

**A Crisis between Humans and Elephants: A Study of Conflict
Resolution Methods taken to Mitigate Human-Elephant Conflict with
Special Reference to Gampola Village, Sri Lanka**

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ABSTRACT

The human-elephant conflict is a serious problem that Sri Lanka has faced for many years. It has existed since people started invading the habitats of elephants causing them to attack villages and areas where people live. Elephants live in their own space but as for humans, they clear forests and protected areas for wild life to get more lands to settle down ignoring the fact that it will result in the change of elephant habitats. This has led to the elephants turning violent often destroying cultivated land and attacking people leading to disability and more frequently, death. There are some steps taken to mitigate the conflict, but the issue is at the same level resulting in the suffering of both elephants and humans.

The research problem addresses the question as to whether any effective steps are taken by the relevant authorities. The major objective of this research is to identify the methods that have been taken to mitigate the human-elephant conflict. This research was conducted primarily in the Gampola village (a village which belongs to Giribawa provincial secretariat division in the Kurunegala district) as a case study. Primary and secondary data have been used for this research including interviews and observation which are used as the main data collection methods. Thirty families were interviewed and observed. In addition, books, web sites, online magazines were taken as secondary data. Since the collected data were qualitative, data analysis has been done qualitatively.

According to the findings of the research the government and the relevant authorities have taken some steps to protect both parties. Electric fences have been the traditional solution to the problem, but other alternatives have been used such as beehives, palmyrah fences and spiky lime to keep elephants away from human settlements. However, these steps have shown limited success and to this year there has been an allocation of Rs 4,000 million for the environment sector for three years, to resolve the human-elephant conflict and preserve Sri Lanka's rich biodiversity. The Government is also seeking additional funds through a World Bank project interest-free loan of US\$ 30 million; a large portion of the project's funding is to initiate innovative programmes that would reduce human-wildlife conflict. Unfortunately, this issue hasn't been adequately addressed by the authorities concerned due

to several factors and according to the findings of the case study, the Gampola people are not satisfied with the steps taken because only an electric fence has been placed around the village and villagers continue to suffer with the issue.

Keywords: *Human, Elephant, Conflict Resolution, Conflict Resolution Methods, Gampola*