Article DOI Link: https://doi.org/10.3126/shss.v1i2.87654

Spectrum of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS)
A Multidisciplinary Bilingual Journal
ISSN 3059-9849; Volume 1, Issue 2, December 2025, pp.145-160
Indexed in Nepal Journals Online (NepJOL)
Research Article

Open access article

Perceived Attitude of Buffer Zone Area People towards Wildlife Conservation in Bardiya National Park

Umesh Kumar Gupta[1], **Sant Kumar Verma**[1]

[1]Babai Multiple Campus Gulariya, Mid-West University, Nepal

Abstract

Understanding the local communities' attitudes toward conservation areas is crucial to conservation area management planning. However, what socio-economic and demographic factors drive their attitude. The objective of this study is to determine the status of awareness of Dallagaun people and their attitudes towards wildlife and its conservation. Survey design method was used having 126 households of that community and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. Findings reveal that Community demonstrates positive perception and attitude towards wildlife conservation recognizing its ecological, economic, and social value. Conservation helps maintain ecological balance, supports future generations, and contributes to local economic growth and wildlife-based tourism, with the highest support (Mean: 3.92) shown for inclusive policy participation, actual participation in conservation programs and willingness to volunteer are relatively lower, indicating a gap between support and engagement, There is a clear desire for increased community involvement in conservation decisions, which presents a valuable opportunity to enhance participation through inclusive, benefit-sharing, and education-driven strategies, ensuring that local voices are central to wildlife policy and practice.

Article Info.

Article History
Received: 5 August 2025
Revised: 5 October 2025
Accepted: 20 November 2025

Corresponding Author
Umesh Kumar Gupta
: umesh.gupta@mu.edu.np

Publisher
Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Mid-West University
Birendranagar, Surkhet
https://muodgshss.edu.np

Keywords: Bardiya National Park, Community attitudes, Local communities, Perceptions, Protected areas

Introduction

The assessment of individuals' perceptions and attitudes towards conservation has become an important aspect of wildlife conservation studies (Ebua et al., 2011). Wild life conservation depends upon attitude of people (Mir et al., 2015).Human-wildlife conflict has been one of the important

conservation issues in the recent years, increasing human population, loss of natural habitats, and in some cases increased wildlife population due to successful conservation programs (Messmer, 2009).Wildlife conservation and biodiversity are necessary to safeguard the maintenance of ecosystem services and the sustainability operative of the earth system (Perrings et al., 2011). International conservation organizations as well as national governments have formulated many policies and programs for ecological balance through wildlife conservation (Clark,1993). Wildlife conservation in developing countries is too challenging because Community people livelihood depends on Natural resources (DeGeorges & Reilly, 2009). The community attitudes can govern the achievement and failure of wildlife conservation, they have a significant impact on management decisions, government policies and laws that are designed to protect wildlife (Weladji et al., 2003).

The World has undergone a transition in wildlife resource management from fortress conservation to community wildlife conservation (Muboko, 2017). People of Nepal are highly dependent on forest resources and face many challenges regarding wildlife (Shrestha et al., 2014). People who are living near conservation protected areas may get direct experience and impact on wildlife (Karanth & Nepal, 2012). Community People also depend on natural resources such as food, shelter, and other ecosystem services, and the quality of their natural resources affects their daily lives (Richardson, 2010). Rapid growth of population has increased the demand for food and natural services in the communities around protected areas (Mcneely, 2020). The way of supporting Community is also dependent on perceptions of the effectiveness and quality of management and governance policies, institutions, and processes (Bennett et al., 2019). Rapid expansion of agricultural activity in and around protected areas has split and shrunken the natural habitats of wild animals (Hansen & DeFries, 2007). The continuous increase in the human population results in competition between people and wildlife for shared but limited resources, which create various types of conflict (Mekonen, 2020). Conflict with wildlife can cause direct material and economic damage such as crop-raiding, livestock predation, property damage, human death and injury, and the reactive killing of wildlife (Gemeda & Meles, 2018a). Conflicts become extremely controversial when people are attacked by wild animals that are endangered and legally protected. First, attacks by wildlife are life-threatening and these activities are not acceptable to society, so people often retaliate by killing the animals involved in the conflict (Hamman et al.,2016).

The conservation of wildlife is dependent upon on community acceptance (Mogomotsi et al., 2020a). People's perceptions replicate the beliefs that they got from their experiences and interactions with a particular activity of conservation wildlife (Baird et al., 2009). People who are the residents near conservation areas have positive social impacts on eco-tourism and with the income of tourism people have a quality of life and good education and they develop a skill for attacking visitors (Bhatta, 2019).

Various researchers (Htay et al., 2022; Lamichhane et al., 2020; Mehta & Heinen, 2001; Paudel et al., 2024; Pokharel et al., 2023; Shawon et al., 2025) studies on the topic related to Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards Wildlife Conservation however there are under research in the case of Nepal. Also, these studies do not compare with community perceptions and attitudes between different wildlife conservation areas (Ngonidzashe Mutanga et al., 2015). Hence, this study focuses on the understanding of Dallagaun community people towards wildlife conservation in Bardiya National Park. This research aims to explore the perceptions and attitudes towards wildlife conservation. To achieve the mentioned objectives, we devise the following research question.

To what extent do community people understand conservation objectives and their impact on livelihoods in Bardiya National Park?

