

Human–Wildlife Conflict: A Case Study of Human–Monkey Interactions in Delhi

A White Paper

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1. Abstract

Human–wildlife conflict has been one of the most significant challenges to biodiversity conservation and sustainable urban development across the world. As human populations increase and natural habitats continue to shrink, interactions between people and wildlife have become increasingly frequent which often results in social, ecological and economic consequences. In India, rapid urbanisation, habitat fragmentation and climate change patterns have increased these conflicts, particularly in metropolitan cities where wildlife has adapted to urban environments.

This white paper aims to examine human–wildlife conflict through the case study of human–monkey interactions in Delhi, with a particular focus on the experiences and perceptions of Delhi University students and local residents.

The study adopts a mixed-method approach by combining secondary sources, including newspaper reports, government publications and academic literature, with primary data collected through interviews and an online questionnaire. The findings aim to understand public perceptions, evaluate existing conflict mitigation measures, and identify gaps in current policy responses.

The paper points out why effective management of human–monkey conflict requires a balanced approach that integrates ecological conservation, urban planning, behavioural awareness and evidence-based policy interventions. Rather than treating monkeys solely as a nuisance, the study advocates for sustainable coexistence strategies that protect both human safety and wildlife welfare.

2. Introduction

Human–wildlife conflict (HWC) refers to situations in which interactions between humans and wild animals lead to negative consequences for either humans, wildlife, or both. Such conflicts may result in injuries, property damage, crop loss, economic hardship or threats to wildlife populations. Although human societies and wildlife have coexisted for centuries, rapid urbanisation, population growth, habitat destruction and environmental degradation have significantly increased the frequency and intensity of these interactions in recent decades.

Globally, human–wildlife conflict has become a major concern for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development. Expanding cities, infrastructure projects and changing land-use patterns have reduced natural habitats, forcing many wildlife species to adapt to human-dominated landscapes. Therefore, animals increasingly depend on urban resources such as food waste, water sources and green spaces which brings them into close contact with people.

India presents a particularly important example for studying human–wildlife conflict. As one of the world's most biodiverse countries and home to a rapidly growing human population, India experiences conflicts involving elephants, tigers, leopards, wild boars, nilgai and monkeys across different regions. While many conflicts occur near forests and agricultural landscapes, human– interactions have become increasingly common in urban areas where rhesus macaques have successfully adapted to city life.

Delhi represents one of the most prominent examples of urban human–monkey conflict in India. Monkeys are frequently observed in residential colonies, government buildings, temples, markets, parks and even educational institutions. Incidents such as food snatching, property damage, entering homes and aggressive encounters have become familiar experiences for many residents. Educational campuses, including those of Delhi University, have witnessed a noticeable rise in such interactions, raising concerns about public safety and wildlife management.

The COVID-19 pandemic further altered the dynamics of this relationship. During lockdowns, reduced human movement enabled monkeys to occupy roads, campuses and residential areas more freely. Many younger monkeys grew up with limited human interaction, leading to behavioural changes that became increasingly visible after restrictions were lifted. As normal human activity resumed, competition over shared urban spaces intensified, contributing to more frequent and in some cases, more aggressive encounters.

Against this backdrop, this study investigates human–monkey conflict in Delhi through the experiences of Delhi University students and local residents. By combining personal experiences, survey responses, interviews and secondary literature, the research seeks to understand the causes of these conflicts, examine existing mitigation strategies and propose policy recommendations that promote long-term coexistence between humans and urban wildlife.

3. Research Objectives

- To understand the nature and extent of human–monkey conflict in Delhi.
- To examine the ecological and human-induced factors responsible for increasing conflict.
- To analyse the impact of urbanisation, habitat fragmentation, waste management and human feeding practices on monkey behaviour.
- To study behavioural changes in monkeys before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To document the experiences and perceptions of Delhi University students and local residents through interviews and an online survey.
- To assess the effectiveness and limitations of existing conflict mitigation measures.
- To recommend practical, sustainable and evidence-based policy interventions for reducing human–monkey conflict.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-method research approach, combining both secondary and primary sources of data to understand the nature, causes and public perception of human–monkey conflict in Delhi.

- **Secondary Research**

The secondary research used for this study involved an extensive review of existing literature on human–wildlife conflict. Information was collected from academic journals, research articles, government reports, newspaper articles, reports published by wildlife conservation organisations and credible online sources. This review helped in understanding the broader context of human–wildlife conflict, its causes, existing mitigation measures and the growing challenge of human–monkey interactions in urban India.

