

APEX CREATURES: A MIRROR OF ECOLOGICAL BALANCEAvin Alva¹, Suresh Bidarkotimath², Shishir Kumar³¹Assistant Professor, Department of Preventive & Social Medicine, K. S. Hegde Medical Academy, Mangalore.²Associate Professor, Department of Anatomy, Jazan University, KSA.³Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Kanachur Institute of Medical Sciences, Mangalore.**ABSTRACT****INTRODUCTION**

South-Western coast of India, we find places where the tribal people and their cultures are still thriving in this part of the world and also has managed to survive the impact of today's ever growing effects of globalisation.

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INTRODUCTION: The Uttara and Dakshina Kannada districts in Karnataka take the major chunk of the statistics when it comes to comparing forests to that of urbanisation. There are dense jungles in which there are people who are untouched by the outer world that we know. The Siddhis in Yellapur forest are a fine example of this. Though today many of them have been reached but there are some traces of the people who habitat themselves in the thickest part of the jungles. According to the 2001 census of India, the Scheduled Tribe population in Kerala is 3,64,189 (Lunas-180,169 and felunas-184,020). Wayanad has the highest number of tribals (1,36,062). Idukki (50,973) and Palakkad (39,665) districts are the next two that make the lion portion of the native tribal people groups in the state. The Paniya (Paniyar) are the largest of the 35 major tribes¹.

Cholanaikkans, Kurumbas, Kattunaikkans, Kadars and Koragas are the five primitive tribal groups in Kerala. They constitute nearly 5% of the total tribal population in the State. Paniya, Kurichyar, Kattunaikkar, Mullukkurumar, Adiyar, Kanduvadiyar, Thachanadar, Kanaladi are the tribes that are seen in this part of the world². Majority of the tribes have very less contact with the outside world, and modern world has not affected the lives of the tribal people. As a result of such conditions that are still existing in the remote places of this part of the Kerala, the people living in this tribal conditions serve as a tool or in other words an indicator of the balance of the whole ecological systems.

DISCUSSION: The Homo sapiens being the species to which the man and in this case the tribal belongs.

The Apex of the pyramid represents the Homo sapiens and his position in the food chain. The wonderful thing about this fact is that man depends on everything that is at his bottom in the food chain and the health of these tribal can be accessed and this in turn can serve as a very useful indicator in knowing the ecological balances in nature.

Any adverse effect in the health of the tribal serves as a tool in knowing the adverse effects in nature. For example: If there is any nutritional deficiency in the tribes, then the source of the nutrition is checked in the nature to which he belongs. Meanwhile, any other animals which are inferior in the food chain, which also depend on such natural products can have a deficiency. In this way, the whole ecological problems can be sorted out just by checking the tribes. The tribes are untouched by the so called "civilisation". They depend on the nature for everything and in some ways they also reverse the cycle. But the tribe is untouched and that itself is a boon to the study. It may serve as a powerful tool to study the ecological balances.

The study may not be limited only to tribal people. If there is lack of tribes or if by any chance the tribe had been infiltrated by the so called civilisation, the next apex creature that sits in the food chain can be studied. Example: The tiger is seen in this part of the world very commonly. The beasts can be studied and the whole ecological balances can be known. By studying the apex creatures there is always a simple way of accessing the whole jungle. The scenario cannot be duplicated in the urban life because the process of globalisation has affected the day to day life and the raw materials that are abundant in one place can be transported to other places.

In this way, the tribal and other apex creatures serve as an important tool to know the balances in nature. One thing should be kept in mind that the tribes are untouched and are not immune to all the pathogens that we commonly encounter in our urban life. So, utmost care should be taken while studying these tribes in order to not kill them with urban pathogens. A simple hand-shake can literally kill them with dangerous consequences. So it is always advisable to take all aseptic precautions known to mankind while studying these paramount important parts of mystery.

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