Literature Review

Yellowstone is the first protected area (PA) established in the world, in 1872, as a response from the western civilization to uncontrolled degradation of biodiversity and ecosystem services (Andrade & Rhodes, 2012). Many protected areas have been established in the same way conventional and exclusionary top-down approach applied at Yellowstone in 1872 (Schelhas, 2010). Many protected areas have failed to consider other important factors, including social, cultural, and political issues (Holmes, 2013). Frequently, communities are prohibited from extracting natural resources that are important for their livelihoods, and in many occasions, traditional communities are removed from their lands with suitable compensation (Fuentes, 2017).

In 1973 scientific management of Protected Areas in Nepal started when King Birendra approved Bill the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation for establishing Chitwan National Park (Croes, K.D. 2006). In 1980 Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC), which is responsible for overall management of protected areas, was founded (Tiwari, 2022). Bardiya National Parks has undergone a number of changes in terms of property rights and changes in conservation status (Paudel, 2012). The area was first declared to be a Royal Hunting Reserve in 1969 but their regulations and policies were not enforced as strictly, thus the access to the resource was available to members of the local community (Thapa & Chapman, 2010). and in 1988 the reserve was upgraded to national park status and thus giving birth to the current Bardiya National Park (Thapa Karki 2013).

Communities and Conservation

Nepal has recently started a community-based conservation approach to managing its protected areas, as reflected in institutional, legislative, and regulatory changes (Baral & Heinen, 2020). The Conservation Area Act of 1989 allowed creation of conservation areas in Nepal (Chaudhary, 2000). Community development conservation is promoted, and the management structure should be Participatory based. As an extension of this approach, the Buffer Zone Management Act, passed in 1993, allowed for the management of buffer zones (Heinen & Mehta, 2000).

Human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is where humans and wildlife coexist and compete for the same limited resources (D. K & F., 2021). In 2080/81 fiscal years total 2166 different types of HWC casualties occurred in BNP (BNP.2023). Human-wildlife conflict is particularly prevalent where there is a continuously growing human population, extensive habitat loss and, in other instances, where there has been an increase in forest-cover as a result of effective conservation measures activities (Baral et al., 2021).

Factors that Influencing Community Attitudes toward Wildlife Conservation

Although the disciplinary definition of attitude differs, research in conservation has classified an attitude as a human evaluative response of an object in terms of favor or disfavor (Ihemezie et al., 2021). The attitude of an individual rises from his or her beliefs, knowledge, experience and contacts with the attitude thing (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2018).

Perceptions by communities of protected areas are important to determining whether conservation succeeds or not; these influence people's behavior and attitudes towards conservation (Abukari & Mwalyosi, 2020). Attitude work is now being useful tools for measuring public understanding, acceptability and effectiveness of conservation interventions (Nilsson et al., 2020). Wildlife Conservation attitudes are influenced by a number of factors both positively and negatively (Hariohay et al., 2018). The impact of benefits in changing attitudes and mobilizing local support may

be improved by regular contacts between the wildlife authorities and the community's people (Moswete et al., 2020). Socio-economic characteristics (gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, land ownership, household income) have most often been the usual determinants in attitudes (Sánchez et al., 2016).

Reducing Conflicts between Human and Wildlife

Human wildlife conflict has been in existence for as long as human beings have existed and wild animals together with people have shared the same lands and resources (Nyhus, 2016). Reducing human-wildlife conflicts can assist natural resource conservation (Garshelis et al., 2020). When wildlife attacks crop and kills livestock, farmers take revenge for their property damages. Compensation, wildlife population control and protective methods are used to deal with human-wildlife conflicts (Wang et al., 2024).

Methodology

Study Area

Bardiya National Park (BNP) is one of the largest protected areas in the lowland Terai covering an area of 368 km2 in the Bardiya districts of western Nepal (Koirala et al., 2020). The terrain of the park ranges from 152 m to 1561 m from mean sea level (BNP, 2020). BNP provides a home to around 61 species of mammals including tigers, leopards, rhino ceros, elephants, and spotted deer and 513 species of birds, 42 herpetofauna and 120 fishes have been recorded from the park area. The southern end of the park extends into Khata forest corridor, connecting to Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary in India (BNP, 2020).

Madhuwan is a municipality located in Bardiya District of Lumbini Province of Nepal. The municipality was established on 2 December 2014, when the government announced 61 more new municipalities. This new municipality was established merging the two then VDCs, e.g. Sanoshree and Taratal and this new municipality was named Sanoshree Taratal. On 10 March 2017, two more VDCs Suryapatawa and Dhodhari Incorporated merged with this municipality and renamed it to Madhuwan. Suryapatawa ward No-1 Dallagaun was selected for the study. This was a backward area of this municipality and far from municipalities and very near from BNP. Bardiya National Park touches the border of the municipality by north. This research is mainly based on primary data which is obtained through household survey, direct observation. The questionnaires included close ended questions

Participants

The data was collected using the primary method. Then the data collected is computed and interpreted based on the objectives of the Study. The participants were Community people of Dallagaon.126 household people were. Among the 126 households 50 are male 76 Female were respondents.

Data Collection

This research is mainly based on primary data which is obtained through household survey, direct observation. The questionnaires included close ended questions. Research data were collected by using the survey method and the questionnaire is divided into six sections of 20 questions. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with each statement, allowing researchers to quantify and analyze their community perceptions and attitudes toward wildlife conservation the subject being studied.

Research Instrument

The main research instrument of this study is a questionnaire. It consists of three sections; Section 1. Demographic Information, Section 2, Part A: Awareness and Knowledge of Wildlife

Conservation Part B. Attitudes towards Wildlife and Conservation Efforts, Part C. Human-Wildlife Conflict and Concern Part D. Community Involvement and Support for Conservation. Part E. Perceived Benefits of Conservation.Section1 consist of 7 questions Section 2 has 20 question close ended questions. Respondents indicate their level of agreement with each statement, allowing researchers to quantify and analyze their Community Perceptions and Attitudes towards the subject being studied. Each part of the questionnaire consists of Likert scales strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree.

