

Try biological way to control mosquito population: VC

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Can man never win the war against mosquitoes even though there are several insecticides and repellents? If biological research on the vector's existence is intensified, mosquito management could be accomplished, without affecting the ecosystem, say entomologists.

K. Murugan, vice-chancellor, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, said, "Chemical insecticides used to control mosquitoes could tentatively help, but will have ill consequences. Sprayed in water bodies, it would affect the animals when they drink it."

Laying emphasis on biological methods, he said: "Using biological insecticides from extracts of neem leaves, tulsi, curry leaves, thumbai, eucalyptus and pungam oil would help at a macro level."

Besides the efforts of the civic bodies, general public has an equal role to play to control mosquito population. "Knowing the life science of the mosquito would create awareness among people.

"Aedes aegypti breeds on water and on the sides and lids of a container. It could withstand environmental conditions and can hatch even after a very long period. So, cleaning the container is as important as drain-

'FOGGING DOES NOT WORK'

Even though doctors claim that fogging is not very effective in terms of eliminating the risk of mosquito borne diseases, the Greater Chennai Corporation use both vehicle-mounted and hand-held fogging machines to satisfy the demands of the public. This however only contributes to creating health problems -either physical or psychological- for those inhaling it.

Though the WHO states that mosquito fogging, being conducted by the Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (VBDCP) will not harm humans, the Centre for Science and Environment has found, from a research conducted recently, that it is harmful for children, the elderly and those with respiratory ailments.*

ing the water," said Murugan.

Professor of Botany, PVKN College, Chittoor,

Sujana explained about the fast evolution of mosquitoes. "The population of frogs and some bird preda-

tors that prey on mosquitoes are fast depleting due to pollution in water bodies. Man cannot eradicate mosquitoes as they form a biological cycle," she said.

"Climate change is another reason for the population increase. Being vectors, they can resist high temperatures and pollution unlike sparrows," she added.

"Cotton ball worm in agricultural ecosystem and locust grass helicopter in desert are other two vectors that are mushrooming. Both of them are capable of destroying green cover on a large scale," added Murugan, who is working on Nano-insecticide methods to keep a check on mosquito population.

