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A STUDY ON THE CONSERVATION STATUS OF *MABUYA MULTIFASCIATA*, ON THE BASIS OF ETHNOZOOLOGICAL SURVEY, IN KOKRAJHAR DISTRICT OF ASSAM, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The conservation status and eco biological behaviour of available species of Mabuya multifasciata, from the region of Assam has very less worked out. This paper deals with the study, to access the biology and conservation of Mabuya multifasciata in Kokrajhar district of Assam. To study the conservation status of Mabuya multifasciata, in Kokrajhar District, Assam, India, on the basis of ethno zoological survey, the villages and town were selected randomly.Total five areas of Kokrajhar were selected. The places are inhabited by various indigenous and tribal groups. In the present field study, the survey was carried out from June 2013 to May 2014. The survey was carried out by performing personal interviews, making questionaries of both structured and non-structed form. Total number of 50 individual was recorded, during the period of which 35 were adults and 15 were juveniles. From indirect survey among the local people, it was concluded that there was steady decline in the Mabuya population in the last few years. The study concluded, covering out with the result that 60% of the tribal population believes and takes Mabuya species as medicine for skin disease, 20 % people are not aware of it and 20 % are non reporting categories. The information on remedial uses of the skink was collected. They use variety of zoo therapeutic medicine along with Mabuya like Varanus, many insects etc f in the tribes for different ailments in their own way. The skink population is declining during the last few years. Killing of the species for the market value, for meat, habitat encroachment, for therapeutic uses were the main causes of decline. In order to protect and conserve the species from future destruction it is essential to develop conservative approach and policies. If there is medicinal values this traditional zoo therapeutic remedies of the skink species would go a long way and will help in future drug designing.

***KEYWORDS**: Conservation, Kokrajhar District, Mabuya, Traditional Medicine*

Article History

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INTRODUCTION

North Eastern places are very rich in biodiversity because of its climate and vegetation. It is rich in herpetofauna too. A good number of herpetofauna is being listed from North East India and from Assam. But, work on species like Mabuya multifasciata from this region is pioneering level. Only four species of Mabuya are being listed here.

Mabuya multifasciata is a widely distributed Mabuya species in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, India, Burma, China, Laos, Bhutan and throughout the world. It is commonly known as many lined sun skink, or common golden skink. Its status in IUCN List is least concern category (2009). But, certain threats are adversely affecting the species. It is mainly due to its habitat destruction and in certain places for its meat as it is believed that it should be used as medicine (Basudev Tripathy, 2007). Mabuya multifasciata has wide range of habitat, including primary and secondary lowland forests, grasslands, mangroves and clearings with vegetations. This paper is based on a study done in Kokrajhar district of Assam, to provide some information regarding conservation and how the species occupies its place having ethnozoological value.

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Study Area

The study was carried out in Kokrajhar District of Assam, India, located in the north bank of the river Brahmaputra.

It is mainly surrounded bounded by Himalayan range of Bhutan. Haltugaoun and Kachugaoun are the two forest divisions of Kokrajhar.

The climate of the area is mainly sub tropical with humidity and high rainfall. Mid February to October is the summer session where the maximum temperature may reach to 32˚C.

Heavy rainfall is found in the monsoon season recorded average as 747mm. Mainly the monsoon season falls under the month from June to September. Five areas were randomly selected.

They are Kachugaon, Ultapani, Pepsu, Kokrajhar town area and Jharbari. Vigorous survey was made.

Pepsu (26°73′.20.1 ″ N, 090°14.4′25″ E) is a forest land; Kachugaon (26 °33.4′41″ N, 090° 12.1′98″ E) is forest land; Ultapani (26° 45.8′29″ N, 090° 17.1′29″ E) is a forest land, village area and also agricultural farm land; Jharbari (26 °17.8′89″ N,090° 26.2′69″ E) is a forest land and village area.

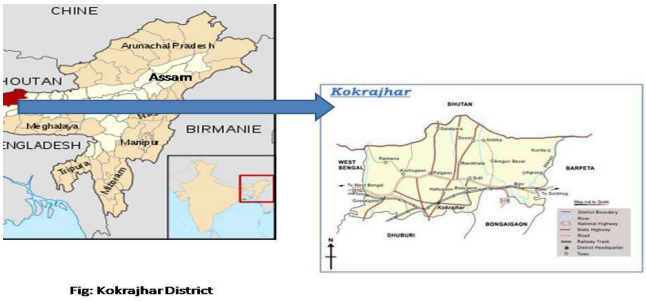

Fig: Kokrajhar District

Figure 1

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To provide some information regarding conservation and how the species occupies its place having ethno zoological value

Why select this objective?

Assam is a land of of various ethnic people. The various tribes give the color, in the culture of the people. Kokrajhar is mainly distinguished by the Bodo tribes. The bodos represent single largest ethnic and linguistic group in Northeast India.

Communities living in villages around the Chakrashila Wildlife area include Bodo, Garo, Adivasi, Rajbongshi, Nepali, Rabha, Assamese of which, the Bodo people are dominant in many villages.

Large sections of this tribe are economically under-developed and reside in relatively remote areas where medical facilities and other knowledge of using wild resources for food, medicine and other purposes basic social amenities are not available. They are, therefore, heavily dependent on their traditional ethnic.

Several studies have been conducted on the ethnomedicine of *Bodo* communities inhabiting different areas of Assam (Basumotary, Ahmed, and Deka, 2004; Das,Saikia, Sarkar, and Devi, 2006; Saikia, Borthakur, and Saikia,2010; Paul, Devi, and Sarma, 2011a; Paul, Devi, and Sarma,2011b).

Along with various medicinal plants the ethnic communities of Assam use various animal parts too. Zoo therapy is the healing of human disease, by use of therapeutics obtained from animals (Alves and Rosa, 2005).

The use of animals for medicinal purposes is part of a body of traditional knowledge, which is increasingly becoming more relevant to discussions, on conservation biology, public health policies, sustainable management of natural resources etc.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Total number of 50 individuals was recorded, during the period of which 35 were adults and 15 were juveniles. From indirect survey among the local people, it was concluded that, there was steady decline in the *Mabuya* population in the last few years. The study concluded covering out with the result that 60% of the tribal population believes and takes *Mabuya* species as medicine for skin disease, 20 % people are not aware of it and 20 % are non reporting categories. The animls are used as whole or body part, or by product like blood, bones, dry skin etc. It was mainly used for skin diseases among the recorded population sample.

The information on remedial uses of the skink was collected. They use variety of zoo therapeutic medicine along with *Mabuya* like *Varanu*s, many insects etc in the tribes for different ailments in their own way. The skink population is declining during the last few years. Killing of the species for the market value, for meat, habitat encroachment, for therapeutic uses were the main causes of decline. In order to protect and conserve the species from future destruction it is essential to develop conservative approach and policies. If there is medicinal values these traditional zootherapeutic remedies of the skink species would go a long way and will help in future drug designing.

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