
- A suspect must not be named or reported as a criminal offender or companion in crime until a court decision says so; an allegation is different from being guilty or being convicted.
- Special caution must be exercised when reporting juvenile crimes. Avoid naming or identifying them.
- The private grief of victims should be respected. Do not intrude into their tragedies just because a story has to be done.

Representation

- Media professionals should be sensitive to differences in attitudes and culture.
- They must include diverse voices that reflect society and divergent views that contribute to informed debate.
- Media professionals should tell stronger and better-informed stories by sampling a variety of perspectives on what they cover.
- It is strictly inadmissible to manipulate victims' feelings while reporting disasters or any other national calamity.
- It is intolerable to practice racial, national, sexual, religious, physical, political, social or any other forms of discrimination.
- Caution should be taken not to glorify violence in any way.
- Columnists and contributors writing on an issue where they have a direct or indirect interest are to declare that interest to readers.

Plagiarism

- Taking someone else's work and intentionally presenting it as if it is one's own is theft. Never do it. Even copying a sentence is plagiarism.
- Use of materials and photos from other sources (published or aired) should be done so with appropriate credits.

5.3 Filmmakers and photographers

- Filmmakers and photographers may follow an ethical code of not sensationalising issues related to HWC and ensure that they take a holistic and balanced approach while presenting the central theme of their films/ products. They can also take the opportunity to highlight the importance of HWC mitigation in conservation and why wildlife conservation is so vital to the ecosystem and overall well-being of humans.
- When a rescue operation is being conducted, forest officials are focused on completing operations seamlessly, without any harm to the animals or the humans around. Sometimes, the situation is extremely complex as animal behaviour and resulting HWC situations are not easy to predict. In such situations, while officials are working on something as complicated as this, it is imperative that filmmakers and photographers stay away at a reasonable distance from a wild animal while documenting the HWC mitigation operations. This is not only to keep themselves safe but also to not agitate or further frighten the animal.
- Credit should be duly given to the forest department in all such media products to build trust and relationships for the future.

Box 2: Case study -Valparai

The picturesque town of Valparai is nestled in the Anamalais, part of the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu, amid 200 square kilometres of coffee, cardamom, tea and eucalyptus plantations surrounded by misty rainforests. While the countryside is spectacular, it is also a biodiversity hot spot and a well-known pachyderm country—Anaimalai means Elephant Hills in Tamil. It's also a part of the country that's reputed for its tiger reserves, wildlife sanctuaries and reserved forest.

But a rising human population of around 100,000 led to increasing conflict with wildlife, especially the elephants. The human habitations were disrupting the movement of the animals from one forest patch to another, leading to frequent human-elephant conflicts, resulting in people dying and damage to property.

Most deaths due to elephants occurred either late in the evening or at night when people were unaware of the elephant's presence and movement while they were returning home from work. The lack of information about elephants in the vicinity was the main reason for fatal encounters. A team formed to deal with the problem developed the Elephant Information Network involving local communities and stakeholders such as estate workers and companies. Conflict Response Units (CRUs) were formed with the involvement of local tribal people good in tracking elephants.

The CRU information was communicated to the local community through a bulk SMS service, letting people know about the presence of elephants in the vicinity. The SMS in English and Tamil carried information on the presence of elephants, with the estate name, field number and landmarks to pinpoint the location for people residing within a two km radius. Information on precautionary measures and the importance of elephants in terms of their biology and societal bonds, drawing parallels with human society, is also conveyed through the SMS service once a week. After that, red flashing lights were set up on poles in areas where elephants used to visit. It would be switched on if the elephants came so that people would know and stay away goes to prove that scaling down man-elephant conflict is not impossible. What is needed are functional methods that can be applied across all elephant landscapes in India to avoid direct confrontation.

The 220 square kilometres of the Valparai plateau is a matrix of tea and coffee plantations with interspersing rainforest fragments. This plateau, a part of the Anamalai landscape, is home to 80-100 elephants and supports about 70,000 people. Living with elephants is inevitable, and coexistence here is desirable. From 1994 to 2013, nearly three dozen people lost their lives as they were unknowingly crossing elephant paths. This project showcases locally adaptable and feasible technological facilities with the involvement of local stakeholders to empower people to manage human-elephant conflict in the plantation-dominated landscape of the Valparai region. This example hopes to promote an understanding of the significance of science-based conservation initiatives coupled with participatory approaches in conflict mitigation and elephant conservation. The current initiatives are based on long-term (1994 – 2014) scientific monitoring of elephants that clearly shows how the dissemination of accurate information about the animal can mitigate conflict.

5.4 Responsible reporting, accountability of reporting:

The media has strengths but also has its own set of shortcomings. Negative headlines can be very damaging to the conservation and protection of the habitat. It is sensationalism in its undesired form that should be avoided. Often, clichés used by the media and negative words heighten the conflict, directly impacting conservation efforts on the ground. It is essential for Media professionals to talk to the right experts, understand the context of conflict and then report. Quoting a wildlife photographer may sound good, but it is certainly not an expert opinion. As the media is a key stakeholder in communication, they can influence policymakers in mitigating the conflict.

Framing and use of clichés:

Phrases like ‘killer elephant,’ ‘rouge elephant,’ ‘man-eating leopard,’ ‘blood-thirsty tiger,’ ‘depredation,’ and ‘crop raiding’ exacerbates the conflict and create unnecessary animosity against the animal. It is therefore important for media professionals to understand the context of the conflict after speaking to various stakeholders and use headlines and content that reflects mitigation efforts and actions taken on the ground. The nature of media reporting can have a serious impact on policy and management of issues on HWC. This is more so in areas where there are large charismatic species in highly dense human settlements.

Box 3: Phrases that may accentuate negative perceptions towards wildlife, and their possible replacement to promote harmonious coexistence approach

The phrase that may accentuate negative perceptions towards wildlife	A possible replacement that is aligned with a harmonious coexistence approach
Crop raiding	Crop foraging
rouge elephant, killer leopard	Animal-in-conflict, elephant-in-conflict, leopard-in-conflict
Conflict tiger	tiger-in-conflict
Livestock killing/ Livestock depredation	Livestock loss/ injury in an HWC incidence
Killing by an elephant/leopard	Loss of life in an HWC-related incidence

SENSATIONAL HEADLINES

Sensational headlines do a lot of harm. Avoid it completely. One must understand that it is humans who have moved into animal habitats and reduced their space and not the other way around. Animals do not recognise the boundaries of national parks in the midst of cities.

Examine your feelings and the perception that enfolds when you read headlines like this:

- Rampaging Elephants Strike Terror in Orissa villages (*India Today* / Aug 2009)
- Man-eater in Uttarakhand has Fetish for Drunk Men (*Mail Today* / September 2014)
- Man-Eating Leopard Claims 21st Victim near Uttarakhand’s Rajaji Reserve (NDTV/ June 2018)
- Rampaging Elephant Herd Pushed towards Tamil Nadu (*Economic Times* / Jun 2013)
- Elephant Runs Amok (*The Hindu*)
- Tusker Runs Amok during Temple Festival (manoramaonline.com)

NEUTRAL HEADLINES

Neutral headlines are the best, as the reader can independently gauge the story. Some examples of such headlines are:

- “Elephants, Like Us, Have Nowhere to Go”: India’s Human-Wildlife Conflict (NDTV/ Aug 2018)
- Conflict on Rise as Animal Space Shrinks (*Hindustan Times*/ November 2018)
- Making Way for India’s Elephants (*Livemint*/ Jan 2012)

BEST PRACTICES

Media professionals would do well to highlight best practices that are being followed in conservation by NGOs, forest departments and the research community as they give a positive spin to the story. Mitigation measures do not spring up overnight. For any project to become successful, it may take many months or years. So, media professionals must invest in understanding the nuances of the issue to write in a responsible and objective manner. Just following one project keenly can often lead to the discovery of many stories.