Data Analysis

The collected data from the questionnaire were computed, processed and analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

Results

Socio-demographic factors of the respondent that influence community perceptions and attitudes toward wildlife conservation

Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Respondents*

Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Sex Respondent	Male	50	39.39
	Female	76	60.31
Age of Respondent	18-30	28	22.22
	31-40	31	24.6
	41-50	31	24.6
	51-60	25	19.85
	61+	11	8.73
Education level of the respondent	Master	1	0.79
	Bachelor	5	3.97
	12	8	6.34
	10/SLC/SEE	27	21.42
	Non-formal education	85	67.47
Occupation of Respondent	Farmer	101	80.16
	Trade/Business	10	7.94
	Government Employee	2	1.59
	Other	13	10.31
Length of Residence Near Conservation Area 2025	1-5	2	1.59
	5-10	3	2.38
	11-20	8	6.34
	20+	113	89.69

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Demographic Characteristics of the Survey Respondents

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of respondents participating in the study on wildlife conservation awareness and impact. It includes variables such as sex, age, education level, occupation, and length of residence near the conservation area. These factors help to understand the background of

respondents and how their personal characteristics may influence their perception of wildlife and conservation issues. The first statement results show that Out of the total respondents, 60.31 percent were female, while 39.39 percent were male. This indicates that females constituted the majority of the participants. The higher participation of women suggests their active involvement in community and household-level issues, possibly reflecting their direct experiences with wildlife.

In the second statement the result revealed that the age distribution shows that respondents were from various age groups. The 31–40 and 41–50 age categories each represented 24.60 percent of the total respondents, followed closely by 18–30 years 22.2 percent and 51–60 years 19.85 percent only 8.73 percent were aged 61 years or above. This indicates that most respondents were in their economically active and mature working age**,** suggesting that they are directly engaged in livelihood activities that interact with wildlife and conservation areas. In third statement result shows the data reveals that a majority of respondents**,** 67.47 percent**,** had non-formal education, followed by 21.42 percent who had passed 10/SLC/SEE, and only a small portion had higher education 6.34 percent with 12 pass**,** 3.97 percent with a bachelor's degree**,** and 0.79 percent with a master's degree. This shows that the community is largely composed of individuals with limited formal education.

In the fourth statement the occupational data show that farming is the main source of livelihood, with 101 respondents' 80.16 percent engaged in agriculture. Smaller proportions were involved in trade/business 7.94 percent**,** government service 1.59 percent and other occupations 10.31 percent such as labor or household work. In the last statement an overwhelming majority of respondents, 89.69 percent had been living near the conservation area for more than 20 years, while a few had stayed for 11–20 years 6.34 percent, 5–10 years 2.38 percent, and 1–5 years 1.59 percent**.** This shows that most of the respondents are long-term residents of the area.

Overall, findings indicate the demographic data reveal that the study area is dominated by female, middle-aged, less formally educated, and agriculturally dependent populations who have lived near the conservation area for many years. These characteristics suggest a community that is deeply connected to the local environment and directly affected by wildlife and conservation activities. Their long-term residence and dependence on natural resources provide them with valuable insights into both the challenges and benefits associated with wildlife conservation.

Table 2: *Awareness and Knowledge of Wildlife Conservation*

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean Score
I am aware of the importance of wildlife conservation**.**	4 (3.18)	14 (11.11)		79 (62.70)	22 (17.46)	3.8
I understand the laws and policies on wildlife protection.	4 (3.18)	19 (15.07)	9 (7.14)	80 (63.50)	14 (11.11)	3.64
Conservation efforts in this area have been well communicated.	13 (10.32)	14 (11.11)	13 (10.31)	86 (68.26)	0	3.37
I know the types of wildlife found in my community area.	6 (4.77)	3 (2.38)	2 (1.59)	81 (64.28)	34 (26.98)	4.06

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Awareness and Knowledge of Wildlife Conservation

Table 2 presents respondents' awareness and understanding related to wildlife conservation through four key statements. In the first statement, the result revealed that 80.16 percent agree or strongly agree that they are aware of the importance of wildlife conservation, while 14.29 percent disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. The mean score for this was 3.80 indicates good general awareness among respondents. The second statement revealed that 74.61 percent agree or strongly agree on the level of understanding the laws and policy of wildlife conservation, while 18.25 percent disagree or strongly disagree. The mean score 3.64 suggests moderate understanding of wildlife laws, with area for improvement, especially in legal literacy. Similarly, the third statement revealed that 68.26 percent agree that conservation efforts have been well communicated with the absence of strong agreement.10.31 percent are neutral and 21.43 percent disagree or strongly disagree suggesting the messaging could be made more impactful or clearer. The lower mean score 3.37 points to potential communication gaps.

Finally, the fourth findings indicated that 91.26 percent agree or strongly agree which indicates that local community people know well-known types of wildlife found in conservation areas, 7.15 percent disagree or strongly disagree and the mean score is 4.06 showing that respondents generally have a strong knowledge of local wildlife. The findings indicate positive perception, awareness and Knowledge of Wildlife Conservation. Good levels of agreement on understanding conservation laws, though less strong than other areas. Their need to communicate conservation efforts could be enhanced for community people. Legal understanding of wildlife protection laws shows a mild knowledge gap that could be addressed through community outreach or educational initiatives. Respondents are familiar with local wildlife, reflecting effective community-level exposure or education.

