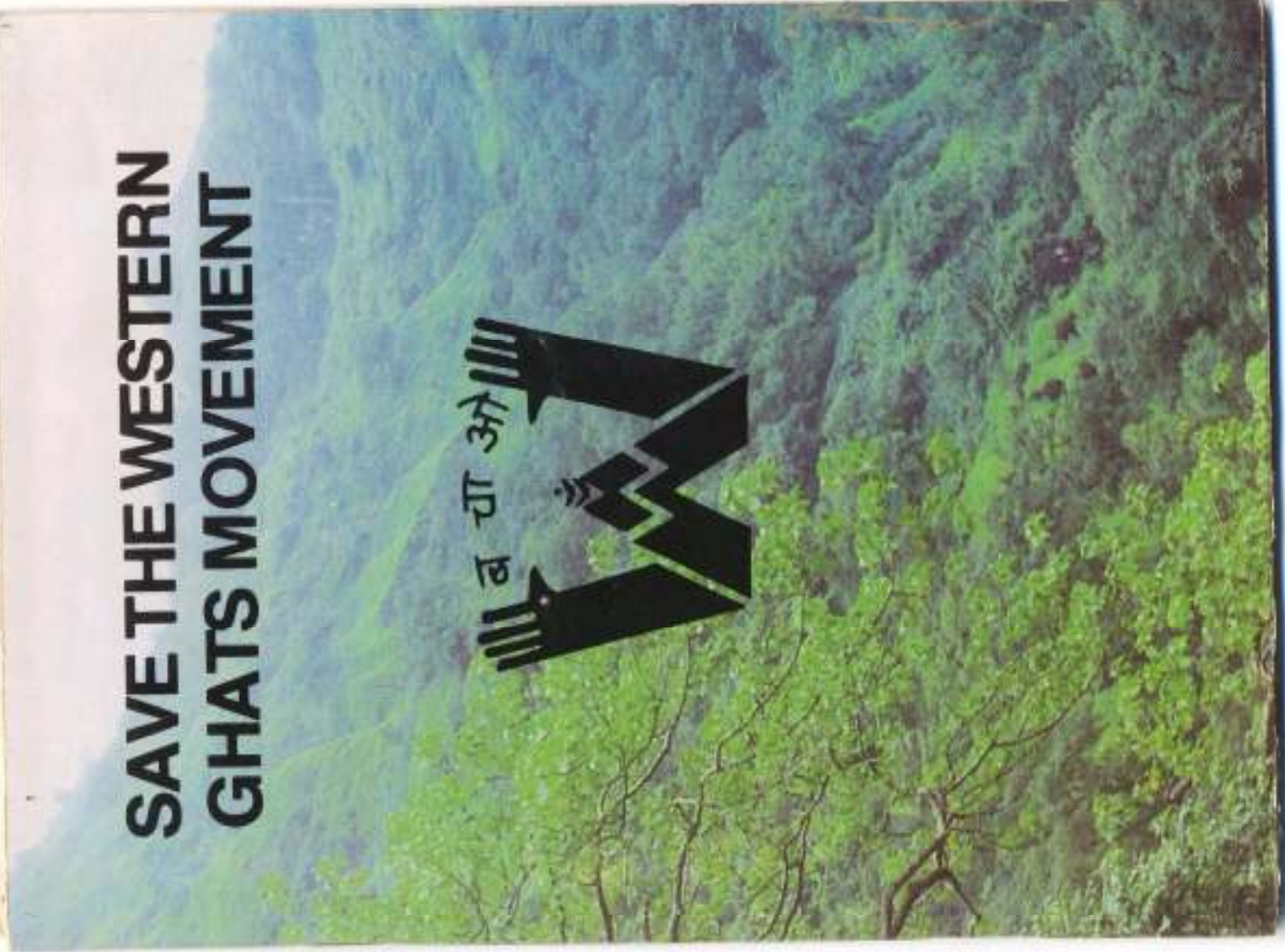
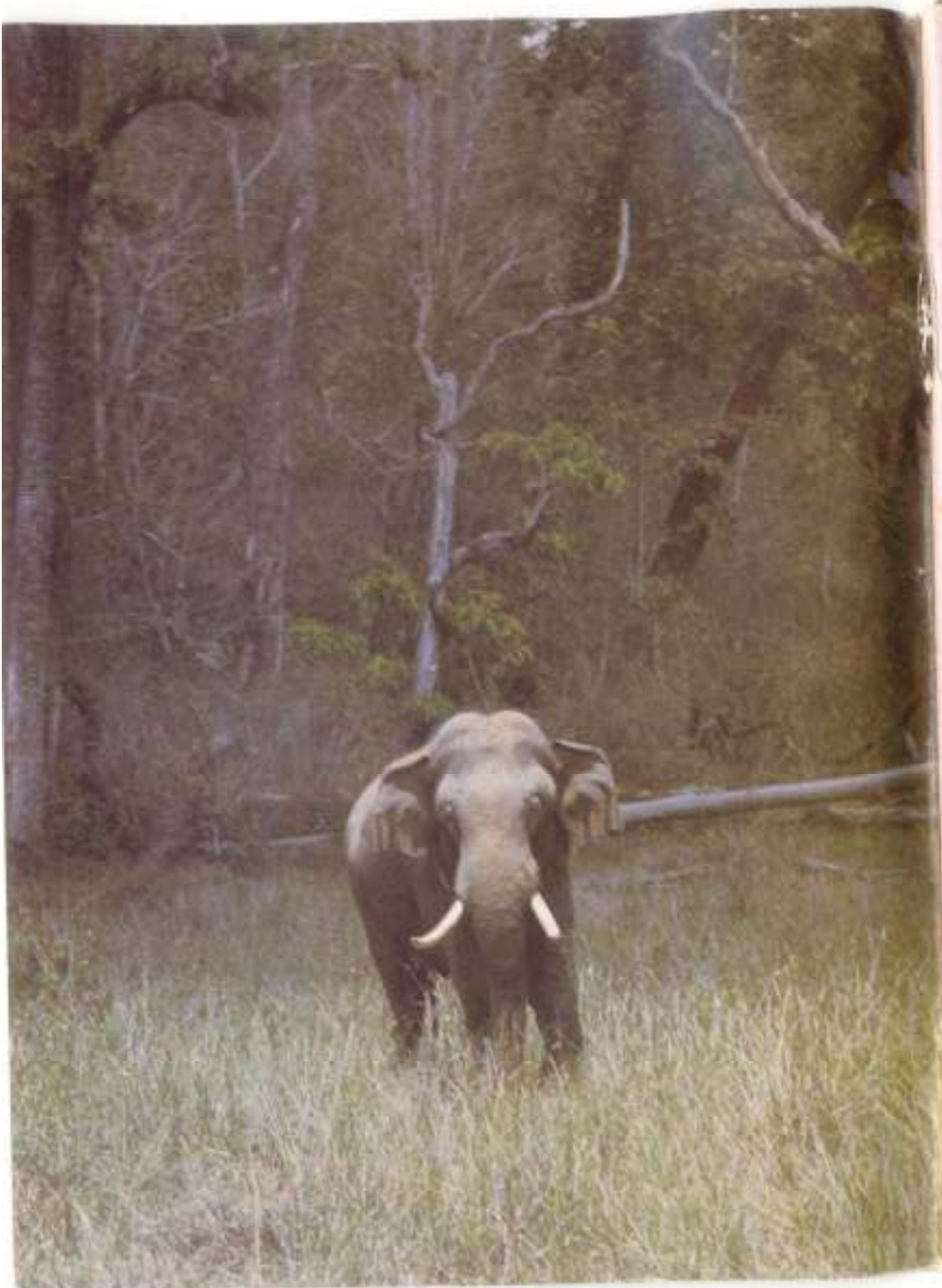


SAVE THE WESTERN GHATS MOVEMENT





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RESTORING NATURE'S BALANCE IN THE WESTERN GHATS

REPORT OF THE "SAVE THE WESTERN GHATS MARCH AND CONFERENCE"

On February 5, 1988, the last of the marchers and delegates of the "Save the Western Ghats March and Conference" left Ramnathi in Goa, the newly formed western Indian state.

The small green Barbet resumed its monotonous "bha-t-r-r" hiding in the foliage of the fruit-bearing trees, while the Coppersmith began its "tonk, tonk". Some say that this call means that the bird is searching for water which has become scarce.

True or not, it was time to write the report of this unique event which began in the bitter winter of November, 1987 and ended on February 3, 1988, a day which did not foresee any relief from the chronic drought that peninsular India is suffering from.

