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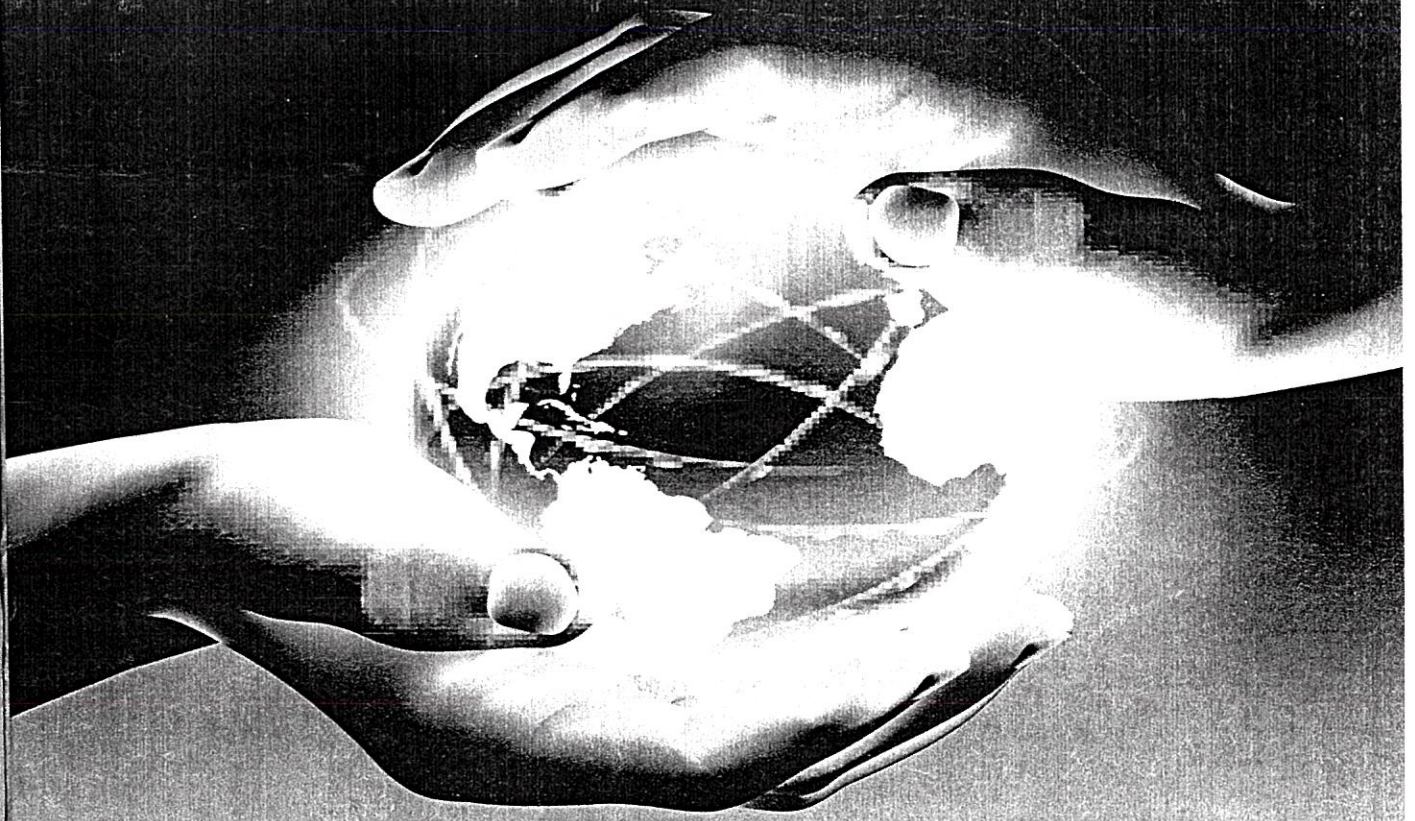
1447

ISBN: 978-93-90863-18-1



National Press Associates

New Delhi



Recent Advances in Social Sciences and Academic Development

EDITOR
DR. SUSHMA

National Press Associates

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ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND MANGROVES

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ABSTRACT

Humans are a part of nature. It is constant observation and experiment with nature, and with suitable use of nature's product be it minerals, alloys, wood or earth that man began to understand nature and create new conditions of comfort for himself and live in some degree of harmony with nature.

There are unpredictable forces of nature, such as violent earthquakes, killer cyclones or destructive volcanoes, which causes not only unfold human misery but gave ecological damage as well, and over which humans have no control. Today the major contradiction between man's developmental activity and environment however rises from continued misapplication of science and technology to over-exploit nature be it forest, minerals or rivers. The alarming built up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, global warming, rise in ocean levels, drastic changes in the weather pattern, depletion of ozone layer, the threat posed to aquatic life and coastal areas by oil spills from tankers, destruction of wild life and herbs now recognised as potential sources of alternate medicine, and looming threat of nuclear and industrial like Bhopal Gas Tragedy. Sustainable development has rapidly become the dominant idea or discourse, shaping international policy towards the environment. We are looking forward to clean water, clean air, productive soil and agriculture abundant forest and wild life. In fact we want our relationship with the environment to be sustainable.

