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## **Impact of Modern Life Style on Natural Habitats**

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### **Abstract**

*The common property resources are also the natural habitats and support many species of plants and animals. Hence there is an urgent need to conserve the rich heritage of biodiversity. In order to preserve endangered plants and animals requires habitat protection. Wildlife plants and habitats are in many ways so ecologically bound together that one cannot be saved without the other realizing that much habitat is bound to fall to modern human activities. The present research is to identify some of the critical dimensions to this issues-modernization and natural habitats in the village of Allkondanatham. The study has been undertaken to understand how far a modern life style caused the natural resources depletion particularly natural habitats of the rural areas. Attention has been paid to measure the awareness and knowledge of the ruralites on natural habitats and its relation to human survival in the study area. From this investigation it is clear that majority of the respondents hold a strong opinion on the diminishing of the natural habitats and its vulnerability faced by living organisms due to the interference of modern human life.*

**Key Words:** *Natural Habitats, Eco-system, Bio-Diversity.*

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**Introduction:** In the Indian philosophical and mythological traditions every living being is constituted by five basic elements panchamahabhutra i.e., sky, air, fire, water and soil. The sentiment being created out of these five elements of nature is the philosophical statement of ecology. The whole living world, the grand cosmos of the resources comprising the five elements is the common resource of the global family.

All life - humankind, wild and aquatic life, vegetative world- are interrelated, interdependent and interwoven. Nature is not only their feeder. It is also their protector. Before the onset of urbanization, large masses of the people lived in rural country side. They lived quite closer to nature. In fact, quite a large section of them, to get their basic needs of five 'F5 food, fuel, fodder, fibres, fertilizers and medicine, depended on nature.

**Ecosystem and Human Society:** The growth and development of human activities and community life came a host of new threats to the earth's ecological balance. Humans soon became the single greatest force in the ecological balance of the mother planet. But this process did not stop there. Industrialization, mechanization, commercialization of

agriculture and globalization once again led to an enormous increase in the ability of people to modify the environment and in the resulting ecological damage.

**Habitat:** Habitat defines each organism within a community occupies a specific region, its habitat or where an organism lives is its habitat. The nonliving part of the ecosystem includes different kinds of habitats such as air, water and land, and a variety of abiotic factor. Habitat is the natural abode or locality of an animal, plant or person. It is classified into three types:

- i. Fresh water habitat: ponds and lakes
- ii. Marine habitat : Sea water
- iii. Terrestrial habitat: forest and mountains

Typical habitats include fresh water ponds, slow flowing streams, rock pools, and hedgerows.

**Modern lifestyle and Natural Habitats:** The quality of life and the activities of all human beings within human settlements are closely interrelated. They depend on the growth, the structure and the distribution of population and also some important factors such as education, health, sanitation, the levels of use of natural resources, the state of environment and the pace and quality of economic and social development. Modern life styles are responsible for the current degradation of environment and dwindling of natural habitats. Human activities have an impact on the environment through their use of natural resource and production of wastes. This is associated with the environmental stresses like land use, water sources, energy and mineral resources, forests and ocean life.

**Why should save Natural Habitats?** Wildlife and their habitat, are in many ways a rich aesthetic resource. Destroying the biological world impoverishes all human beings. Economically, it makes good sense to protect the rich biological diversity-genetic diversity, species diversity and ecosystem diversity. They provide a reservoir of genetic material essential for the battle to fight disease, drought and insects. Their loss would be a global tragedy with far reaching effects on the food supply. Finally preserving species and their habitat helps ensure global ecosystem stability and, ultimately future of human society. They provide for human society many invaluable services with free of charge.

**Statement of the problem:** India is a rich heritage of species and overall, 8 percent of world species founded in India genetic strains of flora and fauna. But India's rich biodiversity is rapidly eroding. Alteration of habitat is the most significant single factor in extinctions. Habitat is destroyed by human civilization/modernization spreading into fields, forests, oceans and waterways.

