

Eco Cinema As An Advocacy Intervention For Community Engagement For Public Policy For Wetland Conservation In India

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INTRODUCTION

Wetlands are often recognized as the most biologically diverse ecosystem. Dhanuari Wetland in Uttar Pradesh, India, is the biggest breeding ground of Sarus Crane a "vulnerable species" on the IUCN Red List.



PROBLEM

The recent use of pesticides by local agrarian community which started posing a great danger to the birds, especially to the Sarus crane which often does nesting in nearby agriculture fields. Increasing population is adding pressure on 'Dhanuari' wetland

OBJECTIVE

1. To use eco cinema as a tool for advocacy intervention for wetland conservation with agrarian community located near "Dhanuari" wetland.
2. To study efficacy of eco cinema as a tool for community awareness towards wetland conservation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sustainable management of wetlands require active local community engagement and effective public campaigns for wetlands policy awareness (Zebardast, L.et al (2020).

"Films, as a popular culture medium, have a deep-rooted impact on commonalities, and a significant portion of the world's population derives its knowledge about contemporary issues from them."

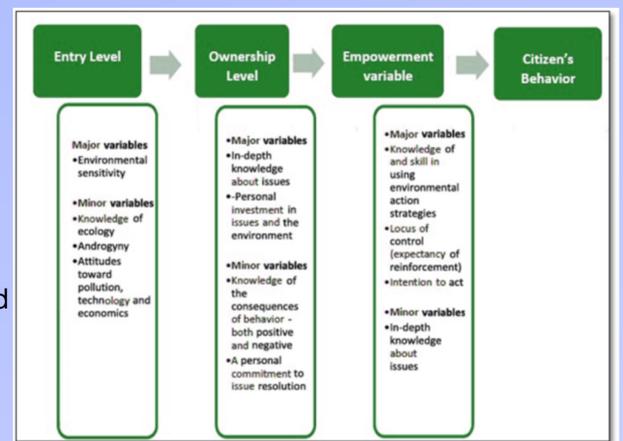
(Sharma and Choubey, 2020).

FRAMEWORK

The Environmental Citizenship Mode

In the Environmental Citizenship Model, Hungerford and Tomera grouped the variables that influence whether a person acts into three categories. These are:

1. Entry-level variables—such as general sensitivity to and knowledge of the environment.
2. Ownership variables—including in-depth knowledge, personal commitment, and resolve.
- 3 Empowerment variables—such as action skills, locus of control, and intention to act.



METHOD

The research team engaged the community of farmers in participatory action research. A group of 140 male and female members from the community were shown a series of non-fiction films on importance and conservation of wetlands in local language. these films were screened every Sunday in village school compound for three weeks followed by discussions after each screening.

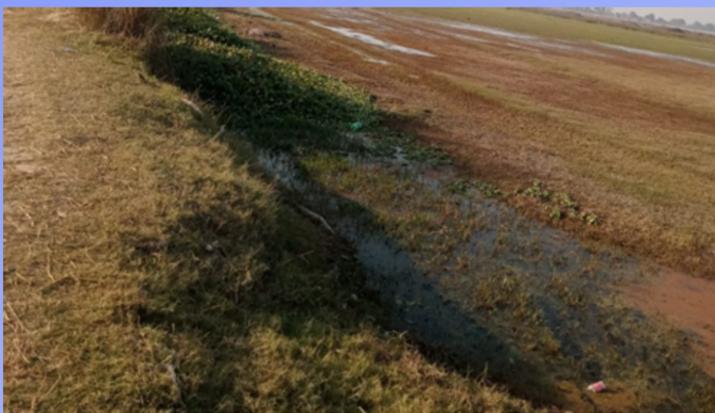
To gauge the rise in awareness levels of the members, the research team used photovoice method in which the members of community were asked to take photographs under the theme of factors causing depletion of Dhanuari wetland. The community members then after were asked to describe their photographs.

RESULTS

During photovoice exercise participants discussed the agents which are causing the depletion of Dhanuari wetland.

Relationship with causing agents:

- a) Single Use Plastic Waste
Deep understanding of factors and issues which are leading to depletion of Dhanuari wetland
- b) Illicit mining of the ground water
- c) enormous growth of Water Hyacinth



CONCLUSION

Study underlined the efficacy of eco cinema in environmental communication It is very effective in engaging community members to become environmental citizens. After exposure to eco cinema the community members exhibited Entry-level and Ownership variables variables—such as general sensitivity towards the environment, in-depth knowledge, and personal commitment towards environmental conservation. Study also highlighted that use of eco cinema may bring increased awareness, knowledge and personal commitment but to achieve significant mitigation action, it is prudent to consider combining Eco cinema with other on-the-ground interventions.

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