Table 3: *Attitude towards Wildlife and Conservation Efforts*

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean Score
Wildlife should be protected even if it limits some human activities**.**	2 (1.59)	14 (11.11)	17 (13.50)	73 (57.93)	20 (15.87)	3.75
Wildlife conservation is beneficial to our community.	8 (6.34)	22 (17.46)	14 (11.11)	73 (57.94)	9 (7.15)	3.42
I feel positively towards conservation organizations.	3 (2.38)	10 (7.93)	11 (8.73)	88 (69.85)	14 (11.11)	3.79
The presence of wildlife makes our environment more valuable.	4 (3.18)	13 (10.31)	13 (10.31)	70 (55.56)	26 (20.64)	3.8

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Attitude towards Wildlife and Conservation Effort

The table 3 presents data on respondents' attitudes toward wildlife and conservation efforts using a five-point Likert scale. The responses indicate an overall positive attitude toward wildlife protection and conservation within the community.

The first statement shows that the majority 73.80 percent agree or strongly agree with protecting wildlife even when it limits human activities, indicating a strong pro-conservation stance, 12.7 percent disagree or strongly disagree and 13.50 percent neutral. The mean score of 3.75 reflects general acceptance of placing ecological needs over certain human conveniences.

The second statement revealed that a significant majority 65.09 percent agree with the statement, a relatively high proportion 34.91 percent are neutral, strongly disagree and disagree. The mean score is moderate. This suggests that while most see conservation as beneficial, there is some skepticism or lack of perceived direct benefits to the community.

Similarly, the third statement revealed that most 80.96 percent are agreeing and strongly agree there is a clear positive attitude toward conservation organizations.10.31 percent are disagreeing and strongly disagree**.** The mean score of 3.79 supports this sentiment. Low levels of disagreement indicate generally favorable community perception of conservation entities.

In the Fourth statement the result shows that a large majority 76.20 percent see wildlife as enhancing environmental value. This is supported by the high mean score of 3.80. While about 23.8 percent are neutral or disagree, this is relatively low, reflecting a strong environmental appreciation among respondents.

In summary, the findings indicate Respondents generally hold favorable views toward wildlife, its conservation, and conservation organizations. High level of trust and positive sentiment toward conservation groups, Support is strongest when related to environmental and aesthetic value, and slightly weaker when considering direct community benefits. Conservation programs may benefit from highlighting the tangible, community-level advantages of conservation efforts to convert neutral or skeptical views. Strong recognition of wildlife's role in enhanced environmental quality.

Table 4: *Human- Wildlife conflict and concern*

Statements	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Mean Score
Wildlife in this area poses a threat to people's safety	6 (4.77)	2 (1.59)	5 (3.97)	67 (53.17)	46 (36.50)	4.15
I have Experienced/heard of conflicts between humans and wildlife.	4 (3.17)	1 (0.79)	5 (3.97)	80 (63.49)	36 (28.58)	4.13
Authorities respond effectively to human-wildlife conflicts.	3 (2.38)	12 (9.53)	20 (15.88)	83 (65.87)	8 (6.34)	3.64
Wildlife causes damage to crops or livestock in this community.	3 (2.38)	1 (0.79)	4 (3.18)	51 (40.48)	67 (53.17)	4.41

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Human-Wildlife conflict and concern

In the table 4 study investigated community perception towards human wildlife conflict in the first statement the result revealed the majority of people 89.67 percent agree or strongly agree that wildlife threaten human safety, and 6.36 percent disagree or strongly disagree. The high mean scores 4.15 indicates **a** strong collective concern about the physical safety risks associated with wildlife presence.

In the second statement result revealed 92.07 percent strongly agree or agree**,** Respondents suggest high personal or community-level awareness of human-wildlife conflict. A very high percentage of participants have either experienced or heard of conflicts with wildlife. The mean score 4.13 indicates that such incidents are frequent enough to be widely experienced or shared, this suggests that human-wildlife conflict is a common or well-known issue in the community.

Similarly, in the third statement the result shows a majority 72.21 percent respondent agrees or strongly agree that authorities respond effectively, 27.79 percent respondent are neutral, disagree and strongly disagree. The mean score 3.64 lowest-scoring statement, indicating a moderate level of trust in institutional responses. This mean score shows some level of dissatisfaction or lack of confidence in the governments or institutions ability to handle wildlife conflicts well.

Finally, the findings indicated that 93.65 percent respondent agree or strongly agree that wildlife damage crops or livestock in the community. It shows that the economic impact of wildlife through crop destruction or livestock predation is the most pressing issue among respondents. 6.35 percent respondents are neutral, disagree or strongly disagree. The mean score 4.41 was associated with damage to crops and livestock, indicating a major economic and livelihood threat posed by wildlife in the community.

Overall, the results suggest a high level of concern about human-wildlife conflicts, with safety, economic loss, and recurring conflict experiences being prominent. The most pressing issue appears to be damage to crops and livestock. Although authorities are seen to be somewhat responsive, the relatively lower score in that area suggests room for improvement in institutional responses and support mechanisms.