One of the major areas of concern is saving mangroves. Mangroves are not merely a few plant species but a complete eco-system found in the inter-tidal regions of the estuaries, bays and creeks. Environmental factors which controls the mangroves eco-system are: temperature, salinity, tides, substratum, wave action, dissolved oxygen and detritus. The absence of any of these factors has a serious effect on the growth of the mangroves. Mangroves are groups of woody trees that grow where rainforests meet oceans. They are found in the tropics, on sheltered coastlines and river deltas, in brackish wetlands between land and sea, where other plants cannot survive. Mangroves are buffers between the land and the sea. Coastlines throughout the world are facing serious problems of coastal erosion and threat of rising sea levels. Due to global warming, the threats have increased by several folds. To control such assault of the sea on land, the nature has provided what is called as mangroves, a tropical littoral ecosystem which is more dynamic than the sea itself.

The study is based on through primary data collection and looking into importance of Mangroves in Vikhroli, Mumbai area. How Mangrove protects the land from erosion and plays an invaluable role as nature's shield against cyclones, ecological disasters and add protector of shorelines.

KEY WORDS: Mangrove, Ecological, Atmosphere, Sustainable Development, Land, Sea, Coastal, Erosion

INTRODUCTION

Mangroves typically grow in wet grounds and are tropical trees with their roots above the ground. They are found in bays and creeks. Mangroves are more likely to grow in marshy lands rather than sandy rocky lands. Waves, temperature, tides, salinity are factors which control growth of mangroves. Disturbances in these factors can led to deterioration of mangroves. In 75% of tropical coast forest they flourish in between land and sea. It adjusts itself to changing environment and tides in the sea.

According to the Oxford dictionary the word mangrove is associated with the Portuguese word "mangal" and the English word "grove". The term "mangrove" often refers to both the plants and forest community. Later it was declared that "mangal" should refer to the individual plants species. Mangrove is known by different names all around the world. For instance, in some places the mangroves are called mangal, in some they are known as

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MANGROVES IN VIKHROLI AREA

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While travelling from the south of Mumbai towards the north, a traveller would be lucky to spot the large mangroves between the tall towers and bustling city life. The mangroves by Godrej are the best taken care of in Mumbai and are home to diverse flora and fauna. There are numerous species of birds and animals that seek shelter during the winters and a large number of unique plants can be spotted in the marshy lands. The mangroves truly are the lungs of Mumbai City. It's not common to find such a diverse and unique habitat in a metropolitan city such as Mumbai. What enhances the unique quality of this place is the fact that it has been possible to conserve in an almost virgin state. While there have been several opportunities to industrialise and build factories in the mangroves area, the land has been kept safe by Godrej and away from modernisation. Any kind near Vikhroli, are Kanjurmarg and Bhandup. Both Kanjurmarg and Bhandup have a large number of fishermen communities that benefit from the large reservoir of fish that are available in the mangroves. In addition to being a source of daily bread-butter for the fisher community, the mangroves are also beneficial in other ways. For e.g., Weeds and grass found in the mangroves can be used to feed goats and cows kept by the fisher community. Many species of mangroves have health benefits-they are rich sources of protein, vitamins and can be added in the food. Timber is found in abundance in mangroves and that can be used in building houses, boats and poles. Soil erosion can also be avoided as mangroves act as a protective agent against them.

Mangroves are of utmost importance to humans and they should be preserved at all costs. While the Vikhroli mangroves are taken care of and protected, it is not the case everywhere. Mangroves are perceived as swamplands and neglected badly, in reality they are home to the most beautiful habitat, they provide humans with basic necessities and above all, they are a huge source of pure oxygen. It is high time we take concrete and strong measures to protect and preserve our mangroves because they too will protect us.

INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP

A scheme was initiated by the Indian government on conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coastal Reefs in 1986-87. Legal protection to mangroves in India in 2011 by passing the Coastal Zone Regulation under the environment protection act 1986, mangroves eco- system are legally protected.

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For the conservation and management of forest in India the country has a strong institutional setup to protect the environment. The Ministry of environment and Forest (MEF) is the nodal agency for planning, promotion, coordination and overseeing the implementation of various environment and forestry programs. The Ministry's mandate includes conservation and survey of flora and fauna, forests and wildlife, prevention and control of pollution, afforestation and regeneration of degraded area and protection of environment. Stringent regulation is necessary for the protection of mangroves in cities.

CONCLUSION

Mangroves protect the land from soil erosion. They are home to a variety of marine life, other animals and birds. They are good source of timbers, fuel and fodders. Mangroves act as a great means of tourism attraction. They are also an important reservoir of income generation for the fisher community.

There are several ways in which the mangroves can be preserved. We need to first educate ourselves on how mangroves exactly are and why they need to be protected. It is essential to develop a culture regarding protection of mangroves. There are laws that work in favour of mangrove protection. In case anyone is destroying or harming the mangroves in any way, they can be charged by law and police under the Maharashtra tree felling act and The environment protection act. Mangroves are potential source for recreation and tourism.

Through education/awareness programmes, one has to realise that there is long way to go to conserve our Mangroves.

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