

**BEYOND INSTINCTS: UNVEILING THE HUMAN-WILDLIFE
CONFLICT AND WORLD OF ANIMAL EMOTIONS IN
Matriarch AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ELEPHANT**



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An Abstract of the Project Entitled :
Beyond Instincts: Unveiling Human-Wildlife Conflict and World of Animal Emotions in
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In the anthropocentric world, where humans are placed at the centre, animals were ignored as inferior beings. It was towards the late nineteenth and twentieth century that animals were accorded importance. This project mainly deals with how animal and their emotions are imagined, experienced, portrayed and given importance and it also highlights the issue of human-wildlife conflict which disturbs the peaceful coexistence of humans and animals. Chapter one titled 'Introduction to Animal Studies' displays how animals were considered as machines without reasons or emotions and how Animals Studies evolved as a medium to voice out the interests of animals by bringing them to the centre. Chapter two titled 'Applying Affective Economy in Animals' deals with emotional aspects of animals such as hate, love, fear and so on. Chapter three titled 'Human-Wildlife Conflict' portrays how animals and human encroach into each other's space. Chapter four titled '*Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant* : A Critical Analysis' portrays how the world and humans are perceived through the eyes of an elephant as they are considered as bearers of emotions. Thus this project analyses the world of animals by bringing them to the forefront and placing them at the centre of study.

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CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that this project entitled “Beyond Instincts: Unveiling the Human-Wildlife Conflict and World of Animal Emotions in *Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant*,” is a record of bonafide work carried out by Aneena Sebastian under my supervision and guidance.

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CONTENTS

	Introduction	1
Chapter 1	An Introduction to Animal Studies	7
Chapter 2	Applying Affective Economy in Animals	21
Chapter 3	Human-Wildlife Conflict	31
Chapter 4	<i>Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant: A Critical Analysis</i>	44
	Conclusion	58
	Works Consulted	62

Introduction

Animals are the people of nature and forest is their homeland. They are basically the nurturers and facilitators of the nature. They play a vital role in the ecological sphere. No matter how small or big the animals are they have their own significance in the maintenance of the ecological balance. They play a huge role in providing stability in nature and human life. They are the soul of nature and without their existence the world would come to a standstill. Without them there is no life. They constitute the rich biodiversity which can be seen as a marker of a stable and healthy ecosystem. They regulate and initiate the smooth working of the mechanism of nature. In every natural cycle animal has an efficient role to do and carry out important functions. Animals play the roles of nurturers, protector, supporter, life giver and also destructor. They are foundation on which nature has built its ecosystem. Without them nature cannot function efficiently. In the ecological sphere the main emphasis is on the animals and their respective roles that they are entrusted to carry out. Animals are present in all the activities carried out by nature from pollination and creation of nature, preparing habitats for themselves, paving pathways in forest, maintaining other natural resources etc. The population of animals is kept on check by the pattern and regulation of food chains in which one animal becomes the predator and the other one becomes the prey. The hidden treasure of knowledge of nature is unveiled in the eyes of animals. The beauty and innocence of the ecology is reflected in its amazing creation of animal species. They are created to serve a purpose. The way of life depicted by them sums up the totality of nature in its true form. Nature and animals' relation to each other is inseparable. They go hand in hand on the basis of a mutual understanding which enhances the maintenance of peace and stability of the ecosystem.

The book *Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant* mainly focuses on the elephant, a magnanimous creation of nature. There are many research works on elephants and on their behaviourism and on their family system but none of them have been much successful in capturing the matriarchal family system of elephants and their behaviourism from an elephant's point of view. One should view an elephant as an emotional creature designed by nature rather than a wild and massive creature. Elephants always have been an inseparable part of human life. They are one of the intelligent animals that exist on earth. They form the foundational base of the biodiversity as they play an irreplaceable role in the nature. Their cognitive abilities and physical strength has been a great help to humans to easily carry out certain activities. They have the ability to decipher and understand human emotions and respond to it. They may appear as massive and rough creature from an external point of view but in reality they are delicate creatures who are highly sensitive and sensible who are capable of expressing emotions like love, care, empathy etc. They have a long term memory. Just like humans they have a family in which the members are bond by love. The herd is led by a matriarch (female leader) and the calves would be under the protection and care of the entire herd. The male elephants remain with the herd till they attain the age of twelve. After that they leave the herd and live an independent life and the female elephants remain with the herd. In aspect of family, they are different from humans as in their case they herd has a female head and follow a matriarchal system while in humans it is always man who is the head of the family and patriarchal system is followed. They mourn the death of their family members and the memory of that particular member stays with them for few years. Even though they are the cornerstone of ecosystem and have a warm relationship with humans but still they are exposed to exploitation and oppression and they are on the verge of endangerment. The bond that elephants and humans share are very affectionate

and emotional one. The emotional and intellectual capabilities of an elephant are mostly close to that of a human being.

In an Indian context elephants are accorded with great significance as they symbolise the Indian cultural heritage and tradition. They represent some of the historical events and battles fought in the Indian history. They have a religious, historical, cultural and traditional importance. In Hindu mythology *Lord Ganesha* (Elephant God) is considered to be one among the Supreme God who is known for his intelligence and wisdom. This can be referred to the intellectual capacity of elephants as they are the ones with largest brain among the mammals. The peaceful and harmonious coexistence of all kinds of animals irrespective of its size and shape is depicted in the representation of *Mushak* as the divine vehicle for *Lord Ganesha*. The portrayal of *Lord Ganesha* (human body with elephant's head) as half human and half elephant is symbolic of the fact that animals and humans are inseparable and they complete each other in one or the other way. It is *Lord Ganesha* who is invoked in the beginning of auspicious events as he is referred to as *vignaharta* (vanquisher of obstacle or hurdles). This depicts the role of elephants as path makers as they perform the ecological function of creation of natural pathways by clearing all the obstacles in the forest and preparing pathways for the other creatures. The white elephant of *Lord Indra*, *Airavat* stands for royalty and elephants have become a part of Hindu religious beliefs and there is no festival without the presence of elephants. They play an important role in the ritualistic practices of India. From a mythological perspective the elephant is represented as a symbol of wisdom and intelligence and in the historical events it is seen as a symbol of strength and courage. The warfare was incomplete without the presence of elephants. The strength of the army was enhanced by the use of elephants. They were specially trained for military and war purposes as their intellectual capacity enabled them to learn all the techniques and strategies of

warfare. It was difficult task to capture, train, feed and care the elephants and riding an elephant was much difficult as it appeared to be a challenging act. The strong bodies and sharp intellectual and memory power made them an important aspect of warfare. Sometimes these animals were instigated using different techniques to bring out their aggressive side which would be helpful in defeating the enemies. Elephants were usually used by the royal king and prince as it symbolises royalty. Later there was a decline in the use of elephants at warfare as their nature sometimes became quite unpredictable causing harm to their own army. Elephant is a figure of endless strength and it stands as an epitome India tradition and culture. Even after positioning elephants as God and referring them as a strong creature with high cognitive abilities still they are struggling for their existence and survival in some parts of the world. The human's aspirations for progress and development had been seen as barrier to the lives of elephants. The invasion of humans into forest space is traumatic experience for the wildlife. Another threat to the elephants are hunting and poaching where male elephants are killed mercilessly for their tusks which are used for the production of ivory products. This book mainly highlights on the urgent need to carry out a substantial mode of scientific research.

Chapter one deals with Animal Studies which highlights the evolution of the field of study focused on animals. It traces how animals were considered by the early philosophers and how the perspective on animals gradually changed with course of time. From being considered as an emotionless machines how animals evolved to be considered as living beings with soul. It also discusses about how animal cognition played an important role in according importance to animals. Animal cognition proved that animals are also capable of identifying emotions and their intellectual ability is not much lesser than humans. They can no longer considered to be inferior to humans. It describes the various cognitive experiments that were done to test the cognitive

abilities of elephants. It provided a scientific and psychological analysis of animals. Animal ethics and rights are discussed in this chapter as the only means for the animals to attain freedom and justice from the cruel deeds of humans. It advocates for eco-centricism instead of anthropocentrism.

Chapter two explores the emotional aspect of animals by applying Sara Ahmed's Affective Economy. It deals with question of how do emotions work in animals. It displays how emotions circulate in bodies. According to her "emotions involve (re)actions or relations of 'towardness' or 'awayness' in relation to such objects" (Ahmed 8). In her opinion certain emotions stick to particular objects and it is conveyed throughout the society. Emotions are not expression of an individual's experience but a social construct that is regulated and circulated in the society. Animals can process and reciprocate emotions. Ahmed discusses about emotions such as hate, disgust, fear, pain and love. This chapter also deals with how animals are portrayed differently human cultures. It also explores how animal emotions are imagined, represented and experienced. How emotions aids in blurring the boundary between human and animal world. Basically emotions are inherent characteristics of animals.

Chapter three deals with one of the important issue of Human-Animal Conflict. This conflict arises when human and animals coexist together. They compete with each for resources and space. It is a struggle to establish the supreme authority over nature. This deals with how the human developmental activities have led to loss of habitat and lives of animals and how intrusion by animal into human spaces has caused social and economical loss. It mainly deals with Human-Elephant Conflict. It portrays how these huge creature who are habitual of seasonal migration, wandering life and vast home spaces are restricted and troubled by the various economic and developmental plans of humans which led to the destruction and fragmentation of

their habitats which further pave way for human-animal conflict. It also analyses how such conflicts can be avoided in the future.

Chapter four applies all these above mentioned concepts and theories in the book *Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant* by Byju H. It explores the cognitive abilities of elephant and analyses the matriarchal family system followed by elephants. It highlights the issue of human-elephant conflict in India. It explores the different dimensions of human- animal relationship. The entire story is narrated from the perspective of an elephant. It shows how changes in the environment and landscape due to human activities and settlements have affected the daily routines of elephants in the Nilgiris. It analyses the actions and behavioural patterns of matriarch and the family members. It explores various aspects of elephant biology and their cognitive abilities. It draws similarities between human and elephant mannerisms and behaviours.

This work highlights how animals like elephants who are considered to be the engineers of ecosystem have their own importance in maintenance of balance and stability of ecology. It explores the cognitive abilities of animal and places them in a unique status equivalent to humans. It portrays animals as emotional beings that are capable of processing and responding to emotions.

Chapter 1

An Introduction to Animal Studies

Animal Studies is one of newly emerging and evolving discipline in Literature. The emergence of Animal Studies opened up Literature to many new perspectives other than human perspectives. It explored the world of animals by shaping the minds of humans in a way that they can relate to animals. The existence of humans and animals overlap each other. It is the existence of animals which help humans to differentiate and identify themselves as humans. Animal Studies basically deals with numerous encounters with animals in the thought process and imagination of humans. Literature was basically anthropocentric where humans were at the centre of everything later towards the late nineteenth century the non-humans started to become the centre of attraction. They were also accorded importance. In the history of Western philosophy there are many examples to portray the fact that animals were trapped and caught up in the anthropocentric cage that is; the thought process were mainly human-centred. Animals were judged as inferior beings to humans and the way animals were treated and how their capacities were considered by humans all these were based on the anthropocentric mode of thought. The development of the attempts to theorise animals and animality can be traced back to the two important periods: Ancient Greece where animal life for the first time was taken into consideration and was accorded with importance by the classical philosophers; and the seventeenth century Europe where philosophers broke away from the traditional mode of thought and faith and gave importance to science and reason as they were influenced by the Enlightenment. They tried to understand the place of human in the sphere of nature. These philosophical periods opened up new possibility of thinking by focusing on the voices of the

marginalized non-humans. “Contained within the history of anthropocentric thought is the beginnings of an alternative history of less- or even non-anthropocentric approaches to animals and animality” (Ryan 5).