Table 5: *Community Involvement and support for Conservation*

Statements	S.Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	S. Agree (%)	Mean Score
I have participated in community conservation programs.	1 (0.79)	14 (11.11)	9 (7.14)	79 (62.70)	23 (18.26)	3.87
Community members should be more involved in conservation activities.	8 (6.35)	8 (6.35)	13 (10.31)	76 (60.32)	21 (16.67)	3.75
I would be willing to volunteer for conservation projects.	12 (9.52)	37 (29.37)	2 (1.59)	65 (51.59)	10 (7.93)	3.19
						3.92

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Community Involvement and support for Conservation

In the table 5 study investigated community involvement and support for conservation. In the first statement results show that 80.96 percent a large majority of respondents agree or strongly agree that they have participated in community conservation programs. This high level of past involvement indicates that conservation initiatives are reaching a significant portion of the community and that many members are already engaged in on-the-ground efforts. 11.90 percent disagree or strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.8 reflects active community engagement and positive past experiences with conservation programs.

The second statement revealed that 76.99 percent respondent agree or strongly agree that communities should be more involved in conservation activities.11.27 percent are disagreeing or strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.75 this may indicate a recognition that although some members are active, more people should be encouraged to engage in conservation activities.

Similarly, in the third statement the result shows that 59.52 percent respondent are agree or strongly agree willing to volunteer for conservation projects.38.89 percent respondent is disagreeing or strongly disagree and 1.59 percent respondent are neutral for volunteer. The lowest mean score 3.19 suggests the presence of barriers to active participation, such as time, resources, motivation, or lack of awareness, affecting individuals' ability or readiness to volunteer.

Finally, the findings indicated that 84.13 percent respondent agree or strongly agree that local communities should have a great say in wildlife conservation policies. It indicates strong support for local empowerment and inclusion in decision-making regarding conservation. The community is not just willing to act; they want a voice in how things are done. 5.56 percent respondents are disagreeing or strongly disagree and 10.31 percent respondents are neutral. The mean score is high 3.92 this reflects a desire not just for participation in activities, but also inclusion in decision-making processes**.**

The overall result shows a motivated and engaged community that values conservation. While practical involvement is relatively high, further encouragement and reduction of barriers may be needed to enhance volunteer participation**.** Most notably, there is a powerful desire for greater agency in conservation governance, signaling a shift toward more participatory and locally-driven conservation models.

Table 6: *Perceived Benefits of Conservation*

Statements	S.Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	S.Agree (%)	Mean Score
Wildlife conservation contributes to local economic growth.	8 (6.34)	18 (14.29)	11 (8.73)	64 (50.80)	25 (19.84)	3.63
Tourism related to wildlife benefits our community.	6 (4.77)	15 (11.90)	9 (7.14)	71 (56.34)	25 (19.85)	3.75
Protecting wildlife helps maintain ecological balance.	2 (1.59)	8 (6.34)	20 (15.88)	83 (65.88)	13 (10.31)	3.77
We believe future generations should also enjoy wildlife.	8 (6.35)	17 (13.49)	9 (7.14)	67 (53.17)	25 (19.85)	3.67

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Perceived Benefits of Conservation

In the table 6 studies investigated Perceived Benefits of Conservation. In the first statement results show that 70.64 percent respondents agree or strongly agree that wildlife conservation contributes to the local economic growth. This indicates a positive economic link between conservation and local growth. 20.63 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree. It indicates some respondents may not perceive direct or personal economic benefits, possibly due to uneven distribution of conservation-derived income. The mean score is 3.63 it indicates that conservation is economically beneficial, possibly through employment, eco-tourism, or ecosystem services. However, some skepticism exists likely due to a lack of direct, visible benefits for certain groups.

The second statement revealed that 76.19 percent respondent agree or strongly agree indicating strong recognition of wildlife tourism as a valuable community benefit. It likely reflects visible impacts like job creation, infrastructure improvements, or business opportunities linked to tourism. 16.67 percent of respondents disagree or strongly disagree. The mean score is 3.75 relatively high and supports the idea that tourism can be a motivator for conservation.

Similarly, in the third statement the result shows that 76.19 percent respondents agree or strongly agree, reflecting widespread understanding of the environmental and ecological importance of conservation**.** The relatively high neutral response may reflect limited detailed knowledge about ecological systems among some respondents. 7.93 percent of respondents disagree and strongly disagree. 15.88 percent of respondents are neutral. The mean score 3.77 indicates a strong understanding of the environmental role of wildlife conservation.

Finally, the findings indicated that 73.02 percent respondent agree or strongly agree indicates strong intergenerational concern for wildlife, but the 19.84 percent disagree or strongly disagree responses suggest some may prioritize present needs over long-term conservation, or may not feel empowered to influence future outcomes. The mean score 3.67 indicates support for protecting wildlife for future generations.

Overall results show that Respondents express strong support for wildlife conservation across economic, ecological, and ethical dimensions, especially in relation to community tourism and environmental balance. The results suggest a solid foundation for expanding conservation initiatives, with opportunities to further engage skeptics by highlighting direct local benefits and future gains.

Discussion

The study concludes that the attitudes and perceptions towards wildlife conservation are generally positive among the people of Dallagaun with some variation between demographic and socioeconomic groups. Among the respondents, women, middle-aged adults, and farmers demonstrated the greatest responsiveness, reflecting a strong understanding of the ecological and economic importance of wildlife despite having limited formal education. Their prolonged stay near Bardiya National Park has yielded dependency on natural products and exposure, which have shaped an equalized understanding of conservation values and challenges.