The media, national and international, described the March variously. The *Times of India* said in its editorial that it was "A March For Survival," while the *Hindustan Times* said it was an attempt in "Re-greening the Ghats." Other print media too, including the *Hindu*, the *Indian Express*, both the News Agencies—PTI and UNI—and the whole gamut of the language press gave the March a wide coverage.

Internationally, news of the March featured in the Asian and the European press. Some described the event as "The Long March for Nature", others called it "India's Tree Walk". Still others compared it with the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi's famous Salt Satyagraha.

Time alone will tell all.

DAM(N)ING OF RIVERS RECEIVES IMPORTANT TREATMENT

The struggle of the tribals on the Narmada cast its shadow over the conference held at Ramnathi at the end of the "Save The Western Ghats March."

A special resolution adopted at the conference said:

"We, the Marchers of the Save The Western Ghats Campaign, are convinced that the Narmada Sagar and Sardar Sarovar Projects are not justified on social, economic, environmental or ecological grounds.

"We will not permit needless suffering to a projected population of over 300,000, including tribals, to be displaced by these dams, or the destruc-

tion of over 100,000 hectares of rich forest and fertile agricultural fields, and the brutal and barbarous onslaught on a vast wildlife population.

"We demand the government cancel this project and issue notice of a sustained agitation, at the dam sites if necessary, if this demand is ignored.

"The Narmada is a part of the nation and we will not permit it to be recklessly destroyed in order to satisfy the demands of the already privileged elite."

Dams on rivers and other projects which destroyed the tropical evergreen moist and dry deciduous forests besides other eco-systems came in to sharp criticism at the conference where experiences were shared and strong action was called for.

The Pullingam and Nariya Dam in Kerala and Karnataka respectively and the Upper Bhadra Project in Chikmagalur district of Karnataka were opposed.

The resolutions in this regard said:

1. "We demand that the Upper Bhadra Project in Chikmagalur district of Karnataka, Sharawati Tailrace Project in Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka, and the Haggur Dam in Mysore district of Karnataka be given up as, a huge area of good forests would be submerged under water and the local people would be displaced for a third time."
2. "Pullingam Dam which is planned to be built in Kerala on the boundary of Kodagu District of Karnataka which is going to submerge 500 acres of thick forests and Nariya Dam in Belttangadi Taluka of South Kannada District of Karnataka, where 12,000 acres of forest land will be submerged, should not be taken up."

The Kerala marchers had a troupe which undertook street plays en route, had a skit depicting the devastation of nature and the failure of the developmental process as a result of large dams on rivers.

THE BEGINNING

On November 1, 1987 two groups of marchers started off from the northern and southern ends of the Western Ghats. Navapur in Dhule district of Maharashtra and Kanyakumari on the southern tip of the Indian sub-continent.

Flagging off the March at Navapur, the Chipko Movement leader. Mr. Chandi Prasad Bhatt said, "The Save The Western Ghats March is the conservation movement of the common people. It expresses their concern for the growing deterioration of the eco-systems in which they live."

At Kanyakumari, was the six-year-old Gautam, the baby of the March. He told a TV interviewer, "When the drought hit my village (in Kerala)

again this year, I started thinking as to why we were not getting rains as we used to in the past. What are the causes of reduction of rain which is causing hardship to all of us? I began to understand slowly that it is the cutting down of trees, especially in the Western Ghats which is contributing to the drought. When I came to know about the Save The Western Ghats March and its purpose, I felt I should join the March."

Gautam's parents came to Ramnathi to participate in the conference and to take part in the decision-making for the follow-up programme. They were proud of their child and other adopted children of theirs who participated in the March.

Among them was Mohammed Ali, who lived off the forest throughout the 100-day March. Gautam's father practices natural farming. In the beginning for him the drought had an adverse effect, but with grim determination he went on and this year the first fruits of his efforts are expected.

Activists, scientists, engineers, doctors, literateurs, trekkers, and even the hill people, whether tribals or non-tribals, joined the March and at any given time at least 50 persons were present on either side.

For the northern march, the route led them through the Tapi Valley, which forms the gap between the northern-most tip of the Western Ghats and the smaller Satpura Ranges that move from the east to the west in north-west Maharashtra. The northern marchers passed through the tribal district of Dangs in Gujarat, the only place in that state through which the Western Ghats pass. The place which they visited, Ahwa, was thickly forested but after that, the pattern was similar. Vast areas of barren brown hills, with patches of secondary forest here and there, greeted them wherever they went till they reached Panaji, approximately at the centre of the hill ranges. The impact of industrialisation had drastically changed the role of the hill ranges. They were being used to hasten the development of an alternative concrete jungle and there were areas green with sugarcane, where water resources were over-used resulting in bald hills rising amidst the haze of the blazing sun.

The impact of the sugarcane crop being a status crop was felt more, as the marchers moved towards Panaji. In Kolhapur district, the southern-most part of the northern march, cultivators were trying to terrace the hill slopes and plant sugarcane. They would transport spent wash from sugar factories or even the black cotton soil of the plains and dump it in the terraced fields.

The field co-ordinator of the southern March from Kanyakumari, Mr. A. Mohan Kumar, said the March from the southern-most tip of the In-

dian sub-continent was tortuous. The average height of the ranges in this part was higher than the north and with the hills slowly but steadily becoming bereft of trees meant the sun blazing down on the marchers. The sky became cloudless quite early in Kerala.

Barring the pristine evergreen forests of the Silent Valley, saved from destruction for a hydel power project by environmentalists in the early '80's and what are termed as the "Shola Forests" of Talcauvery, the source of the Cauvery, one of the three east flowing rivers of the ghats (others being the Godavari and Krishna), the rest of the area is covered with barren hills or degraded forests.

The backwaters have receded in the south, the dams all along had precariously low levels in their tailwaters and the rains were washing away top soils.

THE HISTORICAL SITUATION

In his pre-March backgrounder published by the organisers, the noted ecologist, Prof. Madhav Gadgil said the hill ranges run parallel to the west coast of India. They descend steeply to the coastal plains on the west, but merge gradually through a series of hills with the Deccan plateau.

Geologically the ghats fall into two sections. North of the river Kali is the Deccan trap country of relatively fragile rocks and flat hill tops. The hills do not rise much beyond 1,500 metres in this tract. South of Kali is the region of precambrian archean crystalline rocks which are much harder. The hills tend to be rounded and rise to 2,000 metres or more.

The Western Ghats force the moisture-laden winds coming off the Arabian Sea and consequently they receive heavy precipitation of 2,000 mm or more a year, mainly from the south-west monsoon. The eastern slopes are much drier than the western faces. The rainfall is heavier in the south where its periodicity extends over eight to nine months in the year. In the northern parts it is limited to four months in a year.

Thus the western slopes have a natural cover of tropical evergreen forest which changes to moist deciduous and dry deciduous on the eastern slopes. As a result of this, the Western Ghats have a variety of unique plant and animal species. They also harbour a number of wild relatives of cultivated plants, including rice, pepper, cardamom, mango, jackfruit and bananas. But this diversity of wild varieties has been on the decline over the last 100 years.

The denudation of the forests of the ghats began long ago, historical records show. The first of the famines to be recorded in history was the one which lasted from 1396 to 1407. Besides 11 years of famine, the following

two decades were years of pestilence and wastage of land. Some officials of the Bahamani kings, then ruling the Deccan, right into the present-day Karnataka, tried, and succeeded in reviving agriculture in the region after giving concessions, but warlords of the times including the Moghuls who were the mightiest of them all could not but make haste in conquering lands and extending their empires. Famines stalked the land periodically as one maurader after another laid the land waste.

Such was the disaster of the conflicts that when the British entrenched themselves in the Deccan, after defeating the Peshwas in the early 19th century, the British General Wellesley found, "the land had become a desert with the people exhausted and confused, and economy at its lowest ebb."

With the ambitions of the British as imperialists, growing, and with "need building up a compact India after the 1857 rebellion," wanton destruction of the eco-systems of the Western Ghats began. The tropical evergreen forests were extracted for railway sleepers.

Land settlements were pursued vigorously, with the rich farmer grabbing the best of forest lands and turning them for growing the most wanted cash crop of the era, cotton, required for the cotton mills at Manchester.

Prof. Gadgil told the "Save the Western Ghats Conference" that the situation was noticed by social reformers soon after the British entrenched themselves. Leaders like Mahatma Jyotiba Phule organised the rural masses and petitioned the British Government and the Indian National Congress, the leading force in The Indian Independence Struggle, against the destruction of the eco-systems in the ghats.

Prof. Gadgil recalled the Mulshi Satyagraha led by Senapati Bapat against big dams and bringing into focus the plight of the evacuees.

