

Madhya Pradesh Forests in India and its wildlife



SD Audarya*

Department of Veterinary Microbiology, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University, India

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***Corresponding author:** SD Audarya, (Veterinary Virology), Assistant Professor, Department of Veterinary Microbiology, College of Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry, Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University, Dr. Ambedkar Nagar-Mhow - 453446, Indore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

Madhya Pradesh is the second largest state in India, geographically. The state covers 9.38% of geographical area of India. It hosts 6% of the country's population. Rural population (72.37%) dominates the urban (27.63%). The state ranks first in India for possessing recorded forest area (28.27%). Small percentage of this forest area is classified as very dense. Inside the recorded forest area, there are around 8540 wetlands (1.83% of recorded forest area). In Madhya Pradesh natural forests 146 species of trees, 79 species of shrubs and 72 species of herbs are recorded. The state also has 10 national parks and 25 wildlife sanctuaries. The 'tiger state' hosts to a sizable number of bewildering 526 striped tigers. Apart from tigers, it boast number of wildlife fauna (panther, chital, chinkara, bison, wild boar, wild dog, hyena, wolf, fox, wild cat, jackal, crocodile, black buck, monkey, spotted deer, sambhar, four horned antelope, barking deer, bears, blue bull, alligator, tortoise, dolphin, porcupine and other mammalian and reptilian species and peacock, kharmour, the great Indian bustard and around 200 bird species). The rich forests of Madhya Pradesh provide nutrition not only to its wildlife biodiversity but also livelihood to proportion of tribal population of the state in the form of forest produce. In the present era of COVID-19 crisis, the perceived role of forests as 'safety nets' is even greater because they are shielding humans from harmful pathogens since ages. The forests and biodiversity of Madhya Pradesh state in India will be discussed in brief.

Keywords: Madhya Pradesh; Forest; Wildlife; India; Biodiversity

Abbreviations: COVID-19- Corona viral disease - 2019

Introduction

Madhya Pradesh is proudly placed in the top rank in India for its forest cover. Forests play a very important role in securing nutrition and habitat to its enormous biodiversity. Mammals, reptilians, birds (also migratory and aquatic birds) are spotted in the forests (terrestrial and wetlands) [1,2]. Human activities like search for fuel wood and forest produce frequently led to face with wildlife in the area. Rapid increase in human population, deforestation and occupation of land for industrialization and many other activities are taking its toll on forest cover and ultimately its wildlife. Poaching of wild animals for their hide and belongings is also additional challenge. Forests help to reduce carbon footprints and in times of calamities like drought provide additional nutritional sources in the form of fruits [3]. In this mini-review we will discuss about forests and its wildlife biodiversity and efforts of conservation in Madhya Pradesh in brief.

Discussion

Forests are the natural climax vegetation of many parts of the world covering [4]. In addition to timber the tribal rural community is depended on collection of leaves, flowers, fruits,

bark, seeds and roots for their livelihood [5]. For collecting these, communities had to venture to the forest land and many a times there is a conflict between wildlife and human beings. Sometimes agricultural lands are very close to forest area or inside the forests and while going to the land there can be an attack on the villager by a carnivore such as tiger or wild bear. Many a times such altercations lead to fatal injuries. Hence in quest to avoid such injury villagers may electrocute or poison its adversaries. And other times wildlife poachers could kill animals for trade. Cutting of trees for timber is also a routine menace in the forests. To safeguard forests and its wildlife in Madhya Pradesh joint forest management by participation of forest tribal and rural communities and administration had been started a long ago and a success [6]. Authorities are recognizing rights of forest communities and mechanisms are developed to protect the livelihood of such communities and also conserve forests [7]. Climate change has also resulted into a threat to plant species in the forests due to attack by pests (Gupta, 2013). Additionally, felling of trees for developmental activities is leading to close contacts of humans with forest wildlife and transmission of pathogens.

Wild species are finding their shrunken habitat difficult to adept for and in India it is very common for elephants to pass by the farmland nearby a village in search of food and possible human-animal conflict. Venturing into unknown forest lands and close contact with its wildlife may attract possible potential pathogen endangering whole human lives. Hence, it will be better for us to protect our forests and its wildlife.

Conclusion

Madhya Pradesh is doing quite well by its regular yearly plantation drive at the start of monsoon to maintain and increase its forest cover. It is also strengthening its wildlife conservation efforts culminating into its status of tiger state in the country. However, it needed to continue monitoring its activities of biodiversity conservation amidst challenges, present and future.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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