

The Role of Youth as Conservation Leaders of Biodiversity

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ABSTRACT: Biodiversity is the very basis of human survival and economic well-being and encompasses all life forms, ecosystems and ecological processes. Biodiversity provides to human kind enormous direct economic benefits, an array of indirect essential services through natural ecosystems and plays a prominent role in changing ecosystem function and stability. Apart from the ethical values and aesthetics, biodiversity provides to human mankind enormous direct benefits in the form of food, timber, fiber, raw materials for industries etc. So biodiversity is of incalculable value to human health and needs to be conserved. It is therefore necessary to come up with ideas and implement projects for the conservation of biodiversity. This is impossible without education, information, without raising awareness regarding the importance of biodiversity and its conservation. Conservation of environment is highly important for the good development of social and economic life. Youth have a role to play in environmental and conservation efforts that will improve livelihoods. Youth are back bone of the nation. They can change the future of the society with their well being and courageous behavior.

KEYWORDS: youth education, conservation of biodiversity, management plans, environment, environmental education

I. INTRODUCTION

Biodiversity is the very basis of human survival and economic well-being and encompasses all life forms, ecosystems and ecological processes. Biodiversity provides to human kind enormous direct economic benefits, an array of indirect essential services through natural ecosystems and plays a prominent role in changing ecosystem function and stability. Biodiversity is not uniformly distributed on the earth but comprises of millions of species. Of these only few million species have yet been described thus our knowledge of diversity is still remarkably incomplete. Apart from the ethical values and aesthetics, biodiversity provides to human mankind enormous direct benefits in the form of food, timber, fiber, raw materials for industries etc. Thus biodiversity is of incalculable value to human health; although very few lakhs of the worlds known species of plants have so far been examined form their medicinal value. So biodiversity is of incalculable value to human health and needs to be conserved. It is therefore necessary to come up with ideas and implement projects for the conservation of biodiversity. This is impossible without education, information, without raising awareness regarding the importance of biodiversity and its conservation. Conservation of environment is highly important for the good development of social and economic life. Youth have a role to play in environmental and conservation efforts that will improve livelihoods. Youth are back bone of the nation. They can change the future of the society with their well being and courageous behavior.

II. ROLE OF BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity has a number of functions on the Earth. These are as follows:

- Maintaining balance of the ecosystem: Recycling and storage of nutrients, fighting pollution, and stabilizing

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climate, protecting water resources, forming and protecting soil and maintaining ecobalance.

- Provision of biological resources: Provision of medicines and pharmaceuticals, food for the human population and animals, ornamental plants, wood products, breeding stock and diversity of species, ecosystems and genes.
 - Social benefits: Recreation and tourism, cultural value and education and research.
- The role of biodiversity in the following areas will help make clear the importance of biodiversity in human life:
 - Biodiversity and food: 80% of human food supply comes from plants. But humans use 40,000 species for food, clothing and shelter. Biodiversity provides for variety of foods for the planet.
 - Biodiversity and human health: The shortage of drinking water is expected to create a major global crisis. Biodiversity also plays an important role in drug discovery and medicinal resources. Medicines from nature account for usage by 80% of the world's population.
 - Biodiversity and industry: Biological sources provide many industrial materials. These include fiber, oil, dyes, rubber, water, timber, paper and food.

III. CAUSE FOR THE LOSS OF BIODIVERSITY

The earth's biodiversity is in grave danger. In the present era, human beings are the most dangerous cause of destruction of the earth's biodiversity. In 2006, the terms threatened, endangered or rare were used to describe the status of many species. The "evil quartet" identified by Jared Diamond is overkill, habitat destruction, secondary extinctions and introduced species. Factors identified by Edward Wilson are described by the acronym- HIPPO standing for habitat destruction, climate change, invasive species, pollution, human overpopulation and over-harvesting. Habitat destruction is a major cause for biodiversity loss. Habitat loss is caused by deforestation, overpopulation, pollution and global warming. Species which are physically large and those living in forests or oceans are more affected by habitat reduction. Some expert's estimate that around 30% of all species on earth will be extinct by 2050. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), globally about one third of all known species are threatened with extinction. Even it is estimated that 25% of all mammals will be extinct within 20 years. These are some of the losses of biodiversity caused due to human activities.