Box 4: Case Study of human-leopard conflict mitigation in Mumbai and role of media

An interesting study, ‘From fear to understanding: changes in media representations of leopard incidences after media awareness workshops in Mumbai, India’, underlined how with systematic and intelligent media coverage, it was possible to move from fear of animals to understanding them better and avoiding conflict. It was authored by a team of researchers and managers from the Centre of Leadership in Global Sustainability, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Virginia, the Wildlife Conservation Society – India, in collaboration with the Maharashtra Forest Department.

In 2011, the Sanjay Gandhi National Park Administration (SGNP), Mumbai, engaged with the media in collaboration with scientists, citizen groups and press clubs. They conducted a series of workshops for the media professionals with the prime objective of sensitising them on the basic ecological and sociological characteristics of how the conflict between humans and leopards was playing out in Mumbai.

To figure out whether the workshops helped media professionals get a better holistic understanding of the complicated issue that was frightening a lot of people around the park, the scientists followed and analysed the newspaper headlines to evaluate the impact. What they found in their analysis was interesting. They found that the reportage dwelt more on the setting and context of leopard attacks. There was a decrease in leopards being portrayed as the aggressor. The reports were seen to focus on the welfare of leopards more than before.

Interestingly, the headlines increasingly portrayed that leopards were behaving naturally or were victims of human aggression or circumstance. More emphasis was placed on how humans could prevent attacks.

The study showed how proactive engagement between the forest department and media could positively influence the way human-leopard interactions were reported. Clearly, there was informed reportage rather than sensationalism. The reports kept readers informed of human-leopard interactions but did not provoke unnecessary fear.

It was mentioned that the information provided to the media was also based on recent scientific studies—both ecological and sociological in nature. This was the first time such an attempt was made, despite Mumbai facing high numbers of attacks on people by leopards in the past. Many of the media personnel during the interactions said that they appreciated gaining more knowledge, and the openness of the park management to engage in constructive dialogue with the media was crucial when encouraging more nuanced reporting.

Awareness materials such as posters and brochures on how to deal with leopards in urban landscapes were also shared with local media professionals. Furthermore, if media professionals had any queries, the park manager and members of the research teams were always accessible to the media professionals via phone or email. The resource materials were made available on the SGNP website, and a Facebook page was also started under the same name, which was followed by many media professionals.

Media professionals who attended the SGNP workshop said that they appreciated gaining more knowledge and appreciated the openness of the park management to engage in constructive dialogue with the media. It was observed that some Media professionals reached out to conservationists to get a better perspective. They also took proactive steps to decrease sensational reporting by their colleagues as well.

The workshop showed how fear of the animal could be reduced if scientific knowledge on the ecology of leopards is properly communicated to the media in an inclusive and transparent way. It also makes them understand the issue better. In short, if the media is sufficiently sensitised on the issue, they end up writing balanced articles, which will help control, the conflict instead of fuelling or escalating it.

These results suggest that proactive engagement with the media by park authorities and scientists changed the framing of leopard conflict articles from sensational to more nuanced and informative.

The following video showcases 'Mumbaikars for SGNP' (MfSGNP), a project that was initiated by the Maharashtra Forest Department and aimed to positively manage human-leopard encounters in a novel way. This group engages a variety of stakeholders like scientists, apartment dwellers, tribal colonies, police force and even media professionals, working with them in tandem to alleviate fears among people. This approach has worked well for both humans and leopards, and no leopards have been captured and removed from the area since 2023.

5.5 Understanding animal behaviour for effective media coverage:

As a media professional, one should be aware of animal behaviour and why conflict also happens due to this reason. By engaging with forest department officials, media professionals can get ecological and sociological aspects of conflict and be able to report the story in an unbiased way.

Identifying gaps in reporting

- Reporting is richer if the circumstances in which conflict has happened are better understood.
- Collating crucial information in a short span of time for balanced reporting is crucial. For instance, the reporter should have already worked on getting details of the place of conflict, time of conflict, the reason for conflict, what led to the conflict, were there mitigation measures in place, and if they helped in that situation.
- Questioning the local people if any awareness programmes were conducted by the forest department or other stakeholders like an NGO or local panchayat and, consequently, if those instructions were violated and if the conflict arose due to that.
- Understanding compensation (*ex gratia*) mechanisms for victims. Enquiring and understanding how the victim's family was supported by the forest department in case of death or injury resulting from human-wildlife conflict.

Breaking perceptions through effective and ethical reporting:

The negative perception of interactions between wildlife and people could result in the public being less willing to seek education on coexistence or conservation and could lead to unresolved conflict. As the media has the ability to change public perceptions and reflect public concerns, it can be an effective conduit for changing how people respond to human-wildlife interactions.

News on HWC is important as it is of human interest which overshadows the greater issue of nature conservation. Critical thinking is therefore required while working on HWC stories as it involves a variety of complicated issues of tragedy, material loss, loss of life and attacks that are not generally understood by commoners. On the one hand, it causes social, psychological and economic loss to the community; on the other hand, there is a loss of gene pool when an endangered animal is killed.

Box 5: Case Study on use of FM radio to spread awareness in Jharkhand

The forest department of Jharkhand tied up with a private FM radio channel to spread awareness of elephant movements and mitigate human-elephant conflict. The programme called 'Hamar Haathi, Hamar Saathi', (My elephant, my friend) is aired twice daily. Jharkhand, with adjoining Chhattisgarh and Odisha, is home to ten per cent of India's elephant population. According to the records of the forest department, as many as 277 people lost their lives in elephant encounters in Jharkhand in a five-year period between 2013 and 2017. Information about elephant movements helps residents take precautionary measures. Instructions are also given on how to deal with wild elephants.

5.6 Occupational safety and health, ethical issues and other considerations

- There is a growing trend of people venturing too close to a wild animal for photographs, even in a conflict situation, which can be a grave danger to the person taking the selfie as the wild animal can feel provoked and, hence, retaliate to defend itself. Media personnel should avoid engaging in acts like this for their own safety and well-being.
- Media personnel should get themselves informed on the occupational health and safety aspects, the concept of zoonotic disease prevention and the overall concept of One Health¹². This will help them get better prepared for any possibility of zoonotic diseases when working closely with wild/captive animals, and take all necessary precautions such as wearing masks, sanitisation, etc.
- The sensitive information on animal locations, movement and occurrence can be used by poachers to trap and poach wild animals, especially high-value species. Therefore, it is advised not to disclose detailed location information to the general public. This can be done by switching off geo-tagging options on phones when clicking photos or by not pinning the exact location while sharing on social media.

Box 6: The potential hazards associated with human-wildlife conflict mitigation

Physical Hazards: Injuries due to unsafe mechanical and physical conditions due to inadequate equipment, vehicles and ancillary equipment, inadequate occupational hygiene, heat and hypothermia and injuries due to mechanical objects. Injuries due to kicks, scratches and bites are unavoidably associated with most animal contact. The potential for wet, muddy areas in animal conflict situations increases the risks of slipping and falling.

Chemical hazards: Exposure to drugs and chemicals used in field operations.

Biological hazards. Exposure to disease-causing pathogens due to bites, ingestion, inhalation, mauling, stings and scratches, exposure to biological samples, etc.

Psychological and/or physiological factors: stress, allergies, other pre-existing conditions, fatigue, anxiety, psychosomatic disorders, congenital heart defect (CHD), hypertension, locomotor disorders.

