

Ethno-biology: The Science of a Common Man to Explore the Traditional Ecology, Biodiversity and Philosophy of Conservation: A Review

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ABSTRACT The coining of the term 'Ethno-botany' in the year 1896 is said to be auspicious for the emergence of the science Ethno-biology, with genuine academic and research activities as existing today, to explore the traditional relationship between men and surrounding biota. In Indian scenario, a collaboration work of Indian and Deutsch medicine men during the period 1637 - 1691, reflected as the publication '*Hortus Malabaricus*', was a land mark in the history of biodiversity research, worldwide. In course of time, the subject is now established as ethno-biology with the integration of various branches of science. The subject ethno-botany / ethno-biology is now included in the university curricula as an integrated subject in the post-graduate curriculum of Ecology and Environmental studies; extended to organisation of national level seminars, workshops and international congress along with activities like - All India Coordinated Research projects, initiated by Ministry of Environment and Forests of Central Government. Human relationship with the surrounding biota is as ancient as the evolution of man. The interrelationship between man and surrounding biodiversity is of two types: material and spiritual or cultural which is based on relationship useful to both-man and biota; useful to man, but harmful to biota; useful to biota, but harmful to man and harmful to both man and biota. The techniques of ethno- biological research are twofold: field research and Literature research. Field work is based on survey and collection of information and material. Study of ancient literature and mythology is a new dimension in ethno- biological research which conveys the ancient traditional scientific thoughts, encapsulated in the hymns of Sanskrit or any other language and religious icons in symbolic terms and/or forms respectively. This provides scope to realise that the ancient (Indian) environmental and ethical education deserves a rediscovery and needs an ecological implementation in the present context. Some of the important aspects of literary research are significantly focused in this review.