Philosophers like Aristotle, Descartes followed anthropocentric thought where humans were given importance. In *Politics*, by Aristotle where he separates man from other animals based on his capacity for reason, ethics, language, intellect. According to Aristotle man is a political animal. For him animals are like women who are destined to serve men due to their inferior status to men. In Descartes’ *Discourse on Method* captures the division between body and mind and also highlights the distinction between human and other animals. He portrays animals as something that doesn’t have a mind or reason. These works theorise animals and animality in an anthropocentric thought. In the *History of Animals*, by Aristotle gave stress more on the sensations and the ability to decipher touch. “Non-human animals have ‘perceptive imagination’ whereas humans have ‘deliberate imagination’ which depends on ‘reasoning to decide whether to do one thing or another’” (Ryan 7). Aristotle further draws attention towards the fact that like humans, animals also possess soul which is considered as the ‘the first principle of living things’. All these works picturize humans as dominant and animals as inferior as they are considered to be beings with no reason or intellect and they basically depend upon the experience of touch. Philosophers like Hume and Locke presents the challenges that humans have to face as they have certain limitations in the acquirement of knowledge and they open up on the possibilities of non humans have for knowledge. Struggling through the complex legacy of the philosophical views on anthropocentrism, an exclusive theoretical approach on animals and animality has come into existence during the Enlightenment and post- Darwinian age.

Animal Studies deals with the overexploitation and oppression of animals in human centred world. It portrays the reality of the relationship between animals and humans and how they become a hurdle in each other's lives leading to problems like human-animal conflict. Its focus is to analyse the representation of animals from the perspective of humans. Development of Animal Studies is to counter the anthropocentrism which places humans on pedestal as superior ones. Its main aim is to critique the human dominance and exceptionalism. It tries to bring the interests, needs and representations of animal to the limelight which has been ignored and not taken into consideration. It also critiques the terminology used to refer to them. The use of the term 'animal' has to face lot of contradictions as it is held responsibility for the erasure of the multiplicity and varieties of species which is confined and categorized and reduced into singular form to the use of animal in general. " 'The animal', Derrida reminds us, 'is a word, it is an appellation that men have instituted, a name they have given themselves the right and the authority to give the living other'" (Ryan 15). The term 'non-human' used to refer to animals places animals as the negative counterpart of humans and it is an ideologically loaded term which is constructed from the perspective of human. According to humans, animals are considered as non-humans and by the usage of such terms the main aim to suppress the marginalized voices and to establish human supremacy in the world. Animal Studies is a critical response to the anthropocentric world where the value and importance of animals are re-established. It tried to develop and expand the human consciousness beyond the impassable boundary between human and animal world. It gives a reality check to humans by making them aware of the fact that humans are also one among the many animals found on earth.

The hierarchical relationship between humans and animals which places humans as the superior kind of animal. Immanuel Kant, German philosopher in his book *The Metaphysics of*

Morals describes about the animality of humans. The only factor which enables them to rise above the animality is reason “human is an animal endowed with reason” (Ryan 50). Reason is something which distinguishes humanity and animality. Animality is the lowest level of humanity and human becomes a human in true sense when he is able to rise above the notion of animality. Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher tries to convey the idea that animality of human is a kind of virtue. In his opinion it is from humanity that one should be freed from rather than considering animality as something to be overcome in order to establish human world. In his book *Daybreak*, Nietzsche describes “Humanity- We do not regard the animals as moral beings. But do you suppose the animals regard us as moral beings?- An animal which could speak said: “ Humanity is a prejudice of which we animals at least are free” (Nietzsche 162). According Nietzsche instead of considering human culture distinct/ opposed to animal culture, he puts forward the idea of conceptualizing culture on the grounds of nature. “Nietzsche’s concern is with ‘a cultivation of animality’, where culture is defined not by ‘moral and rational improvement of the human being’ but by critiquing the ‘techniques of domination ‘promoted in the name of civilization” (Ryan 51). Reading an animal oriented work makes humans uncomfortable as it brings them face to face with the reality of the way in which human culture, reason, thought treat animals and it portrays how humans have become distanced from their own animality. Reading such works can actually change one’s perspective about life and animals. It alters the thought process of man as it makes with face the naked reality of life.

The Lives of Animals by J..M. Coetzee is one of the important work in Animal Studies which mainly deals with the animal world and it shows how valuable is animal’s life. The work mainly explores the cognitive abilities and capacities of animals and shows how animals are portrayed in poetry and how philosophers consider animals. It is an eye opener for humans who

mistreat animals. The main protagonist Elizabeth Costello, a novelist gives a lecture series on the lives of animals at Appleton College. The Cartesian view of animals as machines never made any sense to her as such point of views made her feel uncomfortable. She never supported the hierarchical division between humans and animals and advocated that human being and animal being is about “fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being” (Coetzee 33). In her lecture series she compares herself with Red Peter, an ape in Kafka and her intention of such a comparison is to make the audience aware of the human blindness and unconsciousness about animal being. She also criticises Ted Hughes who is known as Animal poet. Even though his poems are filled with animal imagery, his life actions are totally contrast to his poems as he owned slaughter houses in his real life. Costello puts forward ethical questions such as who gave the authority and freedom to humans to use and kill animals to meet their ends. Why is it that the crime of killing an animal goes unnoticed and unpunished? All these exploitation and mistreat of animals are justified using the hierarchical division between humans and animals. In order to show the mistreatment of animals by humans she makes an analogy between the Nazi holocaust and concentration camps to the slaughter houses of animals. Victims of holocaust are compared to the sheep butchered in the slaughter houses. The Nazi butchers killed them and they died as if they were animals. This comparison invited lots of criticism as the comparison of the murdered Jews with that of cattle was considered as an insult and implied that the happenings of camp were taken in a cheaper manner. She is trying to point out the devaluing and demeaning of animals. Costello propagates the fact that animals also have souls and their life is also important as a human life. Their intellectual capacity though it's not as much as humans but still they can't be disregarded as emotionless or as mute dumb creatures. Animal also have their own importance and their life should be accorded with some importance.

Mainly the hierarchical distinction between humans and animals is due to the reason that human's intellectual and logical abilities are stronger and wider than animals. Animals are considered as beings devoid of reason, logic and their intellectual abilities are always underestimated by the humans. In order to prove that animals are also not less than human in their cognitive abilities and to provide a wider understanding of their thinking capacity and behaviourism Animal Studies focused on Animal Cognition. It is a field that deals with study of the various intellectual process and behavioural patterns of animals. This study was undertaken to find answers for the various questions related to the cognitive abilities of animals such as how did animals learned everything? Did they have mental maps and other cognitive mechanisms? How did they found solutions to the problems faced by them and did they use logical reason in solving these problems? How did they communicate with each other? Did they have any sort of belief systems? Whether they were rational or irrational beings? How did they decipher information? To answer all these questions a deep scientific and psychology investigation into the animal life is required and this is the main aim of Animal Cognition. It employs various methods and techniques to process and understand the animal minds scientifically and psychologically. Animals such as elephants, dogs, chimpanzees, cats etc have amazed humans with their extra ordinary abilities which are nor generally expected from them.

Animals Cognition can be traced back to the age of Charles Darwin. His theory of evolutions plays a vital role in animal cognition. His evolutionary theory of natural selection is non- hierarchical and draws the differences and similarities between the species and his thesis of the continuity of the mental across species focuses on the minds of animals and humans. According to Darwin all the species evolve with the course of time as they compete for the survival of the fittest in accordance to the changes that takes place in the environment. For

example, the shape of the beak of Darwin's finches changed according to the availability of food in their habitat. So animal adapts and adopts to the environmental changes. His thesis of continuity conceptualized the continuity that existed in both animals and humans in their morphological, physiological and anatomical developments, cognitive abilities, feelings and emotions. He also suggested that some species are higher and some are lower due to their intellectual capacities. The comparative psychologist didn't consider them as higher or lower but considered animals as different. Darwin takes into consideration the animal feelings, emotions, reason, mind and imagination. Descartes summed up the distinction between the humans and animals as humans are God-gifted as they have their own emotions and intellect but animals are considered to be emotionless machines. Margaret Floy Washburn in her book *The Animal Mind* gave emphasis on the cognitive abilities of animals. According to her the animal consciousness can be scientifically and experimentally proven using different methods and procedures. She gave importance to the animal's emotion, feeling, intellect, reason etc. All these formed the base for animal cognition where animal is treated like a being with mind and soul.

Comparative cognition is the scientific study of the cognitive abilities of animals that identifies humans as animals and propagates the idea that all animals are evolved biological beings. It gave importance to the capabilities and psychological conditions that contributed to the development of behaviour. It is the cognition abilities of animals which enable them to thrive in their respective environments. They have special skills to find out the food and water resources, shelter and to identify and prevent their predators and also to identify their routes or pathways. Some of the examples of cognition are navigation is a cognitive ability mainly found in migratory birds to navigate their routes in search of food and water sources. Arctic terns are migratory birds who navigate directions based on the position of sun. Edward Tolman had

discovered another navigation method by the use of cognitive maps as rats find their way back home using the mental images of environment captured in their mind. Ants and wasps use landmarks like rocks to navigate back to their homes. Some animal have the ability to store episodic memory. An experiment was carried out by Clayton and Dickinson where he tested the episodic memory of Western scrub-jays in USA by hiding the bird's food that is; fresh wax worms and peanuts and located it again. The birds were able to remember the place where they had kept the food and they chose worms when they were allowed to find it shortly but when they were long interval of times they didn't choose worms as it might be decayed. This experiment showed the recollection and selective skills of the birds. Scientists have found out that animals have number sense and they can figure out quantities. They employ their number sense in their choice of mates, to prevent attack from predators and reduce risk of being attacked and injured. Lioness decides whether she has to attack or escape depending upon the number of roars from the approaching pride. Fishes reduce the predation risk by moving in large groups. Among animals primates have high intelligence level chimpanzees can recognize their reflection in water surfaces and Orangutans use their cognitive abilities to use hammer and other tools. Animals are also capable of doing many things about which humans are not aware of. Without understanding their actual potential humans blindly categorize them to an inferior status and consider them as beings with no soul or mind.

Elephants possess the unique status of being the mammal with largest brain among all other terrestrial mammals and they have highly remarkable long life span. Their performance in the cognitive aspects such as fast-action tool usage, extensive information and data storage, visual discrimination learning and tests regarding the insight behaviour is highly commendable. They are known for their long term, social, extensive and spatial-temporal memory. They are

highly social beings and they are emotionally sensitive and sensible creatures. Their behaviour is considered as unique among other non-humans is because of the way in which they react and pay attention to dead conspecifics which reflect the “theory of mind”. The studies conducted on the neural cytoarchitecture of the large brain cells suggested that the neurons of the cerebral cortex of elephants (they have the greatest volume of cerebral cortex) are much less dense than in other large-brained primates like chimpanzees. Elephants have slower cortical information processing than in humans or other primates. They follow a diet with low protein and calories. They doesn’t require a coordinated cognitive response to find out food and water resources but they rather have the ability to locate the distant scattered and unknown water and food resources. Due to all these cognitive abilities elephants are widely employed by humans.

