Environment & Ecology · GS - III

Human-elephant conflict in India increasingly reflects a landscape-level ecological problem rather than merely an issue of animal intrusion. Analyse.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 28/11/2026	GS - III	Environment & Ecology

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Habitat fragmentation, elephant corridors, land-use change, ecological connectivity, community participation, landscape conservation

Model Answer

Elephants are wide-ranging mammals that depend on connected forest landscapes for food, water, breeding and seasonal movement. Increasing human-elephant conflict is closely associated with changes in these landscapes.

Underlying ecological factors:

1. **Habitat fragmentation:** Roads, railways, mining and settlements divide continuous forests into smaller patches.
2. **Resource depletion:** Reduced availability of natural forage and water encourages elephants to move beyond protected areas.
3. **Corridor disruption:** Encroachment and infrastructure development obstruct traditional migration routes.
4. **Human exposure:** Agricultural expansion and settlements along elephant movement routes increase encounters and crop damage.
5. **Climate variability:** Changes in rainfall and water availability can influence seasonal movement patterns.

Landscape-level response:

- Identify, legally secure and restore important elephant corridors.
- Coordinate wildlife monitoring across State boundaries.

- Integrate ecological considerations into infrastructure planning.
- Establish community-based early-warning systems and rapid-response teams.
- Promote habitat restoration and suitable compensation mechanisms for affected communities.

The ecological connectivity approach is more sustainable than treating each human-elephant encounter as an isolated incident.

Conclusion: Managing human-elephant conflict requires conservation beyond protected-area boundaries. Connected habitats, inter-State coordination and community participation are essential for long-term coexistence.

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