- **Primary Research**

To complement the literature review, primary data were collected using multiple field-based methods:

1. Personal Interviews: Informal interviews were conducted with students from different colleges of the University of Delhi to understand their personal experiences, perceptions and concerns regarding monkey-related incidents on campuses and in nearby residential areas.
2. On-ground Field Survey: Field observations were carried out in locations known for frequent monkey activity, particularly the Hanuman Mandir, Connaught Place, where monkey behaviour, human interactions, feeding practices and surrounding environmental conditions were observed and documented.
3. Online Survey: A structured Google Forms questionnaire was circulated among students and residents to gather public perceptions regarding human–monkey conflict. The survey focused on respondents' experiences, awareness of the issue, perceived causes of conflict, concerns for both human safety and animal welfare and opinions on possible policy interventions.
4. The findings from these different methods were analysed collectively to identify common patterns and develop practical recommendations for promoting sustainable coexistence between humans and urban wildlife.

5. Discussion and Analysis

5.1 Why is Human–Wildlife Conflict Important?

Human–wildlife conflict is one of the most crucial environmental and conservation topics of the 21st century. With rapid urbanisation, expanding infrastructure and increasing human populations, interactions between humans and wildlife have become more frequent than before. These conflicts not only threaten human lives and livelihoods but also endanger wildlife populations, disrupt ecosystems and create new challenges for sustainable urban planning.

The present study highlights that human–wildlife conflict should not be viewed merely as incidents of animal attacks or property damage alone. Instead, it reflects the growing competition between humans and wildlife for space, food and other essential resources. As cities continue to expand into natural habitats, wildlife species are increasingly forced to adapt to human dominated environments which results in greater interaction and conflict.

In the Indian context, this issue is particularly significant because the country is home to both rich biodiversity and world's largest human population. Therefore, conflicts involving **elephants, leopards, tigers, wild boars, nilgai and monkeys** have become increasingly common across different regions. Among these, human–monkey conflict has emerged as a major concern in urban areas such as Delhi, where rhesus macaques have successfully adapted to city life.

The findings of this white paper suggest that human–monkey conflict extends beyond concerns of public safety. It has important social, ecological and policy implications. Frequent encounters generate fear among residents, affect the daily lives of students and also increase the risk of injuries and disease transmission. It also results in negative attitudes towards wildlife. At the same time, monkeys themselves face habitat loss, dependence on human food, road accidents, electrocution and unethical methods of conflict management. Therefore, understanding the causes and dynamics of these interactions is essential for developing policies that ensure the safety and well-being of both humans and wildlife.

5.2 Major Human–Wildlife Conflict Cases in India

India is one of the world's most biodiverse countries and supports a wide variety of wildlife species. However, rapid population growth, urban expansion, deforestation and changing land-use patterns have significantly increased interactions between humans and wildlife. As a result, different regions of the country experience distinct forms of human–wildlife conflict depending on the species involved and the local ecological conditions.

One of the most prominent examples is the human–elephant conflict, particularly in states such as Assam and Odisha. As elephant habitats have been fragmented by roads, railways, agriculture and human settlements, elephants frequently enter villages and agricultural fields in search of food. This often leads to crop damage, destruction of property and, in some cases, human casualties.

Similarly, human–leopard conflict has become increasingly common in states like Maharashtra and Uttarakhand. Habitat degradation and declining prey availability have forced leopards to move closer to human settlements, resulting in attacks on livestock and occasional encounters with people. These incidents frequently create fear among local communities and complicate wildlife conservation efforts.

In the forest areas of Central India and the Sundarbans, human–tiger conflict continues to be a major challenge. Expansion of human activities near forest boundaries has increased encounters between tigers and local communities, particularly those dependent on forests for livelihood, leading to both human and animal casualties.

Agricultural conflicts involving wild boars in Punjab and Haryana and nilgai across North India have also intensified over the years. These animals often raid agricultural fields causing significant crop losses and financial hardship for farmers. Consequently, balancing agricultural interests with wildlife conservation remains a persistent policy challenge.

Among these diverse forms of human–wildlife conflict, human–monkey conflict, particularly involving the rhesus macaque, has emerged as one of the most visible urban wildlife issues in northern India. Cities such as Delhi, along with parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, have witnessed a sharp rise in incidents involving food snatching, property damage, aggressive encounters and monkey intrusions into homes, markets, government buildings, and educational institutions. Unlike many other wildlife conflicts that are concentrated near forests, human–monkey conflict occurs within densely populated urban environments, making it a unique challenge that directly affects the daily lives of residents.