The first systematic experimentation in order to explore the cognitive abilities of elephants was conducted by Rensch on an Asian elephant of five years old at the Munster Zoo in Germany and no other experimental study was conducted in order to understand the cognitive abilities of elephants in more than forty years following the publication of this experiment. It took more than three hundred trials to attain the result of the visual discrimination task. In this experiment the elephant was trained to choose one among the two shapes: circle and semi circle in order to get food. In the course of the process it learned to identify and discriminate between more than twenty pairs of different shaped stimuli. Elephants depend on and use their auditory, olfactory sense while interacting and communicating with their surroundings and other members. Tool use is another parameter to determine the cognitive ability of elephants. The elephants use branches as tools and fly switching with branches in elephants can be seen as the first recorded incident of tool use in any animal. While discussing about the intelligence level of animals this fly switching in elephants was also mentioned by Charles Darwin in his work *Descent of Man*.

They modified the branches of trees to switch and fly switching helped in driving away the flies. The other kind of tool usage in African and Asian elephants is throwing stones or sticks at other small animals who try to snatch their food and using the sticks to scratch their body. They are early tool users among the mammals. As they consume large quantity of forage they have to continuously move to new places in search of food sources but their movements are restricted and affected by geographical and climatic barriers. In order to understand the spatial-temporal memory of elephants Viljoen conducted a study on the movement of elephants in the northern Namib Desert. He conducted his study on the movements of radio-tagged elephants in order to track and measure the distance covered by them. The study showed that during dry seasons large home spaces where the elephants went on every five days and went about 60 Km in search of water sources. The extensive long term memory of elephants enables them to trace back to their home after exploring their forging grounds. Elephants are good at the recognising distinct individual acoustic characteristics. They can recognize the individual calls from a distance of 1 to 1.5 km away. They have the ability to recognize the individual calls of about 100 elephants from their own family and also from other families. They have sharp social memory which enables them to recognize individual chemosensory signals. An elephant can recognize another elephants even decades after their encounter as the chemosensory features of urine helps them in recognizing their conspecifics. In Asian elephants, their chemosensory signals prevent inbreeding in their natal families by the adult male elephants who leave their family after reaching certain age as the male elephants flehmen is selectively to the urine of their mothers and it helps in retaining the memory of their mother even after separating from the family. An elephant keep everything stored in their memory and never forgets about anything. Everything is registered and recorded in their minds.

Elephants and their behaviourism reflect the ‘theory-of-mind’ which is constituted by the self-awareness and recognition ability of the elephants and their reaction to the deceased and disabled conspecifics. The experimentation done to test the self-awareness and recognition is addressed by the mirror test. In this mirror test a spot is drawn on the head of the animal and it is given access to the mirror to look at its own reflection in the mirror. If the animal immediately and spontaneously uses the mirror to touch the spot on his head then it is proved that it has self-awareness and recognition about itself. In this test following things are observed like interaction with its own reflection in the mirror, physical interrogation of the mirror, mirror testing behaviours and recognition of the self by looking at the reflected image. In elephants the self recognition is connected to the sympathetic aspect of helping the conspecifics emphatically. “targeted empathic helping” is a well noted behaviour of elephants. A matriarch, Eleanor was massively injured with a swollen trunk in a fall and it’s family was about 1.5 km away from the matriarch but few minutes after the fall of Eleanor an unknown and unrelated matriarch of another family came to support her by extending her trunk to her, sniffed her body and lifted Eleanor and helped her to stand on her feet. But later Eleanor died. The investigators had fixed GPS radio on the animals to record and trace the observations. A tagged member of Eleanor’s family spent about seven hours near the corpse. The dead body was frequently visited by the members of other families for about 5 days even after the death the unrelated members of other families came to pay their last respect to the body. The death of an elephant is collectively mourned by the other conspecifics. They have the ability to recognize the remains of their deceased members. Elephants are in a way emotional animal that have compassion and love towards their companions.

As they have largest brain, it results in complicated brain information processing. The calculation of EQ (Encephalization quotient) decodes the relationship between brain size and higher order brain functions. EQ of elephants varies from 1.3 to 2.3. Elephants were unable to successfully complete the casual reasoning task. In this experiment the elephant is presented with food in a bucket with a lid. The elephant had to remove the lid in order to obtain food but it continued to remove the lid even though the food was kept beside the bucket. But a conclusion cannot be drawn from this experiment as the training provided to them by their trainers affected their perfect and their cognitive abilities. The ability of the Asian elephants to make RQJ (Relative Quantity Judgements) was tested in order to find out whether they have numerical sense. In this experiment five elephants were presented with two baskets of food and all the elephants chose the basket with larger quantity of food without any prior training. Then four elephants were again presented with two baskets of food and this time they were not able to see the quantity of food but still they chose the basket with larger quantity of food. Elephants usually tend to consume food in larger quantity. Elephants are a magnanimous creature with high emotional and intelligence quotient.

Animal Ethics advocates for the rights and welfare of animals. It gives a moral touch to the relationship between humans and animals. The morals in favour of animals are emphasised in animal ethics. It can be seen as a response to the mistreatment of animals by humans. It includes Animal rights, Animal welfare, Animal laws, and conservation. It works to safeguard the interests of animals and to protect it from the mistreatment instilled by humans on animals. Animal Ethics mainly questions the moral of humans which they keep aside in their interaction with animals. Animal life is considered as valuable as human life. They are no longer considered as emotionless machines or robots as it was held by Descartes but they are living beings with

soul and cognitive abilities. It stands for the rights of animals and it questions the authority of man to exploit the animals mercilessly. The use of animals for the benefit of humans and are considered as a means to meet their ends. Animal decipher the inhuman nature of human in their interaction and communication with animals. They are not our experimentations on abuse, entertainment etc. Like humans, animals are also born free but everywhere they are in anthropocentric chains which lock their lives in darkness. It makes humans more tolerable towards animals. It provides an ethical cleansing of humans. Animal Ethics considers animals important enough so that their mistreatment can be dealt with great seriousness. Animal Ethics punishes the ones who go against the already set animal laws and who deviates and violates the well framed animal rights. It mainly demands justice for the animal by bringing the issues related to animals to the forefront. It calls for the conservation and protection of natural world and animal world. It is centred on the interests and needs of animals and any violation of animal rights can led to severe punishments by the law.

Animals also have the right to life and freedom. Even though there has been many laws framed for the protection and conservation of wildlife but it is rarely put into force. All animals rights though they are framed in the favour of animal it is mainly anthropocentric as it is framed in such a way that humans are also benefited by it. The exploitation of animals like elephants has now become a daily business. Elephants are hunted for their tusks, skin, hair and other body parts. They are exploited for the commercial and economic profits where elephants are captured and trained in order to carry out human activities. Elephants are born free and there actual place is in the wild no one can chain them as they have right to live a dignified life. They are the masters of their lives. They live following their free will and no one can intrude into their lives. Animal rights are framed to make humans aware of the importance and significance of animals

in the ecological sphere. It dismantles the idea that only humans are the Supreme universal master of the world. Animal rights can be seen as means through which animals are given an opportunity to voice their interests and needs. It makes humans aware of the existence of other living creatures. As humans are always obsessed about themselves they forget that about the other living creatures with whom they share the space. The concept of animal rights developed when exploitation of animals was reaching its peak point. These laws and rights were created to limit the violent nature of man towards animals and to safeguard the lives of animals from evil intentions of man. Many movements and organization have been formed with the aim to promote peaceful coexistence between humans and animals which is only possible when humans begin to consider the animals as living creatures with souls. Even though many laws and rights have been framed to serve this purpose but rarely these are put into force. This inaction of laws motivates humans to continue their exploitation of animals.

Humans should begin to treat animals as not just animals but as living being. The way one treats and behaves with animals shows who is in true sense the cruellest animal on earth is. Humans should consider animals just like themselves as they also have a heart to feel emotions, eyes to see the reality and a family to love and care for. It's high time that humans better understand and treat animals in proper way.

Chapter 2

Applying Affective Economy in Animals

Emotions are not only possessed by humans. Even animals are the bearers of emotions. Emotions can be seen as a factor which blurs the boundary between humans and animals and facilitate a bond between humans and animals. From an earlier period onwards Pythagoreans believed that humans and animals share same type of emotions and its degree of expression and experience vary depending upon the individual. Charles Darwin in his work *The Expression of the Emotions* came up with the view that animals are considered as lower beings who experience and display pleasure, pain, disgust and so on. In the essay *The Unconscious* Freud elaborate on the idea of unconscious emotions, where “an affective impulse is perceived but misconstrued, and which becomes attached to another idea” (Freud 110). It is the idea that is attached to the feeling which is repressed from consciousness and not the feeling. Psychoanalysis deals with the motion of feelings which take one diverse stages of signification, and these feelings cannot be accepted or comprehensible in the present. According to Sara Ahmed this movement of feelings is known as “rippling effect of emotions” (Ahmed 120). Her notion of emotions pose a challenge to the earlier models on emotions as either moving from inside out or from outside to within. She theorizes emotions as “emotions are not simply something ‘I’ or ‘we’ have. Rather, it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the ‘I’ and ‘we’ are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others... Emotions....produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects” (Ahmed 10). “ They move sideways (along “sticky” associations between signs, figures and objects) as well as backward (repression leaving it’s trace in the present- hence “what sticks” is also bound up with the “ absent presence” of historicity)”(Ahmed 120). In earlier

theories on emotions, it was recognized as cognitive or physical but her theory of emotion is regarded as relational which stands contrast to the prior theories on emotion. According to her “emotions involve (re)actions or relations of ‘towardness’ or ‘awayness’ in relation to such objects” (Ahmed 8). She provides “analysis of affective emotions, where feelings do not reside in subjects or objects but are produced as effects of circulation” (Ahmed 8).

Deconstruction of emotion through the animalistic lens presents animals as living beings that are able to process emotions and feelings.

In her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, she asks, “What do emotions do...I will track how emotions circulate between bodies, examining how they ‘stick’ as well as move” (Ahmed 4). She presents the idea of how “emotions can move through the movement or circulation of objects” (Ahmed 11). She further explains that “such objects become sticky, or saturated with affect, as sites of personal and social tension.” (Ahmed 11). The word ‘stickiness’ refers to how certain emotions such as pain, disgust, fear, hate associate and attach themselves to certain objects and people in turn starts to relate and associate these emotions with these objects. She employs the idea of stickiness to mould the relationship between objects of fear and their ability to affect other objects and body by “expanding the mobility of some bodies and containing others” (Ahmed 79). Sara Ahmed introduces the idea of affective economies in which she considers emotions as economy, “involving relationships of difference and displacement without positive value. That is, emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced as an effect of its circulation” (Ahmed 45). They are materialistic, psychic and social. In affective economies “Bodies surface by ‘feeling’ the presence of others as the cause of injury or as a form of intrusion. The signs of hate surface by evoking a sense of threat and risk, but one that cannot simply be located or found... It is the failure of hate to be located in a given object or figure, which allows it to generate the effects that it does” (Ahmed 48-49). Emotions are not

just expressions or interpretations of the experience of an individual in his life, it is kind of social construct that is present and diluted within the society, associating and attaching to objects and places and is transmitted through them to the others.

