

- (ii) **Over-exploitation:** Humans have always depended on nature for food and shelter, but when 'need' turns to 'greed', it leads to

over-exploitation of natural resources. Many species extinctions in the last 500 years (Steller's sea cow, passenger pigeon) were due to overexploitation by humans. Presently many marine fish populations around the world are over harvested, endangering the continued existence of some commercially important species.

- (iii) **Alien species invasions:** When alien species are introduced unintentionally or deliberately for whatever purpose, some of them turn invasive, and cause decline or extinction of indigenous species. The Nile perch introduced into Lake Victoria in east Africa led eventually to the extinction of an ecologically unique assemblage of more than 200 species of cichlid fish in the lake. You must be familiar with the environmental damage caused and threat posed to our native species by invasive weed species like carrot grass (*Parthenium*), *Lantana* and water hyacinth (*Eicchornia*). The recent illegal introduction of the African catfish *Clarias gariepinus* for aquaculture purposes is posing a threat to the indigenous catfishes in our rivers.

- (iv) **Co-extinctions:** When a species becomes extinct, the plant and animal species associated with it in an obligatory way also become extinct. When a host fish species becomes extinct, its unique assemblage of parasites also meets the same fate. Another example is the case of a coevolved plant-pollinator mutualism where extinction of one invariably leads to the extinction of the other.