It was pointed out at the Conference that there was no perceptible change in the policies after Independence. Forested lands were turned into wastelands and passed on to the landless and poorer farmers under the pretext of land reforms. Land reforms, it was stated were implemented with a view to protect the vested interests of the rich.

Cash crop policy underwent a change no doubt, only to replace cotton with sugarcane. But at least cotton was a rain-fed crop. Not so sugarcane. The amount of water required by the crop which was planted without land use planning, only served to aggravate the acute water shortage in the Deccan.

Prof. Gadgil noted that the demands on forests in the south have been mounting in recent years with an explosion of industries such as paper,

plywood, polyfibres, matchwood and tanning. These, plus mineral-based industries have all but dried up the resource base of the Western Ghats.

VILLAGE SURVEYS NOTE THE DETERIORATION OF QUALITY OF LIFE

The "Save The Western Ghats March" co-ordination committee, brought out three issues of its official bulletin entitled "Voice of the Western Ghats."

Its very first bulletin of November 1987 notes, "The enthusiasm and the deep interest of the marchers is in learning about the state of the ecology of the Western Ghats and the causes for its degradation over the years, through the inhabitants of villages en route the March."

The marchers surveyed 116 villages during their march to Panaji. The northern marchers covered 55 villages in Maharashtra. Seven villages were covered in Kerala, 52 in Karnataka and two in Goa.

The main conclusions drawn by the survey were the decrease in rainfall, late onset of the monsoon, its shorter duration, increasing incidence of thunderstorms and rise in temperature.

The villages suffered from scarcity of drinking water for both human beings as well as animals during summer. There was a reduction in the groundwater table and availability of water for agriculture and horticulture had been reduced to such an extent, that in many places it was not available at all.

The survey report, based on the data collected by the marchers and analysed by the chairman of the advisory board of the march, Dr. Kailash Malhotra of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, and his students, revealed that deforestation had resulted in the reduction of forest resources such as fodder, fuel, food, timber, medicinal plants, etc. It had resulted in siltation of tanks, rivers drying up of springs, invasion of eupatorium, caused soil erosion and increased wind speeds.

Monoculture plantations of teak, rubber and eucalyptus had added to problems.

Deforestation led to wildlife species such as the Indian elephant, wild boar and monkeys damaging crops.

Dams on rivers in the forests of the Western Ghats had created enormous problems for evacuees in the project areas. Agricultural fields were affected by pollution and so were rivers following setting up of polluting industries in the vicinity, such as chemicals and mining, besides others.

Devastation of forests had led to the appearance of new human, animal and plant diseases, the survey found. There was also encroachment in

the forest areas and illicit felling.

One of the biggest problems in the southern part of the hill ranges was the proposal to set up the atomic plant at Kaiga, the preliminary survey report said.

Drinking water and fuelwood

Nine different types of drinking water sources were encountered by the marchers en route. They included wells, tanks or ponds or lakes, rivers, springs, canals, taps, hand pumps, reservoirs and tubewells.

A majority of the villages had more than one water source. However, the number of such villages were far greater in the north—91.8 per cent—and south—86.9 per cent.

A substantial number of villages continued to depend upon natural water sources like rivers, tanks or ponds or lakes and springs. Such dependence in general was more pronounced in the south.

On an average, the number of sources were significantly higher in the south than in the north. Villages with two or more sources in the north were 61.1 per cent but in the south they were 88.6 per cent.

The average distance of the water source from the villages concerned in the north were nearly double—average 0.96 kms, range 0 to 9 kms—than in the south—average 0.45 kms range 0 to 7 kms.

The average time spent per family per day for fetching the drinking water was also nearly double in the north—average 1 hour 24 minutes range 3 minutes to 10-10 hours—than in the south—average 49 minutes, range 10 minutes to 3 hours.

Regarding seasonal variation in availability of drinking water, the survey found that abundant water was available in both northern and southern villages during the rainy season. However in summer, water was more scarce in the north—50.5 per cent of the villages did not have drinking water—and south—40.7 per cent of the villages did not have drinking water.

It was noteworthy that only in 16.7 and 8.5 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively, drinking water was available throughout summer.

There was a change in circumstances, in that, in general, the availability of water during winter and summer in the last ten years had become scarce in both the north and south. The situation was much more pronounced in the south—76.3 per cent cases—than in the north—34.6 per cent cases. However, in some villages, the situation improved: north: 19.2 per

cent—south: 5.1 per cent.

Clarifying this, Dr. Malhotra, a noted anthropologist said the situation in the north was so bad that further deterioration was slow.

On the question of domestic fuel—type, availability and change, the report said that six different types of fuel were used in the survey villages. These included, firewood, agricultural waste, cowdung, kerosene, electricity and biogas.

A majority of the villages in both the north—52.7 per cent—and south—91.7 per cent, more than two types of fuel were used. In all the villages firewood appeared to be the main fuel.

The pattern in the south compared to the north was however, strikingly different in that, while in the south 43.3 per cent used electricity and 55 per cent used biogas, in the northern villages these means were totally absent in the survey villages. Also, in the north only 12.7 per cent villages used kerosene, against 45 per cent in the south.

The use of different types of fuels used in the north in the order of their magnitude was:

1. Fuelwood, 2. Cowdung, 3. Agricultural waste, 4. Kerosene.

In the south the order was:

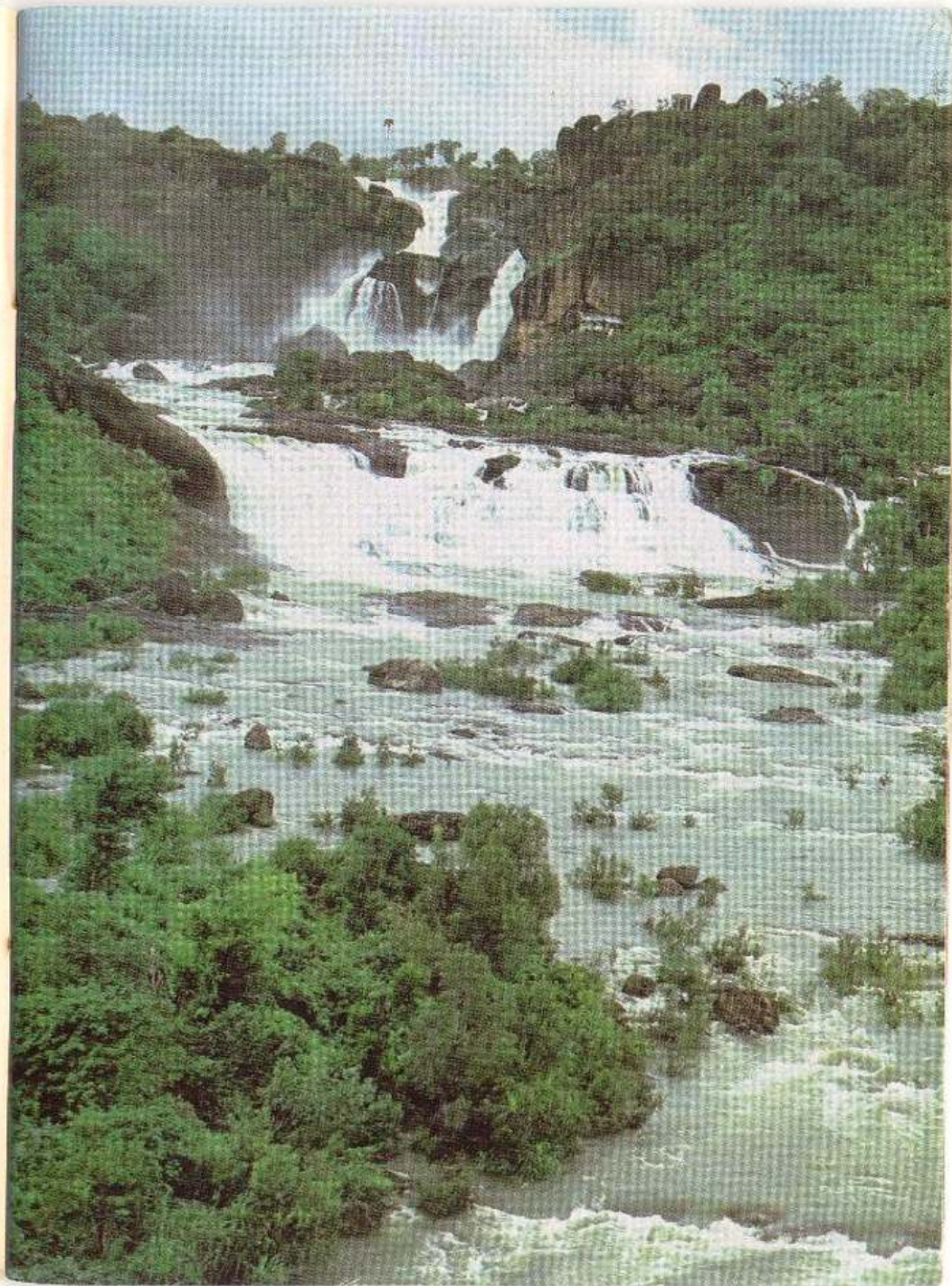
1. Fuelwood, 2. Agricultural waste, 3. Biogas, 4. Electricity, 5. Cowdung.