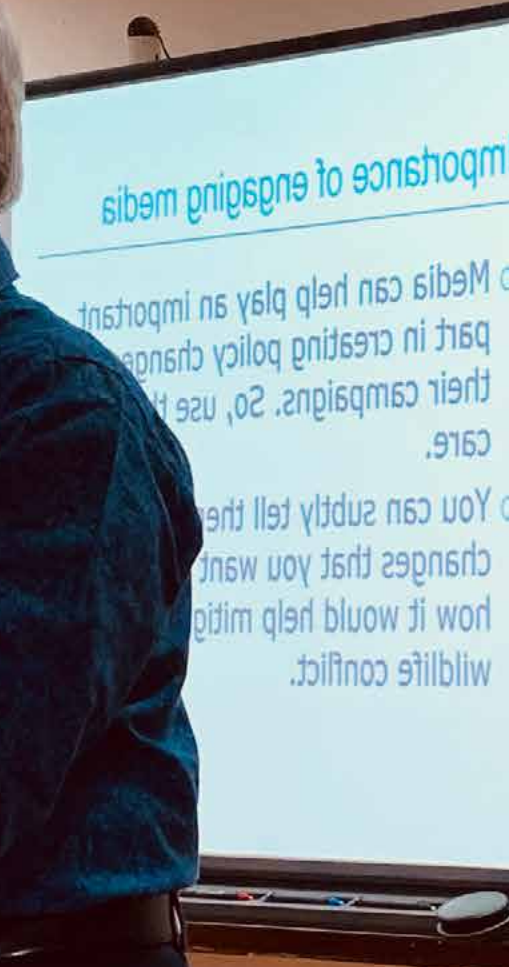
Retaliations from the crowd: In some cases, the local situations can be hazardous. Unruly crowds can create danger for all the people involved in HWC mitigation activities through unpredictable and irrational behaviour. The media personnel may be aware of such human-related risk factors and take appropriate safety precautions.

Weather and environmental hazards: Weather conditions can also pose a risk, particularly in areas of extreme temperature, rainfall and altitude or situations with flash floods, landslides or avalanches. The media personnel may thus be well prepared for the weather conditions as well as the terrain that may be encountered.

Firearms safety: Personnel untrained in the use and safe handling of firearms or use of poorly maintained firearm equipment can endanger the health and safety of personnel involved in HWC management operations, onlookers and media personnel.

1 One Health is a collaborative, multi-sectoral and trans-disciplinary approach—working at the local, regional, national and global levels—with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes, recognising the interconnection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment.

2 Khera, Luedekke and Mandal (2022). Strengthening capacities to address the issues related to zoonotic and other emerging diseases, for human-wildlife conflict mitigation: Taking a One Health approach

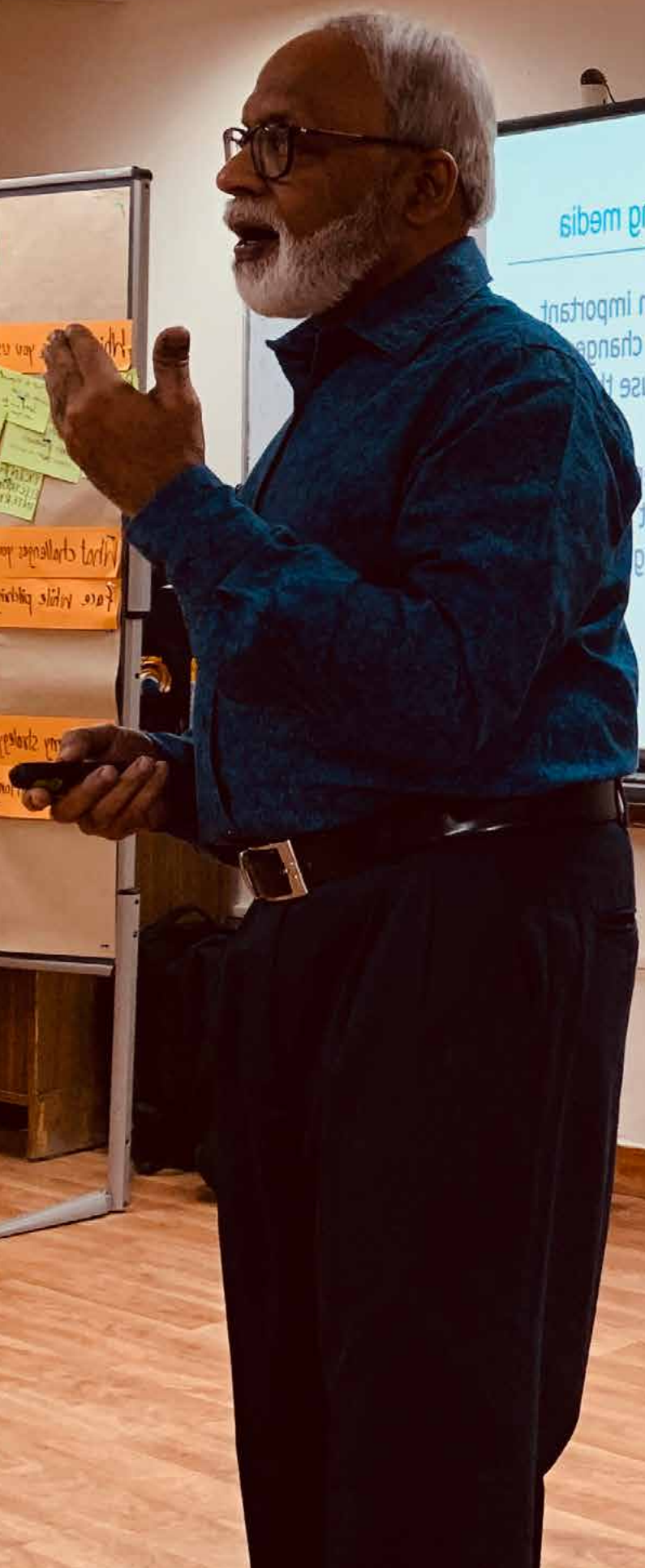


importance of engaging media

Media can help play an important part in creating policy changes. So, use their campaigns. So, use their care. You can subtly tell the changes that you want how it would help mitigate wildlife conflict.

Engaging Media

Handwritten notes on sticky papers on a whiteboard, including phrases like 'What challenges are there?' and 'Face risks by using a...'



6. Forest-media cooperation: measures to be implemented by the forest sector

Dialogue with stakeholders is an important way to resolve human-wildlife conflicts, and the media is an important stakeholder. If forest department personnel avoid the media and do not give answers, the media will go elsewhere to find information, which should be totally avoided as the other sources of information may not be credible and may do more damage.

Media professionals are essentially generalists. They know something about everything but are not necessarily experts in any area. They may not be experts on environmental issues, wildlife management, animal behaviour and ground realities. It is up to forest department personnel to educate them, give them a perspective so that it flows into their reporting and talk about the complexities of human-animal conflict.

As the media actively shapes public opinion, it is necessary that the right information is sent out and gossip and conjecture do not become news. This is precisely why forest department personnel must have open communication with the media, as they are an important partner in awareness building and other campaigns.

6.1 Challenges in engaging with forest department personnel- media perspective

Getting information at the right time is extremely crucial for media personnel. It is their job to break stories. Stories are also now told via multiple platforms such as mobile apps, web portals, television and print media. In such times, if the media personnel do not get timely updates from the forest personnel, they may end up giving speculative information in their stories.

Media professionals are often worried about the credibility of information that is handed over to them. Media professionals work under tremendous pressure all the time, as they have to generate content, keep watching for developments in the news space and work to meet deadlines. Apart from this, they have to ensure that the information they put out is credible, which requires cross-checking all the facts.