In the rural areas, as they cannot meet their needs, they are forces to use the natural habitats such as forests for food, fuel pastures for fodder and ponds and rivers for water. The common property resources are also the natural habitats and support many species of plants and animals. Hence there is an urgent need to conserve the rich heritage of biodiversity. In order to preserve endangered plants and animals requires habitat protection.

Wildlife plants and habitats are in many ways so ecologically bound together that one cannot be saved without the other realizing that much habitat is bound to fall to modern human activities. The present research is to identify some of the critical dimensions to this issues-modernization and natural habitats in the village of Allkondanatham.

**Methodology:** The present study aims to analyse the nexus between nature of common property resources (natural habitats) and modern human activities and the responsibility and awareness of both the community and the government agencies to conserve and preserve the natural habitats at the Allkondanathan village, Cuddalore district, Tamilnadu, with the following objectives.

1. to understand the nature of human activities and modern life style of the respondents,
2. to assess the level of awareness and knowledge of the respondents on eco-system and importance of natural habitats,
3. to examine the causes for the dwindling of natural habitats and its effects on human society, and
4. to find out suggestions from the ruralites for effective/appropriate strategies to conserve the natural habitats.

**Selection of the study area and sampling:** There are three villages in Allkondanathan Panchayat. They are Allkondanathan, Sivakkam and Radhanalloor. All the three villages were considered for the study. The household is the basic unit of present investigation and analysis and the functional adult of the household is the respondent. A total 132 households are chosen from the village. The responses relating to modernization and its impact on natural habitats were obtained from the respondents by using an interview schedule.

The investigator personally interviewed the respondents by using the well structured interview schedule, specially developed for this purpose. Field investigation was made after establishing good rapport with the respondents through the President, local leaders, ward members of the respective villages. The collected data were coded and simple tables were prepared for further computation. Statistics like simple percentages, was made to interpret the data collected in the field.

**Findings:** The study has been undertaken to understand how far a modern life style caused the natural resources depletion particularly natural habitats of the rural areas. Attention has been paid to measure the awareness and knowledge of the ruralites on natural habitats and its relation to human survival in the study area. Data collected have been classified and studies to realize the objectives of the study. For this purpose the researcher analysed the collected information and classified it in to three sections. They are as follows:

(i) Socio-Economic status, (ii) Contemporary life style and (iii) Wisdom on Natural Habitats and Conservation.

**(i) Socio-economic status:** Regarding socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.

Out of the total 132 respondents, illiterates and primary level educated are more (57.57%) in the study area. All the respondents are Hindus and married. Majority of the

respondents (81.82%) belong to the scheduled caste community. The study reveals that majority of the respondents are (63.69%) collies and only 18.94 per cent of the respondents are engaged informing activities. It could also be noted that there is very few respondents engaged in private services and retail trades. It is clear that more than 90 (9.93%) per cent of the respondents have their annual income below Rs. 40,000. From the analysis it could be understood that the income level is closely associated with farming activities.

**Table – 1 Distribution of the Respondents by their Socio Economic Characteristics (N=132)**

Demographic Variables	Sub Samples	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Age	31 to 40	28	21.21
	41 to 50	31	23.48
	51 to 60	29	21.97
	61 to 70	34	25.76
	Above 71	10	7.5
Education	Illiterate	27	20.45
	Primary	49	37.12
	High school	45	34.10
	Higher Secondary	7	5.30
	College	4	3.03
Income	Below 20,000	79	59.83
	25,001 to 40,000	45	34.10
	40,001 to 60000	2	1.52
	60,001 and above	6	4.55
Occupation	Farmer	25	18.94
	Collie	84	63.69
	Government service	7	5.30
	Private service	13	9.86
	Retail trade	3	2.27
Land holding (in acres)	Land less	82	62.12
	Below 2.5	41	31.06
	2.5 to 5	6	4.55
	5.1 and above	3	2.27

The present investigation highlight that a good number of respondents (83) use the hand pump for domestic water purposes. The data reveal that all the respondents are using the village's traditional fire wood as their cooking fuel and few respondents are now using LPG for cooking. They feel that Panchayat bore- well water quality is poor even though they get adequate supply of water from the grass root level institutions.

