

Conservation: A Fairy Tale or A Sorry Tale???



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Our mother Earth is the only planet in the solar system on which life thrives and it thrives through a large variety of lifeforms all over the globe. Yet, amongst this huge number of species thriving, the humans came out to be the most successful, intelligent and dominant species which eventually led us to be the masters of the planet. And so, we treated the entire planet like we owned it completely. Since the event of this ape like creature standing on its two feet, it brought about so many changes, big and small, that it changed the entire shape of the world.

From being merely insignificant ape like hunter-gatherer species to being the space traveler species, we have developed to an unimaginable extent in a blink of just 12,000 years which may seem big time period but is actually a tiny time frame when we put evolutionary processes in picture. But this development came at a very big cost, a cost which was paid by the planet and numerous floral and faunal species all across the globe. History tells us that all the places *Homo sapiens* went were followed by massive species extinction. Some examples include the extinction of 90% of Australian and New Zealand's megafauna along with 60% of New Zealand's bird species around 45,000 years ago, the extinction of Mammoths of the Arctic region, the extinction of giant-sloths, Sabre-tooth cats and other unique species of the American continent some 14,000 years ago, the extinction of numerous indigenous birds, insects and other species in the islands of Solomon, Fiji, Easter Islands, Cook Islands, Hawaii etc. Following the footsteps of his ancestors, the modern man was also not far

behind and he accounts for extinction of around 784 species in just last 500 years along with around 42,108 species more threatened with extinction waiting in queue to be part of the human-induced biological annihilation. This is the first time since the origin of life on earth that one single species and its activities has brought the world amidst a sixth mass extinction phenomenon.

The 21st century humans have acknowledged the fact that they have caused massive disruptions in biodiversity all over the world and there are multiple conservation efforts, strategies, forums globally that have pledged to take care of the current situation and conserve some of the most important keystone species and other many relevant species. Many pioneer conservationists realized that if they do not act fast then this alarming rate of extinction will sooner or later affect the human species too like a domino effect where the smallest of domino which may be an indigenous plant or animal of a certain area may topple and it may lead to toppling of other dominos finally hitting and toppling down the largest domino, the Human domino. But this conservationism also has its own biasness towards a certain number of species. Many have argued that the conservation is limited to species which have a direct or larger impact on humans if they collapse. Many invertebrate species which may too are rushing towards extinction due to human activities are not researched properly or are neglected simply because they are not directly significant to humans. We talk about an eco-centric approach towards the planet and its

creatures, but yet if we talk about us conserving a species or us living sustainably, we do so by taking in consideration only the human benefits which shall be obtained. It would be a blatant lie if we say that when we talk about sustainable development we consider about the generations of Bengal tigers, the blue whales, the Siberian cranes or the monarch butterflies that their coming generation enjoy the resources their predecessor enjoyed. It's just the human benefit which has taken into consideration.

Conservationism has a very positive impact in saving a lot of species and raising awareness among the common masses all around the world has truly brought positive changes in many instances but the above shortcomings also need to be addressed by us as we are the one who are to be blamed. If conservation is way to say a heartfelt apology to nature and its creatures for the atrocities we committed on them, the apology

should be equal towards each and every species that suffers every day because of us. Of course, the fittest shall survive and the unfit shall be extinct, but when we take the place of nature in wiping out the various species in the world, it disturbs the entire balance of the nature. Now, for the time being, we humans need to cut down our consumption of natural resources significantly, lessen our invasion of forested land across the globe, control our population, reinvent ideas that not only are beneficial to us but also ensures that no species is severely affected by it. Only then our apology towards the nature will be accepted, and our conservation efforts would be more worthy, if we are able to conserve even that species also which may seem insignificant from the human perspective. So, a small effort today would save us, our surroundings, our nature and would prevent the planet from becoming a nest for only a handful of species.