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The impact of jhum cultivation on the problems and prospects of tourism in Manipur and strategies to control the problems

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Abstract

Manipur has immense prospects for tourism as its natural flora and fauna are uncountable and artistically distributed along the surrounding hill ranges. But because of the traditional jhum cultivation of the ethnic tribes in the hills most of the hill ranges are now becoming a barren. However nowadays a lot of private tourist places have sprang up in the cultivable valley area which in turn diminishes the productivity of the state. Here some of the remedies of these problems are being discussed. It includes (i) Conservation of the cultivable valley area for plantation of paddy and other food plants for the survival of the locals of Manipur; (ii) Plantation of high productive mango plants in the barren area after jhum cultivation; and (iii) Shifting of private tourist places in the hill sides.

Keywords: Flora, Fauna, Jhum and ethnic tribes.

Originality statement: The present view is based on my ideas and experiences as a local ethnic environmentalist

Introduction

In Manipur, we can see most of the hills inhabited by the ethnic tribes and also by the immigrants for example, the Nepalis are becoming bare due to their practice of jhum cultivation.

And the temperature of Manipur is also increasing drastically in recent years which may be the result of deforestation of the hills because of the practice of jhum cultivation. So it is the high time for the people of Manipur to discuss the means to minimize deforestation for our survival. Here some of the strategies to overcome the loss of deforestation are being discussed.

Results

As a result of jhum cultivation, we can see a lot of changes to the survival and economy of the state. It may be discussed in the following points.

1. Damage to the natural beauty of the hill ranges in Manipur

Due to repeated practice of jhum cultivation, the natural beauty of the hill ranges in Manipur is very much disturbed that it becomes a barren area. It in turn gives a negative impact in tourism in Manipur which must be the main prospect of the Look East Policy of India.

2. Adds to global warming calamities

As a result of deforestation for jhum cultivation, the overall temperature of the state is increasing to a great extent in recent years. Soil erosion is also increased and thereby the river beds in the valley are becoming shallower in recent years and cannot harbor large amount of rainwater for use during offseason. Of course in the valley also earlier there was at least one pond in a home to store the monsoon water for use in the whole year. But because of the increase in population, most of the ponds are now replaced by buildings. It also increases global warming calamities.

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Discussion

Some of the strategies to overcome or decrease the effects of jhum cultivation may be the following

1. Conservation of the cultivable valley area for plantation of paddy and other food plants for the survival of the locals of Manipur

Not only the hill ranges becoming barren area due to jhum cultivation, but also the paddy fields in the valley are being replaced by government and private buildings which ultimately lower the total productivity of the state. So it is the high time to formulate state policies to conserve the paddy fields in the valley for the survival of the inhabitants of Manipur.

2. Plantation of high productive mango and bamboo plants in the barren area after jhum cultivation

The barren area in the hill ranges after repeated cultivation most probably three consecutive years; it must be planted with mango and bamboo plants which are more economic than the paddy and with less labour. The nurseries of mango plant can be prepared easily in our kitchen garden by buying good and tasty mangoes from the market and putting the seeds under the soil, instead of blaming the government for not supplying the nurseries. The bamboo plants have vigorous growth and can be harvested many times a year.

3. Shifting of private tourist places in the hill sides

As Manipur has no remarkable industry for giving employment to the youths, we can harbor tourist industry as the primary source of income for the youths in the state. Keeping this in mind nowadays lots of private tourist places are being established in productive paddy fields in the valley, which again lower the total productivity of our state. So we have to depend everyday on imported foods for our survival. So we must shift our private tourist places in the hillsides where productivity is less and must conserve the paddy fields.

4. Plantation of fruit plants on road sides and office and institution campus

Only a few roads and highways in Manipur have trees on the sides whereas most of them remain bare. So state and private farms and local clubs can join hands to plant fruit bearing plants on the road sides which will not only make beautiful but also will increase the productivity of the state.

5. Conservation of one pond at least in one home lawn as in the past

In Manipur in our childhood we can see and experience the importance of one pond in a home land. It gives all the requirements of water in the family. There was no need of buying water every week, but it is a routine expenditure in the present situation in Manipur. The reason of demolishing the home pond is that it is included in the distribution of land area among the descendants. In this culture there is now hardly no pond in the Imphal city. In a small family there is an expenditure of at least Rupees 200/- to Rupees 400/- per week to purchase water. So per year a small family has to spend Rupees 9600/- to Rupees 19200/- for purchasing water. The river running in Manipur also will not be able to supply water all the year round. It will initiate drought in the state. So it is the high time to conserve at least one pond in a home lawn to harvest the monsoon

water. We must not include the pond to divide the land property among our descendants. The home pond must be kept conserved for the water supply of our descendants. It will also increase the beauty of our home campus.

6. Conservation of bamboo bush in one home land as in the past

In Manipur, there was at least one bamboo bush at the back side of the home campus. It was the income releasing bush in the past. It also gave many products for our families in the past. But nowadays we cannot see even a single bamboo bush in the Imphal city. Of course bamboo is a quick growing plant and can be harvested many times a year. Some entrepreneurs have started to make bamboo farms in hillsides. Bamboo plantation once it is planted it can yield endless income. It requires a little labour.

Conclusion

So we the inhabitants of Manipur both in the hills as well as in the valley must try our best to conserve our environment by keeping the above points in our mind so that we can attract more tourists and increase our state income.

References

1. Personal experience and encounter with the changing environment.
2. Personal ideas to fight the problems.