



AWARENESS OF ENDANGERED SPECIES EXPLOITATION ON ECOSYSTEM AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

R. Jansirani* Bincy Mathew Dr. B. William Dharma Raja*****

*M.Phil Scholar, Department of Education, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

** Full time Ph.D Scholar, Department of Education, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

***Head in charge, Department of Education, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu.

Abstract

Education is the sole solution to most of the problems which plague nation. The academic studies have developed to think over the exploitation in this ecosystem. This study is purported to assess the awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem among the college students. Survey method is used for the present study which was made with three hundred twenty college students. Awareness questionnaire on Endangered Species Ecosystem (2015) was used for the collection of data. The analysis using the statistical techniques t-test, revealed that there was significant difference in the awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem with regard to medium of instruction, but no significant difference with regard to gender, nature of residence and nature of institution. Implications were also discussed based on the findings.

Key words: Endangered species, Exploitation, Ecosystem, Habitat.

INTRODUCTION

Endangered species are like fire alarms. If listen to their alarm calls, they could help improve lives and the health of planet. Endangered animals are basically those animals whose population is reducing at an alarming rate. An endangered species is a native species that faces a significant portion of its range. Such species may be declining in a number due to threats such as habitat destruction, climate change or pressure from invasive species. (Martens, 2008).

An ecosystem is a basic functional ecological unit and consists of living organisms and non living substances. Odum (1980), stated that an ecosystem is the basic fundamental unit of ecology which includes both the organisms and the non living environment each influencing the properties of the other and each is necessary for the maintenance of life. (Arumugam, 2008).

Extinction is the fact that some animals are not able to reproduce quickly in genetic disorder, another possibility is bad weather and poor live quality of the habitat in animals. Human beings are largely responsible for the destruction of animal habitats and this can easily lead to endangered animals. The outbreak of deadly diseases can also contribute a lot to the reduction of animal numbers.

The habitat of the Nilgiri tahr is exposed to pressures from human disturbances such as uncontrolled cattle grazing, fuel wood collection, as well as interference due to illegal tourism activities and occasional poaching. Nowadays one of the major threat for lion tailed macaque is habitat fragmentation. The habitat loss is due to timber harvest and the creation of exotic plantations such as tea, eucalyptus and coffee. Habitat degradation is due to hunting of animals, for “medicinal” purposes. Green turtles eggs are killed by people throughout the world for food, and for products including oil, leather and shell. Coastal development-Green turtle habitats are degraded and destroyed by coastal development. Pollution-Plastics, discarded fishing gear, petroleum by products, and other debris harm and kill turtles through ingestion and entanglement (Miller, 2009).

ENDANGERED SPECIES EXPLOITATION ON ECOSYSTEM

Food webs are very important in maintaining the stability of an ecosystem. If Nilgiri tahr is a endangered animal, great damage can be caused to the animals like wolf, tiger, lion etc, which in turn causes irreparable damage to the ecosystem. Lion tailed macaque is one of the endangered species. It is seen highly in Papanasam of Tirunelveli district. Both animals and plants are benefited by lion tailed macaque. Plants are benefited in terms of pollination especially cullenia is one of the trees in western ghats pollinated by lion tailed macaque, thus this animal is very important for ecosystem. Green sea turtle lays larger amount of eggs and it is consumed by various sea birds. The crab, seagull, jelly fish, shark, etc. depends on green sea turtle in different aspects. Due to these extinct of species the whole marine ecosystem is imbalanced. Thus the study focused on endangered species of Nilgiri tahr, lion tailed macaque and green sea turtle in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Revealing From Studies on Endangered Species On Ecosystem

Susan (2010) found that positive attitudes towards native and endangered species conservation and the ecosystem management. Jacobson and Marynowski (2010) found that mass educational approaches were effective in increasing



knowledge, and that mass media contributed most to shifts in attitudes towards ecosystem. Shrestha (2012) found that WWF Nepal program and its partners have been able to minimize the conflict between the park and the people by gaining better understanding about the importance of conserving the natural and cultural environment. Sunithran and Fraser (2000) found that possible causes for decline includes high mortality from predation and poaching and loss of habitat. Sushma and Arumugam (2012) found that only 462 lion tailed macaques in 30 groups live in Kalakad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The academic studies have developed to think over the exploitation of endangered species in this ecosystem. Ecosystem is a dynamic complex system of plants, animals and their living environment. The components of ecosystem constitutes an interacting system. They are mainly connected by food webs of chain reaction which circulates between living and non-living factors. Human activities like destruction of trees, hunting for economic benefits, natural calamities, pollution and genetical disorders acts as challenges for the ecosystem, which results in the exploitation of species like nilgiri tahr, lion tailed macaque, green sea turtle, sparrow, squirrels and other species. If it continues, the world may face an irreparable damage to animal life and therefore the endangered species has to be protected and recovered. Education alone can create awareness among the pupil and also to the society. Hence education plays a vital role in the conservation of endangered species. So, the investigator selected the area of study as Awareness of Endangered Species exploitation on Ecosystem among college students.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the significant difference, if any, in awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem among college students with regard to select background variables.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

- There is no significant difference in awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem with regard to the background variables.

METHODOLOGY

Survey method was adopted for this study.

Tool used

The tool namely awareness questionnaire on the endangered species exploitation is constructed by the investigator, has 85 items. The items are to be answered by fill in the blanks, objective types, match the following, true or false and agree or disagree. Content validity was established by two experts. Item analysis is also made.

Sample

Three hundred twenty college students in Tirunelveli district were chosen as sample from eight colleges, following stratified random sampling technique.

DATA ANALYSIS

The relevant statistical techniques help the investigator to analyse and interpret the data meaningfully in the study. The technique employed in this study were t-test for independent large groups.

Table 1 Significance of difference in awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem with regard to background variables

Background Variable	Category	N	Mean	SD	t value	p value
Gender	Male	110	19.621	3.610	1.725	0.787 ^{NS}
	Female	201	18.895	3.689		
Nature of Residence	Rural	182	19.400	3.768	1.353	0.322 ^{NS}
	Urban	138	18.844	3.523		
Medium of Instruction	Tamil	138	18.536	3.956	2.638	0.010 ^{**}
	English	182	19.642	3.373		
Nature of Institution	Women's	134	18.365	3.740	3.328	0.351 ^{NS}
	Co education	186	19.741	3.519		

NS - Not Significant

** 1% level of significant



FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem among college students with regard to gender, nature of residence and nature of institution.
2. There is significant difference in awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem among college students with regard to medium of instruction. The students of English medium have more awareness of endangered species exploitation on ecosystem than the Tamil medium students. The reason may be at college level the students are given information in English and they possess good comprehension ability because they read more international books, gather news from websites and may receive an awareness on endangered species.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To create awareness about endangered species, special programmes like quiz competition, seminars, workshops, enacting dramas, symposium, documentary films, guest talk on wild life conservation, films, tours, camps, youth club activities can be conducted. Endangered species conservation can be promoted by means of providing awareness materials and education programmes through mass media. Biology science instructors can be encouraged to use various classroom techniques while teaching about endangered species. They can also use blogs and other resources to share their views. Eco clubs can be established to create and promote environmental awareness among the students.

Tamil medium students should be given proper orientation regarding endangered species and conservation. The NGOs, and the government should conduct awareness programmes on conservation of endangered species. Students should conduct awareness programmes on endangered species to the indigenous people. Animals should not be killed for their medicinal use. Instead they should search for other means like yoga and acupuncture. Conservation of endangered species should be included in the college curriculum. Media can also play a key role in creating awareness on endangered species and conservation to the people.

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