5.3 Impact of Human–Wildlife Conflict on Humans

Human–wildlife conflict has far-reaching consequences that go beyond incidents of animal encounters. The findings of this study indicate that these conflicts affect individuals economically, socially and physically, particularly in urban areas where humans and wildlife increasingly share common spaces.

Economic Impact : Human–wildlife conflict often results in considerable economic losses. Damage to crops, destruction of household property and loss of personal belongings impose financial burdens on affected individuals and communities. In urban settings such as Delhi, monkeys frequently enter homes, markets and educational institutions, damaging property and stealing food items. Additionally, victims of monkey attacks may incur healthcare expenses for medical treatment, including vaccinations further increasing the economic impact.

Social Impact : The growing frequency of human–monkey encounters has also created several social challenges. Repeated incidents generate fear and a sense of insecurity among residents, students and commuters, particularly in areas with large monkey populations. Such

conflicts may discourage people from using parks, public spaces or even educational campuses freely.

Health Impact : Human–wildlife conflict poses significant risks to public health. Physical injuries caused by monkey bites and scratches often require immediate medical attention due to the risk of infections and zoonotic diseases. Beyond physical harm, repeated encounters with aggressive wildlife can also contribute to psychological stress, anxiety, and fear, especially among individuals who have experienced previous attacks. These health concerns highlight the need for effective conflict management strategies that protect both human safety and wildlife.

5.4 Impact of Human–Wildlife Conflict on Wildlife

While human–wildlife conflict is often viewed from the perspective of human safety, wildlife also experiences serious consequences as a result of these interactions. The study finds that increasing urbanisation and human activities have significantly affected the welfare, behaviour and long-term survival of wildlife species.

Animal Welfare Concerns : Wild animals involved in conflict situations frequently suffer injuries or death due to road accidents, electrocution from power lines, or retaliatory actions by humans. In some instances, monkeys are illegally captured or relocated without adequately addressing the ecological causes of conflict. Furthermore, continuous dependence on food provided by humans alters their natural foraging behaviour, making them increasingly reliant on urban environments for survival.

Ecological Consequences : Human–wildlife conflict can disrupt the natural behaviour and ecological balance of wildlife populations. Habitat fragmentation and frequent human disturbances may alter movement patterns, reduce access to natural food sources, and interfere with breeding and social behaviour. In some species, prolonged habitat loss and isolation can also contribute to declining genetic diversity, affecting the long-term health and resilience of wildlife populations.

Ethical Considerations : Human–wildlife conflict raises important ethical questions regarding the balance between ensuring human safety and protecting wildlife. While measures to reduce conflict are necessary, they should also uphold principles of animal welfare and biodiversity conservation. Sustainable solutions should therefore aim to promote coexistence rather than relying solely on practices that displace or harm wildlife.

5.5 Root Causes of Human–Wildlife Conflict

The findings of this study indicate that human–monkey conflict in Delhi is driven by a combination of ecological, environmental and human-induced factors rather than the aggressive nature of monkeys alone. The major causes identified through literature, field observations and preliminary interactions are discussed below.

1. Habitat Loss and Fragmentation

One of the primary drivers of human–wildlife conflict is the continuous loss and fragmentation of natural habitats. Rapid urban expansion, construction of roads, commercial complexes and residential colonies have significantly reduced forested and green areas available to wildlife. As their natural habitats shrink, monkeys are increasingly forced to enter urban spaces in search of food, water, and shelter, leading to more frequent interactions with people.

2. Human Population Growth

Delhi's growing population has intensified pressure on available land and natural resources. Expansion of human settlements into previously undisturbed areas has increased the overlap between human activities and monkey habitats, resulting in encounters that were once occasional have become a regular part of life in many neighbourhoods and educational institutions.

3. Urbanisation

Urbanisation has transformed Delhi into an environment where monkeys can easily survive by exploiting resources created by human activities. Residential colonies, parks, markets, temples and university campuses provide green spaces for their shelter, making urban areas attractive habitats for rhesus macaques. Consequently, monkeys have adapted remarkably well to city life, increasing the likelihood of conflict.

4. Improper Waste Management

Field observations and existing literature indicate that poor waste management is one of the most significant factors encouraging monkey presence in urban areas. Open garbage bins, food waste and litter provide a reliable and easily accessible food source. Over time, this dependence on human-generated food reduces monkeys' reliance on natural resources and increases their interaction with people.