Emotions and affects are two words which are interchangeably used as synonyms. Emotions are considered as culturally expression of experience that may differ across various diverse cultures and varies from one particular community to the other. Emotions are products of social construction while affects enables the bodies to move in and out from a particular state of being. Affect is not ontologically distinct from or secondary to cognition or meaning. Emotions enter the public sphere of societal life as objects that contribute to the maintenance of social order, specially race, gender and sexuality. It is a response to the socio-economic political structure in which an individual is positioned. Animal emotions were neglected by humans as it had no relevance or significance to them. Affective economy refers to the ways in which emotions affect animal's behavioural patterns, decision makings and their everyday life. Different emotions influence the way animals respond and react to particular conditions. Ahmed discusses about various emotions such as pain, hate, disgust etc which gets attached to objects and in turn the objects are propagated in relation to emotions attached to it. Animals are emotional beings and particular kind of emotion is associated with particular animal such as peace is associated with doves, anger and fierceness is associated with tigers, lions etc. Animals are storehouse of emotions as they display emotions such as love, fear, hate, anger, sadness etc.

According to Sara Ahmed "hate is an investment" (Ahmed 51) which intervenes the border between others and self and also between groups or communities, the 'other' who enters into space of ones own existence is viewed as a threat. The physicality of motion of bodies becomes the platform where the some bodies are aligned with other bodies and these

bodies are considered as disoriented and re-oriented as they face the ones referred to as the hated one. Hate crime is a form of violence that involves power structures and forms. The emotion of hate is inculcated in the minds of animals against humans as they intrude into the spaces allotted to animals. The emotion of hatred brings out the violent form of animals which led to hate crimes. Animals have conflict with humans on the basis of their hatred for humans. Just like hatred, fear also can be considered as an affective economy that is regulated among objects, bodies and signs. The main of emotions is to align the social and bodily spaces. A fear and anxiety function through the displacement of objects and it connects these objects together. The movement of objects across sideways functions to stick the objects together as markers of threat. These movements accord fearsomeness to others. Fear or anxiety cannot be considered as inherent patterns of behaviour but it instead shapes and moulds bodies and their relationships to a particular space. Intensification of fear between the ones who are threatened and the ones under threat reflects the language of fear. Fear is an emotion that arranges the bodies with and against other bodies. The fear provokes animals to adopt violent ways in order to safeguard their lives. The fear of life is an emotion which both humans and animals possess. The feeling of disgust enables the subject to go through both hatred towards object and fear towards the threat. It is associated with the feeling of being sickening. Others are considered as the cause of disgust. Love is an emotion which is important in how a person becomes accustomed with the collective by identifying with the ideal one. Love is the only way of forming a bond which is considered as ideal. Love is an emotion which is an inherent characteristics and which is equally shared by animals and humans.

Animals have great significance in different human cultures. They play a vital role in shaping humans' cultures, societies and even their own identity. They take up different roles in different cultures. Culture is a thread that binds humans and animals together. The

appearance of animals in human cultures makes humans aware of the existence of other living creatures with which they share the space. Animals symbolise many aspects of human culture. They hold a rich cultural and symbolic value in various ways across the different human societies and unveil various human beliefs, traditions, customs and practices that connect human world to the animal world. The cultural attributes associated with animals varies across different cultures and changes over the course of time. The representation of animals in diverse human cultures portrays how humans treat and view animals and it displays the human's perspective on animals by allotting animals space in their cultures. The various symbolisms associated with animals in human cultures gives an overall picture of the relationship between humans and animals.

According to the importance accorded to animals, they are represented in different ways in human cultures. From the prehistoric time onwards animals have been a part of human culture. Animals such as bull, lion, tiger etc were represented and picturized in cave paintings and artefacts which gave details about the prehistoric cultures of human and their relationship with humans. These paintings portray how animals have been a source of artistic inspiration for humans since prehistoric times. They have a high cultural importance in their portrayal in religions and mythologies as they are worshipped as deities. The Indian culture is incomplete without referring to animals. Hinduism mainly considers animals as symbol of divinity. Animals such as cows, snakes, elephants, peacocks etc have great religious significance in Indian culture and these portrayals of animals helps humans to cultivate tolerance towards animals. In Hindu mythology half animal- half human Gods such as Narasimah, an incarnation of Vishnu; Ganesha, the elephant God etc are given importance as they signify the union of human and animal. These religious figures denote the notion of how humans and animals complete each other in all aspects. In Egyptian culture, cats are considered to be protective animals that used to guard the chambers of pharaoh after their

death. Some of them were mummified just like humans. In Christianity, doves were used as the sacred messenger between God and people. The worth of animals and the different roles taken up animals are realized by humans in their representations of animals in particular human cultures. During the prehistoric times in Peru guinea pigs were killed as sacrifices and were buried with or without humans. Buddhist cultural context always connected human life with animal life. They are intertwined and reincarnated into each other. Respect and sympathy is the basis of human-animal relationship in Buddhism. The depiction of animals in a particular culture reflects their attitude and tolerance towards animals and shows the ways in which animals should be treated with respect, care, sympathy and love. The representation of animals in diverse cultures presents them as either a boon or bane for humans. The depiction of a particular animal varies across different cultures. Owl is depicted as evil messenger of Satan in Christianity but in Hinduism it stands for wisdom as it is used as Goddess Lakshmi's *vahaan*. In Roman culture it is associated with secret knowledge as Athena is accompanied by an owl. The treatment of an animal in a positive or negative way mainly depends upon its cultural depiction in different societies. Totemism is mainly a connecting link between humans and the animals. It is a system of belief in which a subculture group identifies their alliance and kinship with a spirit entity which is represented by a particular plant or animal and later it becomes the emblem of that subgroup. Their relationship with the totems reflects their social relationship with the natural world. Shamanism is one of the practices employed by them to communicate with plants or animals. Animals such as bears, deer, cranes, fishes are used as totem animals. Totem poles are used to represent the ancestral history of a particular subcultural group. So animals are used as a medium to portray human history in certain cultures. They are agents of human culture and social relations. The way humans have included animals into their culture illuminates the fact that they recognize the importance of animals in their life but find it hard to accept and

accommodate them into their life situations. With the emergence of animality of humans, animals can be seen as cultural creations and their behaviourism and manners can be identified and can be referred to as non human or animal culture. Human culture is incomplete without the animal symbolism which can be seen as attempt to accommodate animals into human space and inculcate tolerance towards animals.

During the earlier periods animals were not given any voice or agency in Literature, philosophy or in other fields. They were never treated with importance as they were considered to be devoid of any emotions or reason. They were ignored and side-lined by humans in all forms. They were not even recognized as a companion to man with whom they shared their space. Their existence never made any sense to humans. They tried to escape from the fact that animals and humans share a mutually dependent relationship. Animals never came to the centre as the focus was always on humans. Animals were mere things living on the mercy of humans as they were regarded as inferior beings. It's towards the nineteenth and early twentieth century animals were identified, experienced, imagined and given significance by human. In the form of novels, poem etc the thought process of animals were portrayed. Animal perspective was taken into consideration. Ranging from their physical strength, cognitive abilities, emotion quotient, and behavioural patterns were observed and studied by humans. They opened up their world to animals for the inclusion of animal world into human world. By identifying with animals, humans were forced to face the harsh realities of their lives like their treatment of animals and everyday interaction with animals. The world of animals provided a platform for humans to escape from the realities of their harsh life and enabled them to find relief in animals. Thinking about animals and portraying them as characters that are provided with the agency to express and speak expanded the imaginative power of humans. Humans began to imagine and identify animals as their companions and they were given value in the life of humans. The way animals are

perceived by an individual displays his character. Animals were judged and analysed by comparing their attributes with that of humans. They recorded their experience with animals as a record that will prove the kind of relationship shared with humans. Thomas Nagel's *What Is It To Be a Bat?* Mainly focuses on the mind-body problem. It deals with the question whether mind or the thought different from the physical body. According to Nagel the "subjective character of experience that cannot be explained by physical phenomenon". The life and experience of a Bat is different from that of human life and experiences. He uses the metaphor of Bat to convey the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. Each individual has consciousness and thought process which uniquely belongs to the individual. If it was not so then one would not feel subjectively different in thoughts and experience from others. Humans can use their imagination to know how it is like to be a Bat by incorporating the point of view or perspective of a Bat. It would appear like a human's projection of consciousness to a Bat's body. They will never know what it is like to be a Bat for a Bat. They will only have a humanised point of view of animal. Animals have their own stories to tell which make them stand out in the human dominated world. They have their own subjectivity and their experience cannot be expressed by humans in its uniqueness. Human's subjectivity tries to overshadow the animal subjectivity. Their life experiences, skills, capacities are unique to these which are not quite easily comprehensible by humans. Animals portray their stories from their own unique perspective. Humans can only adopt their point of views but can't really portray animal stories and experiences in their true essence. It's easy for humans to adopt the perspective of animals and to imagine their thoughts and experiences but it's impossible to think the same thoughts and go through the same experience for themselves.

Humans lives are laid on the foundation of animal lives and deaths. Without the presence of animals, humans cannot be identified as human beings. The lives of animals and

humans are interwoven as they both have separate lives but still they are living parallel lives. Humans are embodiment of animals. Human identity is always identified in opposition to animals which automatically gave them the superiority over others. Even the historical representations of animals are coloured by human filters. The presence of nonhuman animals qualifies the presence of humans. In Derrida's work *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, he discusses about the problematic philosophical idea associated with animal and he explores the limit of the space between humans and animals. "Not just because it will concern what sprouts or grows at the limit, around the limit, by maintaining the limit, but also what feeds the limit, generates it, raises, and complicates it. Everything I'll say will consist, certainly not in effacing the limit, but in multiplying its figures, in complicating, thickening, delinearizing, folding, and dividing the line precisely by making it increase and multiple". (Derrida 29) He blames Aristotle and Heidegger for misinterpreting the ontological difference between human and animals. According to Derrida the term 'Animal' has given the power, right and authority to man over other living beings. He comments on the nudity and the shame associated with it in the incident of man's creation "In principle, with the exception of man, no animal has ever thought to dress itself. [Thus] clothing would be proper to man, one of the 'properties' of man. 'Dressing oneself' would be inseparable from all the other figures of what is 'proper to man,' even if one talks about it less than speech or reason, the logos, history, laughing, mourning, burial, the gift, etc" (Derrida 5). Animals and humans relationship provides a medium to identify and establish the feeling of being a human. The hierarchical order between them places them in different positions. There is only a thin line which separates human and animal world and it is highly permeable. Without the existence of animals, humans' authority cannot be established. The exclusion of animals enables humans to face identity crisis. Animals and humans are considered as an antithesis to each other. The shift of focus from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism has opened up the imaginative world to animals. Animals

still remain as being residing in the imaginative world of humans. The relationship between humans and animals forms the basis for everything as it gives meaning to the existence of both animals and humans.

