
Ecosystems Approach to Human Health: A Case of Konda Reddi Tribes and Women's Health

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ABSTRACT The health of humans, like all living organisms, is dependent on an ecosystem that sustains life. Healthy ecosystems are the sine qua non for healthy organisms. The consequences of ecosystem degradation to human health are numerous. Countries across the world have a strong inclination to continue economic growth, even at the cost of severe environmental damage. The human population is now at all-time high, and associated pressures of human activity have led to increasing degradation of the earth's ecosystems. Ecosystems approaches strive for outcomes that involve long term economic benefit rather than short-term financial gain. Ecosystem approaches to management involves a holistic, ecological view of natural resources and the environment. They recognize that human activity and production takes place within, and not outside of, ecosystems. This paper attempts to view tribal health from the ecosystems approach with the help of a case study of a Primitive Tribal Group; Konda Reddis in Andhra Pradesh, Southern India. The paper focuses on the tribe's adaptability to their surrounding physical environment. They have harmonious interdependent relationship. However, a change in ecosystem due to human activities, development and modernization is disturbing this harmonious relationship. As a consequence of deforestation, forest rules and exploitation by the non-tribals their survival is threatened and life is becoming more and more challenging. The emphasis is on the adaptation, livelihoods, well-being and survival strategies of the Konda Reddis in this predominantly tropical rain forest environment. It focuses on the human contexts of deforestation and its repercussions on women's health. This paper focuses on the ethno-ecological knowledge and on local resource management. The study gives *emic* perspective, the local perception, and gives the indigenous people a voice.

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