One constant in a media professional's life is the lack of time. Twenty-four hours is always too little to finish what they want. Seven days a week, they have to be on their toes as news events and happenings can take place anytime. They work for very long hours a day. They also have to adhere to deadlines day after day. As forest officials are under pressure all the time during a wild animal-in-conflict capture, for instance, Media professionals also have to report it immediately. Time is of the essence today with the coming of the internet, as competition is very fierce.

Amidst all the pressure of generating content depending on the flow of news, a major challenge is getting the right source of information. Getting access to information is also a challenge as everything does not move as fast as they would want, as there is so much sluggishness in the bureaucracy and government departments that access to information takes time.

Media professionals also have to keep in mind that they must adhere to the perspective of the media house they work for.

- The forest personnel may use appropriate platforms and applications to share timely updates with the media personnel to facilitate fact-based communication.
- A press release may be issued as early as possible, not only to make it easy for media coverage but also to avoid any wrong information getting into media stories.
- Efforts may be made to release any major information through a public press conference, which gives an opportunity for hosting all media persons equally. Also, if a press conference is not possible, it may be useful to send a common press release to the media or make the same public.
- 6. The forest personnel may explain everything in detail while keeping it simple with the explanations and avoiding technical details to the media personnel so that there are no errors in reporting.





6.2 Types of media to be engaged with:

Regional and national TV: India has a large number of regional and national television channels. In most cases, the regional channels in the area will pick up news of HWC as it impacts them and is of interest to the people around them. But national channels could also pick it up if it has any gravity on a national level. HWC-related news can be broadcasted in the form of news programmes, feature programmes, talk shows, documentaries, etc.

Print media: Newspapers and Magazines: India has a large number of national, regional and local newspapers. Print publications continue to be popular and are great vehicles of communication. There are also specialist magazines like *Down to Earth* and *Sanctuary* that deal with the environment, wildlife and biodiversity.

Radio: All India Radio and FM: Radio has bounced back into the media space in a big way, as there are numerous FM radio channels all over India. It largely deals with entertainment but can have talk shows and interviews. It could also air public interest messages that forest officials can provide. Radio programmes can be live or taped.

Online/Digital media: The media landscape is rapidly changing. First, we largely had newspapers and magazines, then newer forms of media such as radio and television. Now the Internet is integrating print, the sound of the radio, and visuals of TV and putting out a neat package to go online the digital media. There are many websites like *Mongabay* that have content dealing with the environment and wildlife.

Social media: The forest department would do well to create social media handles with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to disseminate information on wildlife conservation and HWC issues on a regular basis. It must be updated on a daily basis so that it is active and has the latest news and information, just the way major broadcasters do. This will ensure that there is more reporting of wildlife stories as it will help media professionals a great deal and also constantly remind them of crucial issues.

Filmmakers and photographers: A large number of photographers and filmmakers today, such as Mike Pandey, are interested in wildlife and the issues around it. They have a huge audience as the visual medium has tremendous power in terms of conveying a message. With digital media reaching every corner, it also can be easily accessed and disseminated.

6.3 What we need to know about how the media works

- Many of the forest personnel may be hesitant to engage with the media, but it is important that we address it and not overlook it. After all, it is a powerful tool to shape public opinion, and the media can be used to change attitudes that people have towards issues like human-wildlife conflict.
- The media is always hungry for news, views and features. News need not be negative all the time, and we can generate good news. Media coverage can be educative.
- The more officials run away from the media, the more suspicious they get. Then, they feel that there is something fishy. Therefore, communication lines with the media should always be open. Staying to face the cameras is much better than not being available. Overcome fear of publicity and PR. It can be turned around to positively show things in a different light.

Reasons why many try to avoid the media

- Unscrupulous media professionals might distort your message.
- You might be misunderstood.
- You do not know how media professionals work and the pressures on them.
- You do not know what news stories they want.
- Be careful of the words you use. Unknowingly, we often use words such as 'dangerous', 'man-eater' and 'killer elephant'. Refer to the section above to check the words and phrases that need to be avoided when referring to HWC.
- Look at the media in the eye. By being available for comment, you ensure that rumours do not become news tomorrow.
- Hand out regular stories of progress and achievement. Once a project gets moving, media professionals will want to write about it as it progresses. They will have a lot of questions on, it and you need to have the answers. There should be no ambiguity, and everyone in the office needs to take in one voice.
- Target for regular coverage. Develop a strategy for getting regular and positive news coverage. Target the newspapers, television channels, radio stations and the internet. Regular press releases on the progress of the project will give a feeling that things are moving.
- Media professionals need you and, therefore, make them feel welcome. Media professionals may seem arrogant but they need you as much as you need them. They need to fill space, and you need coverage. So, the relationship can be symbiotic and both can benefit equally. Your office must be a place where media professionals feel at home and where the atmosphere is friendly and open. Transparency stops negative reports. The PR department must at all times have loads of information available on the project's functioning and progress.

6.4 Understanding the role of media in the regional context for human-wildlife conflict

India is a very diverse country, and each state is almost like a different country. The culture, food habits, attitudes, ethnicity and sociology are dramatically different from state to state. It is important to appreciate that each region has its own peculiarities and diversities. The situation with one species can vary from one location to another. Conservation values and people's perceptions towards wildlife conservation and human-wildlife conflict issues are also closely linked to the overall value systems and attitudes of the people.

- The media has tremendous power in influencing public opinion on wildlife conservation issues. Society's general knowledge and attitudes are largely shaped by stories in newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet.
- Dynamics of regional perspectives are very unique: It is important to understand that India is a very diverse country, and each state is almost like a different country. The culture, food habits, attitudes, ethnicity and sociology are dramatical differ from state to state. It is important to appreciate that each region has its own peculiarities and diversities. Therefore, the situation with one species can vary depending on the location. Conservation issues are also closely linked to the value systems and attitudes of the populace.
- Fact-checking with relevant sources: Factual information is crucial for mitigating forest and wildlife issues. Wrong information can destroy the good conservation work that has been going on for years and can misguide stakeholders into doing the wrong thing. It also helps build credibility and gives an accurate picture. Updated data must therefore be used in all circumstances, as old data can give a wrong picture.
- Sources should be verified: Sources need to be credible. For example, wildlife photographers are not sources as they are not experts; rather, their job is visual documentation and not research. Cite authoritative sources that possess extensive knowledge, experience and expertise in the field. However, one has to be careful of sources who may deliberately mislead you with information, as even experts may have vested interests or might unknowingly give you half-baked information with factual inaccuracies. Never take anything for granted. It is absolutely important that every fact needs to be checked and rechecked.
- Build a checklist of varied experts: Media professionals always work on tight deadlines, so having a checklist of regional and national experts working on human-wildlife conflict helps construct a better story and lends credibility to the story. Keeping in touch with the experts will also make these experts trust the media professionals and will help media professionals get ideas for story ideas as they will learn about new developments.
- Key terms: Some keywords are often misunderstood as they have different connotations for different stakeholders. The explanation so some key terms can be found on the National Knowledge and Data Portal on HWC Mitigation.

