Mini Review Paper

Global impact of Wildlife and Animal Trafficking with special reference to Indian Perspective and International Regulatory Efforts: A Review

Ganguly Subha

AICRP on Post Harvest Technology (ICAR), Department of Fish Processing Technology, Faculty of Fishery Sciences, West Bengal University of Animal and Fishery Sciences, 5, Budherhat Road, P.O. Panchasayar, Chakgaria, Kolkata 700 094, WB, INDIA

Abstract

Animal trafficking includes the unlawful poaching, smuggling, transportation and distribution of the animals and the products and derivatives obtained from them for commercial purposes for human use. The whole market management of trafficking is controlled and regulated both nationally and internationally. As per an estimate made by the Interpol, it has been predicted that annually 10-20 billion US dollars is generated from such illegal activities.

Keywords: Animal trafficking; Human; Regulation.

Introduction

The small scale hunters dwelling in or near the forest regions in the under developed nations are actively involved in animal poaching activities which provide them a constant source of income. Moreover, the low risk of penalties and relaxation in the prosecution also gives a boost to these illegal activities[1].

Effect on Economic Status

The valuable products from such exploited animals include traditional medicine, clothing, exotic pet foods, jewellery prepared from animals' fins, skins, shells, horns, tusks and internal organs. According to an estimate, the countries like China, US, and the European Union are the places where these smuggled products have huge market demand.

The market demand of the people is also influenced by the lifestyle, cultural heritage and regional preferences. Demand of the exotic wildlife products is in constant rise in the South-East Asian regions and North America. Also, in some parts of the African continent, the 'bushmeat' from primates are considered a delicacy due to increased protein source. The meat is also exported to all over Africa, Europe and the US[2,3].

Influence to Human Health Risks

The exports of smuggled wildlife products and derivatives have an alarming effect on the introduction of many transboundary diseases, also affecting human beings and the entire ecosystem. Among these, the diseases of viral and prion origins like, SARS, Avian flu, monkeypox are prominent having tremendous zoonotic potential. Wildlife trafficking has also jeopardized the ecosystem and the faunal diversity. Certain species of animals in higher demands are smuggled regularly leading to a constant drop in their population and reproductive status in their native habitats. Even introduction of some foreign and predatory species at some locations have proved to be detrimental for the inhabitant and indigenous wildlife[3].

Role of Controlling Agencies Worldwide

South Asian Enforcement Network: The South Asian Enforcement Network (SAWEN) was created with the help of CAWT and TRAFFIC. In 2008, South Asian environment ministers agreed to create SAWEN under the support of the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme. The SAWEN countries include India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan.

Coalition against Wildlife Trafficking: In 2005, the Coalition Against Wildlife Trafficking (CAWT) was established by the U.S. State Department as a voluntary coalition of governments and organizations. The main objective of the coalition is to regulate and end the the illegal trade of wildlife and wildlife products. CAWT currently includes six governments and thirteen international NGOs. Their means of action include strengthening international cross-border law enforcements to limit supply, raising public awareness to curb demand and endeavoring to mobilize political support from upper echelons[4].

Association of Southeast Asian Nations Wild Enforcement Network: The Freeland Foundation and TRAFFIC Southeast Asia worked with the Thai government and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), to establish the ASEAN Wildlife Enforcement Network (ASEAN-WEN) in 2005. ASEAN-WEN oversees cross-border cooperation and aims to strengthen the collective law enforcement capacity of the ten ASEAN member countries. It is the largest regional wildlife law enforcement collaboration in the world and receives support from the United States Agency for International Development[4].

Efforts on conservation in India for the endangered Species

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) directs its efforts at the supply side of wildlife smuggling. It aims to restrict wildlife smuggling and trade in India by improvising various policies. India being a member of the CITES since 1976, has a strong legal and policy framework to regulate and restrict wildlife trade. CITES is an effective agreement between governments internationally to protect the existence of wildlife species globally and to control their illegal trade. In India, due to lack of programme promotion and awareness, these efforts have been very passive and not implemented or enforced effectively.

Conclusion

Towards this TRAFFIC, the World Wildlife federation (WWF), the global conservation organization and IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, established in 1976, works closely with the National and the State Governments and various agencies to help study, monitor and influence action to curb illegal wildlife trade and bring wildlife trade within sustainable levels.

References

1. Lovgren, Stefan, Wildlife Smuggling Boom Plaguing L.A., Authorities Say, National Geographic, **(2007)**

2. Christy Bryan, Wildlife Smuggling: Why Does Wildlife Crime Reporting Suck?, Huffington Post., **(2010)**

3. Mastny, Lisa and French, Hillary, Crimes of (A) Global Nature, *World Watch Magazine*, **15**, (5) **(2002)**

4. Poaching, American Security: Impacts of Illegal Wildlife Trade., U. S. Government Printing Office., 5 [Available online] **(2012)**