

Preservation of Biodiversity- Efforts at Household Level

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ABSTRACT Majority of population depends directly on the diversity of plant and animal life for their food, medicine, clothing, household items and other produce. It is no exaggeration to say that the threat to biodiversity is a threat to human society itself apart, of course, from being tragic for the plants and themselves. Since present human activities are destroying the earth's biodiversity, some efforts have to be taken at household level for preservation of biodiversity.

INTRODUCTION

Preservation of biodiversity is a global concern and its protection is one of the challenging tasks facing mankind today. The rapid material progress no doubt made man's life happier, easier and wealthier but has put man face to face with a series of challenges of which the rapid degradation of biodiversity is threatening the very existence of man. Lakhs of trees, which formed part of the evergreen forests spread all over Himachal Pradesh, are being sacrificed every year at the altar of getting greater yield of resin for commercial purposes (Varshney, 1997).

The consciousness of ethic has to be developed in children, as they are future citizens of the country. By focusing to children the beauty and the orderliness one can observe in nature, children can be prepared to develop appreciate behaviour towards nature and the need to protect it. Banerjee (1995) analysed that preserving the biodiversity of the planet is a monumental task, which needs to be addressed jointly by governments, NGO's and the people.

So, environmental consciousness for preservation of biodiversity among homemakers would include not just awareness about problems and issues related to environmental degradation but includes development and promotion of attitudes, values, problem solving and decision making skill all necessary for the protection and conservation of the environment. In this paper an attempt has been made to highlight the various measures adopted for preservation of biodiversity at household level.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

A total sample of 60 respondents was taken from Palampur Tehsil of District Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. A random sampling technique was adopted to select the respondents. The analysis was done by using both descriptive (frequency, scoring, percentage, mean) and relational statistics that is correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Background Information of the Respondents and Their Families: Majority (22%) of the respondents belonged to age group of 25 – 35 years were educated upto graduation level (40%), each unemployed and were having monthly family income of more than Rs. 10,000 (55% both) (Table1).

Awareness on Some Aspects of Biological Diversity: Nearly 50 percent of the respondents were not aware about the term biological diversity. Despite the respondents were educated they were least bothered for preservation of biodiversity at household level. Turner (1997) conducted a survey to determine public awareness and perception of biodiversity in Chicago. It was found that a large segment of the public remained unfamiliar with the word biodiversity; only 36.72 percent of all respondents were familiar with the term. He found that there was no significant difference in familiarity with biodiversity among age groups or between males and females, yet awareness increased with the educational level of the respondents

Table 1: Background information of the respondents and their families (N=60)

S. No.	Variables	Categories	Frequency(%)
1	Age	25-30 years	5(8)
		30-35 years	11(18)
		35-40 years	13(22)
		40-45 years	9(15)
		45-50 years	10(17)
		Above 50 years	12(20)
2.	Education	Illiterate	3(5)
		Primary	3(5)
		Middle	8(13)
		High School	15(25)
		Graduation	24(40)
		Post – graduation	7(12)
3.	Employment status	Unemployed	33(55)
		Employed	15(25)
		Self – employed	12(20)
4.	Family income (Rs./month)	Less than Rs. 5000	10(17)
		Rs.5000-Rs. 10,000	17(28)
		More than 10,000	33(55)

Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Nearly 20 percent of the respondents felt that degradation of biological diversity is a problem. About 13 percent each of the respondents perceived degradation of biological diversity as a problem both at highest and least extent. The reason may be they were having callous attitude towards protection of diversity. Further 47 percent of the respondents were unaware of this

problem. Similar results were found for the need to prevent biological diversity. Kumar (2001) suggested that the best way to arrest environmental degradation and preservation of biodiversity was to ensure major participation of people in management of natural resources.

Measures Adopted for Preservation of Biodiversity at Household Level: The results indicated that a large majority of the respondents did not adopt the measures like use of organic pesticides in home and composting of household waste (Table 2). The reason may be, despite the people are fully aware about the various methods for preservation of bio-diversity, yet they are not willing to act in a right direction. Singal (1993) found that majority of the respondents showed 'moderately high' gain in knowledge after being exposed to social forestry programme.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The respondents were aware of biological degradation problems, which are concerned with day-to-day life, but the rate of awakening towards efforts being made for its protection is slow. This may be due to ignorance and careless attitude for conservation of biological diversity.

Further, the individuals were aware of the various methods for preservation of biological

Table 2: Measures taken by respondents for preservation of biodiversity at household level (N=60)

S.No.	Practices	Adopted	Not adopted	Would like to adopt
1.	Use of organic pesticides in home	3 (5)	54 (90)	3 (5)
2.	Use of solar energy devices	10 (17)	46 (77)	4 (6)
3.	Use of indoor plants	42 (70)	18 (30)	-
4.	Garbage is first separated in degradable and non- degradable and then thrown	-	60	-
5.	Composting of household waste	-	60	-
6.	Use of natural air purifiers like tulsi	53 (88)	17 (12)	-
7.	Proper disposal of garbage	30 (50)	23 (38)	7 (12)
8.	Trees are grown outside the house	30 (50)	25 (42)	5 (18)
9.	Minimum use of polythene bags	39 (65)	21 (35)	-
10.	Regular checking of vehicles	21 (35)	35 (58)	4 (7)
11.	Use of cloth bags for shopping	10 (17)	41 (68)	9 (15)
12.	Use of alternative source of energy for use at household level and vehicles	-	49 (82)	11 (18)
13.	Use of silencers in vehicles	29 (48)	28 (47)	3 (5)
14.	Use of communication media at restricted volume	34 (57)	26 (43)	-
15.	Water stagnation in and around the house is avoided	60	-	-
16.	Household waste is not thrown in river	51 (85)	7 (12)	2 (3)
17.	Polythene bags are not thrown in rivers	51 (85)	7 (12)	2 (3)
18.	Use of smokeless chulha in the kitchen	52 (87)	6 (10)	2 (3)
19.	Paper should be used properly with regard to forest conservation	52 (87)	1 (1)	7 (12)
20.	No cattle or human bathing in rivers (Kuhls/khuds)	58 (97)	2 (3)	-

Figures in parentheses indicate percentage

diversity but feeling of concern was not generated. However, education with respect to sustainable development can create environment congenial and make people more responsive to the effort being made at household level.

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