**(ii) Contemporary Life Style:** In order to understand their contemporary changing life style the researcher posed question regarding their traditional life pattern and modernity in personal life, family life, transport and communication, occupation pattern and recreation. Table 2 presents data on the level of participation and involvement in the modern socio-economic activities of respondents.

**Table 2 Distribution of Respondents by their Contemporary Life Style**

Sl. No.	Activities	Level of involvement		Total
		Yes	No	
1.	Using synthetic material for cleaning	120 (90.91%)	12 (9.09%)	132 (100)
2.	Using toilet soap	97 (73.48%)	35 (26.52%)	132 (100)
3.	Using toilet	112 (84.85%)	20 (15.15%)	132 (100)
4.	Food habits	132 (100%)	-	132 (100)
5.	Occupational pattern	32 (24.24%)	100 (75.76%)	132 (100)
6.	Medical treatment	132 (100.0%)	-	132 (100)
7.	Higher education to Women	90 (68.19%)	42 (31.81%)	132 (100)
8.	Natural Worship	102 (77.28%)	30 (22.72%)	132 (100)
9.	Celebrating cultural and Religion	117 (88.64%)	15 (11.36%)	132 (100)
10.	Recreational Activities	76 (57.58%)	56 (42.42%)	132 (100)
11.	Exercise	91 (71.94%)	41 (31.06%)	132 (100)
12.	Using machines in agriculture	123 (93.09%)	9 (6.89%)	132 (100)
13.	Using chemical fertilizer in Agriculture	86 (80.31%)	9 (14.70%)	132 (100)
14.	Using insecticides in Agriculture	112 (84.85%)	20 (15.15%)	132 (100)
15.	Using green manure	21 (15.91%)	111 (84.09%)	132 (100)
16.	Using bore well	6 (9.55%)	126 (95.45%)	132 (100)
17.	Using bio-fertilizer	83 (62.88%)	49 (37.12%)	132 (100)
18.	Cultivating hybrid seeds	42 (31.82%)	90 (68.18%)	132 (100)

It is noted that they have changed in the attitudes of cleaning, utensils, body cleaning, brushing their teeth against eco-friendly indigenous traditional methods and used the modern synthetic materials chemical items for that purposes. It is significant to note that all are changed their food habits. The communication pattern for their day to day life activities and using modern gadgets to convey the messages for socio-economic activities are changed in an implicit level.

It is observed that all the respondents are changed their personal, family and community oriented life significantly towards modernity. There is ample evidence from the data that individually they have changed fast in their personal hygiene such as brushing teeth, using soaps and detergents for washing and cleaning their household materials, food habits, transport and communication except their occupation. In the family aspects, using toilets, and recreation behavior are not changed in a significant level. In the community aspects, using transport, communication and medical treatment are changed vehemently in the study

area. It is evident from the data that higher education to women, applying modern agricultural practices have familiarized in the study region.

**(iii) Wisdom on Natural Habitats and Conservation:** Table 3 presents data on the views of respondent's wisdom about importance of natural habitats. In order to understand the respondents' wisdom on common property resources the researcher confined fourteen statements regarding positive and negative aspects of sustainable environment.