5. Climate Change

Climate variability and changing environmental conditions have also contributed to change in wildlife behaviour and habitat availability. Changes in vegetation, water availability and seasonal food resources may encourage wildlife to move towards urban areas where resources remain relatively stable throughout the year. Although climate change is not the sole cause of conflict, it acts as an additional factor influencing wildlife movement and adaptation.

The analysis reflects the close interconnectedness of these factors. Habitat loss, rapid urbanisation, population growth, waste management issues and changing environmental conditions collectively create circumstances in which human–monkey conflict becomes increasingly common. Therefore, addressing only one factor is unlikely to produce long-term solutions; instead there is a need for an integrated approach.

6. Human–Monkey Interaction in Delhi

Delhi has emerged as one of the major urban hotspots for human–monkey conflict in India. It has a significant population of rhesus macaques, which have adapted to urban environments due to habitat loss, limited food availability and continuous interaction with humans. Unlike wildlife conflicts that are largely confined to forest borders, human–monkey conflict in Delhi occurs within densely populated urban areas making it a part of the daily lives of many residents.

6.1 Areas Most Affected

The study identified several locations where human–monkey interactions are reported most frequently. These include:

- Government buildings and administrative offices
- Residential colonies
- Public parks and green spaces
- Temples and religious sites
- Markets and commercial areas
- Educational institutions, particularly Delhi University campuses

These locations provide easy access to food, water, shelter and frequent human activity, making them attractive habitats for urban monkey populations.

6.2 Common Forms of Human–Monkey Conflict

Field observations, interviews, and secondary sources indicate that monkey-related incidents in Delhi have become increasingly common. Some of the most frequently reported incidents include:

- Snatching food from pedestrians
- Entering houses, hostels and residential buildings through balconies or windows
- Damaging household property and public infrastructure
- Aggressive encounters, including chasing, scratching and biting people
- Creating fear and disruption in educational institutions and public spaces

Many respondents interviewed during this study reported modifying their daily routines to avoid areas known for frequent monkey activity. Students living in paying guest

accommodations and university hostels also described incidents of monkeys entering rooms in search of food, highlighting how deeply these interactions have become embedded in urban life.

6.3 Monkey Bite Incidents and Public Safety

The growing number of monkey-related incidents is also reflected in public health concerns. Government records and media reports indicate that Delhi continues to report a substantial number of monkey bite cases each year, requiring victims to seek immediate medical attention and anti-rabies treatment. These incidents place additional pressure on healthcare facilities while also contributing to fear and anxiety among residents.

According to *The Indian Express*, Delhi in 2018 alone, reported around 950 cases of monkey bites. As the key strategy to tackle the growing monkey problem in Delhi, the government captured 6,591 monkeys and relocated them to Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary between Feb 2021 and Dec 2025. But complaints of monkey attacks across the city from residential areas and market places continue to rise..

The findings suggest that monkey bites represent only a part of the bigger challenge. Even in the absence of physical attacks, frequent encounters, food snatching and aggressive behaviour have significantly affected people's perception of safety in public spaces. Consequently, human–monkey conflict in Delhi should be viewed not just as a wildlife management issue but as an important concern for urban governance, public health and sustainable coexistence.

6.4 The COVID-19 Factor: Changing Dynamics of Human–Monkey Conflict

The COVID-19 pandemic marked a significant turning point in the pattern of human–monkey interactions in Delhi. The nationwide lockdown, followed by the gradual reopening of public spaces changed the behaviour of both humans and urban wildlife, resulting in changes in the frequency and nature of human–monkey encounters.

- **Before the COVID-19 Pandemic** : Before 2020, rhesus macaques had already adapted to urban life and regularly interacted with humans particularly in areas such as temples, markets, parks, residential colonies and educational institutions. Human presence, traffic and everyday activities acted as informal barriers that limited monkey movement across urban spaces. Although monkeys frequently relied on humans for food, they generally maintained a certain degree of caution and distance while interacting with people.
- **During the COVID-19 Lockdown** : The nationwide lockdown brought unprecedented changes to Delhi's urban environment. With roads, markets, educational institutions and public spaces largely closed, monkeys gained unrestricted access to areas that were previously dominated by human activity. Urban resources

such as trees, water sources, parks, campuses and residential neighbourhoods became more accessible, allowing monkeys to expand their movement across the city.