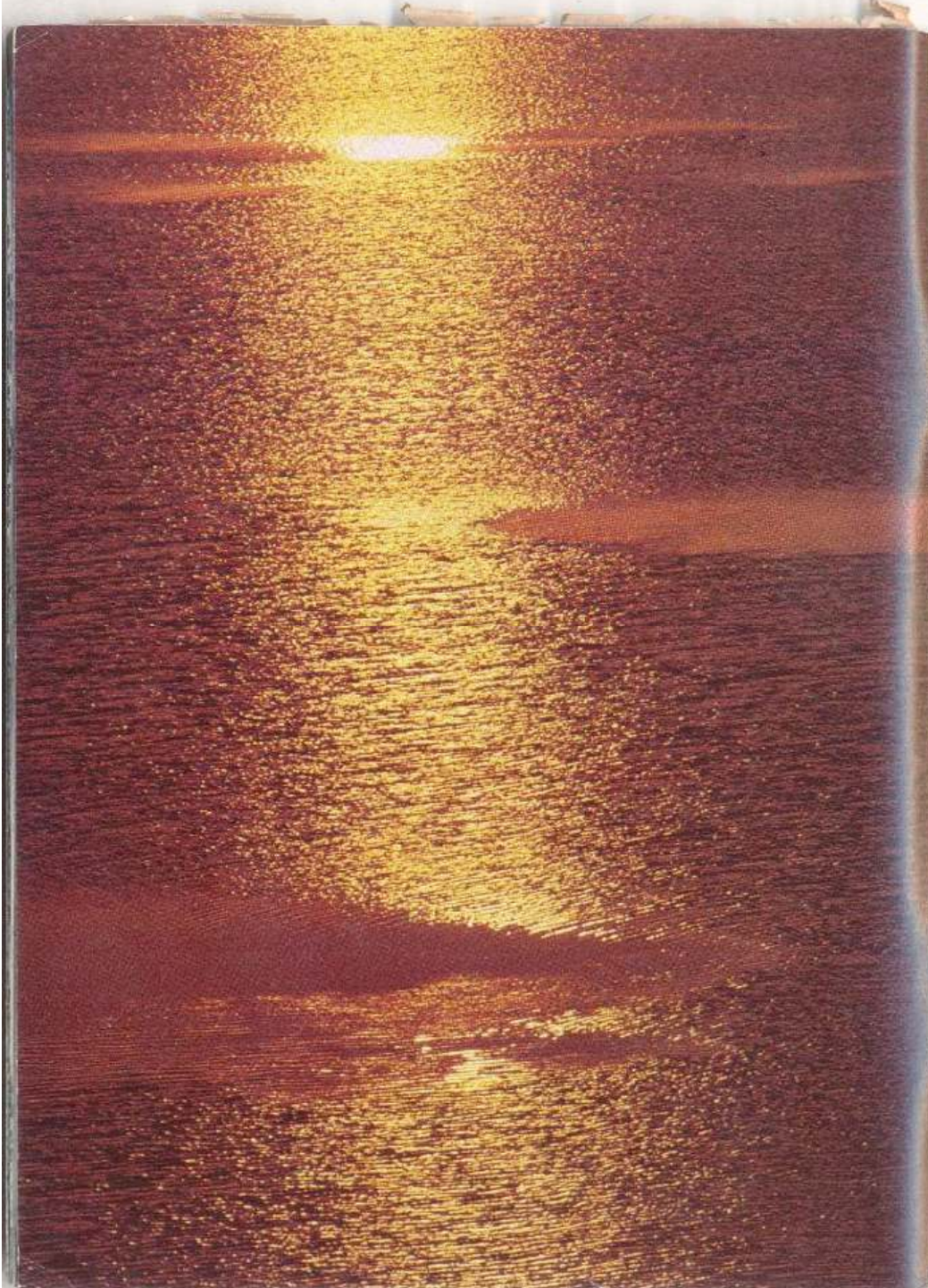
As far as the average distance travelled per day for collection of wood or cowdung was concerned, it was nearly double in the north—average 4 kms, range 0 to 12 kms—compared to the south—average 2.16 kms, range from 0 to 7 kms.

The average time spent per day per family in collection of fuelwood or cowdung in the north was substantially higher—average 3 hours 51 minutes, range 30 minutes to 9 hours—than in the south—average 2 hours 51 minutes, range 10 minutes to 10 hours.

The report referred to the seasonal availability of fuel and said that fuelwood or cowdung in both north and south was readily available in over one-third of the villages during all seasons. The situation, however, deteriorated steadily from rains to winter to summer. It was noteworthy that fuel was not available in 10.3 per cent, 3.5 per cent and 1.7 per cent of the villages during rainy, winter and summer seasons respectively, in the south. In the north, during the rainy season it was not available in 11.5 per cent of the villages.

Changes had taken place in the last ten years regarding distances travelled for fuelwood or cowdung. The distance travelled per family per day for collection of fuelwood or cowdung during the last decade or so had more than doubled in the north and in the south.





Regarding agricultural practices the survey found that in the 116 villages seven crops were sown. These included, rice, sorghum, wheat, maize, ragi and tapioca.

There were significant differences in the crops grown in the north and the south. In the north except for tapioca the other six crops are grown but in the south only rice, ragi, varai and tapioca are grown.

The survey found it noteworthy that while rice, ragi and varai were grown in over 96 per cent of the villages in the north, in the south 3.3 to 18.3 per cent of the villages grow these crops.

A highly significant difference was seen between the north and the south concerning the number of crops grown in a village. In all the northern villages more than one crop is grown whereas in the south in 75 per cent of the villages alone, more than one crop is grown.

In 30 per cent of the villages in the north and 43.1 per cent villages in the south the productivity of crops has decreased over the last ten years.

Four types of manures—leaves, cowdung, compost and chemical fertilisers—were used in the survey villages. In both, the north and the south besides organic manure, the use of chemical fertiliser was also widely prevalent.

In the south, over 93 per cent of the villages used pesticides as against only 50 per cent in the north.

The predominant sources of irrigation in the north were waterfalls, rivers, wells and canals, while in the south they were rivers, wells, tanks, waterfalls, springs and tubewells.

The type of cultivation differed significantly in the two regions. In the north in 70 per cent of the villages shifting cultivation was practised against 17 per cent in the south. In the south 73.6 per cent of the villages practise river valley cultivation, against 16 per cent in the north.

Regarding commercial crops, the report said that altogether 17 species were grown as commercial crops in the surveyed villages of the Western Ghats. They were coconut, arecanut, pepper, cardamom, cocoa, coffee, tea, rubber, tobacco, sugarcane, cashew, banana, betel leaf, pineapple, lemon, cotton and eucalyptus.

Except for sugarcane (in eight villages) and cotton and eucalyptus (each one village), no other commercial crop is grown in the northern villages. In contrast, except for cotton and eucalyptus, all the remaining commercial crops were grown in the southern villages.

Of the 15 crops grown in the south, the most common ones were arecanut—88.5 per cent villages, pepper—72.1 per cent villages, coconut—65.6 per cent villages, cardamom, coffee and sugarcane—40

per cent villages.

In 71 per cent of the southern villages between four to six commercial crops were grown.

In the last ten years monsoon-related factors such as lack of rainfall, late onset of the monsoon, irregular pattern of rainfall and the depletion of groundwater table has resulted in decrease in agriculture or horticulture productivity.

Soil-related factors such as soil erosion, decreased soil fertility and non-availability of organic manure has also adversely affected productivity.

Disease-related factors such as decrease in resistance against diseases, emergence of new diseases affecting pepper, banana and cardamom and other factors such as poor quality, insufficient supply and high cost of seeds and damage by wild animals such as the wild boar, monkeys, sloth bears and Indian elephants, have added to problems.

The survey took an interest in domesticated animals and found that nine types of animals or birds were domesticated by the hill peoples. Among them the most important ones were cattle and buffaloes, followed by goats and pigs.

The only striking difference between the north and the south was the near absence of pigs in the north and presence of the same in 45 per cent of the southern villages.

The occurrence of goats in the north was considerably higher—85.5 per cent villages—compared to the south—58.3 per cent villages.

