

Great Indian Bustard Conservation: Battling Extinction with Urgency

Tanmay Gupta

Second Year BBA, Section-C, Symbiosis Centre For Management Studies, Village Mauje-Wathoda, Bhandewadi, Nagpur - 440 008, Maharashtra
E Mail: tanmay.gupta2025@scmsnagpur.edu.in

Often called the “Godawan,” the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) is a big bird distinguished by its unique look. With its muscular physique and brownish-white plumage, the bird has a regal charm and stands around one metre tall. Dry grasslands, semi-deserts, and open landscapes make up the majority of its habitat, which is why it is essential to India’s vast biodiversity.



The grand bird of the Indian subcontinent, the Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), has long served as a symbol of the varied and distinctive fauna of the area. There are just about 200 members of the species surviving, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and despite its ecological and cultural significance, there is a grave threat of its extinction. In-depth information about the

Great Indian Bustard’s fascinating life, impending dangers, and the critical need for conservation efforts shall be covered in this article.

As India’s drive is to become pollution-free, it started to shift from non-renewable energy to renewable energy. The so-called industrialists of our country forgot about our GIB and hence the Supreme Court (SC) Bench including Chief Justice of India Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, J.D. Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra disapproved the order of SC’s April 2019 order for the restriction on the power transmission lines in 90,000 square kilometres of solar panel in the location where GIB are mostly found in the states of Rajasthan and Gujarat. Noted environmentalist Shri M.K. Ranjitsinh raised the issue of the death of many of GIBs because of collision with power lines. Large tracts of land are frequently needed for solar energy projects, which disrupts the GIB’s habitat. The fact that these birds are already declining in population may further drop as a result of the construction and use of solar panels, which may result in the loss of vital breeding and feeding habitat. There is a considerable risk of

collision due to the large solar panel installations in the GIB's habitat as was observed by the SC.

With a wingspan of almost 2.5 metres, these massive birds may be badly injured in the event of a collision with solar panels' shiny surfaces. This risk is increased by a lack of knowledge and protective actions. It is essential to educate the public about how solar installations affect threatened animals and birds. The conservation of the GIB can be achieved through involving local people, developing educational initiatives, and encouraging the development of appropriate energy sources.

The GIB is quite vulnerable to several challenges that have driven them to the verge of extinction which are as follows:

1). Habitat loss: Most of the habitat were degraded because of land acquisition and urban expansion. The GIB is having difficulty in finding proper environment for finding their foods due to the conversion of grasslands into farmlands and because of increase in human population which creates pollution.

2). Collision with electricity wires: These birds frequently travel across large areas where they come into contact with electric wires and they die because of accident. This happens because these birds fly at low altitudes. The frequency of fatal collisions can be considerably decreased by putting safety measures in places including identifying power lines and designating safe fly zones. We need

to put emphasis on developing our world and at the same time with saving our environment.

3). Illegal hunting: This practices is the worst one, because we humans have different food varieties to consume, but still we are hunting animals. We need to stop it.

Conservation Efforts

To prevent the extinction of the GIB, there is an urgent need for coordinated efforts in wildlife conservation. Even the issue was noted by Supreme Court which earlier imposed a blanket restriction on overhead power transmission lines in 90,000 square kilometres. However considering the need for India's ambitious international commitment to go "Net Zero" by 2070, now its 13,000 square kilometres for GIB's core habitat is protected and 77,000 square kilometres area is left for overhead transmission lines. The SC in this way tried to create a balance between climate and ecology. It is critical to involve nearby populations in conservation initiatives. Their sense of responsibility for the preservation of the species can be increased by teaching them about the importance of the GIB and encouraging sustainable activities.

In conclusion, the dire circumstances faced by the GIB highlight the pressing requirement for extensive conservation efforts. We must act quickly and decisively to save this amazing bird from extinction. To reverse the negative trends endangering the species, local communities, conservationists, and governments must work together.