An important behavioural change during this period was observed among infant monkeys born or raised during the lockdown. Due to limited human presence, these monkeys had significantly fewer interactions with people than previous generations. Therefore, they developed behavioural patterns that differed from monkeys accustomed to regular human contact.

- **After the Reopening** : As educational institutions, offices, markets and public spaces reopened post lockdown, humans returned to areas that monkeys had extensively occupied during the lockdown. This created greater competition over shared urban spaces and resources. The findings of this study suggest that younger monkeys, having had limited prior exposure to humans, often perceived people as intruders or potential threats. As a result, incidents such as chasing, food snatching, scratching, and biting became increasingly common, particularly in university campuses and residential colonies.

The observations of this study are supported by recent research on human–primate interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies have reported that the drastic reduction in human mobility during lockdowns altered the movement patterns, behaviour and space use of several primate species. As urban environments became quieter and less disturbed, primates increasingly explored human-dominated landscapes, creating new patterns of interaction that persisted even after restrictions were lifted.

Although further scientific research is required to establish a direct relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and increased aggression among urban monkeys in Delhi, the findings of this study, together with existing research, strongly suggest that the pandemic reshaped patterns of human–wildlife interaction. It demonstrated how sudden changes in human activity can influence wildlife behaviour and highlighted the need for urban wildlife management strategies that incorporate behavioural ecology, habitat conservation and long-term coexistence rather than focusing solely on conflict mitigation.

7. Perception of Humans in the Human-Monkey interactions in Delhi

To understand awareness, experiences and perceptions of the public in a better way regarding human–monkey interactions in Delhi, an online survey was conducted prior as part of research. A total of **90 respondents participated**, the majority of whom were students from the University of Delhi.

Demographic Profile

The respondents were mostly young adults, with 77.8% belonging to the 18–20 years age group and 17.8% to the group of 21 and 24 years, while only a small proportion fell below 18

or above 25 years. The gender distribution was almost balanced, with 51.1% female and 48.9% male respondents. Regarding residential status, 55.6% lived with their families, whereas 41% resided in rented accommodations or paying guests (PG), reflecting the student-dominated nature of the sample. Hostel residents constituted only a negligible percentage. More than 80% of the respondents were affiliated with South Campus colleges of Delhi University, making the survey particularly representative of the university community in this region.

Awareness and Understanding of Human–Wildlife Conflict

The survey revealed a moderate level of awareness regarding human–wildlife conflict. Around 70% of respondents were aware that monkey-related incidents constitute a form of human–wildlife conflict, while 23% were unaware, and a small proportion remained uncertain. When respondents were asked to rate their knowledge on a five-point scale, the majority placed themselves at an intermediate level. 42.2% rated their knowledge as 3 out of 5, followed by 24.4% rating it 4, and 21.1% rating it 2. These findings suggest that although basic awareness exists among the respondents, there remains considerable scope for improving public understanding of the ecological and behavioural aspects of human–monkey interactions.

Perceived Causes of Increasing Human–Monkey Interaction

Respondents identified multiple factors contributing to the increasing number of human–monkey interactions in Delhi. The most commonly understood cause was habitat loss (over 82%), reflecting widespread awareness that environmental degradation forces monkeys into urban spaces. Similarly urban expansion (over 70%) was the second most frequently identified factor, highlighting public awareness of rapid urbanisation as a major factor of conflict. Religious feeding practices (41.1%), poor waste management (30%), and easy access to food provided by humans (28.9%) were also perceived as important contributors. A smaller proportion (16.7%) believed that an increasing monkey population was responsible. Overall, respondents demonstrated an understanding that the issue arises from a combination of ecological changes and human behaviour rather than from wildlife alone.

Understanding of Risky Human Behaviour

Participants also displayed awareness of behaviours that increase the chances of monkey encounters. Approximately 70% believed that carrying visible food attracts monkeys, while 64.4% believes that direct eye contact or provoking monkeys may trigger aggressive behaviour. Feeding monkeys (46%), attempting to take photographs or selfies at close range (37%), and leaving garbage exposed (32%) were also identified as risk-enhancing factors. These responses indicate that respondents possess a basic understanding of behavioural factors associated with human–monkey conflict, although greater public education could further strengthen safe practices.

Personal Experiences with Monkey Encounters

The findings demonstrate that monkey encounters are a common experience among respondents. Nearly 47.8% reported encountering monkeys occasionally, while 22.2%

experienced such encounters frequently. Another 26.7% encountered monkeys rarely while only a very small proportion had never encountered them. This suggests that interactions with monkeys form a routine part of daily life for many students and residents in Delhi.

