



NEWS BULLETIN

Plants and Pollution

ENVIS RP-NBRI

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Vol. 05, May 2021

Biodiversity: Our solutions are in nature

CSIR-NATIONAL BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, LUCKNOW

UN Day for Biodiversity: If consumers are not given tools to 'go green', then the climate is doomed

Modern Diplomacy, 22 May 2021

Biodiversity loss threatens one million animals and plants with extinction. But as we celebrate the UN's International Day for Biodiversity (May 22) we are greeted by a silver lining: Consumers are waking up. There is an 'eco-awakening,' where environmental consciousness and consumerism are inextricably linked. However, going green can be tricky. Faced with a lack of transparency, consumers are often unable to make the right choices, but new technologies and certification schemes may offer transformative solutions.

After the events of 2020, consumers made one thing clear: They want a more sustainable world. In the EU, 93% of people consider biodiversity a 'very serious' problem, reflecting a change in consumption patterns. For example, a recent report done by Future Market Insights discovered the organic skincare market is expected to grow 8.1% in the next decade as people use the experiences of Covid, climate change, and increasing health problems to influence purchases.

Yet, as more consumers transition to 'eco-friendly' choices there is a risk of companies marketing unsustainable products as sustainable in order to meet demand.

Recently, there was consumer backlash against products containing palm oil—which many do not realize can be sustainably sourced—leading to boycotts and many companies replacing palm oil with soybean oil. However, soy needs almost eight times more land than palm oil and is connected to decreased bird diversity in the Amazon, home to the most rare and endangered species, where deforestation has risen to a 12 year high.

The issue with consumer-led change is, in order for it to be successful, it has to be based on accurate information which brands can support through transparency and accountability. Studies show that eco-labels and certification schemes contribute to transparency and these processes can be combined with technology like blockchain, or organizations like Sourcemap, to provide consumers innovative tools to make green choices and prevent ecological loss..... [Read More...](#)

Biodiversity conservation: Alarm bells are ringing, find solutions together

The Times of India, 22 May 2021

The theme for International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) this year is: "We're part of the solution". The IDB is celebrated on May 22 with an aim to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity. The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly affected the social and economic systems all over the world. Many lives have been lost, many children orphaned and many others rendered homeless.

What one tends to forget is that loss of biological diversity, fragmentation of habitats and increasing interface of humans and wild populations have resulted in the spread of zoonotic diseases like this one. The jolt to civilization by the disease has forced us to reconsider our position and role in nature. We have been made to realise that we are not the masters of nature but just an active constituent of this infinite system. Our survival and well being are conditional to harmonious functioning of the natural systems.

Until now, the entire discourse on environment management was centred on making the humankind realise how its actions have led to destruction of ecosystems and deterioration in functioning of earth systems. However, 2020 was a watershed year and henceforth all focus should be on how man, as a part of the planet, can help in the recovery of the biological systems that influence life on earth.

Today even a child studying in primary school can tell that deforestation, air pollution, water scarcity, climate change and waste disposal are the major environmental problems and the rate of species extinction is increasing every year. According to the State of India's birds report released last year, 79% of the bird species studied showed a decline over the last five years. The linear projects have created artificial fragmentation in habitats and have increased the incidences of human-animal [Read More...](#)



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To Prevent Future Pandemics, Start by Protecting Nature

World Politics Review, 10 May 2021

The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted humanity's growing vulnerability to emerging infectious diseases and underscored the need to reduce our collective exposure to these pathogens. Not surprisingly, then, the past year has seen a torrent of reports on pandemic preparedness, including one I co-authored for the Council on Foreign Relations. Most of these focus on controlling outbreaks after they start, rather than averting them in the first place. Moving from reaction to prevention requires identifying and mitigating the main drivers of new infectious diseases. These drivers are almost entirely anthropogenic and are the same forces responsible for precipitous declines in global biodiversity. The path to global health security, in other words, begins with protecting nature.

We have entered a new era of infectious disease. In the past several decades, more than 400 new pathogens have emerged in humans. About 75 percent of these are zoonoses, or diseases that originated in wild animals before jumping to people, often through an intermediate host. SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19 and which originated in bats, is only the latest example, following on the heels of HIV/AIDS, Ebola, SARS, Nipah, West Nile, Zika, MERS, H5N1, H1N1 and many others. Economists estimate the average annual global cost of emerging zoonotic disease at more than \$1 trillion, with periodic severe pandemics like COVID-19—for which projections of lost economic growth through 2025 go as high as \$28 trillion—capable of inflicting much more damage.

It is tempting to treat pandemics as acts of God, but they are human-made, a function of our unsustainable exploitation of nature, which exposes us to new pathogens, and of our transportation networks, which help these new pathogens spread around the world. Three of the most important factors behind the rise in zoonoses are: changing land-use patterns, as human populations encroach upon, disturb, fragment and degrade habitats and come into closer contact with once-isolated species;

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Connecting India's Urban And Rural Future Is Important For Biodiversity Conservation

World Atlas, 21 May 2021

We We all know that the younger generations are the future of Planet Earth. The older generations of humans have left them a planet riddled with environmental issues. Climate change and species extinction are some of the major challenges they need to deal with in the coming decades. Thus, the youth of every country in the world must receive the right kind of environmental education that will equip them with the knowledge needed to battle the environmental crises prevalent today.

In developed countries, such education is usually uniformly available to all irrespective of their socio-economic status.

In developing countries like India, however, the quality of education received by students of rural and urban communities is often extensively different. This difference affects their perception of nature and biodiversity conservation.

However, the conservation goals of a country like India cannot be achieved when its rural and urban youth are not in sync. Both sections constitute large proportions of the population. They need to act in unison to protect the environmental health and biodiversity of the country.

And that is only possible when they are provided equal education and the opportunity to interact and exchange knowledge and resources during their student life.

To learn about how this synergy can be achieved, World Atlas spoke to Biswajit De, Founder President of WildRoots, an NGO working in the field of environmental education in India. De, an educationist and designer by profession, launched WildRoots in 2008 to build environmental consciousness and implement conservation actions by involving the energy and,.....

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