Chapter 3

Human-Wildlife Conflict

Human-wildlife conflict has become a critical issue which should be carefully dealt with as soon as possible as it has become a threat to both humans and wildlife. The question of belonging and superiority has instigated this never ending conflict between humans and wildlife. “The earth is large enough for all to share but mankind’s heart is not large enough to care” (Williams). Humans consider themselves to be the master of the world and they are governed by the feeling of having superiority over other creatures with whom they share their living space. They claim to have ultimate authority over everything on earth. Animals who live in their specific habitat are unaware of this particular ideology that has been shaped in human minds. Even history bears witness to a number of human-wildlife conflicts that have been existing since long time. When humans and animals share their living space with each other, it results in a number of encroachments that finally end up in a conflict between humans and animals. Both get largely affected due to this conflict. They have their own importance in the maintenance of ecological balance. One becomes a reason for the exploitation of the other. Humans intrude into natural habitats of animals in the name of civilization, advancement and development and animals intrude into the space claimed by humans as their own by putting into question human lifestyle, safety and sustenance. They mainly conflict over the sharing of resources posing a threat to the ecological cycle. These conflicts can lead to cause negative impacts on humans as well as on wildlife such as loss of natural habitats, destruction of nature, disintegration of biodiversity, loss of lives and property, unhealthy competition between humans and wildlife, disturbance to the ecological balance, extinction of certain species and destruction of natural peace etc. The animal lives become more vulnerable as

their exposure to this conflict may lead them to their extinction due to the harm caused by humans. Incidents such as road or railway accidents, capturing and poisoning of animals, getting caught in the trap set for other creatures, hunting, poaching etc pose a threat to animal life. Humans also have to undergo many problems due this conflict as they are socially and economically affected by all this. Their contact with animals can lead to various diseases, infections caused from the attack of predators. Economic loss such as fragmentation and damage of property, loss of livestock, spread of diseases and infections among domestic animals etc are caused due to this conflict. This conflict makes the co-existence of human-wildlife near to an impossible task as both of them inculcate an attitude of intolerance towards each other. Human-wildlife conflict is an issue which equally affect both humans and wildlife and it highly demands an immediate attention and solution as it one of the major wildlife management issues that has been going on since ages.

In the human history this conflict can be traced back to the initial ages of man's life. Since the Stone Age period the human-wildlife conflict had evolved into a highly complicated and violent phenomenon. There have been evidences recorded in history regarding this conflict. During the Miocene epoch a number of humans became victims to the attacks by animals like leopard, saber-toothed cats, spotted hyenas etc. During the modern era, civilization has brought a huge change in the entire scenario. Humans began to convert forestlands into agricultural spaces for their own benefit which led to the degradation of natural habitats. It also began a competition of survival of fittest among the domesticated animals and wildlife. Many of the species became extinct due to human encroachments and their developmental activities. Animals intrude into agricultural spaces due to food unavailability and also due to reduction in the natural prey and these animals are referred by humans as "problem animals" as they cause problems in the lives of humans by interfering into their spaces.

Is it really the animals who are problematic or the humans? In the perspective of an animal, it is humans who are problematic as they have unjustly claimed their ownership over the land which is naturally allotted to them. Animals like wolves, tigers, lions and mainly elephant encroach into human spaces for food in the form of crops, livestock and other food supplements. Wildlife is considered to be the life and soul of nature and humans had left no way in destroying its life by creating a vacuum in the nature. The blurring of boundaries between humans and animals had mainly led to this conflict. The fear of these animals restricts the people in their movements and access to the natural resources and they are forced to protect their property from these animals by adopting dreadful methods which in turn would result in death of animals. This will in turn cultivate a negative attitude towards animals which is evident in their brutal killing and hunting of animals and these activities restrict their movements to the natural water and food sources. Whatever humans do in order to save their lives at the cost of the life of an animal is not at all justifiable. Animals also have the same right to live their lives just like humans. Their lives are also valuable and important. Nobody as assigned the ultimate authority of ownership to man as it is only his presupposition. Human's existence is more like a catastrophe when compared to wildlife as man's existence on earth has caused a lot of destruction and has led to cause a negative impact on nature but wildlife had never been a threat to nature. It has enhanced vitality of nature and It has always added up the beauty and serenity of nature. The local communities living close to such areas has to find a way to cope up with the damages and benefits of such conflicts. They ought to bring out a balance between the cost and profit of such survivals.

The various activities and practices of humans such as agricultural expansion, advancement and developmental projects, hunting, poaching, animal husbandry had negatively affected the wildlife. The constant increase in the human population and their livestock in India had created an imbalance in the ecology as it had resulted into unnecessary

pressure on the availability of all natural resources. Most of the natural habitats and pathways of animals are destructed, degraded and fragmented due to human activities and practices. Many of these forest areas have been transformed into agricultural areas under civilization process in order to meet the demands of the increasing human population. The unsustainable management of land has further contributed to the fragmentation of forest areas. The unexpected modifications of the natural habitats of animals by the humans have resulted into the ecological dislocation and displacement of many species. Even though some of them have adapted to human invasions but still some intrude into human spaces causing damage to their property and land. Even today in rural areas of India the land use follows an unsustainable, irregular and illogical pattern. With this conversion and intrusion into forest areas, loss and fragmentation of natural habitats the wildlife population came down. These lead to the emergence of conflict between the human species existing on the land which once belonged to the wildlife and the original inhabitants of forest lands that is; the wildlife. Even the protected areas in forests reserved for the protection of animals are exposed to human encroachments, cattle grazing, destruction and exploitation of natural resources. Human activities have the tendency to confine and enclose many areas of the forest by the installation of various developmental advancement projects such as construction of dams, irrigational canals, shifting cultivation etc which induce such conflicts between humans and wildlife. The people living around the areas of forest management and protected areas are traumatic as they are constantly exposed to animal intrusion. These people can barely afford the loss created by the animals. Incidents such as the increase in the number of people being killed in their attempts to protect their crops by the crop raiding elephants that live in destructed and fragmented habitats, the cases of livestock and child picking by tigers, lions in various regions. This conflict is all about the matter of survival and existence. Civilization and advancement in technology had made this conflict even more worse. Cities, towns and

villages are the places allocated for human settlement and these places are assumed to be forest areas during earlier times. If humans face extinction and are vanished from the surface of earth then the animals would be able to claim the place which once used to be their habitats. This conflict can be seen as a battle between the two for their survival and security. The population of animals are increasing day by day but they face unavailability of habitat which forces them to enter into human habitations. Large carnivores and herbivores such as tigers, leopards, elephants etc. pose a threat to man as they intrude into man's space.

Elephants mainly reside in a place that has richness and abundance of resources such as water and food availability. Their presence is shown as an indicator of rich biodiversity. They mainly enter into human areas for the livestock as whenever there is a fall in the availability of food resources in the forest areas. In Pethikuttai forest division in Coimbatore eight elephants died due to habitat fragmentation and degradation.

The anthropocentric approach which places man's existence as a major issue and prompts one to side line the issues related to animals. Even the animal friendly legal laws are human centred as everything is done and understood from the perspective of man and ignoring even the existence of animals that are considered as secondary and inferior. No justice is given to animals. The law is partial towards humans and they have framed it in a manner that it favours humans. The activities related to biodiversity and wildlife conservation reflects such anthropocentricity. Human-wildlife conflict is a great hurdle for environmental protection and conservation. Eco-centric approach should be adopted as it gives importance to both humans and other living creatures and its centre of focus will be placed on nature. By conserving and protecting nature the safety and livelihood of both humans and non humans are ensured. Anthropocentrism should be replaced by eco-centricism.

The human-wildlife conflict can be seen as a competition between humans and wildlife to meet their ecological, nutritional, existential, behavioural and survival needs and interests. This conflict takes place in many forms one such prominent form of human-wildlife conflict is crop damage which is mainly happens in tropics regions. Crop damage is caused by animals like elephants, bear, jackals, antelope etc. In this animals come in search of food into human spaces due lack of availability of food in their habitats. The raiding of crops leads to loss of edible food crops and commercial crops which will directly affect the food availability of humans. This one is like snatching the food of one party by the other party. The loss of crops are not affordable to the poor rural people as their livelihood depends on it. Many people are employed for doing agricultural activities and the loss of crops means indirect loss of employment and livelihood opportunities. People are intolerant towards such crop damages caused by animals but certain religious and cultural practices have enabled few communities of north-western India to be tolerant enough to accept the crop damages caused by wild antelopes. Another form which triggers the conflict is the loss of domesticated livestock. The ‘problem animals’ come in search of food such as domesticated animals like sheep, goat, cow becomes prey to the predators like tiger, leopard etc. Killing of humans by the intruding animals such as people being attacked and killed by elephants who come in search of crops. Man eating predators like tigers, leopards, lions pose a threat to human life. This conflict is all about the varied interests and needs of both humans and wildlife.

There are many global driving forces that contribute to growth of human-wildlife conflict in world. The increased growth in human population has contributed to the conflict as the social and demographic variations enabled the exposure of people into the areas of wildlife. The human settlements encroach into the natural habitats of wildlife and constrain the species to certain margins. With the increase in population there is an increased demand for food, land and raw materials and in order to meet these demands the forest areas and other

ecosystem is transformed into agrarian spaces and urban settlements. The transformation of land areas cause disturbance to the wildlife communities. As the result of these transformations the natural habitat of Sumatran tigers got fragmented and restricted to certain forest areas. The growing interest in eco tourism and the curiosity of man to know more about other species had led to the intrusion of man into the animal spaces. The increasing number of livestock leads to the overlapping of the diets of the domesticated and wild animals. It enables a forage competition between the livestock and wildlife. The decline of the prey population in the forest prompts the predators to move to human spaces in search of food where there is abundance of prey. The conservation programmes and effective habitat management in Gir National Park led to an increase in the population of Asian lions. Due to the increase in the population human confined home ranges were not able to meet the needs of the increasing population of lion which led to the straying of lions into other human spaces. The protection and conservation programmes can also led to this conflict. The climatic factors also add up to this conflict. During dry seasons lions and tigers find it hard to hunt as they would be deprived of the vegetative hide which would automatically turn them towards the livestock and humans as their prey. Unpredictable events such as forest fire etc can strengthen this conflict. In order to escape the forest fire caused in Berbak National Park due to El Nino Southern Oscillation, tigers moved from the forest areas into human spaces and killed humans. All these factors contribute to the destruction of coexistence of animals and humans.