Among those who had encountered monkeys, 48.9% reported having food or snacks snatched, making it the most common incident experienced. Thirty percent had lost personal belongings to monkeys, while 17.8% experienced property damage. Comparatively fewer respondents (11.1%) reported physical injuries such as scratches or bites. These findings indicate that although serious physical harm is relatively uncommon, monkeys frequently create inconvenience, property loss and feelings of insecurity among residents.

Perception of Safety and Seriousness of the Issue

When asked to rate their sense of safety in areas where monkeys are commonly present, respondents generally expressed moderate concern. About 38.9% respondents selected the middle value (3 out of 5), while 32.2% rated their sense of safety as only 2, indicating that a significant section of respondents feels uncomfortable in areas with frequent monkey presence.

Similarly, perceptions regarding the seriousness of monkey-related incidents reflected moderate concern. Around 40% rated the issue at 3 out of 5, while 30% assigned a rating of 2, suggesting that although respondents acknowledge the problem, many do not yet perceive it as an extremely severe public issue. This may indicate a degree of normalisation of monkey encounters within Delhi's urban environment.

Responsibility and Preferred Solutions

A majority of respondents (over 57%) believed that managing human–monkey conflict is a shared responsibility involving citizens, government agencies and wildlife authorities. About 20% assigned primary responsibility to municipal authorities, while over 13% identified wildlife authorities as the key stakeholders. Only a small proportion placed sole responsibility on citizens, residential welfare associations or educational institutions. These responses reflect an understanding that effective conflict management requires coordinated efforts rather than reliance on a single institution.

When asked about their preferred long-term approach, more than 55% supported coexistence through better management practices, whereas over 23% favoured relocating monkeys away from urban areas, and approximately 20% remained uncertain. This demonstrates that the dominant public preference is not elimination of wildlife from cities but the development of sustainable coexistence strategies.

Regarding possible interventions, habitat conservation emerged as the most preferred solution (40%), followed by public awareness campaigns (30%) and stricter regulation of wildlife feeding (20%). Additional suggestions included better waste management and monkey-proof infrastructure. These responses indicate that respondents favour preventive and educational approaches over reactive measures.

Finally, the survey highlighted strong support for awareness initiatives within educational institutions. More than 85% of respondents agreed that colleges should organise programmes on human–wildlife conflict, demonstrating substantial demand for educational interventions. This finding also validated the organisation of the webinar, suggesting that such awareness programmes are both relevant and welcomed by the target audience.

Overall Interpretation

The survey findings reveal that while young adults in Delhi have a reasonable awareness of human–monkey conflict, their understanding remains moderate and can be strengthened through structured educational initiatives. Respondents largely recognised habitat loss, urban expansion and human behaviour as the principal drivers of conflict, reflecting an appreciation of the issue's ecological dimensions. At the same time, the high frequency of personal encounters, particularly incidents involving food snatching and loss of belongings demonstrates that human–monkey interactions have become an everyday reality for many people. The strong support for coexistence-based management, habitat conservation and awareness programmes suggests that the public increasingly favours balanced, science-based solutions over punitive or exclusionary approaches. These findings reinforce the importance of community education, responsible urban planning and collaborative governance in promoting long-term human–wildlife coexistence in Delhi.

8. Recommendations and Proposed Interventions

Human–monkey conflict in Delhi is a complex issue that cannot be resolved through a single intervention. The findings of this study suggest that an integrated policy combining wildlife conservation, urban planning, public awareness and scientific management is essential for promoting long-term coexistence between humans and monkeys. The following interventions have been identified based on existing practices and field observations.

1. Relocation to Wildlife Sanctuaries : One of the most commonly adopted measures is the relocation of monkeys from densely populated urban areas to protected forests such as the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary.

Benefits

- Reduces monkey presence in highly populated urban areas.
- Minimises immediate human–monkey encounters.
- Provides monkeys with a more natural habitat.

Limitations

- Relocated monkeys may face territorial conflicts with existing troops.
- Increased pressure is placed on the ecological resources of the sanctuary.
- Relocation often provides only a temporary solution, as new monkey groups may eventually occupy the vacated areas.

2. Sterilisation (Neutering) Programmes : Sterilisation programmes aim to control the growth of monkey populations through non-lethal reproductive management.