6.5 The role of media in education, policy-making and HWC mitigation:

- Media stories can contribute to proper understanding and education on the HWC, sensitise readers and viewers with the necessary information to grab complicated issues and finally help figure out how to mitigate in conflict. Viewers and readers range from commoners, public servants, policymakers, administrators and politicians. Addressing HWC in the proper context will help paint a bigger picture and give a holistic view of the environmental problems that society faces today. It will help a larger understanding and importance of sustainable development. Effective positive stories that exemplify successful mitigation measures can be illustrative case studies or examples. Responsible use of headlines and visuals also helps put the story in proper perspective. Often, sensational headlines that are used just to catch the reader's eye end up doing more harm than good. They create unwanted tension and perpetuate harmful stereotypes between humans and the natural world. Unsubstantiated information can have an adverse impact on conflict mitigation as it would confuse readers and viewers.
- Stories can sensitise people on natural history, species' behaviour and their roles in our ecosystem maintenance. These help in a broader understanding of the natural world and remove myths. Conflict occurs as the same resources and space deplete over time due to anthropogenic pressures. It is important to note that animals do not intentionally cause harm.
- How the media reports the conflict story also matters. They can focus on the central point of conflict, explain how the conflict emerged, detail what actions were taken to mitigate it and analyse how the conflict played out. They can help readers or viewers understand the issue better. News stories need not blame the forest officials or local people or anyone for that matter. Rather, they can focus on the incident and how it was addressed. Mentioning what was done to address the issue can prevent the spreading of fear among local people.
- Media might also want to cover forest department awareness programmes to mitigate HWC. For instance, if people were told to keep the area garbage-free, was this followed? Did the conflict happen as a result of not following mitigation measures that they were told to undertake? Was there effective follow-up by the administration after the awareness programmes? Media can play an active role as an educator and can help local people in taking preventive steps. This also works as a collaborative effort where the media supports the forest department and acts as a communicator between them and the local people.
- Policy narratives with a preference or support for a specific policy or view can serve to strengthen pre-existing opinions or even sway readers to change their minds as they see and appreciate a different perspective. Therefore, the nature of media reporting can have a serious impact on the policy and management of wildlife.
- Among the several good examples of reportage is the story of how the Coimbatore Forest Division succeeded in mitigating HWC to curb elephant deaths on railway tracks by just using sensors along the railway tracts in Tamil Nadu.

It can easily be adapted to other regions like Assam, Uttarakhand and West Bengal, or other regions where this prevails. To give a specific example, the forest department in Uttarakhand has set up ramps for elephants to move. This measure has been implemented in Coimbatore as well. Reporting on such best practices as stories of mitigation can be a positive influence on policymakers. It can also help expand the solutions to different geographies.

6.6 Specific communication tools to be used for effective media engagement

Regular interaction with Media

- Forest personnel can interact with the media even when there is no news to give them. It will help them get a better understanding of issues, events coming up, of story ideas they can pursue later.

Interviews

- The interview is a forum to articulate ideas, advocate issues, debate opponents and persuade key players.
- As a future spokesperson and leader in your department or ministry, you might have to speak to the media on important issues. You may be called upon to speak as an expert on a television show or perhaps interview for a newspaper or magazine.
- Media interviews take planning and preparation. Try to rehearse it in your head before you go for the interview. Ask yourself what the possible questions will be. Try and say something new. Remember, the media has a pervasive bias of negativity. The challenge lies in presenting an assertive and optimistic perspective that can make a breakthrough. Keep it simple. Use uncomplicated language and avoid jargon.
- Go in for off-the-record conversations only if you trust the media professionals. Otherwise, it might become a headline tomorrow.
- Avoid saying 'No comments' as it may imply that you are trying to conceal something.

Preparing for the interview

You must go to an interview with answers for the following:

- Which media is recording it?
- What is the topic?
- Who is the reporter?
- What is the angle the reporter is taking?
- What is the nature of the story?
- What is the deadline?
- How long will it take?
- Will it be live, or will it be edited?
- Who else is the reporter talking to?

During the interview

- Give the interview undivided attention.
- Set the ground rules at the beginning.
- Tape-record the interview.
- Lead with the most important messages.
- Maintain a calm, cool, and collected demeanour.
- Do not respond to hypothetical questions.
- Try to phrase things in a positive way.
- Focus on facial expression and attentiveness.
- A slight smile will make you appear more engaging and sincere.
- Do not smile if you are talking of a horrendous tragedy.

- Look at the reporter and not the camera.
- Look at the interviewer in the eye and not look here and there, as it makes you look shifty or dishonest.

Press Release

Press releases contain information that the government or forest department wants to give to the media. It is tightly written with all the necessary facts and figures, packing the information into a few paragraphs. It must have the name of your organisation, its purpose, background and statements of the official who is authorised to talk to the media. It should have contact details of the person who can be contacted for additional information and queries. It should be short and not be more than a page or two.

Writing a Press Release

A news release that isn't addressed to a specific person will usually end up in the newsroom-recycling bin. You must target the information to specific contacts at your local media outlets. Call them first to invite them personally to your media event and tell them that additional information will be sent to them. Then, when you've faxed or emailed your news release, call them again to make sure they've received it and answer any questions they might have.

Elements of a News Release

Logo: Your logo usually goes in the top left-hand corner and is a visual reminder of your organisation.

Headline: Your headline should be informative and is the first thing an editor will read. To captivate the editor's attention, entice them with a compelling headline that serves as a 'hook'.

Date: Date your news releases so that it is not mistaken for old news.

Lead: Your lead, which is your first paragraph, has to be both catchy and informative.

Body: Your body paragraphs should answer the questions, What? Why? Who? When? Where? How?

Contact information: Always include information on how to reach you with any number of questions. The most basic contact information should be a name, email address and phone number. A web page address can also be added.

Why and how to handle a Press Release

1. Sending a press release is a bid to get coverage.
2. Make your release short and sharp. It will have better chances of being used in comparison to a rambling one

that is long.

3. A media professional might use the release as it is or turn it into a larger, better story by adding additional information, interviews, photographs and even video.
4. However, a press release should be part of a planned media strategy.
5. Send one only when there is a genuine news story, or it will be seen as a ploy to get easy publicity.
6. If you have an interesting story, you could maybe target some newspapers or media organisations that will do a good job of it instead of just sending a small press release.
7. Media professionals are incredibly busy and work very long hours. It is not that they are lazy, but often, they have very little time to gather information. So, it is a good idea to capsule the information in a press release to make it easier for them.
8. Ensure it is grammatically correct. Language must be precise. Your release must be just right in terms of focus and the required information.
9. This is what the media professionals look for out in your press release: The first para must have the news. Also, it must talk about who is involved, what the issue is, where it is happening, why it is happening, when it is happening, and how it is happening. In media professionals' parlance, it is called the 5 Ws and one H.
10. The remaining paragraphs must deal with the information and details concerned.
11. The release must be clearly referenced. The media professionals must know who it is from, how to get in touch and the details of the person who has sent it.
12. Give a telephone number and email address so that the media professionals can get in touch for additional details if required. The contact information should be at the bottom of the page.
13. The timing of a press release needs careful consideration. If you send it too long before the event you wish to promote, it might be forgotten.
14. Department heads must help write the press release so that it is perfectly done.
15. Press releases are more credible as readers see ads with cynicism.

Press conference

It is a good idea to use the media to your advantage with a press conference when there is something that needs to be



conveyed to the public. Use it to drive your points and also help media professionals understand the issue from the right perspective and cut out their guesswork. Give out handouts and visuals that can be used while writing the report. A senior person should address the press conference, but he or she can have deputies around who can help in answering queries. It must be planned and executed well.

Handling press conferences

1. Get the chief to address the press conference.
2. Must have the deputies around who can help with the answers.
3. As they sit together, it seems like great teamwork.
4. It must be short and to the point.
5. Give media person handouts with all the information required.
6. these PR department should send out a press release within one hour of the department.
7. Ensure that it is arranged in a neat place.
8. It will be ideal if you have both an audio and video presentation.
9. PowerPoint presentations make things clear.
10. Keep both videos and photographs ready.
11. End the press conference with high tea, lunch or dinner. It helps loosen the official atmosphere and allows conversation and discussions that will help media professionals write a better story.

Media workshops

- A media workshop is a one or two-day event that has both indoor sessions and field visits. Multiple wildlife and anthropology, and administrative experts can interact with the media professionals during a media workshop and, thus, can help media professionals understand the issue in all its

complexities and listen to the viewpoints of key stakeholders.