It is mainly humans who are intrudes into natural habitats of animals for their own survival and in the course of this process the loss of wildlife and degradation of environment takes place. There are a number of methods that has been taken up by the people in order to restrict wildlife encroachment into human spaces. Watchtowers are built by farmers in their areas in order to spot the problem animal and to alert others about its arrival. These

watchtowers are placed within few kilometres so that it becomes easier for the farmers to detect the presence of an intruder. This direct method of vigilance is not that harmful when compared to other methods that have been adopted by the humans. The bushy and woodland areas near the boundaries of the fields are cleared off so that the problem animals can be easily spotted by the farmers. Some of them use strings oiled with pepper oil and grease as fences in order to ward off the animals as this mixture causes an irritating sensation in the animal's body. They also graze their cattle inside highly fenced areas in order to protect them from the attack of their predators. The use of electric fences caused harm to animals as their bodies are vulnerable to such electric currents and in worst cases it even led to the death of the animals. They use guard dogs so that it will alert the farmers about the presence of a wild animal and it also helped in protecting the livestock. Building of stonewalls to restrict the intrusion of wildlife into the human space was another way to restrict the encroachers. These methods can be considered as common methods which are considered to be harmless to both humans and animals. Even though many legal rules had been put into action in order to safeguard these problem animals but still humans continue to adopt such blood-shedding methods which would eventually end up in the death of animals. One of the major negative impacts of this conflict is the loss of lives. Hunters are appointed and paid in order to kill these animals. Killing is never a solution for any problem. Rather than a solution it opens up space for the new intruders and new problems. These merciless harming and killing of animals can lead to the extinction of certain species. Killing makes things more complicated than resolving it. They are killed when they become a threat to man. Both animals and humans kill each other assuming that the other one is a threat to them and it can also be seen as an attempt to save one's life. Some of these animals are displaced to a new area separating them from their natural habitat. They face more problems in adapting to the new environment where they are relocated. It's a challenge for the animals to cope up with the new life habits and

conditions as everything appears to be new for them. Fire crackers are burst so that these animals would be kept away from the human space as they can't tolerate the loud bursting sounds. But there is a chance that animals can become habituated with such sounds and can come to realization that these techniques poses no threat to them and they will continue to carry out their raiding activities. Fire is always a nightmare for animals. It's a symbol of danger for animals. They try their best to avoid the presence of fire so people keep fire burning in the areas prone to the attacks and raids by animals. Other methods such as the use of pepper sprays and growing unpalatable crops on the boundaries of the field and growing main cash crops in middle portion which can prevent the raiders from consuming the main food crops. In some local areas the communities had adopted traditional methods like setting up beehives on the borders in order prevent the entry of animals into the fields. Through the employment of hazardous techniques man is creating trouble not only for animals but also for themselves. The destruction caused by humans to nature and wildlife can be seen as man's act of digging his own grave. The equilibrium of nature is distributed by this human-wildlife conflict and it will soon lead to an imbalance which can never be restored back to nature.

Human- Elephant Conflict in India is one of the major issues which requires immediate attention and action. The conflict is fuelled by factors such as food unavailability, habitat fragmentation and destruction, overlapping of spaces. This can lead to crop and property destruction, death, injury etc. The conflict can be seen as a competition between humans and elephants over natural resources and spaces. India is one of the largest populated country and it has the largest population of Asian elephants so a peaceful coexistence between them is near to impossible as they have to encounter each other in one way or the other. Elephants are gigantic animals that have particular migratory pathways in search of forging grounds and water holes. The conflict mainly comes into action when these migratory paths are transformed into agrarian spaces and roads and railway are made on these lands.

The loss of habitat and foraging site enabled them to move towards agricultural lands to consume the crops grown there. In order to prevent the elephants from crop raiding the farmers take up retaliatory actions such as fencing the fields, poisoning and electrocution of elephants. The crop lands near to water sources frequently visited by elephants and forest areas are more prone to such intrusions by elephants. An elephant as their defence mechanism kills the farmer who tries to obstruct them. In Gadichiroli, a village in Maharashtra were a herd of twenty four elephants crop raided the agricultural areas. The constructions of roads and railways have become an obstacle to the free movements of elephants. The elephants are killed as they are knocked down by speedy trains and are prone to more injuries and harm as they are hit by the vehicles. According to the reports of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change during the period of 2009-10 to 2020-21 more than 186 elephants were found dead on railway tracks. The highest number of death reports of elephants due to train collision is reported by Assam. Thus the consequences of such infrastructure hampered the lives of animals. The natural habitats of elephants are fragmented and destructed due to human activities. Their habitats are converted into agrarian spaces, grazing land, mining and quarry areas. The shortage of space and resources drives elephants into human spaces. Elephants are hunted and poached for their ivory tusks, skin and other body parts. Humans exploit elephants to meet their greed. Elephants kill humans as part of their defence mechanism that too only at the time of need but humans kill elephants for their greed. The use of male elephants in musth when they are in aggressive state for religious processions can increase chances of being attacked by elephants. The mistreatment of elephants kept in human's captivity and the physical torture instilled on them triggers their aggressive state which provokes them to attack humans. This conflict can be avoided by minimizing the interaction between humans and elephants. Such conflicts cause great imbalance in the ecology and disrupts the stability of biodiversity.

These conflicts can be managed by preventing the encounter of humans and animals. Both of them should be left undisturbed in their territories. The construction of artificial barriers or the natural barriers can prevent the overlapping of human and animal spaces. Rivers, valleys, mountains are the natural barriers which mark the boundary for wildlife and constrain them within their space and prevent their entry into the human spaces. Artificial barriers such as wire fencing and rubble walls help to avoid the spatial overlapping. Sometimes these barriers are not successful in restraining the movement of animal into human spaces. Chain link fencing was done in the eastern side of the Gir National Park in order to prevent the movement of lions out of the protected areas into the local villages. It was not successfully carried out as it was not economically friendly. The physical and biological barriers are not always successful in their restrictive functions. Guarding of personal property such as the agricultural fields can be seen as an affordable preventive method adopted by the farmers where they guard their farms during night time accompanied by guard dogs. People can be relocated to new areas where there are low chances of encounter with animals and availability and accessibility of resources should be taken into consideration when people are relocated. Governmental organization should take up measures to provide compensations and insurances for the losses created by this conflict. The wildlife can be displaced to new areas where their needs are taken care of and where they are provided with necessary resources and are protected from human encroachments. The lost habitats of the animals can be restored back by practices like afforestation which will facilitate the regeneration of the forest areas which were once destroyed and devastated by humans. By giving back their natural habitats to wildlife, human can also live a peaceful life undisturbed by the animal intrusions.

Peaceful coexistence is the only solution to such conflicts. Humans should develop love, compassion and affection towards animals. They should value the life of even the tiniest

creature on earth. Even animals have emotions and feelings like humans and they have different ways to express and communicate and one should try to understand this and take this into consideration. Sustainable development should be promoted in such a way that it does not disturb the wildlife and also it should be able to meet the human needs. There is enough space in the nature to accommodate men but there is no space for their greed in the nature. People should be made aware of how important it is to conserve and protect the wildlife and nature. They should take up preventive measures which are not harmful to animals.

Creation of buffer areas where animals are protected and taken care of should be promoted. If they are provided with ample food sources in their areas they will not encroach into human spaces in search of food. Eco- friendly practices should be promoted so that it would not have an affect the wildlife in a negative manner. Wastes accumulated by human activities are a site of attraction for the animals. Wastes generated by humans are lethal to animals so it should be properly disposed off so that it won't affect the lives of animals and it would also prevent the animals from being attracted to human areas. Human's love and compassion towards animals can be developed by adopting animals like dogs, cats etc as their pets where humans gets a chance to communicate and connect with them and create an emotional bond with animals. Construction processes should be done in way that it doesn't block the animals' accessibility to other sources. Roads, bridges should be constructed in such a manner that it doesn't obstruct their natural pathways and it should be carried out in a wildlife friendly manner so that it would prevent accidents on roads where animals are accidentally hit by vehicles. Whenever humans are devising a plan to do something they should keep in the mind not only human concerns but also animal concerns. One should not limit his world to his own area or among his own people instead of that he should make himself aware of the fact that earth is not a space that is created exclusively for him but it is a universal space that he shares with other

living creatures. One should open his heart to animals as by doing so one becomes aware of his own soul and his own existence.

Chapter 4

Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant: A Critical Analysis

Elephants are always considered as wild and life threatening due to their massive size. They don't pose a threat to anyone unless one gets into its way and becomes an obstacle in its pathways or disturbs their movements. They are highly sensitive and emotional beings. They share similarities with humans as they are intelligent, emotional, social animal with a largest brain and they have a long life span and they have long period of dependency on the family even after many years of their birth. They can easily decipher the changes that happen in the environment. The activities of elephants have a tremendous effect on plants and animals. They are the life bearers of nature as they perform many important functions in the environment. They dig the riverbeds for the production of underground water or subsoil water for other animals. They clear the pathways in the forest for the easy movement of other animals. They keep a check on the pathogens and seed predators. They are responsible for the green cover of nature as they disperse the seeds to new areas which produce new trees in the new places. They are magnanimous creature with great level of intelligence and importance.

In this book *Matriarch Autobiography of an Elephant* by Byju. H narrates the story of two elephant families led by two matriarchs, Banti and Sundhari. The story is narrated from the perspective of an elephant. He picturizes how elephants perceive the things that happen in their surroundings and draws attention towards the how elephants view humans and their point of view on human activities. This work is not anthropocentric. It is totally eco-centric where the main focus is on nature and animals. Humans can be seen as the one who takes up the role of

both a hero and villain in the lives of the elephants. They wonder at the duplicity portrayed by the humans. The story depicts the life of an elephant as a sweet and bitter one. It is an exploration of a life full of emotions, struggles, love, care, loss and death.

The entire story is narrated from the perspective of Banti, the matriarch. The matriarchs are known as the storehouse of knowledge. They have imbibed a lot of information and knowledge from their life experiences. The families of elephants are led by the female leaders that is; the matriarchs. The guiding force for the elephants are matriarchs. Even the identification of the pathways are inherited from the matriarchs of the family. The elephants are led by their sense of smell. They can recognize distinct smells like the smell of a crushed leaf, bamboo, tiger etc and these led them through the paths. Banti believes that “the jungle has its odours and aromas” (Byju 35). In order to tackle the heat they flap their ears nonstop and this is a relief mechanism for the elephants from the hot weather. During the dry seasons Banti’s family prefer to stay near the water sources so as to prevent forest fires and also to stabilize the humidity. The scarcity of food is mainly known during the dry seasons so they use their thinking capacity and intrude into human areas to raid crops. These crops are easily available and they did not need to waste much of their energy in search of foraging grounds. During the rainy seasons they move faster as the food is abundantly available. Whenever they face food unavailability they prefer to live between the borders of village and forest for easy access to food. Their social life is mainly encircled around their matriarchs, mother- calf bonds and other bonds among themselves. The role of a matriarch in a family according to Banti is to “capture a lifetime of social, spatial and environmental knowledge of the land we live in, that is why I Banti, the Matriarch, the de facto leader of this elephant family is proud even after crossing the age of fifty- five.”(Byju 39). A female elephant cannot live her life in isolation and loneliness just like the male tuskers. They are

the cornerstone of the family and bind the entire family together. With the course of time they have accumulated knowledge about everything which is necessary for their survival. As they live in a 'multi-generational groups' the knowledge about how to live the life of an elephant, how to become an elephant and how to lead the family is passed from one generation to the other so that the daughter can take up the responsibility of her matriarch mother after her death.

Matriarchs have the spatial memories which enable them to discover new water sources especially during summer and dry seasons. They have apt knowledge not only about other animals but also about landscapes. When a calf is in trouble it sends distress signals to her family so that the family can track and detect the problem. When Banti lost her first calf as it was stuck in the mud and she was able to find her calf because of these signals. A matriarch lays the foundation for the formation of the family.