As expected, in all the surveyed villages the fodder comprised of crop residues, foliage, grass and cattle feed, the survey report said.

In respect of cattle feed there was a striking difference between the north and the south. While in the former cattle feed was given only in 18.2 per cent of the villages, in the latter it was given in 62.7 per cent of the villages.

In general, abundant fodder was available both in the north and south during the rainy season. However, in summer it became scarce both in the north—49.1 per cent villages—and south—40.4 per cent villages. Strikingly, in 49.1 per cent of the southern villages and 9.4 per cent of the northern villages, fodder was not available in summer.

Giving details of the drinking water position for the animals in the hill ranges, the report said altogether nine different water resources were used for animals in the surveyed region.

The predominant sources were natural water courses such as rivers, springs, tanks and lakes in 65 per cent of the northern and 71 per cent in the southern villages.

The change in the last ten years was that the number of animals in

general, had decreased in 74.6 per cent villages in the north and in 47.5 per cent villages in the south. Only in a small number of villages has an increase been reported—7.8 per cent villages in the north and 22 per cent in the south.

There has been some change in the type of animals. Such a change has been reported in 15 per cent of the villages in the north and 25.5 per cent villages in the south.

The change however, is adverse due to decreased availability of fodder, water and cowboys.

The availability of fodder in both the northern and the southern villages had been drastically reduced in the last ten years. Earlier, it was scarce in 30.8 per cent of the northern villages but the percentage increased/rose to 49.1 per cent. In the south the percentage had increased from 34.5 per cent to 40.4 per cent. Earlier, fodder was not available in 19 per cent of the villages in the south but this percentage has now increased to 49 per cent.

In general, both in the north and in the south, drinking water for domesticated animals during winter and summer had been drastically reduced. Earlier, water was scarce only in 8.6 per cent of the villages in the south but now it is scarce in 41.4 per cent of the villages. In the north the scarcity has increased from 32.1 per cent to 54.6 per cent.

On natural resources, the survey report said that edible natural produce such as nuts, roots, tubers, fruits, leaves, etc. were readily available in 30 per cent and 23.1 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively. These resources were no more available in 34 per cent and 25 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively.

In 60 per cent and 24.5 per cent villages in the north and the south respectively, there was abundant grass for huts. It was either scarce or not available in 40 per cent of the northern villages and 75.5 per cent of the southern villages.

Timber for house construction was readily available in 47.2 per cent and 41.2 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively. In 52.8 per cent and 58.8 per cent of the villages of the north and the south respectively, timber was either scarce or not available.

Similarly, in 62.5 per cent and 66 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively, timber for implements was either scarce or not available.

With regard to raw materials for handicrafts like baskets, mats, ropes etc., the situation in the north was precarious. These were not available in 68.3 per cent of the villages there. In the south, these were not available in 29.4 per cent of the villages.

Medicinal plants were only readily available in 22.2 per cent and 19.2 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively. In 62.2 per cent of the villages in the north these plants were not available at all.

Honey is available in abundance in 15 per cent and 48.1 per cent of the villages in the north and south respectively. The situation appeared to be better in the southern villages.

In general, the availability of natural resources had been drastically reduced in the last ten years, the report said.

Concerning wildlife, the report said that the number of animals and their numbers in general had decreased during the last ten years in 43.1 per cent and 75.4 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively.

Hunting of animals was reported in 36.4 per cent and 54.2 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively.

The report also referred to human migration in search of work and said that inhabitants from 61.8 per cent and 59.6 per cent of the villages in the north and the south respectively migrated out of their villages in search of livelihood.

In a majority of the villages several persons from other villages had also settled.

On voluntary organisations or individuals working in the surveyed villages, the report found it noteworthy that in 60 per cent of the villages in the south some voluntary groups of individuals were working on environmental issues.

In the northern villages the number of such groups was substantially smaller—13.3 per cent.

Referring to environmental problems and issues, the report said that during the survey, villagers were asked to point out the two most important environmental problems and issues faced by them.

The response was that rainfall was the foremost amongst them. It had decreased, the monsoon set in late, it was of a shorter duration, there were thunderstorms and there was an increase in the temperature.

The villages and districts covered by the survey included: Maharashtra—55 villages—Districts: Ahmednagar—one village, Dhule—2 villages, Kolhapur—15 villages, Nashik—7 villages, Pune—7 villages, Raigad—9 villages, Sangli—3 villages, Satara—5 villages and Thane—6 villages.

Kerala—7 villages—Districts: Kottayam—4 villages and Pathanamthitta—3 villages.

Karnataka—53 villages—Districts: Chikmagalur—11 villages,

Dakshin Kannada—7 villages, Kodagu—1 village, North Kanara—11 villages and Shimoga—22 villages.

Goa—2 villages—Districts: South Goa—2 villages.

Among the interesting factors concerning cattle pointed out by the marchers and accepted by environmentalists in general was the question of indicator species. One of the reasons of the increasing number of goats found in the north was the deterioration of the wetlands and pastures there. Buffaloes were few in number indicating that these eco-systems had deteriorated considerably. They had been replaced by cows which could survive on the degraded eco-systems. But even these secondary systems were, or had rapidly degraded bringing in goats which could survive on the totally degraded eco-systems.

Prof. Gadgil commended the survey stating that it was the first such attempt to get a holistic picture of the region. He urged the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) supporting and participating in the march and the conference to undertake detailed surveys in the areas in which they worked to enable proper eco-development of the villages in which they worked.

THE GENESIS

Way back, towards the end of 1986, environmentalists and activists of (NGOs) working in southern India—Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra—met in Goa at a meeting organised by the Peaceful Society at Bandora, to discuss environmental problems of the region and share experiences.

These discussions brought out the important role played by the Western Ghats in India's environment, cultural life and economic development.

At the Goa meeting the situation was reviewed and an assessment was made of the dimensions of the environmental problems. The discussions revealed that if the Western Ghats are to be protected, the people in the region need to organise themselves. The strength of peoples' organisations had already been demonstrated in isolated spots and it was felt that the time had come to bring these isolated movements into one movement.

It was to do this that the "Save The Western Ghats March" was planned.

The march was initially conceived by a handful of people but then it received the support of over 150 organisations. Hundreds of people showed interest in participating in the March and came forward to help.

To co-ordinate the March and to raise resources, state level committees were formed in each of the five states. These committees functioned under a Central Organising Committee, comprising several eminent people like

Dr. Kailash Malhotra, a noted anthropologist of the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, who was made the chairman of the advisory board of the March. Mr. Kumar Kalanand Mani, of the Peaceful Society, Bandora, Goa was made the central co-ordinator. Mr. Jagdish Godbole, who had undertaken similar surveys on the Indravati River in central India and in the Garwhal Himalayas with leaders of the Chipko Movement was made the regional co-ordinator (North). Mr. Dinanath Manohar assisted him as Team Co-ordinator. Mr. A. Mohan Kumar, who had been working on environmental issues in the hill ranges in Kerala was made the regional co-ordinator (South). He was assisted by Karnataka's Samaj Parivartana Samudaya leaders, Messrs. S.R. Hiremath and Anant Hegde, Messrs. M. Gangadharan and Civic Chandran from Kerala and Messrs. Tirumalai and Venkatachalam in Tamil Nadu.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVES OF THE MARCH WERE:

1. To generate awareness among the people about ecology and related issues like denudation of forests, afforestation, preservation of wildlife, natural resources, etc.
2. To learn more facts about the nature and extent of ecological destruction of the Western Ghats.
3. To expose young research scholars to the field situations problems, so that they could view the problems in a wider perspective.
4. To bring together all voluntary organisations working in the region, to formulate some long-term common ecological programmes.
5. To encourage academic institutions, including schools in the area to take up afforestation and other ecologically relevant programmes and
6. To create suitable environment for effective co-operation between voluntary organisations, government agencies, academicians and educational institutions in solving ecological problems.

THE MARCH REJECTS THE ELITIST CONCEPT THAT HILL PEOPLE THEMSELVES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DEVASTATION OF THE ECO-SYSTEMS.

Relating experiences of the March, one marcher after another, both from the north and the south believed that the accusation that the hill people themselves were responsible for the denudation of the tropical forests of the Western Ghats was not true.

Pages of diaries of the marchers state that contractors were exploiting the tribals and other rural poor on the hill ranges to collect timber and transport it to nearby urban centres, which were mainly trading centres and where the bureaucracy was lodged.

It was not surprising therefore that the marchers were not only without friends in these towns but were unwelcome. Whether it was Navapur or Trichur or Kudremukh or Panaji, the urban populace in these centres seemed to have nothing to do with the March.

The response in the rural areas was, on the other hand, enthusiastic. The poor opened the doors of their humble huts and gave the marchers an emotional welcome. They poured out their woes and urged the marchers to save their lives.

