

Global Biodiversity and Conservation

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Abstract : The need for biodiversity conservation is being strongly felt because we are experiencing an unprecedented increase in the rate of extinctions being caused by human actions. Extinction is a natural phenomenon, but what is different about current human caused extinction is both its rate and the fact that it leaves a void in the natural system (whereas in natural process one or more species are likely to get replaced than getting extinct.).

(Key words: Biodiversity, Extinctions)

Introduction

Biodiversity includes the full range of species on Earth, from unicellular organisms (like bacteria, viruses and protozoans) to all the multicellular organisms (like fungi, plants and human beings)¹. Biodiversity includes both types of living forms:

- (i) Those which are found in the wild, as well as.
- (ii) Those that are domesticated (like crop varieties, breeds of livestock, poultry etc.)

Conservation of Biodiversity

All levels of biodiversity are required for the continual survival of species and natural communities and are important for the well-being of humans.

A variety of human actions² lead to extinction: cutting of forests, overgrazing, draining of wetlands, conversion of mixed forests into single-species plantations. All these actions lead to loss of habitats which wild plants and animals depend upon. The introduction of exotic

species often drives local, indigenous species to extinction. Pollution, global warming, acid rains etc all alter the habitats in a negative manner and depleting the habitat quality.

Values of Biodiversity

Unfortunately, the developmental planning has ignored the simple fact that "Without biodiversity, humans would perish". The costs of environmental damage and depletion of natural resources has never been taken into to our own detriment. It is not easy to bring value to biodiversity in terms of monetary values, as the roles played by various species are many, complex and often hidden or insufficiently understood by humans. The following list provides a broad view of the possible benefits we stand to gain from biodiversity.

1. Direct value of biodiversity: Direct values are assigned to those products that are directly harvested and used by people.

2. Indirect value of biodiversity : Indirect values are assigned to the aspects of biological, such as environmental processes and ecosystem services that provide benefits to the human are without having to be harvested, depleted or destroyed during use.

3. Value of biodiversity in education and science: The educational and scientific values of natural landscapes are enormous. Most of the complex natural world still remains to be explored and understood. The extinction of species and destruction of habitats will limit our efforts to explore nature and understand its implications

for the human knowledge system. Many species serve as an early warning system of environmental quality e.g., lichens and mollusks are the indicators of air and water quality.

4. Ethical values:

Environmental ethics find a place in the value systems of most religions, philosophies and cultures. Broadly they appeal to have reverence for the living world, a respect for life and a sense of intrinsic value in nature. The ethical arguments can be elaborated as below:

- (i) Each species has a right to exist. Each specie has value of its own.
- (ii) All species are inter-dependent. Extinction of one species is likely to destabilize the community and cause the extinction of other species.
- (iii) We need to recognize the need for a more sustainable lifestyle, which will reduce our impacts on the environment.

(iv) Resources should not be wasted. This will help to minimize our demands of the natural ecosystems and our impacts.

(v) Nature has spiritual and aesthetic values that transcend economic value. Poets, philosophers and artists have been inspired by nature the loss of biodiversity will reduce this value.

Conservation is already and very appropriately recognized as being a manor activity.

Conclusion:

Nature has a wonderful way of setting things right³. If you don't care for the society and keep stocking all your skills, intelligence, talents and resources only for your for your selfish interests and luxuries and comforts of your immediate family, then you will be regarded as a defaulter in Nature's book and will have to repay it with penalty in several ways in this very life or in future life forms.

References

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