Benefits

- Controls long-term population growth.
- Considered a humane alternative to culling.
- Reduces dependence on repeated relocation programmes.

Limitations

- Limited scientific evidence exists regarding its long-term effectiveness.
- Sterilised monkeys may experience social exclusion within their troops.
- Requires continuous monitoring, funding, and veterinary expertise.

3. Use of Langurs or Langur-Mimicking Deterrents : Several government agencies have employed trained personnel or artificial methods that mimic langurs, which are natural competitors of rhesus macaques.

Benefits

- Takes advantage of monkeys' natural avoidance of langurs.
- Can temporarily reduce monkey activity in sensitive locations such as government offices and public institutions.

Limitations

- Monkeys gradually adapt to artificial deterrents.
- Effectiveness decreases over time.
- Requires regular monitoring and cannot serve as a permanent solution.

4. Plantation of Fruit-Bearing Trees : Increasing the plantation of fruit-bearing trees in suitable green spaces may help restore natural food resources for monkeys.

Benefits

- Provides natural food and shelter.
- Reduces dependence on food obtained from humans.
- Supports urban biodiversity and ecological restoration.

Limitations

- Requires several years before meaningful results are achieved.
- If poorly planned, plantations may attract larger monkey populations to nearby human settlements.

5. Monkey-Proof Infrastructure : Residential colonies, educational institutions, hospitals, and government buildings can reduce conflict through the installation of protective nets, reinforced windows, secure waste bins, and monkey-proof building designs.

Benefits

- Prevents monkeys from entering buildings.
- Reduces food theft and property damage.
- Provides immediate protection for residents, students, and staff.

Limitations

- Installation and maintenance can be expensive.
- Addresses the consequences of conflict rather than its root causes.

6. Canopy Bridges and Arboreal Crossing Structures : Constructing canopy bridges between fragmented green spaces can enable monkeys and other arboreal species to move safely without entering roads or residential areas.

Benefits

- Maintains ecological connectivity.
- Reduces dependence on electric wires, rooftops, and roads for movement.
- Lowers the risk of electrocution, road accidents, and unnecessary human encounters.

Limitations

- Requires careful planning, funding, and coordination among multiple agencies.
- Effectiveness depends on appropriate location, maintenance, and monitoring.
- Does not directly eliminate human–monkey conflict but contributes to long-term ecological management.

Towards Sustainable Coexistence

The findings of this study indicate that no single intervention is sufficient to address human–monkey conflict in Delhi. Existing measures often provide short-term relief but fail to resolve the underlying causes, including habitat loss, urban expansion, improper waste management and behavioural adaptation of monkeys.

Therefore, future policy should adopt an integrated approach that combines scientific wildlife management, habitat conservation, improved waste management, monkey-proof urban infrastructure, ecological restoration, and public awareness campaigns. Such a strategy would not only reduce conflict but also promote a more sustainable and ethical coexistence between humans and urban wildlife.

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11. APPENDIX

11.1 Questionnaire (Sample Size = 90)

† Human-Monkey Conflict in Delhi: Awareness, Experiences and Perceptions among Stu...

Public Perception of Human–Monkey Conflict in Delhi

1. Name: _____

2. Age Group

- ☐ Below 18 years old
- ☐ 18–20 years old
- ☐ 21–24 years old
- ☐ Above 25 years old

3. Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

4. Area of Residence During Survey

- ☐ College Hostel
- ☐ PG/Rented Accommodation
- ☐ With family
- ☐ Others

5. Campus Location (for DU students)

- ☐ North Campus
- ☐ South Campus
- ☐ Others
- ☐ Not applicable

6. Are you aware that monkey-related incidents are considered a form of Human-Wildlife Conflict?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

7. How would you rate your knowledge of Human-Wildlife Conflict?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2

- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Not at all

8. What do you think are the main causes of increasing monkey-human interactions in Delhi? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Urban expansion
- ☐ Poor waste management
- ☐ Habitat loss
- ☐ Easy access to food from humans
- ☐ Religious feeding practices
- ☐ Increasing monkey population
- ☐ Don't know

9. Which of the following behaviors may attract monkeys? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Carrying visible food
- ☐ Feeding monkeys
- ☐ Leaving garbage exposed
- ☐ Attempting to take selfies/photos closely
- ☐ Direct eye contact or provoking them
- ☐ Not sure

10. Have you ever encountered monkeys in or around your college, hostel, PG or residence?

- ☐ Frequently
- ☐ Occasionally
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