Overall, awareness and education of wildlife conservation were strong among the people. The people of Dallagaun recognized the importance of the park to ensure ecological balance and biodiversity conservation. Conservation law and policy knowledge was moderate, and this is a reflection of the fact that there are needed more outreach and education programs. This is in agreement with current findings (Katswera et al., 2022; Thapa et al., 2025) that information and education accessibility are good indicators of pro-conservation attitudes. Though the majority of community members appreciated wildlife protection and highly valued conservation organizations, conflicts between humans and wildlife were a significant issue. High mean scores on crop and livestock loss

issues reflect the economic burden imposed by contact with wildlife in agreement with (Mekonen, 2020 b; Gemeda & Meles, 2018b). The conflicts risk undermining positive attitudes unless interventions, timely compensation, and participatory management systems are implemented.

Involvement of the community in conservation programs was evident but limited, especially in decision-making. Even though residents were enthusiastic to experience greater participation, institutional and resource constraints limit active engagement. The gap between support and participation emphasizes the role of empowerment and equitable benefits in sustaining community involvement (Mogomotsi et al., 2020b). Commonly perceived benefits tourism, economic growth, and environmental gains were broadly agreed upon. Linking conservation with livelihood opportunities and equity benefit-sharing can create local ownership and long-term partnership.

Conclusion

The Dallagaun community people hold largely positive perceptions and attitudes toward wildlife conservation**,** recognizing its ecological, economic, and social value. The results determine a generally positive outlook toward conservation efforts, coupled with a strong willingness to support these initiatives, especially when they are economically beneficial, ecologically significant, and inclusive in governance. The community recognizes the importance of wildlife conservation in maintaining ecological balance and supporting future generations. Protecting wildlife is vital for both the environment and long-term community well-being. Local community attitudes towards the wildlife and their resources, this affects their contribution to wildlife conservation and related issues. Their attitudes are dependent on the level knowledge about the conservation education and awareness, level of awareness in knowing about wildlife conservation, interest in involvement in conservation programs, management of the resource access and use initiative, handling of victims of illegal entry into the conservation area, To improve community perceptions and attitudes towards the wildlife conservation area, park management should emphasize community empowerment, livelihood improvement, strengthening conservation education and awareness. Community people see clear links between wildlife conservation, tourism, and local economic growth**.** Future conservation efforts should build on this positive foundation by addressing barriers to participation and ensuring that local voices are central to wildlife policy and practice**.**

Disclosure Statements

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s). Author(s) read and reviewed the final version and agreed consent for publication. All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

About Authors

Umesh Kumar Gupta, working as Assistant lecturer in a Babai Multiple Campus, Bardiya Gulariya, a constituent campus of Mid- West University, Surketh Nepal. His qualification is M.P.A, M.Phil in Public Administration from Lucknow University M.S.W from Uttar Pradesh Rajashri Tandon Open University, Allahabad India. His research interests include Social Work related. Mr. Gupta has 10 Years teaching experience.

Sant Kumar Verma is an Assistant Professor at Babai Multiple Campus, a constituent campus of Mid-Western University in Surkhet, Nepal. With a Master's degree in Computer Applications and has 20 years of teaching experience. Currently, he is pursuing a Ph.D. at Maharishi University of Information Technology, Lucknow. His research interests focus on emerging technologies, e-governance, and their applications in education.

References

Abukari, H., & Mwalyosi, R. B. (2020). Local communities' perceptions about the impact of protected areas on livelihoods and community development. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, *22*, e00909. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2020.e00909

Albarracin, D., & Shavitt, S. (2018). Attitudes and attitude change. *Annual review of psychology*, *69*(1), 299-327.

Andrade, G. S. M., & Rhodes, J. R. (2012). Protected areas and local communities: an inevitable partnership toward successful conservation strategies? *Ecology and Society*, *17*(4). https://doi.org/10.5751/es-05216-170414

Baird, T. D., Leslie, P. W., & McCabe, J. T. (2009). The effect of wildlife conservation on local perceptions of risk and behavioral response. *Human Ecology*, *37*(4), 463–474. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10745-009-9264-z

Baral, K., Sharma, H. P., Kunwar, R., Morley, C., Aryal, A., Rimal, B., & Ji, W. (2021). Human wildlife conflict and impacts on livelihood: a study in community forestry system in mid-hills of nepal. *Sustainability*, *13*(23), 13170. https://doi.org/10.3390/su132313170

Baral, N., & Heinen, J. T. (2020). Regulatory compliance of community-based conservation organizations: empirical evidence from Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal. *Sustainability*, *12*(22), 9420. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12229420

Bennett, N. J., Di Franco, A., Calò, A., Nethery, E., Niccolini, F., Milazzo, M., & Guidetti, P. (2019). Local support for conservation is associated with perceptions of good governance, social impacts, and ecological effectiveness. *Conservation Letters*, *12*(4), e12640. https://doi.org/10.1111/conl.12640

Bhatta, K. D. (2019). Exploring socio-cultural impacts of ecotourism in the Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal. *Journal of Engineering Technology and Planning*, *1*, 55–74. https://doi.org/10.3126/joetp.v1i0.38245

BNP Annual Report 2020,2023,

Chaudhary, R. P. (2000). Forest conservation and environmental management in Nepal: a review. Biodiversity & Conservation, 9(9), 1235-1260.

Clark, T. W. (1993). Creating and using knowledge for species and ecosystem conservation: Science, organizations, and policy. *Perspectives in Biology and Medicine*, *36*(3), 497–525. https://doi.org/10.1353/pbm.1993.0013

Croes, K. D. (2006). Conserving the King: inverting the origin story of the Annapurna Conservation Area Project of Nepal. Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, 26(1), 6.