**Table 3 Distribution of Respondents by their Views on Wisdom of Natural Habitats**

Sl. No.	Statement	Level of wisdom on natural habitats					Total
		S.A.	A.	D.A.	S.D.A	No ideas	
1.	Destruction of common property resources leads to loss of environmental balance	15 (11.37%)	32 (24.24%)	9 (6.82%)	43 (32.57%)	33 (25%)	132 (100)
2.	Destruction of common property resources mysteries to natural habitats.	9 (6.82%)	36 (27.28%)	11 (8.83%)	27 (20.45%)	49 (37.12%)	132 (100)
3.	Destruction of soil affect the flora and fauna life.	32 (24.24%)	64 (48.48%)	18 (13.63%)	10 (7.58%)	8 (6.07%)	132 (100)
4.	Modern human activity caused climate change.	36 (27.28%)	41 (31.07%)	21 (15.90%)	18 (13.63%)	16 (12.12%)	132 (100)
5.	Modern life style caused global warming.	8 (6.07%)	35 (26.51%)	41 (31.70%)	18 (13.63%)	30 (22.72%)	132 (100)
6.	Glacier melting caused increasing the sea level	5 (3.79%)	47 (35.60%)	36 (27.28%)	23 (17.42%)	21 (19.91%)	132 (100)
7.	Population growth leads to depletion of natural resources	11 (8.33%)	26 (19.69%)	41 (31.07%)	22 (16.67%)	32 (24.24%)	132 (100)
8.	Chemical fertilizers caused the loss of soil quality.	28 (21.21%)	58 (43.94%)	18 (13.63%)	9 (6.83%)	19 (14.39%)	132 (100)
9.	Modern agricultural practices threatened the natural habitats.	36 (27.28%)	53 (40.16%)	13 (9.84%)	16 (12.12%)	14 (10.60%)	132 (100)
10.	Mechanization in agricultural leads to affect the living organisms.	14 (10.60%)	49 (37.12%)	31 (23.49%)	16 (12.12%)	22 (16.67%)	132 (100)
11.	Industrial revolution caused the shrinking of natural habitats.	24 (18.19%)	37 (28.03%)	14 (10.60%)	25 (18.93%)	32 (24.24%)	132 (100)
12.	Decline of morality leads to environment pollution.	5 (3.79%)	26 (19.70%)	33 (25.00%)	26 (19.69%)	42 (31.82%)	132 (100)
13.	Modern agricultural practices caused water pollution.	39 (29.54%)	33 (25.00%)	6 (4.55%)	15 (11.37%)	39 (29.54%)	132 (100)
14.	Dumping of modern garbage affected natural habitats.	57 (43.19%)	63 (47.72%)	5 (3.79%)	2 (1.51%)	5 (3.79%)	132 (100)

SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, D.A – Disagree, SDA – Strongly Disagree

From this investigation, it is estimated that the villages are having sufficient common property resources. The healthy and wealthy of natural habitats are with the mother Cauvery River because the river acts as a generator and a prime source for providing water in these regions. The agricultural lands and the people are utilizing the water through Veeranam

Lake. It is reported that originally the water flow is without any interruption through five canals for these villages. Now it is found that nearly 90 percent the respondents hold negative opinion regarding quality of water and water table in the study area. It is observed that water quality and quantity are deteriorated by modern activities of the people and the wells were dried up in this region due to the lowering of water table.

**Table 4 Distribution of Respondents by their Views on Wisdom of Conservation of Natural Resources**

Sl. No.	Statement	Level of wisdom on natural habitats					Total
		S.A.	A.	D.A	S.D.A	No ideas	
1.	Retaining of environmental balance only through sustainable agriculture.	28 (21.22%)	21 (15.90%)	28 (21.22%)	6 (4.54%)	49 (37.12%)	132 (100)
2.	Environment controlled by good Degradation of governance only	29 (21.94%)	28 (21.22%)	30 (22.72%)	9 (6.81%)	36 (27.27%)	132 (100)
3.	Environmental crisis controlled by stringent laws only.	26 (19.69%)	20 (15.16%)	16 (12.12%)	1 (0.75%)	69 (52.28%)	132 (100)
4.	Encroachment is one of the cause for shrinking of common property.	38 (28.78%)	20 (15.16%)	29 (21.97%)	3 (2.28%)	42 (31.81%)	132 (100)
5.	The legal procedure only stop the encroachment of common property.	34 (25.75%)	29 (21.97%)	23 (17.42%)	17 (12.88%)	29 (21.98%)	132 (100)
6.	Political ethics of natural resources.	20 (15.15%)	22 (16.67%)	32 (24.24%)	3 (2.27%)	55 (41.67%)	132 (100)
7.	Political stability many protect the shrinking of natural habitats.	10 (7.75%)	27 (20.45%)	18 (13.63%)	31 (23.48%)	46 (34.84%)	132 (100)
8.	Richness of biodiversity human well being	24 (18.19%)	57 (43.19%)	22 (16.66%)	10 (9.57%)	19 (14.39%)	132 (100)
9.	Using non-conventional energy leads to save the depletion of natural resources	24 (18.19%)	73 (55.31%)	18 (13.63%)	6 (4.54%)	11 (8.33%)	132 (100)