Media expeditions

- Seeing is believing for everybody, but more so for the media professionals. Thus, when talking about the importance of a holistic and harmonious coexistence approach to HWC mitigation, the impact of taking the media professionals on tour to a potential HWC emergency site, or to a location of a HWC mitigation measures, or to take them to a mock drill by the rapid response teams will be far higher than holding a press meeting in an office. A one-day expedition usually helps media professionals to better appreciate the issues and challenges that forest personnel face.
- A media expedition develops trust, builds relationships and removes misconceptions. It helps in improved reporting of HWC mitigation measures being implemented by the forest personnel.
- A special bonding and a common understanding develop between the forest personnel and media professionals when observing the issues together. This relationship built in a natural environment is usually remembered over years and will immediately help in building a trust quotient that will come in useful during crisis situations.

6.7 Possible solutions and ways for an effective engagement between the forest personnel and the media

Overall measures

- **Trust building:** Trust is built over a period of time. One has to invest time to build trust. Just like one would do in a relationship.
- **Cooperation:** Cooperation helps partners understand each other better and helps the task easier and better, as two minds are better than one.
- **Coordination:** It is important to coordinate all the time as people on both sides work under tremendous pressure.
- **Understanding of how the media works:** It is important to understand how media works so that forest personnel know how to supply information, at what time and in what amounts.
- **Knowledge platform:** It is important for media professionals to have access to ready information as it happens.
- **Mutual fairness:** Mutual fairness will come about naturally when good relationships are built.
- **Institutionalise communication with directory of resource person from media and forest department:** The forest department should maintain a directory of sources in the media like environment media professionals, wildlife photographers and editors of publications and television channels that make editorial decisions so that they can network with them, supply them with information and ensure that the right points of the issue and conflict are addressed.
- **Following government protocols for media engagement:** Sometimes, the government does not want a particular piece of information to be broadcasted or printed before a specific date. The term used to denote that is 'embargoed'. However, media professionals are given the material, which they could process but not put out in public space before a specified time and date.
- **Create library of photos, videos for dissemination to media:** It would be ideal for the ministry or the forest department to set up a library of photos and videos so that when a news or feature story has to be done, media professionals could get quality visuals and not rely on old stock footage that may not even give the real picture.
- **Use of WhatsApp groups for quick and authentic flow of information:** Technology today has the speed that is enviable and it must be used for quick transmission of information.
- **Think of news story ideas:** Think all the time of news story ideas or feature story ideas so that it can be farmed out to media professionals. As you work in the field, you will have so many ideas for news stories that may not strike media professionals.
- **Help media professionals identify stories that have human appeal.** It could be of residents near a forest who have devised ingenious methods to avoid human-wildlife conflict and how both animals and humans have learnt to coexist. It could be of how your department is using modern technology like drones to track an animal so that you can easily warn those who are living on the edge of the forest.
- **Healthy interactions with the media help create awareness of issues:** Media professionals are not experts; they rely on you to give them a proper perspective of issue of human wildlife conflict and other complicated issues relating to the world of nature.
- **Site visits bring credibility:** Take Media professionals to the site as first-hand information is always more credible, and they end up writing better stories.
- **If relations with the media are not yet established, contacts should be established, and personal contacts should be made to establish a network.** Usually, this is a win-win situation. The media need news and stories, and we have to spread information on certain issues.

A communication strategy to get regular and positive media coverage

- All relationships can work only if you invest time in building them in a natural gradual process.
- Running away from the media causes more suspicion.
- Overcome fear of publicity and public relations.
- Highlight stories of hope and achievement.
- Help media professionals identify stories that have human appeal.
- Give them handouts with all the information required.
- The target for regular coverage but do not run after publicity.
- See what the media professionals want and what you can you deliver.
- Field visits for media professionals greatly help as they can see things for themselves.
- If there is negative publicity, deal with it and do not ignore it, hoping that it will go away
- The more we run away from the press, the more suspicious they get. To them, it may give them the impression that there is something to hide.
- Staying to face the cameras is much better than not being available.
- Do not say 'No Comment'. Instead, give straight answers.
- Doors for the press should always be open.
- Develop contacts in the media and then build relationships with media persons.
- The media needs you as much as you need them, as the media is always hungry for news. They need to fill space, and you need coverage. So, the relationship can be symbiotic. And both can benefit.
- By being available for comment, you ensure that rumours do not become news tomorrow.
- Develop a strategy for getting regular and positive news coverage. It must be short and to the point.
- Identify Media professionals interested in the environment: It is easier to talk to media professionals who are interested in the subject and are aware of what is happening in your area. But many are not so lucky all the time, as media professionals have to do a whole host of things in various areas. So, you need to completely hold their hand, and brief them.
- Appreciate good media work: It is good to appreciate what media can do to mitigate HWC through mass awareness. Empathise with the kind of grind and pressures that media professionals go through to build a better understanding.
- Start building a video and photo library: Media professionals want not just information but videos and photographs. Always have stock footage ready in case you do not have current visuals. It will ensure better coverage. To ensure comprehensive coverage, it is essential to utilise the power of video and captivating images. These visuals are effective in conveying our story, whether it be about overcoming challenges or showcasing successful management strategies. These powerful tools can be efficiently used to tell our narrative.
- Have an interactive website: On your website, put in a separate query box for media professionals. Respond to their queries immediately. Use the Internet to push forward your messages to the public. Talk about the hard work you do.
- Training for frontline staff: Handling media relations and ensuring that frontline staff also gets specialised communication training is important as everyone has to talk the same language and be on the same page.





7. Forest-media cooperation: measures to be implemented by both actors

7.1 Disseminating right information to media

It is essential to share scientific and practical knowledge on animals in an inclusive and transparent way with the media. This will reduce fear of the animal and help media professionals understand the issue in a better way. If the media is sufficiently sensitised on the issue, they will write balanced articles, which will help control the conflict instead of fuelling it.

Information on recent scientific studies, both ecological and sociological in nature, should be communicated to the media. At Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP), this was the first time such an attempt was made, though the problem was prevalent for a long time (see Case Study 2).

The forest department officials should report every once in a while. For example, the strategies and activities of the Rapid Response Teams, new equipment or training to show that they are developing things, etc., can be reported. This also is a way of advertising. The reports should help to overcome traditional prejudices. For example, animals do not stray into human habitations. Rather, it is humans who have cut down forests and other habitats, cut migration routes and shrunk them—forcing animals to move out in search of food, water, breeding places and other requirements.

7.2 How to react to fake news or doctored news

All media outlets have social media handles that can be easily accessed. Whenever forest officials detect fake news or doctored news, they should immediately refute it with evidence using social media handles. This is crucial as the news would otherwise gain credibility. Today, technology is easily available that can spot fake news and doctored photographs.

If a media professional writes or broadcasts something that is not true, get him to run a denial. If there is a story you do not want to be featured and you are asked for a comment, do the following:

Ignore it—hoping it would die down.

Respond—to get your point across.

Figure out which is a better option.

If a media professional writes or broadcasts something that is not true, get them to run a denial. When this happens, the forest officer in charge should write to the editor with an explanation of the real facts and how the media organisation should run a correction. This must be done as soon as the fake news appears. If this is not done and ignored by the forest department, the reader or viewer will assume that the fake news they encountered is actually true.

7.3 Crisis Communication

What is a crisis

It is important that the field officers are trained in crisis and mob management and that a crisis plan exists. We have a crisis, for instance, when 500 people are around a leopard in a village or when an elephant causes harm to a person, and the people start to riot. Such situations must be handled intelligently and with care. The right wording is important to de-escalate the situation. The essential information to deal with the problem has to be forwarded decently with easy words. The acting officer(s) must act calmly and deliberately. It is essential to have a trained response team that can work immediately after an incident has happened or by looking after other responsibilities such as giving first aid to injured persons, organising transport to the hospital, immobilising an animal, etc.