Many marchers wrote, "The tribals when left to themselves protect the forests better than any government agency."

Another said, "There were instances when the lower echelons of the Forest Department, like forest guards did good jobs when protecting the forests. But these persons were transferred from one place to another following political pressures."

Along the route, at some places, the marchers felicitated such persons for the good work done. At a village in the northern march, a forest guard was transferred 17 times in the 17 years of his service. His "indiscipline" was that he stalled more than a crore of rupees worth of illicitly cut logs being taken away from the forests.

The awareness of the hill peoples in preventing degradation of the Shola (a type of tropical evergreen forests found in the southern stretches of the Western Ghats yet to be scientifically accepted) forests is ascertained from a recent incident.

When the head of the Sringeri Matt (a holy place in Karnataka where a head of the sect resides) abdicated the Matt and traversed towards Talcauvery, the mouth of the Cauvery river, he wanted to establish a Matt there. The local people persuaded him not to do so as pollution and clearance of forests would be inevitable in the wake of setting up such a Matt. Pilgrims would flock and "development with the destruction of environment" would start in these hitherto virgin forests.

Already large chunks of the Shola forests in the nearby Kudremukh mining area have been destroyed, they said.

Further down, in Kerala, the marchers helped to set up Save Munnar and Anti-Pulingam Dam Committees. They felt that the people in these areas were already reeling under the drought because of loss of tree cover and the attempt of the authorities was to bring in tea estates to Munnar and to build a dam for a multi-purpose reason at Pulingam—a hydel power station and irrigation—despite opposition from the local people would be devastating.

The marchers said that as it is while the Silent Valley itself was not

touched after the loud protests by environmentalists in the earlier part of the current decade against the hydel project sought to be put up there by the Kerala State Electricity Board, the green cover around the Valley had disappeared.

Gautam's father has been a witness to this. In fact, his attempts at natural farming almost failed because of this.

In another part of the state, the levels of water at Iddiki were down to deadwater level. Wildlife, including the large herds of elephants were suffering. Production of hydel power, the main source of Kerala's power supply had been depleted to a precarious level.

And now the State authorities were considering the alternative of generating power through thermal stations. The Kerala contingent to the Save The Western Ghats Conference was sceptical of the impact on the environment.

Up north, the conflict between the tribals and other rural poor on the hill ranges and the authorities came into focus as the March proceeded southwards beyond Pune district.

In this part, there appeared to be three types of forests. One belonged to the Forest Department itself, another to the Revenue Department and the third was held privately. Thus in the end, only confusion prevailed as to who was ultimately responsible for the continued degradation of the forests. In discussions with the concerned authorities, the marchers found that government agencies were unconcerned. They kept passing on the buck.

The incident of illicit charcoal-making in the forest around the Koyna catchment area (Koyna is the biggest hydel project in the northern side of the hill ranges) came into focus even as the marchers were passing through it.

In summer last year, the Maharashtra Legislature was agitated by the fact that more than a crore of rupees worth of charcoal had been made illicitly in these forests and was about to be transported out for selling in the market. Following a debate on the issue, the State Government had banned its removal and the Revenue authorities there had been divested of their power to give permission for its transportation. Coincidentally, northern marchers came into the area and the State Government decided to permit the transport resulting in a loss.

The decision only served to expose the stranglehold of vested interests on the forest wealth of the state.

Discussions that the marchers had with Forest and Revenue Depart-

ments' officials at various stages of the northern march revealed that there were a number of instances where the officials did not know who or which department had the authority to control and protect the forests in an area.

Dajipur Sanctuary in Kolhapur district at the southern end of the northern march is a pointer to this. The sanctuary, originally in the catchment area of Radhanagari project was expanded to include the catchment area of the Dudhganga project nearby. But according to Dr. Jay Samant, a member of the Central Co-ordinating Committee of the march, despite the government notification of September 16, 1985, till date it has not yet been able to function as a sanctuary. The Forest Department officials expressed helplessness, as protection measures could not be undertaken because of intermingling of lands belonging to the department itself, revenue department and privately owned forests.

The total sanctuary area is 315,116.003 hectares. Of this, the Forest Department area is 26,308.182 hectares. The Revenue Department controls 2,742.311 hectares of wasteland and 922.890 hectares of gairan (community forests. The area submerged by the two projects is 5,142.620 hectares. In addition, privately owned forests cover 10,356.186 hectares, Devasthans (temple authorities) have 888.509 hectares, cemeteries 7.024 hectares, *gauthan* (community land) 161.319 hectares, roads 89.120 hectares and clear area 806.315 hectares.

While the privately owned forests do not officially fall in the sanctuary, they criss-cross the sanctuary giving a free access even to the *sanctum sanctorum*. The result has been a fair number of bald slopes in the region where the owners of private forests practise shifting cultivation known there as "Kumbheri" cultivation.

Before the march actually started, the general opinion was that Devrais (sacred groves) were among the areas in the Western Ghats region where the pristine forests were protected by tradition. But the marchers found that the tradition was broken, especially south of Bhimashankar (Pune district) and devasthan committees were taken to cutting the sacred forests.

The most glaring example of the devasthan committee taking recourse to cutting trees for the ostensible reason of improving the temple was at Udaigiri. Hectares of forest were clear-felled before the authorities came to know of it and that too, only when activists gave the information to the media. It was alleged that political manoeuvring took place to prevent action being taken against the devasthan committee. Some of the members then tried to get the area clear-felled denotified as a forest and sell it to the very people who were engaged in the cutting under the pretext that they

were landless. The legal battle goes on and in the meantime so much more forest cover is lost.

Marchers from Karnataka complained that while benefits of developmental programmes have by and large gone to the urban industrial sector, the poor in the region of the projects had been bypassed. The bulk of electric power from the Sharavati hydel project has gone at highly subsidised rates to the aluminium factory at Belgaum, but those whose lands were submerged under its tailwaters have been dumped in the forests to fend for themselves.

Similarly, while the forest department has begun to charge as much as Rs. 5 per tonne to artisans of Uttara Kannada for bamboo, the same commodity was being given to the West Coast Paper Mills at rupee one per tonne or so.

And another factor to be noted they said, was that the state government while implementing the Forest Conservation Act of 1980, averred that it came in the way of assigning tree *pattas* to the landless in that state, it was easily waived to clear projects like the Sharavati Tailrace and the Kaiga Atomic Power Plant.

The Karnataka marchers also found the Kudremukh Iron Ore Project to be ill-advised. This project and the Harihar Polyfibres plant were the major pollutants of overland water resources in their areas.

In Goa, many fertile fields had been destroyed by mine tailings and the Mandovi and Zuari rivers were silting rapidly. Little attempt had been made to re-vegetate the land after the mines were abandoned when their capacity to give more ore was over. Transport of the ore by road or ships is yet another source of environmental problems.

Experts say that the capacity of these open strip mines is for another ten years and trade unions are groping in the dark to find a solution to the impending unemployment problem.

SOME EXPERIENCES EN ROUTE

Back in Nashik district or in an area on the boundary between Nashik and Dhule district of Maharashtra and Danga districts in the village of Chachpada, lives a weather-beaten man of the Bhil tribe. Named Pirya Bhil, he decided six years ago that he would guard the trees in the hilly tract surrounding his agricultural field from cattle and villagers. Day and night he guarded the tract and allowed nature to take its own course, and today it is an island of greenery amidst the brown hills that most of Nashik district is.

Accompanying the northern marchers to this place was "Kaka" Chavan,

winner of the Indira Priyadarshini Vrikshamitra Award, given annually for those who work for conservation of forests and maintenance of tree cover. He told the marchers that 32 different species of trees had generated naturally in the protected area. Due to the improved green cover, the capacity of the soil, in which Pirya practised agriculture, to hold water increased, the produce of the land doubled and in addition to this Pirya got fodder and fuel from the protected land.

But Kaka Chavan is not the Forest Department and there are people officiating there who do not have the same outlook. Take the case of Pirya Bhil himself. He knows that the forest he has helped to grow is on Revenue Department land and if the officials decide to cut it there is nothing he can do. And this may not be far off. Kaka Chavan is not in the area any longer. So the marchers were told as they neared Goa. The new official may not be the same.

The villagers of Waki a few kilometres away from Pirya's plot, were inspired by the old man and decided to protect an area of about 75 hectares along the banks of a small river passing by. The land belongs to the Forest Department which kept it fallow and allowed denudation for the last 40 years. The villagers contributed to the employment of a guard and shrubs.

The Forest Department officials have already started creating obstacles. One of them told the Marchers, "What right do they have to use government land? Today they claim the right to use the grass, tomorrow they may claim to own the land. What would happen to national wealth?"

