

Theme 3: Biodiversity – Terrestrial, Aquatic

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CONSERVATION THREATS OF PACHAIMALAI HILLS BIODIVERSITY, TAMILNADU: ANTHROPOGENIC PRESSURE

Ashoka Chakkaravarthy Q.

Environmental Science, St. Joseph's College, Tiruchirappalli-2.

Anthropogenic activities and the rapidly changing environment have been gradually depleting and deteriorating habitats for proper perpetuation and survival of many plant as well as animal species, Ambarish Mukherjee (1995). The present study was conducted to have a detailed work over the factors responsible for the habitat's decline in Pachaimalai hills. The study area is a part of the Eastern Ghats in the southern state of India, Tamilnadu. The hills are spread over the three districts of Tamilnadu viz, Tiruchirappalli, Salem, Perambalur, located near 11.18 °N 78.35 °E. It is –one of the least known hill ranges occupying a total area of 527.61 Sq.km with 82 villages. - -Tropical climate prevails here with - temperature ranging from 14°C to 31 °C. The study area faces constant uncontrolled anthropogenic exploitation of lands as well as vegetation. Tapioca cultivation is in practice instead of traditional - paddy culture for better profit. The study site is rich in biodiversity but problems have arisen recently as the habitats of Pachaimalai hills are threatened- due to the anthropogenic activities - carried out in -the pretext of human development resulting in the gradual conversion of natural vegetation for the purpose of tapioca cultivation. Rapid rate of deforestation due to encroachment and illegal felling of trees, especially on hillocks pose serious threat to all forest species. -Fire wood collections by local villagers destroy microhabitats.