D. K, K., & F., G. (2021). Influence of resource competition on human-wildlife conflicts among the community of Kithoka area in Meru County, Kenya. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science*, *05*(09), 526–534. https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2021.5935

DeGeorges, P. A., & Reilly, B. K. (2009). The realities of community based natural resource management and biodiversity conservation in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Sustainability*, *1*(3), 734–788. https://doi.org/10.3390/su1030734

Ebua, V. B., Agwafo, T. E., & Fonkwo, S. N. (2011). Attitudes and perceptions as threats to wildlife conservation in the Bakossi area, South West Cameroon. *International Journal of Biodiversity and Conservation*, 3(12), 631-636.

Fuentes, A. (2017). Protection of indigenous peoples' traditional lands and exploitation of natural resources: The Inter-American Court of Human Rights' Safeguards. *International Journal*

on Minority and Group Rights, *24*(3), 229–253. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718115-02403006

Garshelis, D. L., Noyce, K. V., & St-Louis, V. (2020). Population reduction by hunting helps control human–wildlife conflicts for a species that is a conservation success story. *PLOS ONE*, *15*(8), e0237274. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237274

Gemeda, D. O., & Meles, S. K. (2018a). Impacts of human-wildlife conflict in developing countries. *Journal of Applied Sciences and Environmental Management*, *22*(8), 1233. https://doi.org/10.4314/jasem.v22i8.14

Gemeda, D. O., & Meles, S. K. (2018b). Impacts of human-wildlife conflict in developing countries. *Journal of Applied Sciences and Environmental Management*, *22*(8), 1233. https://doi.org/10.4314/jasem.v22i8.14

Hamman, E., Woolaston, K., & Lewis, B. (2016). Legal responses to human-wildlife conflict: the precautionary principle, risk analysis and the'lethal management'of endangered species. *IUCN Academy of Environmental Law eJournal*, 7, 57-83.

Hansen, A. J., & DeFries, R. (2007). Ecological mechanisms linking protected areas to surrounding lands. *Ecological Applications*, *17*(4), 974–988. https://doi.org/10.1890/05-1098

Hariohay, K. M., Fyumagwa, R. D., Kideghesho, J. R., & Røskaft, E. (2018). Awareness and attitudes of local people toward wildlife conservation in the Rungwa Game Reserve in Central Tanzania. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, *23*(6), 503–514. https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2018.1494866

Heinen, J. T., & Mehta, J. N. (2000). Emerging issues in legal and procedural aspects of buffer zone management with case studies from Nepal. *The Journal of Environment & Development*, *9*(1), 45–67. https://doi.org/10.1177/107049650000900103

Holmes, G. (2013). Exploring the relationship between local support and the success of protected areas. *Conservation and Society*, *11*(1), 72. https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-4923.110940

Htay, T., Htoo, K. K., Mbise, F. P., & Røskaft, E. (2022). Factors influencing communities' attitudes and participation in protected area conservation: A case study from Northern Myanmar. *Society & Natural Resources*, *35*(3), 301–319. https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2022.2032515

Ihemezie, E. J., Nawrath, M., Strauß, L., Stringer, L. C., & Dallimer, M. (2021). The influence of human values on attitudes and behaviours towards forest conservation. *Journal of Environmental Management*, *292*, 112857. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2021.112857

Karanth, K. K., & Nepal, S. K. (2012). Local residents perception of benefits and losses from protected areas in India and Nepal. *Environmental Management*, *49*(2), 372–386. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00267-011-9778-1

Katswera, J., Mutekanga, N. M., & Twesigye, C. K. (2022). Community perceptions and attitudes towards conservation of wildlife in Uganda. https://doi.org/10.5281/ZENODO.6522377

Koirala, P., Neupane, B., Silwal, T., Dhami, B., Regmi, S., & Dahal, D. (2020). Distribution of blue bull (boselaphus tragocamelus) and its conservation threats in Bardia National Park, Nepal. *Journal of Forest and Natural Resource Management*, *2*(1), 50–60. https://doi.org/10.3126/jfnrm.v2i1.40220

Lamichhane, S., Joshi, R., Poudel, B., & Subedi, P. (2020). role of community in leading conservation: Effectiveness, success and challenges of community-based anti-poaching unit in Nepal. *Grassroots Journal of Natural Resources*, *3*(4), 94–109. https://doi.org/10.33002/nr2581.6853.03046

Mcneely, J. A. (2020). Today's protected areas: Supporting a more sustainable future for humanity. *Integrative Zoology*, *15*(6), 603–616. https://doi.org/10.1111/1749-4877.12451

Mehta, J. N., & Heinen, J. T. (2001). Does community-based conservation shape favorable attitudes among locals? An empirical study from Nepal. *Environmental Management*, *28*(2), 165–177. https://doi.org/10.1007/s002670010215

Mekonen, S. (2020a). Coexistence between human and wildlife: The nature, causes and mitigations of human wildlife conflict around Bale Mountains National Park, Southeast Ethiopia. *BMC Ecology*, *20*(1), 51. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12898-020-00319-1

Mekonen, S. (2020b). Coexistence between human and wildlife: The nature, causes and mitigations of human wildlife conflict around Bale Mountains National Park, Southeast Ethiopia. *BMC Ecology*, *20*(1), 51. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12898-020-00319-1

Messmer, T. A. (2009). Human–wildlife conflicts: emerging challenges and opportunities. Human-Wildlife Conflicts, 3(1), 10-17.

