

# Why Elephants Attack the Human Civilization in and Around Western Ghats in South India

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**Abstract:** *The frequency of attacks of the mighty beasts in and around human civilization is on a constant rise. More so in the villages and towns those are near to Western Ghats of south India. The frequency has been increasing steadily but surely more so from the last four to five years. There are so many factors that may attract the elephants towards the human world. It may not be water crisis because it is available plenty in and around the Western Ghats. The bamboo is Asian elephant's favorite meal<sup>1</sup>. Now a day, the bamboo trees are very scarce and are becoming extinct. The bamboos were profoundly seen on the outskirts of the Kalpetta and Sultan Bathery, pointing towards the fact that the beasts may turn in for its favorite food.*

**Keywords:** Bamboo, Beasts, Human civilization, Elephants, Western Ghats

## 1. Introduction

The frequency of attacks of the mighty beasts in and around the human civilization is on a constant rise. More so in the villages and towns that are near the western ghats of south India. The frequency has been increasing steadily but surely from the last four to five years<sup>1</sup>. In the region of Waynad, the attacks of the elephants have been increasing, especially in the region of Kalpetta and Sultan Bathery. People have lost their lives and heavy losses of the property have been reported. Forest officials have been scratching their brains and many hypotheses have been put forward. But steps that have been taken appear not satisfactory neither to humans nor the beasts. However there seems to be uprising in the frequency of attacks on the human traffic causing casualties. I am putting forward my views on this, which may help to restrain the elephants in their natural habitats and the beautiful human souls of Wayanad can continue to work peacefully.

## 2. Discussion

There are so many factors that may attract the elephants towards the human world. It may not be the water because it's plenty in and around the Western Ghats. Next thing that

caught my mind when travelling from Sultan Bathery towards Mysore were Bamboo Tree.

One of the most profoundly found vegetation of bamboos in this region; belong to the species *Dendrocalamus strictus* and *Bamboosa arundinacea*. *Bambusa arundinacea*, which grows to a height of 80-100ft, has a life span of 45 to 60 years, when it flowers and dies after seeding. The flowering, often gregarious where vast stretches of forest flowers at a time, or sporadic with flowering occurring in a particular locality and progressing to other parts of the forests.

Elephants eating bamboo leaves, young shoots and even bamboo trees used to be a common sight while travelling on the road and incidentally the bamboo trees were found in large number by the side of the roads. The bamboo trees are Asian elephant's favourite meal<sup>2</sup>. Now a days the bamboo trees are very scarce. I observed that the bamboo, that were once lush green in colour have totally dried up. Not even a single bamboo was standing alive. The fact for that was the life cycle of bamboo. Meantime the bamboos were profoundly seen on the outskirts of the Kalpetta and Sultan Bathery, pointing towards the fact that the beasts may turn in for its favourite food.



**Image 1:** Living Bamboo abundant near the outskirts of the towns



**Image 2:** Dead and dried bamboos in the forest

### 3. Conclusion

The scarcity of the elephant's favorite food in the forests and its abundance in the outskirts of the towns are alarmingly attracting the elephants towards such areas. It may be kindly suggested to the Department of Forest, either to plant fresh saplings of bamboo in the forest or to remove the existing bamboos on the outskirts of the towns. Another thing that can be done is to avoid farming of banana and sugarcane on the outskirts of such towns. The fresh saplings that are growing in between the dead bamboo trees, as a result of seeds that have been dispersed, will take at least 5 to 10 years to grow<sup>3</sup>. And eventually the elephants will get its favourite food there but, till then some necessary action has to be taken to keep the elephants at bay and avoid dangerous encounters with such mighty beasts.

### Reference

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