In some cases, a crisis may persist for an extended period of time. For instance, when a leopard or elephant repeatedly comes to villages and poses a threat to human life. In any case, it is important that the forest department has a crisis-communication plan. There should be one trained spokesperson who knows what should be said and what not and how the messages have to be forwarded. The fears and apprehensions of the target groups must be kept in mind. An experienced spokesperson knows what the population wants to know and what he is supposed to tell them. It is important to act quickly before a real crisis develops. Information that may lead to confusion may be held back.

Forms of crisis

- Environmental (like forest fires)
- Poachers killing animals
- Disease outbreak among forest animals
- Dealing with the wood mafia
- Bribery scandals involving forest officials
- Labour problems with the staff
- Poor security leading to theft or harming of animals by villagers
- Kidnapping of officials
- Rumours creating panic
- Wild animals like leopards and elephants enter human habitations.
- Animal capture operation goes horribly wrong.
- Animal dying in suspicious circumstances.
- Poisoning of animals by villagers.
- Mitigation measures like a preventive barrier, kraal and so on implemented by the forest department that attracted severe criticism from activists.
- Tourist or villager experiencing harm or loss of life due to encounters with a wild animal.

Phases of crisis

1. Early detection
2. Preparing to ensure prevention
3. Containment
4. Recovery in the short term
5. Recovery in the long term
6. Learning from experience

How to prepare for a crisis

- Develop a specific protocol for crisis management along with a clear direction on who will take the decisions.
- Identify a senior nodal officer who will be responsible for crisis management.
- Identify potential crisis areas in advance.
- Devise effective communication channels like using a walkie-talkie or mobile phones.
- Communicate the protocol throughout the department so that different versions will not be there.
- Create awareness among the forest department about the kind of crisis that might happen.
- Procedures to follow will always be in line with the approved protocol.
- The officers must be trained in teams on a regular basis to deal with any crisis.

Golden rules of crisis communication

1. Be prompt. Respond immediately.
2. Be honest. Put public interest first.
3. Be caring. Show empathy.
4. Be informative. Tell the affected what you plan to do.
5. Be transparent. Keep everyone in the loop.
6. Be smart. Turn crises into opportunities.
7. Be consistent. Ensure all stakeholders are giving and receiving the same message.

Plan your actions

1. Verify the situation when a crisis occurs.
2. Conduct an assessment and activate a crisis plan.
3. Organise assignments.
4. Prepare information and obtain approvals.
5. Release information to media, the public, and partners through arranged channels.
6. Obtain feedback and conduct crisis evaluation.
7. Conduct public education.
8. Monitor events carefully.

What will the public ask?

- Is my family safe?
- What have you found that I need to know to protect ourselves?
- Who is responsible for this?
- Can it be fixed or resolved without any more damage?

- Why was this animal not captured?

Questions the media will ask

What happened?

Who is in charge?

Has this been contained?

Are victims being helped?

What can we expect?

What are you doing?

Why did this happen?

Did you have any forewarning?

Why have you not been able to capture this animal for the last few days?

Was the standard operating procedure followed?

How long do you think it will take to capture the animal?

Things to remember in a crisis

1. Crisis arises quickly and needs quick attention.
2. Has a strong element of emotion.
3. It grows in magnitude very quickly.
4. It impacts normal routines and operations.
5. It challenges the organisation's resources.
6. It generates immediate and increased interest and public scrutiny.
7. Crisis can happen to anyone at any time. No one is immune!
8. Panic undermines clear thinking.
9. Well-managed crises can become opportunities.
10. The media will get answers and so make sure it comes from you and not based on hearsay or rumours.
11. Have trained spokespeople available all the time. They must be confident and articulate.
12. Ensure all employees are in the loop, as they should be saying the same thing and not differing versions. Key messages should be the same.
13. When there is a crisis, handling it intelligently is very important.
14. What you decide to say in a crisis is as important as what you decide not to say. While it is important to give out essential information, it is also crucial to hold back information that can lead to confusion and fear.
15. Spell out your communication crisis plan.
16. The fears and apprehensions of the stakeholders involved must be kept in mind.
17. Only one person should be speaking to the media as multiple people will speak in different voices and give a distorted picture of what is happening.
18. Key messages must be the same, and never ever address the media without a plan, as it will expose shortcomings.
19. It is good to have an emergency response
20. The team should get to work immediately to deal with the crisis.
21. Anticipate what the public will want to know.
22. The best way to avert a crisis is to prevent it before it happens.



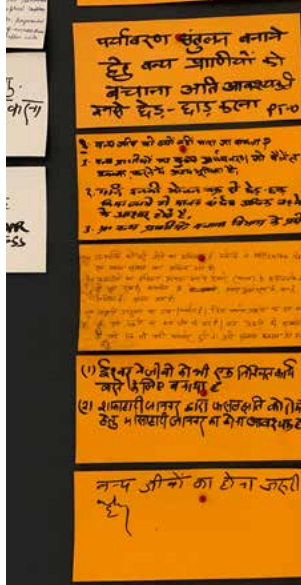
Shrinking Spaces



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Issues that will dominate the future. But, what we do know is that environment is going to be a hot world. In India, we are seeing it happen. It is going to define our futures, our value systems, our world and our future.