When females are in their oestrus period they produce droppings of five balls of caramel coloured dung. Males recognize the signals of sexual drive from the vaginal secretions and urine. The females have a longer gestation period. Motherhood is a celebration of life for them. The new calf is able to stand on its feet within an hour after birth. After few hours the new-born makes attempt to walk after several times of falling and rolling. The calf finds its way to get her mother's breast for drinking milk and all these activities are done by the calves without any training from their mothers as these are naturally inherent characteristics. They have basic understanding of things from the time of their birth. The coordination of the limbs of calves were not perfect. They have limited eyesight. Under bright light they viewed the world in the shades of grey and under dim light their colour vision was limited. By the second week of their birth, they become much steadier and starts use their trunk and the coordination of limbs gets much better. The calves by their first birthday would have become well skilled in independent drinking

and feeding but they still depended on their mothers for defence against their predators and for drawing nourishment and nutrition. From their young age itself they become skilled in basic survival means. They develop the ability to understand and store information and data in their brains. They have a large brain which governs and regulate their behavioural patterns.

Male tuskers leave the family after they attain certain age. They live an isolated life after being separated from their family. The aggressive period for the males is when they experience 'musth'. This is the period when males are sexually charged. "The smell of 'musth' is from a steady secretion of fluid from the temporal area, which streams down the cheeks. The swelling of the area is prominent at this period. Those times, the male is likely to have his penis erect and dripping with urine." (Byju 106). They would be in an agitated state. In this they are easily provoked by small things. He might get into fight with other males, he might hit the ground, and sometimes might follow the families. They become quite unpredictable than usual. He might even forget less as he gets involved in various other activities. Musth is not just about the sexual drive but it is a factor to determine his position in the male society. When a tusker tried to approach Rathi, who was captivated in the camp he was driven away by the local villagers but as he was in his musth which made him kill some of the people intentionally or by mistake. Male tuskers advocate a life of freedom and they are killed by the hunters for their ivory tusk. Their beauty becomes a sort of curse for them.

Due to their cognitive abilities and sharp long term memory power elephants are used by humans to carry out certain activities. They are preferably known as thinking individual. They can be easily trained by humans as they can understand things quite easily. Their mental capacity is wide enough to accommodate as much information as possible. Rathi narrates the story of captivity to Banti. Kraal is a system to train and mend the newly captured wild elephants. They

are usually for timber extraction because of their massive physical strength. In order to make them obey the instructions their calves were tied and kept captive for many weeks across the river and they were also kept in chains. After few weeks their calves were sold off in auction sale. This experience was traumatic for every mother who was held captive in the camps. In order to make them do painful timber lifting their calves were kept in custody. Rathi had lost lot of her calves like this. She had even thought of killing these humans who had inflicted such terrific physical and mental torture on her. Even though she thought of revolting back she mainly ended up in even worst condition where she was devoid of food and got all sorts of punishments and severe beatings. "I finally decided this was my fate." (Byju 109). Later the elephants captured in the camps turned to be site of attraction for the tourists. They had to carry the tourists on their back for joyride. During these rides the mahouts used to poke their ears with sharp metal rods. The mahouts trained them first by giving simple commands and later they were made to obey more complex commands. Another elderly female elephant, Bhama was for the religious processions. Elephants have the kindness towards each other. They share an empathic relationship which is depicted in the way Bhama used to sniff and feel the presence of her other mates and touched them to express her love and care towards them as they all share similar plight and difficulties in the camps. In the camps each elephant had separate elephant stand. There is also cooking space for the preparation of food for them. Kraals were not only the training area but also a place for the treatment of injured animals. They were trained by the mahout who is the main trainer and cawadi who is an assistant trainer. Elephants that were into crop raiding and killing of humans were brought to camps for getting tamed and controlled. They were left starving for days till they obeyed the instructions of the mahouts. Elephants are

exploited by humans by taking advantage of their mental and physical strength. They are prone to torture and finally lead to a traumatic end to their life.

They living beings that are able to understand the emotions and respond to it. Their reaction to the deceased or disabled conspecifics reflects the ‘theory-of-mind’. The death of Janaki, a female elephant explores mother-child relationship that exists among the elephants. They collectively mourned the death of their family member. They have their own way of paying last respect to their family members. Even after hours passed by Janaki’s calf did not allow the forest people to touch his mother’s body. The young calf was not able to digest the fact that his mother was no more. He tried to force her up and hugged her. They exhibit love and affection to the departed souls even after knowing that they won’t again come back to life. Banti died as she consumed plastics and on the occasion of her death she was visited by the non related members of other families. Her last calf, Raani visited her mother’s deceased body several times. Some of the members tried to investigate to know the reason behind her death by sniffing and inspecting her skin and by checking her skull. The elephants have the ability to identify the members of other families and also to retain their memory for a long term. They exhibit love and compassion to the ones who loves them and display their anger to the ones who badly treat them.

In this book Byju H mainly focuses on the Human- Elephant conflict in their habitats as well as in their migratory paths. It highlights the consequences that the elephants have to face due to the changes that have happened in their natural habitat such as habitat fragmentation etc. Elephants are considered as free beings who freely roam around in the wilderness of the nature without any restrictions. But certain human activities and practices restrain their pathways and limit their freedom by imposing certain restrictions. “Elephants are present everywhere in the land as humans” (Byju 37). The author in this book has mainly drawn light on the human-

elephant conflict in the Nilgiris. He has written about this conflict from the perspective of the elephants. There are many instances in the book to portray this never ending conflict between humans and elephants. Humans have made roads for their own convenience but this can be seen as a disturbance to the elephants. As the continuous movement of the safari vehicles which carry people to see the elephants is seen as the most irritating and disturbing thing faced by them as it obstructs their free pathways that are made for their free locomotion in search of natural food and water resources. This act can be taken as an act of violation and trespassing into their territories. “The presence of humans themselves become a barrier to our movements” (Byju 85). According to Banti the British had converted the travel pathways used by their ancestors into tar roads. This act can be seen as the first act of obstruction of their natural habitat and peaceful life. The hills were moulded and reshaped for the construction of roads which became a hurdle in their normal pathways. “Is this road only for humans? Or is this our road too?” (Byju 86). The irritating horns and other noises of the vehicles sometimes caused hearing impairments as elephants have very sensitive ears. The wildlife photographers with cameras made their life more unbearable as the flashlights of the cameras affected their vision. The continuous arrival of jeeps and vehicles during day and night time disturbed their entire life routine. For humans watching the elephants and observing their activities and capturing their pictures in their cameras are all a sort of entertainment but for the elephants it’s like an unbearable torture which they have to go through as they have no other option other than living their life even on the verge of pain and suffering. “In our early days, the scents of humans on vehicles were a provocation for us. Things have gradually changed, and we are learning to live with them too” (Byju 30). These lines portray how elephants felt about the presence of humans in their territories and how they have learnt to adjust with the activities of man as they have no other option. They are mute creatures that are only able

to communicate through their gestures and actions which are always misinterpreted by man which in turn becomes a threat to their own life.

According to Banti, the matriarch civilization had affected their life in such a manner that they find it difficult to cope up with the new changes. Civilization activities such as construction of dams, irrigation canals etc had led to the disappearance of the green cover of the forest. According to her before the construction of the tar roads there used to thick forests and muddy paths in their place. With the construction of roads their homes were partially cleared off and a huge load of machinery and other construction equipment were introduced into their home spaces. For Banti the cylindrical pipes, communication lines laid between hilltop reservoir and powerhouse became a hindrance to their free movement. The Shola forest disappeared in a flash of moment as firewood were cut in order to generate fire to keep animals away from approaching the workers. The noise made by the machines used to generate electricity was unbearable for Banti and her herd. Coffee, sugar, tea and other plantations replaced their habitats. Their home space has been converted into tourist spots. The construction of railways by using the migratory routes of elephants led to many disasters. Shankar became an orphan as his entire family died as they were hit by train. “The badly mutilated body of my mom exposed along with the aborted male foetus lay on the long railway track as the train stopped with the impact of three giants on the track in front of the engine.” (Byju 115). Human’s curiosity to know about other living creatures had basically paved the way for the exploitation of animals. “Human visitors see us only as showpieces” (Byju 39). Even a forest fire becomes a spectacle for the humans. The reckless movement of vehicles triggered the young tusker, Kaanthan who charged towards the vehicle in an intimidating way to attack the vehicle. The tolerance level of elephants has a limit beyond which they go wild and crazy.

Not all humans behave cruelly towards animals. There are people who are truly affectionate and caring towards animals and who really wants to peacefully co-exist with animals without causing any disturbance to them. This double sided nature of humans always left the animals in a confused state regarding the human's attitude towards them. On one side there are group of people who mercilessly kills and exploits animals and their habitat and on the other side there are people who call themselves as animal- lovers and work for the rights and safety of animals. According to Banti, they are actually amazed by this "duplicity in human behaviour" (Byju 37). In Banti's opinion the only good man who she has ever met in her life was Siva, the forest man. In this book he represents the community who have sympathy and emotional attachment towards animals and who works for the welfare of animals. The existence of people like Siva is a proof that there are still people who are not blinded by greed and cruelty. Banti knew Siva since her childhood. She was familiar with his smell. "I could recognize his unique scent. The common thing for me all these years was his unique scent and his ever- growing love for us" (Byju 57). His presence was a kind of assurance that they would be protected in one way or the other. Siva lived in a community who were into hunting and he had learned skills through his experiences. He was good at tracking animals in the forest and later their community shifted to agriculture. Even though his community lost their natural identity due to the new advancements but still Shiva's inner self remained the same. Once Banti lost her first calf after they were coming from the marshes. As she got no signals from the calf she stood in the middle of the road which led to a traffic jam. The forest department people started bursting and throwing crackers at her. Siva came to rescue her calf that got stuck in the mud. He lifted her calf on his shoulder and rescued the calf and became a medium for the reunion of Banti and her calf. Banti expressed her gratitude by raising her trunk to salute him. This incident initiated the heart-

warming bond between Banti and Siva. He plays the role of protector of the jungle. When he saw that few youngsters have gathered in the forest to drink alcohol, he reminded them that they are the protectors of the jungle and had spent their life living harmoniously with animals by respecting each other and they should not throw any waste or plastics in the jungle as it was harmful for the wildlife and nature and they should not do anything that disrupted the peace of jungle. At the time of death of Earan, male tusker Siva came with the veterinarian and forest department officials to do the post-mortem. He paid his last respect to Earan by a salute and he broke into tears as he was so saddened by his death. He felt like as if he had lost a family member: “Any loss of these giants is a loss in our family. We both live in the same home.”(Byju 58). The only trustworthy human for Banti was Siva and she was much at ease with people only in his presence. Through the character of Siva Banti one gets to know the real humane nature of man. He is the representative of every human who has compassion and love towards animals. His presence and interaction with animals in the story depicts the possibility of a harmonious co-existence of humans and animals.

