

Project RE-HAB of Karnataka

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In news : In order to mitigate human-elephant conflict a project-REHAB has been launched in Kodagu, Karnataka recently

What is project RE-HAB?

Project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees) launched in Kodagu **entails installing bee boxes(bee fences) along the periphery of the forest and the villages** with the belief that the elephants will not venture anywhere close to the bees and thus avoid transgressing into human landscape. This idea stems from the **elephants' proven fear of the bees.**

Aim of the project

Reducing human and elephant fatalities using honey bees as a fence against the pachyderms, without causing any harm to the animals

More about the project

- **Initiative of:** The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), it is a sub-mission of KVIC's National Honey Mission.
- It was launched at four locations around Chelur village in Kodagu district by KVIC chairman
- Locations: These spots are located on the periphery of Nagarahole National Park and Tiger Reserve, known conflict zones.

How does it work?

- 15 to 20 interspersed bee boxes have been set up by KVIC at each of the four locations.
- The bee boxes are set up in the passageways of human-elephant conflict zones to block the entrance of elephants to human habitations.

- The bee boxes are connected with a string so that when elephants attempt to pass through, a tug causes the bees to swarm the elephant herds and dissuade them from progressing further.
- Bee boxes have been placed on the ground as well as hung from the trees.
- High resolution, night vision cameras have been installed at strategic points to record the impact of bees on elephants and their behaviour in these zones.

Impact assessment

KVIC has involved the College of Forestry under the University of Agriculture and Horticultural Sciences, Ponnampet, for impact assessment of the project.

Advantages of the project

- Project helps dissuading elephants without causing any harm to them
- It is cost effective as compared to various other measures such as digging trenches or erecting fences

Elephant attacks in India

During the year 2015-2020, around 500 people have lost their lives in elephant attacks across India out of which about 170 human fatalities have been reported in Karnataka alone, according to KVIC.