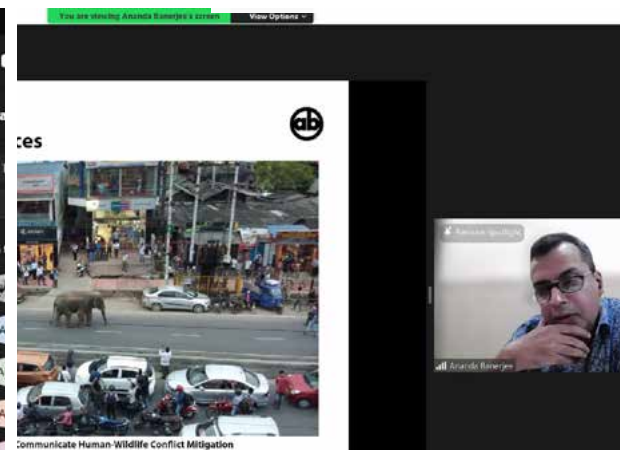
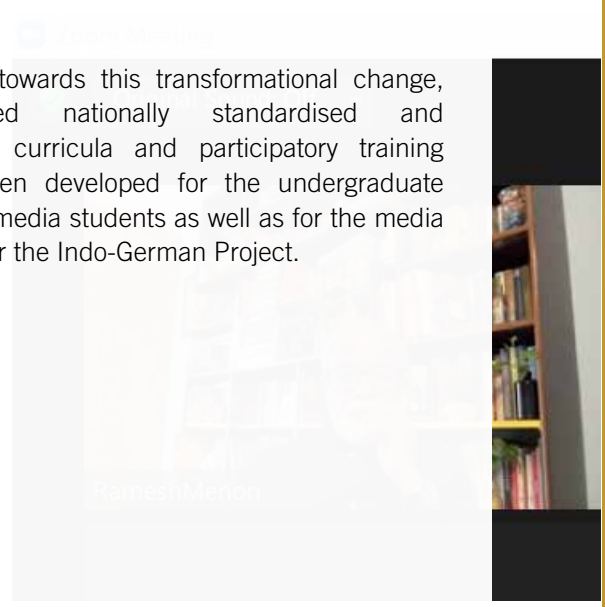
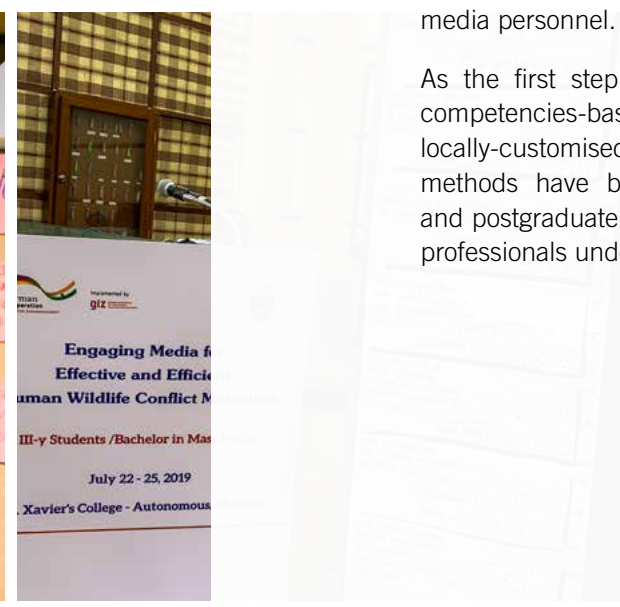
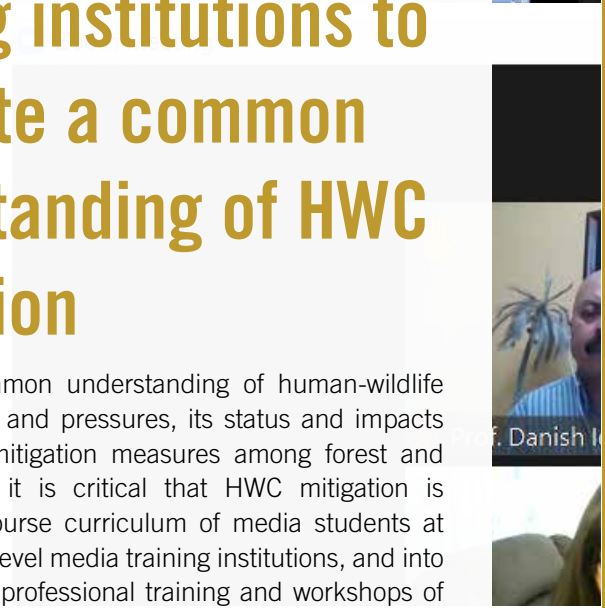
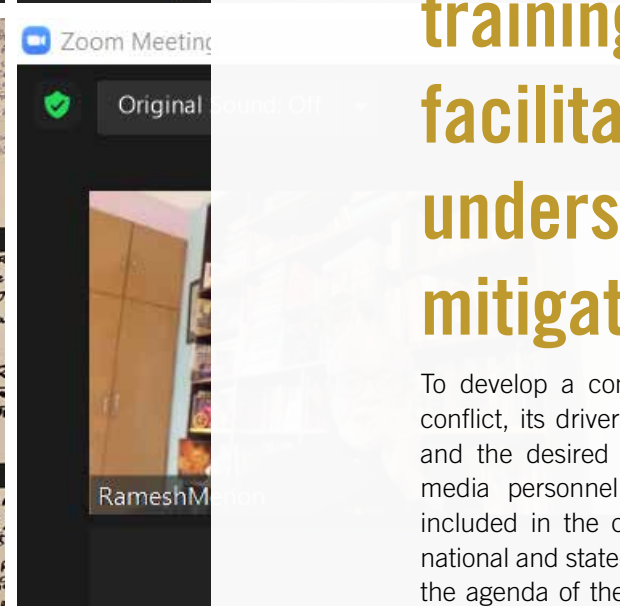
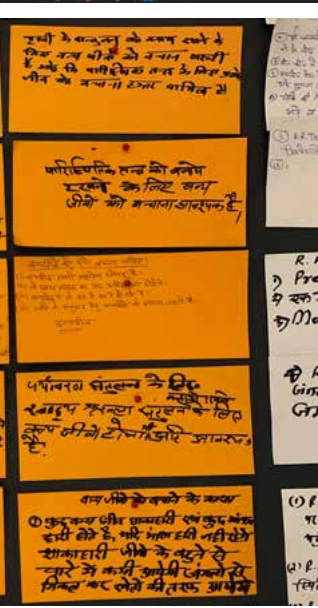
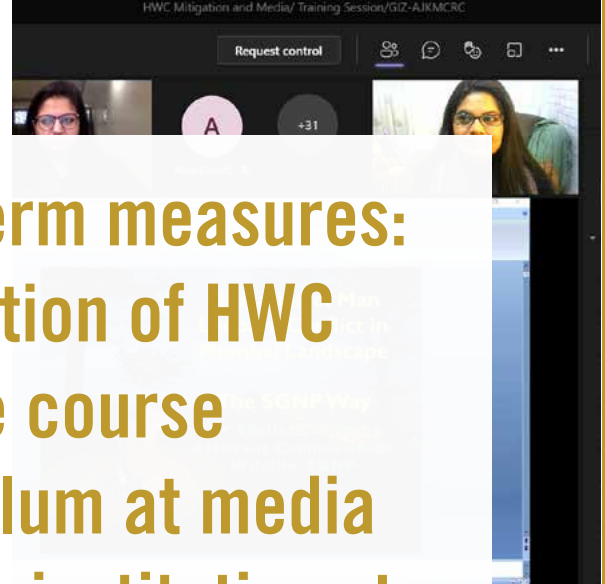
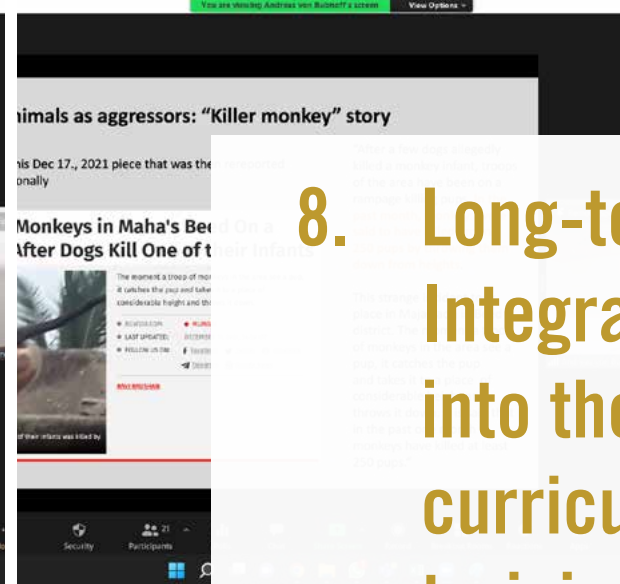
- Human-animal conflict.
- Climate change.
- Floods.
- Droughts.
- Seawater rise.
- Dramatic change in habitats.
- Vanishing forest cover.
- Wildlife under threat.
- Water tables collapsing.
- Air pollution making us sick.
- Land destroyed by pesticides.
- Resources being blatantly exploited as if there is no tomorrow.
- Infrastructure collapsing because of human intervention and neglect.
- Government working with their lobbies becoming stronger than ever.
- Environmental degradation.
- Refugees of Progress.



8. Long-term measures: Integration of HWC into the course curriculum at media training institutions to facilitate a common understanding of HWC mitigation

To develop a common understanding of human-wildlife conflict, its drivers and pressures, its status and impacts and the desired mitigation measures among forest and media personnel, it is critical that HWC mitigation is included in the course curriculum of media students at national and state-level media training institutions, and into the agenda of the professional training and workshops of media personnel.

As the first step towards this transformational change, competencies-based nationally standardised and locally-customised curricula and participatory training methods have been developed for the undergraduate and postgraduate media students as well as for the media professionals under the Indo-German Project.



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