The villagers have asserted that nobody from outside the village would be allowed to cut the grass or trees grown naturally in the belt.

One of the marchers told the Forest Department official, "this land had remained unutilised and denuded for four decades. Now that this unutilised land has grass and trees growing in it, the government wants to undo the good in it and set about to undertake further denudation."

On the southern side there is the sad story of Vazikodu. Vazikodu lies in the Nelambar Range, famous for its tropical evergreen forest and forest products. It is in the Nelambar Valley situated downhill of Nilgiri on the Kerala side. The village is so called because it means "the way of the streams" but it is no longer the way of the streams.

In nearby Calicut is the Mavoor Gwalior Rayon factory. The factory first gobbled up the bamboo forests of Nelambar. Then the Kerala Government transferred the entire reserved forest of 10,000 acres to the factory. Soon the forest ceased to be tropical evergreen forest.

The company planted a monoculture of eucalyptus. These drained the waterway. The perennial streams became seasonal and then disappeared.

"The way of the streams" suffers from acute water shortage.

The factory has gone one step ahead. It has polluted the Chaliyur river, the lifeline of Calicut and Mallapuram districts.

Deforestation by authorities? Voluntary efforts to re-forest? Conflicting reports have come from marchers.

At Peghet village in Nashik district, tribals told the marchers on November 12 last year, that they had organised themselves into the Jungle Kamgar Sahakar Society (cooperative society for working in the forests for forest produce). They said the Forest Department could only give them work for felling trees but when they demanded that they should give them work for planting trees they were told there was no financial provision for such work.

What happened to the programme of afforestation under the Employment Guarantee Scheme? The marchers had information that a massive afforestation programme could be undertaken under the scheme which had proved to be cheaper and longer lasting than by any other programme. Some of the Forest Department officials had worked out that under the programme, the total cost per tree at the end of five years would work out to Rs. 5/- while, if similar work was undertaken under any other programme the cost per tree may rise to Rs. 140/- per tree at the end of five years. But while the same department is trying to make out a case, officials of the department elsewhere do not want to take the risk or are just not bothered, marchers felt.

In Kerala, marchers found that 10,000 acres of evergreen forests were felled, to make way for monoculture plantations for industry. In Uttar Kan-nada District of Karnataka, another 40,000 acres of the same type of forest was clear-felled to make way for eucalyptus monoculture only to be affected by disease.

Sugandhabai Tupe, a person displaced by the Pawna Dam Project in Pune District, was the prime communicator of the northern march. The "aunty" of the march was heard with rapt attention by the tribals and other rural poor en route. She spoke with great emotion of her plight and the plight of the others, having lost everything and still subject to the machinations of the powerful in the vicinity, who tried to subjugate them with terror.

Sugandhabai spoke in a language that was understood by the rural masses and at the same time could communicate with comparatively better off-core marchers. She found the need to join the march because she felt that protection of the environment was inevitable in the Western Ghats region for survival, leave alone improvement in the quality of life.

Another marcher from the south, Mr. Venkatachalam found that "leasing of vast tracts of forests to the joint sector company, Karnataka Pulpwood and Mysore Paper Mills was creating major environmental problems in Karnataka, besides depriving lakhs of people of basic needs like fodder, fuel, raw materials for artisans, etc. The most ironic part of the story is that the areas from where the forests were cut were high rainfall areas. And with monoculture eucalyptus, there is no way that this rainfall will percolate into the ground. The topsoil is just being washed away."

The experiences of the marchers could not be better summed up than in what Dr. Madhav Gadgil had to say:

"The environmental costs of development have indeed been very substantial. We have been ignoring these because they have largely been passed on to the weaker sections of the society. The whole challenge of eco-development is to change this set-up. It aims to ensure that we do not permit excessive environmental costs to be incurred and to pass on the benefit of development to the weaker sections."

Political leaders had failed to play the positive role expected of them in the developmental process, especially when they have talked of "sustainable development" on so many occasions, he avers and insists that this has been the case of the development of the Western Ghats region.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS AS A RESULT OF THE MARCHERS' EXPERIENCES

The experiences of the marchers and activists associated with the Save The Western Ghats March did not result only in talking about dams and their adverse effects but other equally important issues.

These included:

Problems created by leasing out Government land to industry: the resolution of the conference said "Galebeedu Tea Project in Kodagu district in Karnataka which will destroy 5,000 acres of forest land, pollute water and destroy still more forest for processing tea leaves should not be undertaken."

Another resolution pointed out that "Ballarpur Industries of the Thapar Group has grabbed about 500 acres of land in Ponda Taluka of Goa for a project. This project has been opposed by the Town Planning Department, but the Government of Goa under pressure from the Thapar lobby in Delhi and in Goa is trying to impose this project on Goans. In terms of danger and as a health hazard it will be like bringing Bhopal to Goa."

The resolution pointed out that "this project is called Nilon 66 project,

with an investment of approximately Rs. 100 crores. It is going to be a turn-key project to be executed in collaboration with Dupont, an American-based multinational."

Speakers at the Save The Western Ghats Conference where this resolution was adopted said information about the processing for manufacture of the synthetic products was not being given. The extent of the damage that will be caused by air pollution was anybody's guess. There were grave doubts about disposal of effluents and a big question mark about stocking raw materials required. They said the project would be a danger to water bodies and verdure in Ponda Taluka of the state.

Speakers also pointed out that the Central Water Pollution Board, Health Laboratories and Industries Secretary, Mr. B.P. Mishra had expressed serious doubts on the viability of the project in a place like Goa, where human settlement was in the vicinity.

When the northern marchers moved across Thane district and had arrived at Jowhar in early December last, local activists from Dahanu approached them and asked them to visit the site of the Bombay Suburban Electric Supply Company's thermal power station in nearby Dahanu taluka of the same district.

After an assessment of the situation, the marchers felt that this utility company in the private sector supplying power to the western suburbs of Bombay and which has been in the limelight of acrimonious debates in the State Legislature and in the media in Bombay, should not be permitted to set up the power station, coal for which will be transported from the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.

A resolution of the Save The Western Ghats Conference said: "We resolve that the 2,000 MW, BSES Thermal Power Plant which is to be constructed at Dahanu (Maharashtra) should not be permitted as it will have disastrous implications on the environment—forests, horticulture and marine life. The plant has been stoutly opposed by all sections of the local population—adivasis, fisherfolk and orchard owners.

"Their protests have so far been ignored and this conference demands that all work on the project be suspended pending solution to the problems created and the government should reconsider setting up the thermal power plant in the area."

The conference also considered a problem created by the district authorities in Dhule district of Maharashtra, who were trying to evict tribals from 50 villages in Shirpur taluka.

A resolution adopted by the conference said "This conference expresses its deep concern for the attempted eviction of villagers in over 50 villages in

Shirpur taluka of Dhule district of Maharashtra by Forest Department officials and special police force officials and the resultant violence.

"We urge the state government to see that the villagers are not evicted and that the destruction of their houses and property are duly compensated and normalcy is restored as early as possible."

There were other resolutions passed at the conference.

These included: "Resolved that the water pollution acts of various states be amended to require water using industries should and must take their water intake downstream of their effluent outflows. This should apply to all industries, particularly those who claim that their effluents are harmless."

"Resolved that central and state governments having permitted private sector generation and electricity for captive consumption, extend this policy by buying back surplus power from private generation facilities at rates equal to their own average generation costs each year. This will give an instant and enormous boost to mini and micro generation by numerous communities and organisations."

"Under the guise of power crisis Kerala is presently passing through, the government is trying to impose various hydro electrical and thermal power plants that are ecologically disastrous.

"We strongly protest against the move of the government and demand that an open debate be started regarding the power crisis in Kerala for a possible solution to it.

"This conference strongly condemns the policy of the central and state governments of distributing surplus degraded forests, revenue and grazing lands to industries, institutions, etc. and in the name of social forestry, thus creating a new type of zamindari.

"We resolve that all such available lands should be allotted to landless labourers, small and marginal farmers who have no source of subsistence, forestry and agriculture.

"The conference demands from all governments, that all plans, budgets and related information about any project or programme should be made available to all people before and during their implementation.

"This conference demands that gardens and herbal medicinal garden should have fruit-bearing trees growing in them."

"This conference demands that government departments and agencies should desist from making the tribals grow the so-called superior variety of cereals.

Experience has shown that the so-called "coarse" grains give the tribals more calcium and iron than they require."