11. Have you ever experienced any of the following due to monkeys? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Food/snacks snatched
- ☐ Personal belongings taken
- ☐ Property damage
- ☐ Physical injury (scratch/bite)
- ☐ None

12. How safe do you feel in areas where monkeys are commonly present?

- ☐ Very much scared
- ☐ 1

- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Not at all scared

13. Do you believe monkey-related incidents in Delhi are a serious issue?

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ Strongly disagree

14. In your opinion, who is primarily responsible for managing monkey-related conflicts?

- ☐ Municipal authorities
- ☐ Wildlife authorities
- ☐ Residential Committees/Educational Institutions
- ☐ Citizens
- ☐ Shared Responsibilities

15. Which statement best reflects your view?

- ☐ Monkeys should be relocated from urban areas.
- ☐ Humans and monkeys should coexist through better management.
- ☐ Monkey populations should be controlled.
- ☐ Unsure

16. Which measures would be most effective? *(Select all that apply)*

- ☐ Public awareness campaigns
- ☐ Better waste management
- ☐ Stricter regulations on feeding wildlife
- ☐ Habitat conservation
- ☐ Installation of monkey-proof infrastructure

17. Should colleges conduct awareness programs on Human-Wildlife Conflict?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

18. Any additional experience with monkeys or suggestions you would like to share?

11.2 Personal Interviews

"While entering the college for an EVS test, I encountered a troop of monkeys along the main entry avenue. One particularly aggressive juvenile monkey suddenly chased me and grabbed my ankle, causing scrapes and minor injuries. Fortunately, bystanders intervened and prevented a more serious attack. The incident highlights how close and sometimes hostile human–monkey interactions have become in Delhi's educational campuses."

- **a first year student of Ramjas College, University of Delhi**

"Last year, I was walking on my terrace while talking to my friends on a phone call. I noticed a troop of monkeys approaching, but since they were a common sight in the area after the pandemic, I did not feel threatened. Suddenly, when I turned away for a moment, I felt a sharp tug on my sleeve and arm. A monkey had grabbed my arm and bitten me, despite the fact that I was not carrying any food or interacting with it. The incident was completely unexpected and left me shocked, highlighting how unpredictable human–monkey encounters in urban areas can be."

- **a local resident of Saket**

"I used to stay in a PG with open balconies, and monkeys would often create havoc. They would enter through the balconies, scatter things around, and even raid the fridge to take away food items. However, this issue has now been resolved, as fences were installed to cover the balconies."

- **a student of DU South Campus living in a PG in Satya Niketan**

"The monkeys have become somewhat like my business partners. They often snatch bananas from devotees and because people know this happens, many buy bananas from me to feed the monkeys (as monkeys are considered holy and associated with Lord Hanuman). In a way, the monkeys help my business."

- **a local fruit shopkeeper near Hanuman Mandir, Cannaught Place**

11.3 PHOTOS CLICKED DURING ON GROUND WORK



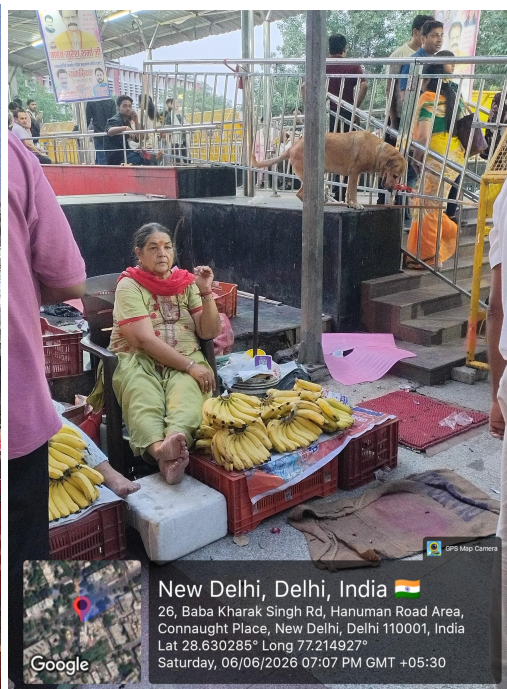
Troops of monkeys spotted at New Delhi Railway Station



Monkey as seen in DU south campus (Satya Niketan)



Lack of proper waste management in Satya Niketan (Delhi University South Campus)



Monkey Troops, a common sight in Hanuman Mandir area of Connaught Place



A student bitten by a monkey in a recent case in Ramjas College