Mir, Z. R., Noor, A., Habib, B., & Veeraswami, G. G. (2015). Attitudes of local people toward wildlife conservation: A case study from the Kashmir Valley. *Mountain Research and Development*, *35*(4), 392–400. https://doi.org/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00030.1

Mogomotsi, P. K., Stone, L. S., Mogomotsi, G. E. J., & Dube, N. (2020a). Factors influencing community participation in wildlife conservation. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, *25*(4), 372–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2020.1748769

Mogomotsi, P. K., Stone, L. S., Mogomotsi, G. E. J., & Dube, N. (2020b). Factors influencing community participation in wildlife conservation. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, *25*(4), 372–386. https://doi.org/10.1080/10871209.2020.1748769

Moswete, N., Thapa, B., & K. Darley, W. (2020). Local communities' attitudes and support towards the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in Southwest Botswana. *Sustainability*, *12*(4), 1524. https://doi.org/10.3390/su12041524

Muboko, N. (2017). The role of transfrontier conservation areas and their institutional framework in natural resource-based conflict management: A review. *Journal of Sustainable Forestry*, *36*(6), 583–603. https://doi.org/10.1080/10549811.2017.1320224

Ngonidzashe Mutanga, C., Vengesayi, S., Gandiwa, E., & Muboko, N. (2015). Community perceptions of wildlife conservation and tourism: A case study of communities adjacent to four protected areas in Zimbabwe. *Tropical Conservation Science*, *8*(2), 564–582. https://doi.org/10.1177/194008291500800218

Nilsson, D., Fielding, K., & Dean, A. J. (2020). Achieving conservation impact by shifting focus from human attitudes to behaviors. *Conservation Biology*, *34*(1), 93–102. https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.13363

Nyhus, P. J. (2016). Human–wildlife conflict and coexistence. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources*, *41*(1), 143–171. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-110615-085634

Paudel, P. K. (2012). Challenges to wildlife conservation posed by hunting in non-protected areas north of the Bardia National Park. In P. Kindlmann (Ed.), *Himalayan Biodiversity in the Changing World* (pp. 177–195). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-1802-9_8

Paudel, U., Kc, R. B., Kadariya, R., Karki, A., Shrestha, B. P., Shah, S. K., Subedi, N., & Thapa, S. K. (2024). Human–wildlife conflict in Bardia—Banke complex: Patterns of human fatalities and injuries caused by large mammals. *Ecology and Evolution*, *14*(10), e70395. https://doi.org/10.1002/ece3.70395

Perrings, C., Naeem, S., Ahrestani, F. S., Bunker, D. E., Burkill, P., Canziani, G., Elmqvist, T., Fuhrman, J. A., Jaksic, F. M., Kawabata, Z., Kinzig, A., Mace, G. M., Mooney, H., Prieur-Richard, A.-H., Tschirhart, J., & Weisser, W. (2011). Ecosystem services, targets, and indicators for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, *9*(9), 512–520. https://doi.org/10.1890/100212

Pokharel, B., Chotikarn, P., & Gywali, S. (2023). *Changing the perception of forest value and attitude toward management in the conservation area in Nepal and sustainable forest energy: A Review*. *12*(2).

Richardson, R. B. (2010). Ecosystem services and food security: Economic perspectives on environmental sustainability. *Sustainability*, *2*(11), 3520–3548. https://doi.org/10.3390/su2113520

Sánchez, M., López-Mosquera, N., & Lera-López, F. (2016). Improving pro-environmental behaviours in Spain. The role of attitudes and socio-demographic and political factors. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, *18*(1), 47–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2015.1046983

Schelhas, J. (2010). The US national parks in international perspective: the Yellowstone model or conservation syncretism? In: Polisciano, Grazia; Farina, Olmo, eds. National Parks: Vegetation, Wildlife, and Threats. NOVA Science Publishers: 83-103., 1-21.

Shawon, R. A. R., Rahman, Md. M., Dandi, S. O., Agbayiza, B., Iqbal, M. M., Sakyi, M. E., & Moribe, J. (2025). Knowledge, perception, and practices of wildlife conservation and biodiversity management in Bangladesh. *Animals*, *15*(3), 296. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani15030296

Shrestha, T. K., Aryal, A., Rai, R. K., Lamsal, R. P., Koirala, S., Jnawali, D., Kafle, R., Bhandari, B. P., & Raubenheimer, D. (2014). Balancing wildlife and human needs: The protected forest approach in Nepal. *Natural Areas Journal*, *34*(3), 376–380. https://doi.org/10.3375/043.034.0313

Thapa, K., King, D., & Diedrich, A. (2025). The influence of perceptions and demographic factors on local support for protected areas. *Conservation Science and Practice*, *7*(3), e70003. https://doi.org/10.1111/csp2.70003

Thapa Karki, S. (2013). Do protected areas and conservation incentives contribute to sustainable livelihoods? A case study of Bardia National Park, Nepal. *Journal of Environmental Management*, *128*, 988–999. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvman.2013.06.054

Thapa, S., & Chapman, D. S. (2010). Impacts of resource extraction on forest structure and diversity in Bardia National Park, Nepal. *Forest Ecology and Management*, *259*(3), 641–649. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foreco.2009.11.023

Tiwari, A. (2022). Chasing performance of protected area management in Nepal. *Journal of Tourism and Himalayan Adventures*, *4*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.3126/jtha.v4i1.46288

Wang, W., Wronski, T., & Yang, L. (2024). The status of wildlife damage compensation in China. *Animals*, *14*(2), 292. https://doi.org/10.3390/ani14020292

Weladji, R. B., Moe, S. R., & Vedeld, P. (2003). Stakeholder attitudes towards wildlife policy and the Bénoué Wildlife Conservation Area, North Cameroon. *Environmental Conservation*, *30*(4), 334–343. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0376892903000353