Data presented in table 4 reports the distribution of respondent's views on wisdom about conservation strategies of natural habitats by government, community and civil society in the villages. It could be seen from the study of the data that out of the total 132 respondents 35 to 40 percent of the them hold a view on sustainable agriculture, good governance, stringent legal measures, controlling the encroachments, ethic oriented political activities, stable government, using non conventional energy and maintaining bio-diversity are the appropriate strategies to renovate the natural habitats from the devastation. It is significant to note that more than 50 per cent of the respondents have no conscious opinion on environmental crisis and its conservation strategies. It is reflected that their illiteracy, poor occupational mobility and poor participation in public and social activities in the study region.

It is clear from the study of the data that a good majority of the respondents understand the devastation of aquatic plants and animals due to the impact of the poor management of

common property resources by the government and community. It is noted that different aquatic plant species are endangered such as grasses, plankton, benthos and other floating plants. Similarly the aquatic animal's species are also threatened by modern human activities. Particularly the different varieties of snakes, crabs, frogs, snail, turtle, leeches, and mussel are either migrated or disappeared or vacated from its original habitats due to environmental risks.

It could be observed from the data that a good number of respondents hold opinion that there's reduction of different essential animals such as lizards, squirrels, birds and cave dwelling animals in the regions. It is noted that the reason for vulnerable conditions of animals due to the impact of changing human attitudes. Further, the respondents stated that the increase of land value as a stimulant factor to do such kind of unethical activities.

From this investigation it is clear that majority of the respondents hold a strong opinion on the diminishing of the natural habitats and its vulnerability faced by living organisms due to the interference of human activities. Regarding the dwindling of natural habitats and its effects, the researcher examined that the respondents views on the relationship between their contemporary socio-economic attitudes and the impact of dwindling of natural habitats. Above 90 per cent of the respondents felt about the disappearance of many indigenous varieties of medicinal plants, aquatic animals, food item, domestic activities, and fire wood. However, there is slow mobility in the occupational status but the domestic activities got changed a lot in the study region.

The present study have data about collected the respondents opinion on the conservation strategies of natural habitats. It is observed that 25 – 35 per cent of the respondents hold a view on sustainable agriculture, good governance, stringent legal measures, ethical commitment in political activities, stable government, using of non- conventional energy and protection of the bio-diversity are the appropriate strategies to revive the common property resources from the devastation. It is surprising to note that 30 per cent of the respondents have no opinion on the current challenges of environmental crisis and its conservation strategies. It is found that they have no fundamental knowledge about the environmental deterioration and shrinking of natural habitats.

**Conclusion:** It is hard to believe that all the respondents hold a positive opinion on there is significant relationship between the growth of population and modern life style and also its effect on eco system. There are changes in the infrastructural facilities. The research reveals that there are minimal changes in the housing pattern. It is heartening to note that the irrigation facilities and occupational activities are static because of lack of systematic governmental interventions to uplift their standard of living. Moreover, it is observed that the dwindling of natural habitats like water bodies and lands due to the practice of materialistic culture and adoption of western way of life style by the villagers.



### **Suggestions:**

The following suggestions could be made on the basis of study to save the natural habitats.

1. Campaign to promote eco-friendly measures.
2. Steps to control the illegal encroachments.
3. Strict legal measures to deal with offenders to undertake common property resources restoration.
4. Creating awareness on proper farmer friendly measures and encouraging the social forestry scheme to preserve the natural habitats.
5. Measures to conserve and preserve the water bodies
6. Mass awareness should be generated about that importance of bio- diversity and natural habitats for well being of human society.
7. Eco-friendly clubs can be created villages and involving local people.

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