

**Literature and More-Than-Human Encounters in India:
A 2-day workshop on Human-Wildlife Conflict in Indian Literature**

The increasing prevalence of human-wildlife conflict (HWC) in India has become a critical environmental and social issue. As human populations expand and encroach on natural habitats, interactions between humans and wildlife have escalated, often resulting in tragic outcomes for both. Discourses surrounding HWC are often deeply anthropocentric, framing wildlife primarily as predators and emphasizing human losses, such as crop and livestock damage, typically tied to economic activity. This perspective predominantly highlights negative interactions, with scant attention given to positive encounters or the broader ecological and cultural benefits of coexistence. Discussions rarely attempt to reconceptualize conflict beyond the narrative of mutual harm, failing to explore alternative frameworks that might better integrate both human and wildlife well-being.

This workshop is premised on the hypothesis that literary representations of HWC or more-than-human encounters can help us expand our conceptualizations of HWC. We aim to explore if and how literature can challenge anthropocentric views of HWC, offering perspectives that emphasize interspecies empathy, interdependence, and the intrinsic value of wildlife beyond their economic impact on human activities. We invite submissions from scholars across disciplinary borders to engage with any aspect of HWC as represented in Indian literature, spanning any genre, language and historical period from pre-independence to the present. We especially welcome a focus on different kinds of animals—snakes, birds, elephants, bears, and any other animal encountered in the wild—as we do not want to focus only on one particular animal, such as tigers. Prospective submissions must aim to show how HWC is critically conceptualized in literature rather than merely analyzing the story itself. The goal of this workshop is to interrogate HWC through literature to generate insights that can have practical and policy implications for HWC management and assessment.

Call for Abstracts

We invite abstracts of 300-500 words that engage with the above thematic areas or any related aspects of human-wildlife conflict in Indian literature for a 2 day online workshop on August 23-24, 2024. The workshop is open to scholars from any field, including literature, sociology, anthropology, human ecology, conservation science and cultural studies. Submissions could be on literature written in any Indian language and should reflect on the ways literary texts contribute to our understanding of HWC and its significance in the Indian Anthropocene, as well as the possibilities they suggest for coexistence between humans and wildlife.

Submission Guidelines

Abstracts of 300-500 words should be sent to indiananimalstudiescollective@gmail.com by July 21st.

Please include a brief bio (up to 100 words) with your submission.