The violent attitude of humans are “more evident in their act of mistreatment of animals. For humans animals are considered as a means to make profit. The inhuman behaviour of man sometimes proves that it’s better to be an animal than to be a man. The way a person treats an animal reflects the real picture of his heart. A man who hurts innocent creature like animals depicts his ability to hurt even his fellow beings. If he can’t even show kindness to mute creatures like animals then how can one expect from him basic manners and kindness. Wildlife is as valuable as a human life. A person’s entire character can be understood by the way in which he treats an animal. When a person portrays his extreme form of cruelty he is referred to as an animal. But for animals, using their reference for humans would be considered as an insult to

them as animals are far better than humans. They only attack when they detect a threat to their life and attacking is only their defence mechanism but humans they hunt and poach for making personal profits and benefits. Even after being aware of the fact that the humans cannot exist without nature and wildlife they continue to exploit and degrade them in their own ways. In this book, Byju has written about the ways man take everything for granted and contribute more and more not for the protection of nature but for its exploitation. Hunting and poaching are the main method by which humans harm animals. He has written about the instances in which mugger crocodiles in the dam areas were hunted by the people in earlier periods. With the course of time along with hunting they skinned the crocodiles and made money out of it. Fishermen poisoned the water resources for an easy catch. The peaceful coexistence was tampered by life threatening activities by man. These kinds of activities diminished the number of animals. They were constantly attacked, chased, killed and harassed. According to Banti “the occupants have become occupiers” (Byju 69). Hunting and poaching are further supported by the commercial industry by commercializing animal skin, tooth etc. In this book there are many incidents where male tuskers are killed for their tusk as it is believed to have medicinal and commercial purpose. Even their hidden teeth are in high demand. Banti saw a board with the picture of their teeth as it is used as a ayurvedic remedy for human hair loss and she was confused to see such a board as it didn’t made any sense to her. Kempan, a young male tusker in Banti’s family was killed by a notorious gang and they robbed him of his beauty that is, his tusks. One day Kempan was grazing in the jungle then he was suddenly alarmed by the unfamiliar smell of humans and identified the presence of a stranger as he was familiar with smell of the nearby villagers. He saw a lean man with a gun. But Kempan was not aware about gun and he mistook it as a stick. The gang members circled him from various directions and started to provoke him by throwing pebbles

and by hitting him with stick. He tried to retaliate but all his attempts became futile as he was shot thrice by them. Blood was oozing out of his wounds on forehead, ears and body. Then two of the gang members mercilessly cut off the tusks of Kempan. This incident portrays how humans are worse than animals. According to Siva if such incidents continues to happen then the population of elephants will become really low as there will be no male elephants left to mate. This will affect the entire ecosystem. Banti says that she is confused by the way in which humans behave. Once there was a fight between Kempan and Bomman, another male tusker in which Kempan was badly injured. Siva tried to help him by bringing veterinary doctor who used a gun similar to the one possessed by the gang members. So Banti is confused by the fact that they used same type of weapon to both save and kill them. In her opinion men cannot be easily trusted and trusting men always came with a price.

In this story the confusing behaviour of humans towards animals is highlighted. Human's attitude towards them are very difficult to understand as they tend to change their ways according to their convenience. One day as Banti and her family was passing nearby the township near the highway she saw poster in which it was written "Kaneer Anjali for Maharaja (Tearful farewell for Maharaja)" (Byju 128). This phrase was used to bid a sorrowful farewell for Kattayan, a twenty year old tusker. Garlands were put on the poster and she heard the telephonic conversation of a man who was expressing his sadness over the demise of Kattayan. He died as he was captured by the forest department as a result of a full week's effort. He was a trouble maker for the villagers as he used to intrude into their fields and destroyed their fields and homes and he had even killed few men. He was captured and displaced to the kraal, a camp for training. But he was so aggressive and adamant to get back his freedom that he hit his head on the wooden poles in order to escape from the kraal. This caused him many injuries in his skull which led to

his death. Banti found humans as hypocrites as it was the same villagers who threw stones and burst crackers to ward away the hungry elephants and now they are bidding farewell for the elephants that became the victim of their torture and had to sacrifice their life. Even Sundhari's family had witnessed this double natured attitude of humans. Paarur, youngest daughter of Sundhari once fell into the well as she was rescued by the villagers. Humans doesn't believe in sharing space with other fellow creatures and even don't have a sense of belongingness to a particular place. Humans find new ways to cause trouble for the animals. In their anger and revenge they set fire on the natural habitats of the animals. Banti is confused that whether she should trust men or not. As on one side they mourn for the loss of wildlife and willingly shares food with other fellow creatures and on other side they use stones, chilly powder and crackers to ward them off from human spaces. Some of them hunt them down for their hair and tusks. She finds it very strange as she really don't know who are their real friends and who are their really enemies. These are the same people who worship and seek the blessings of Elephant God who harms elephants without any hesitation.

Humans are considered as outsiders who intrude into the animal space. They establish their land as their own by fencing it out even though it has been snatched away from the animals. From an animal's perspective it is always humans who obstruct their freedom by imposing restrictions on them through their cruel and oppressive ways. This human-wildlife conflict can be seen as a fight between both of them in order to establish who is the real custodian of nature. The struggle is to gain recognition as the sole owner of earth. Rather than sharing the space and co-existence they opt for conflict and division. They are passing through the phase of survival of the fittest. In order to prevent the entry of elephants into human areas they set up electric fences which separated the animal space and human space. Komban tried to pass through the electric

fences and he got his entire trunk burned as the electric current went through all over his body which resulted in his death. He used to steal through the farms to eat carrots and in order to put an end to these excursions by Komban he was chased by the farmers by bursting crackers. Two female elephants from Sundhari's family Janaki and Jaanu had to meet their end as they were poisoned by the people. They had Jackfruits which had pesticide residues in it which ultimately led to their deaths. Animals as an innocent creatures falls victim to the cruelty of man. Both fight for their survival and existence but in the process they wipe out the existence of the other party. The only means taken up by both animals and humans resolve these conflicts are violence. There has been many animal friendly laws implemented by the government but none of these laws are actually put into force or taken seriously by the people. Elephants as they are innocent animals they fall victim to the cruel deeds of humans. This book gives an overall awareness about how an elephant feels when their right to life and freedom are violated by humans. According to Banti "we can't help the situation we are in until the humans decide to live along with us" (Byju 173). A voice is given to the thoughts of elephants which is otherwise ignored by humans as they present the problems of animals in their own perspective so that it doesn't cause much of disturbance to their life. They are massive creatures standing at the verge of extinction and struggling for their existence. The book gives an outlook of how elephants are designed to carry out certain necessary functions and how they determine the presence of humans in their lives as dangerous and confusing. Elephants are portrayed as emotional beings capable of changing the entire structure of nature.

Conclusion

Animals are not mere beings inferior to men. They too have the authority over the world as their presence and absence can make huge difference in world scenario. Anthropocentrism is replaced by eco-centricism where the dominant mode of thought is rooted in nature. Humans are not considered as the superior master of the world. The anthropocentric approach enabled human behaviour as the dominant standard against which the animal behaviourism is analysed and they are stamped with an inferior status. The thought process of humans should be altered in such a way that it will take into consideration the existence of varieties of perspectives other than the human perspective. The world has been governed by the authority of humans over other things. Animals should not be considered as a negative counterpart of humans. The animality in humans enables human to understand animals to an extent. They should be provided with their rightful deserving position in the world. The hierarchical distinction between humans and animals should be erased and instead of division they should peacefully coexist with each other. Animals should be given importance in the world as they perform varieties of functions and they are appreciated for their significant roles in the nature. Animals are beings with emotions, feelings and reason. Though their logical reasoning doesn't match up with that of humans doesn't make them categorize as lower beings. Their rights and freedom should be protected and should be taken care of with ample efforts. Animals were considered as mute creatures capable of doing nothing by the early philosophers but with the course of time an importance is accustomed to animals. Animals have the ability to comprehend and understand but they do that in a way that is not identified by humans. Animals are born free so no one can put them in chains. Their wilderness is much explored by humans so that they can make strategies to tame them. In the

contemporary world scenario animals are given importance which is evident in their appearance in numerous novels and poetry and humans use their imagination to explore the world of animals.

Humans basically proclaim a master-slave relationship with animals. They consider superiority over animals as a means to exploit them and demean and devalue the existence of animals. Animals are exploited in order to satisfy the envy, ego of animals. Human- animal relationship is traumatic and problematic as it is based on hierarchical order. The conflicts between humans and animals is basically about to establish the notion of ownership and authority over the world. Humans exploit animals to satisfy their personal greed and needs and whereas animals believe to follow a peaceful life away from humans in order to prevent the oppressive encounter between humans and wildlife. The threats caused to animals by the humans directly affect the nature. The humans who exhibit the cruellest form of humanity is always referred to as an animal. Animals are considered as problematic by the humans but in reality it is the humans who basically encroach into human spaces and try to estate their authority over everything that rightfully doesn't belong to them. Humans have incomplete perception about animals as they don't enough knowledge about the animal world. In reality humans are animals but this reality is hardly accepted by humans. Humans are perceived individual person but animals are referred as things or object of precarious nature. The geometry of human-animal relationship is quite complex and complicated. Man pretends to be ignorant of the animal nature and behaviourism. For animals, humans are the intruders of their life and the destructive force that disorients the balance of the ecology. The dynamics of the relationship between humans and animals are symbiotic and co-dependent.

Elephant is gigantic creature with high level of emotional and intelligence level. They are the best companions for humans. They never intentionally harm people. They attack humans as a part of their defence mechanism to protect themselves from the cruel intentions of humans. They perform many functions as the seed dispenser, perpetuators of life and have great significance in the ecology. They provide support for the survival of other small creatures. Elephants and humans have similarities such as they both are social, emotional and intelligent. They follow systematic daily routines. They come into conflict with humans as they encroach into their natural habitats and obstruct their pathways. They became the victims of human oppression and exploitation. In the name of progress and development animals like elephants are mentally and physically harassed by the humans. Their rights should be protected and safeguarded from humans. Animals should be accorded with same importance that is given to the human who is also an animal. Animal ethics come into play to voice the needs and interests of animals. Elephants basically are innocent creatures but the violent behaviour of man towards them provokes them to bring out the bestiality which is kept dormant in their inner self. The ethical notion of considering animals as a living creature with soul and emotions advocates for their rights and freedom. But the man made institution of law which advocates for animal rights are centred on human perspective that favours human intentions and ignores the real interests and needs of animals. Animals and humans complete each other in the world as they are dependent on each other. By advocating for the rights of animals, humans are given a reality check about their activities that hampers the peaceful existence of animals. The peaceful coexistence of animals and humans is near to an impossible task.

According to the great elephant field biologist, late Ajay Desai: “The soft golden light of the setting sun lit the elephant and it’s mahout a few minutes before night plunged them into

darkness. That instant in time seemed to sum up the story of the elephant and its long association with man. A glorious association, it begins with Indus Valley Civilization (3,000 BC)” (Byju 208).

The association of man and elephant is interwoven as they depend on each other in one or the other way. Elephants also possess the right to life and freedom which should be recognized by humans. By protecting elephants and their landscapes and recognizing their rights, needs and interests, humans are saving themselves and their future. The future of humans lies in the hands of animals. So they can't be ignored but should be protected and treated well. Without developmental and advancements humans cannot survive in this progressive world. But this progress and development should not be achieved at the cost of animal lives, biodiversity and natural resources. Human should learn to adopt sustainable forms to conserve and protect our natural resources and biodiversity by employing animal and eco friendly conservative programmes and policies. The prediction of future depends upon the interaction between humans and animals.

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