

## Biodiversity – A Manual for College Teachers

**NS Leela**



*Biodiversity – A manual for college teachers.*

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*Biodiversity* is the first single topic module in the series EnviroScope brought out as a collaborative project by the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) and Environmental Education Programme of the World Resource Institute (WRI, USA).

Life is the best indicator of environment. The variety of organisms serve as a measure or index of the environmental change in time and space. Thus it is evident that every organism is a product of the conditions under which it grows. There are many specific environmental action plans, conservation strategies and developmental priorities. To succeed in such endeavours we have to share ideas and morals and learn to respect all forms of life. To achieve this a basic, well-planned, and activity-oriented teaching at school and college level is necessary. This manual clearly provides an indication of change in science education. It provides the resources needed by the multitude of teachers and a ready source of information. With a little creativity and imagination a teacher can help in bring-

ing a change in the quality of education. Such adaptations can bring about the excitement of the biological revolution directly to students and to the general public.

This manual is devised to ensure the breadth and balance of basic knowledge and understanding of the environment. Combination of the subject with activity orientation provides flexibility which is attractive to both students and teachers. Flexibility can be achieved by making provision for the locality-based projects.

The content provides an appropriate vehicle for the realization of assessment objectives. The course material can be used in such a fashion that it can be taught, learned and assessed. The assessment helps to gain knowledge followed by handling of information, interpretation and evaluation. The activity-based programme can provide practical and experimental skills for data collection.

The manual helps in the reorientation of the views of environmental awareness around a practical, problem-solving focus which has a recognizable relevance. This approach makes it very clear that environmental processes are not simply seen as a part of the curriculum but as an integral or related part to everyday phenomenon. It is meant to resolve the problems of environment by creating an atmosphere which is serious and at the same time enjoyable. It has both historical records and contemporary data. One advantage to

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start the course in environmental biology through Biodiversity is to bring to notice the relative mishandling or human disturbance.

The manual tries to highlight and stimulate the challenges of the present day teaching by employing a variety of new approaches. As mentioned by the editor, it is not a text book but a teacher's manual. The comprehensive basic ecology kit in the form of teacher's notes and learning cards for students outlines the basic concepts of biodiversity and food chain. It has been prepared by evaluating the material using comments and suggestions of college teachers from different parts of India.

The role play, 'People or Tigers', projects that protecting the environment is a serious and difficult task demanding enterprises which continually raise political and moral dilemmas. It also frequently touches on sensitive vested interests. It is a co-operative and cumulative activity with reference to social, economical, technological, ethical and cultural influences and limitations which can be felt by the students themselves when they enact such role plays. They can communicate logically and concisely through this approach. This

manual can also be used as a source book for NSS and NCC students belonging to various faculties.

The manual will help in furthering interest in this fascinating subject of biodiversity and conservation among the students. Drawings and distribution maps provide an overall picture of the subject matter. For anyone interested in ecology this can be an enthralling and informative source book. It lists the sources by which audiovisual aids could be obtained to supplement the information. The glossary, list of organizations working in the area of biodiversity and the reference books given are the source of information.

The activities suggested in the manual demonstrate the scientific concepts present in the curriculum. The instructions are easy to follow. In the hands of a good teacher, the manual can fulfil the objectives of the CEE.

The main drawback of the kit is the flimsy box. A better plastic folder or a thick durable cardboard box will be well appreciated.

In summary the main aim of this kit is to develop an interest in the study of living organisms. This kit is a must for any educational institute.

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