So there is a need to conserve the Biodiversity. Now the conversation of biodiversity can be done by the generation of today. So let's see what the role of youth in conservation of Biodiversity is.

IV. ROLE OF YOUTH IN CONSERVING THE BIODIVERSITY

Youth can play a special role in protecting and restoring nature. Youth are back bone of the nation and have a role to play in environmental and conservation efforts that will improve livelihoods. They can change the future of the society with their well being and courageous behavior. Therefore there is a necessity to create awareness and cultivate the next generation of conservationists. We need to provide opportunities for young people of diverse backgrounds to experience and connect with nature through some awareness programmes

Here are few points on how youth can save the biodiversity by creating awareness about the following-

- Protection, revival, and revitalization of sacred sites
- Strengthening and supporting community conservation areas.
- Monitoring the status of representative ecosystems across the country
- Conducting research on the structure, function, and interactions amongst and within ecosystems
- Study of ecosystem services provided by biodiversity
- Developing conservation plans and projects for each of the seriously threatened, prioritized endemic, and other species of conservation significance, with special attention to hitherto neglected species/taxa
- Updating the schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, to include all threatened and endemic species, and species they are dependent on.
- Reducing use of pesticides and fertilizers in your gardens that often have knock-on effects in wildlife populations and run off into water courses with adverse effects for the plants and animals living there
- Volunteer for your local wildlife trust, community garden or conservation group. Request the public to manage their lands in a biodiversity friendly way.

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- Reduce, reuse, and recycle,
- Use of environmentally friendly personal and household cleaning products Buying local, organic food and drink, Buying sustainably harvested seafood, which avoids 'by-catch' of other species.
- Energy use: By reducing your energy demand, you reduce both carbon dioxide release into the atmosphere, which contributes to climate change, and disturbance of habitat for fossil fuel exploration and extraction
- Conserving energy in your home
- Reduce single-person car use. Car pools, public transport, walking, and bicycling are also options.
- Using green landscaping and building materials and allow for nature in any external design ideas.
- Creating awareness and supporting people and groups who are acting on long-term ecological sustainability.
- Anti-poaching and anti-trade measures
- Taking preventive measures relating to 'natural' disasters
- Minimizing the impacts of alien invasive species
- Strengthening the use of botanical gardens, and other ex situ repositories, as seed banks for various biogeography regions
- Establishing secure common property rights
- Enhance biodiversity related education in the formal education system and college education system
- Strengthen non-formal education on biodiversity including through folk media
- Build capacity of scientist and other academics.

V. CONCLUSION

Biodiversity is of immeasurable value to human health; although very few lakhs of the worlds known species of plants and animals have so far been examined form their economic value. At the same time we have learnt that we have entered into a phase of mass extinction and have altered roughly half of the habitable surface of the earth impairing and destroying several ecosystems. If the present mass extinction proceeds unchecked, the biosphere shall be impoverished for several human generations. In conclusion I would like to say that we all need to join our hands to conserve the Biodiversity so as to keep our mother earth alive. We must follow 3 R Rule-Reduce, Recycle and Reuse. We must Nurture the nature for our better future. As per the poet and ecologist Gary Snyder, "if the human race...were to survive at the expense of many plant and animal species, it would be no victory." As Mahatma Gandhiji told Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need but not every man's greed. Let us Follow a sustainable lifestyle and let us leave a healthy planet for the next generation. Let us stand united in this endeavor to maintain a "Healthy environment, the future we want". So let's all Nurture the nature for our better future.

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