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Biodiversity and taxonomical studies based on mriga pakshi Shastra in ancient India

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Abstract

Biodiversity is the living organisms present in the entire world but if it is taken for one area, it is considered as the biodiversity of that particular area. In ancient times, Biodiversity is considered as a major part for balance in the ecological cycle and balance in nature. Parashara is the sage who wrote books on plants and agriculture. There is a book called mriga pakshi Shastra, in which classification of animals and birds is done based on various factors. It was written by Hamsadeva. This paper basically focussed on the classification of animals based on various criteria in ancient India, and how it is beneficial for the present situation for conservation of biodiversity.

Keyword: Biodiversity, classification, hamsadeva, mriga, pakshi, shastra, conservation

Introduction

Living organisms are classified into plants, animals and microorganisms based on their physical characteristics. There are various types of methods in classifying organisms. Carolus Linnaeus is considered as father of taxonomy. He introduced binomial nomenclature system in which one name describes genus and another name describes species. Based on morphology, appearance and physical Characteristics, the classification is done.

Ancient indian literature has various types of classification. In Purusha suktam the classification is like this:

“Pashugsthagschakre vayavyaan

Aranya gramyascha ye”

Vayavya-Birds

Aranya-Wild animals

Gramya-Domestic animals

Animals are our younger brothers and sisters. new dimensions on the animal world through the eyes of India, Nepal, Tibet, the Himalayas

Mriga. pakshi. shastra: The Science of Animals and birds written as mrigapakshi shastra.

The book is a translation by Nalini Sadhale and YL Nene from a 13th-century Sanskrit text by Hamsadeva, who is said to have been a poet and scholar attached to the court of King Shaudadeva.

He considered physical as well as mental and behavioral characteristics for classification of animals.

Hamsadeva has described the nature and qualities of animals and birds into 36 groups to facilitate some of them are

1. The description in general.
2. The time of their intercourse.
3. The period of pregnancy.
4. The early stages.
5. The number of kinds, colour and work.
6. The nature of female ones.
7. The limit of age.
8. Their quality whether furious, calm or dull.

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Classification of lions

One example is classification of lions based on physical, mental and behavioral characteristics.

There are 6 types of lions; they differ in colour, work and quality. These have passion in rainy season at their 6 or 7 years their passion increase when they think of female lions or they see them. At this period they begin their intercourse either in bushes or in caves by liking the body, waving their tails and jumping with great roaring with pleasure.

At the time of intercourse foam comes out from lioness mouth and this period is fixed for three hours after that lioness will get sound sleep then it will get pregnant. For some days lions follow them. After pregnancy their food and pray is decreased and sleepiness increase day by day they will feel uncomfortable to face strong wind and hot sun. The period of delivery is fixed at 9 to 12 months generally they deliver cubs at the end of the spring or at the biggening of summer at delivery they give birth to 4 to 5 cubs. After delivery lioness will again become strong and the cubs starts to play around the mother and suck the milk of their mother. At their 3rd or 4th month they begin to roar aloud and catch deers and threaten other animals. During their 2nd or 3rd year their youth begins along with their strength, anger and speed increased.

At the time of hunger their anger increases, they appear terrible these are never afraid of anything and so called the king of the animals. There are 6 kinds of lions they are.

Simha

These will have short bodies and dense mane and long tails these will have strong nerves and are very strong. These are gold coloured but still we could find white lions rarely. They have soft hairs on their body. They lift their head while walking. These will run very swiftly. These will neither have long nails nor short nails. These are very angry when they are hungry. They generally dwell in caves. Sometimes they get into water. These are very hard to be captured.

Mrigendra

These are tall a long maned lions. They will be little angry when they are hungry. These are very fond of hunting elephants. These like to wander in sandy and busy regions. These will have long Jaws. These are always healthy and will get less sleep. These will have more passion in rainy season. They like to play in shadow areas when they are not hungry. Though they walk very slowly they are not easy to capture. Some of them will have their mane covering their front body. They have golden coloured eyes with long mustach. They will have spots of various colours on their body.

Panchasya

These are whitish and of short tailed. Their hair are dense and their mane are short. They have 36 to 54 inches (or) 92 to 138 cm of height and they will have long bodies. They are always sleepy. They appear very terrible. They always jump and bend while walking with their head down. Their tongue and testicles are hanging down. They will have short face and long mustach.

Haryaksha

These are very terrible, furious and short. These will have long jaws and claws. They will have stripes on their bodies. These are very hungry and healthy. They have long body with long mane covering their face. These are whitish brown in

colour having gray tail. They are very fond of laying in shadow region. They never lift their tails. They ooze their saliva in their childhood. They roar loudly while walking.

Kesari

They always dwell in caves. They roar very terribly in their youth. They do not relish food. These will have strong legs and bodies. They become more terrible when they hear the cries of elephants. They are very fond of hunting. They have red body. They are very sleepy. They will have stripes on their faces. They will always have foam on their tongue.

Hari

These are very short. These are whitish red coloured they have little anger. They will have little mane. These are afraid of wandering in day time. They like moon light. They do not have much appetied but often feel thirsty. Though these are very strong they are calm and patient.

Generally lioness are just like lions. They are short and will have no mustach on their faces. Some of them have a little mane and some of them do not have at all.

They are not terrible and speed as lions. They have short claws and pass little urine. They give birth to cubs once or twice in their life time. After 10 years both lions and lioness do not harm any other animals they won't hunt instead they kill the animals that comes near to them. Their age is limited to 20 years.

Conclusion

The ancient classification system is more profound. They considered behavioral patterns of animals. It helps to understand ethology of animals and birds as well as helps for conservation of biodiversity by using advanced methods.

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