The Tamil Nadu delegation to the Save The Western Ghats Conference was also active. This resulted in the following resolutions on the situation in the hill ranges in that state, especially the Nilgiris, being adopted at the conference:

"It is resolved to request the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Union Bank of India not to grant permission to planters, Planters' Association of Tamil Nadu (PAT) and United Planters Association of South India (UPASI) for converting the virgin Janmam Forests of Gudalur (Nilgiris) into teak and other plantations."

"It is resolved to request the Government of Tamil Nadu not to use the Nilgiris and Palani Hills for raising industrial and commercial plantations like Blue Gum, etc. to feed the wood-based commercial industries like Messrs South India Viscose Private Limited and Messrs Sashasayee Paper Mills."

"It is resolved to request the Government of Tamil Nadu and the Union Government not to grant permission to Messrs Needle Industries Private Limited, Ketti, Nilgiris for putting up their electro-plating unit at Masinagudi on the outskirts of the Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary with the Nilgiri Biosphere reserve."

SUPPORT

Many eminent personalities supported the Save The Western Ghats March. Legal luminaries, literateurs and others sent their blessings. Among them was Mr. V.K. Krishna Iyer, former Justice of the Supreme Court of India and the opposition Presidential Candidate in the Presidential elections held in 1987.

He said in a communication:

"I am wholly with you in the meaningful movement you have started in the name of "Save The Western Ghats March." The murder of Nature by thoughtless, reckless and wildly crazy profit-making sector of politicians and industrialists must be resisted if Nature is not to avenge itself on man. The words of Sir Winston Churchill are worth remembering when applied to our Operation Environmental Annihilation:

"The dark ages may return—the Stone Age may return on the gleaming wings of science; and what might now shower immeasurable material blessings upon mankind may even bring about its total destruction. Beware I say: Time may be short."

(Winston Churchill)

I wholly support the project but I am not sure whether I will be able physically to join the march as I would wish to. Let us begin the march.

Yours sincerely,

V.K. Krishna Iyer

A fortnight after the northern marchers set out from Nawapur, they arrived in Nasik city—divisional headquarters, fast turning into an industrial metropolis.

Here they felicitated the noted Marathi poet, V.V. Shirwadkar alias Kusumagraj, who had recently received the Sangeet Natak Akademi award.

Replying to the felicitation, Kusumagraj hailed the march as the lone star directing the way for revival of the Sahyadris, as the Western Ghats are known in the Northern Sector. The poet described the devastation of the hill ranges as being the result of 100 years of deprecation and felt that the task of rejuvenating them, so that it could resume its role of regulating the water resources of the Deccan, as a stupendous one, but had hopes in the young marchers and NGOs which supported it.

Meanwhile in the south, another noted literateur, Dr. Shivram Karanth lent his support to the March. Dr. Karanth who revived the traditional folk art of Karnataka, Yakshagana, and who initiated the movement in that state against monoculture of eucalyptus, came specially to Talcauveri.

Here in the few Shola forests that remain in the southern part of the Western Ghats, the octogenarian Karanth flagged off the onward journey through the forests towards the north by giving the "babe" of the March, Gautam, and the field co-ordinator, Mr. A. Mohan Kumar, a twig.

The March passed through five states—Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra. As a practice, the co-ordinators did not invite political leaders to participate or address them. However, they were free to join in anywhere. But whereas the Chief Ministers of other states waited for a formal invitation to join the March, the Goa Chief Minister, Mr. Pratapsing Rane, was present in person when the marchers entered Goa on Republic Day evening.

Even as this unusual gesture was welcomed by the marchers, the "Save The Western Ghats Conference" held at Ramnathi in the same state a few days later, did not spare the Goa Government over the deprecation of the eco-systems in the state through mining and despoliation of its beaches.

THE CENTRAL CO-ORDINATOR WELCOMES DELEGATES TO THE CONFERENCE

Welcoming delegates to the conference, Mr. Kalanand Mani, the Central Co-ordinator of the March, said that the March was the culmination of a dream and the efforts to translate it into a reality.

"About a year ago it was very much limited to a group of friends. But today it has crossed all such limitations and the grave situation of the Western Ghats has become a question and a challenge to the entire nation," he said.

Mr. Mani pointed out that the March had been successful in reaching a vast number of people in the region of the hill ranges and made them think about the grave situation of the Western Ghats.

The March, he said was not an end in itself. "It is only the beginning of a long journey that will in point of time will make human beings and nature live in peace and harmony with each other," he said.

"This March succeeded in generating an awareness among those people who are active about social problems but were overlooking the question of ecology. It has touched the hearts of those who are using all their abilities to destroy the ecological balance," he added.

Stating that ecological degradation was the result of faulty planning and improper policies, Mr. Mani said, "the effort for creating an ecological balance demands a completely different outlook. We do agree that our policy on development and planning is responsible for today's ecological imbalance. The major portion of the responsibility is of the government and its irrelevant policies," he said.

"But to form and topple governments is not the sole duty of the citizens of a democratic country. The greater part of our duty lies in making people involved in the sustainable developmental process, in which the government was repeatedly failing," he said.

He felt that this responsibility was all the more greater and the involvement of the people in working for the promotion of the ecological balance was a must.

On such a struggle—for bringing back ecological balance—Mr. Mani said, "there are struggles, such as class struggles, struggles of farmers for remunerative prices for agricultural produce and struggle. The class struggle does not touch all classes of people in society, neither does the struggle against the caste system. But the struggle for ecological balance not only envelops humankind as a whole but also includes nature and every living being in nature. Hence when we are taking steps towards ecological

balance our views and strategies should be total and continuous."

"Today when every other living being is facing the danger of extinction, no struggle for the survival of humankind can be effective unless it becomes one big common effort. . . We have reached the edge of the abyss of total destruction. And we can no more wait for governments to do miracles. At this point of time we must realise that so far we were not serious about our responsibilities. We were expecting too much from government," he said.

"I do agree that people should come together and take action against a number of government policies. But it is not that easy to achieve. To achieve this we have to adopt various strategies. We must win the support of the people and Save The Western Ghats March is one of such strategies," he averred.

The Central Co-ordinator of the March, pointed to the impending ecological disaster in Peninsular India. He said, "We, being concerned about the maintenance of ecological balance find two very big problems facing us—one is the Narmada and the other is Kaiga. At any cost we have to save these eco-systems. All our struggles must aim at this. Every struggle should be such that it changes the attitude of the government. We can achieve this through the immense strength of Satyagraha. I believe our sincere efforts through Satyagraha can certainly involve local people whereby Narmada and Kaiga eco-systems can be saved. And for this, our motto should be—NARMADA IS OUR LIFE, TO HER WE PLEDGE OUR LIFE."

As regards other issues in general, Mr. Mani said, "At present the Save The Western Ghats March is concerned with the local problems such as strong actions against deforestation and appropriate steps for afforestation. Whatever top-soil is left on the hills and slopes of Western Ghats today, if not properly protected in four or five years, it will be lost and the problems of soil erosion would become terribly complicated. All our steps to keep the balance of nature will be entirely futile. Hence, today, if someone still thinks that afforestation is not serious enough a work, then it is my earnest request to them that they should give it a second thought. Reforestation is not simply plantation. It is arresting further soil erosion, which can help maintain an evenly distributed rainfall. It is a concrete step to solve the problems of the poor and the oppressed in the villages who suffer continuous floods and droughts."

On the question of involvement of educational institutions in the afforestation programme, Mr. Mani said, "Today the need is to inspire more and more people, the students and teachers of schools and colleges, peo-

ple of all ages, but more particularly the younger generation."

DR. GADGIL PROPOSES ECO-DEVELOPMENT

In his keynote address to the Ramnathi Conference, Prof. Gadgil said, "What we therefore face is a gigantic task that would have to be attacked on many fronts.

The objectives he said, were of two categories—environment and social.

The environmental categories included conservation of the diversity of plant and animal species and of natural biological communities, the genetic resources of cultivated plants and domesticated animal species, the diversity of landscapes resulting from traditional patterns of harmonious resource use, Sustainable use of renewable resources of soil, water, vegetation and cultivated plants and animal biomass of direct utility to the human populations and improving the efficiency of use of resources such as fuelwood, fodder and water.

Prof. Gadgil divided the social objectives into two categories. He said these included those on which there was universal agreement and the other which were controversial.

He pointed out that on those which there was broad agreement were, generating resources to meet the basic needs of the local population, generation of rural employment on a massive scale for the purpose of eco-forestation, effective motivation of local population for good resource use and proper rehabilitation of people displaced by development projects.

He appeared to be aware of the differences of opinion on certain other proposals. He said, "There would obviously be less unanimity on how to approach the demands of industrial development, power and irrigation projects and the armed forces. Some would view these demands as signs of progress, others, as a force that needs to be accommodated, and still others as an evil that needs to be fought tooth and nail.

The approach would obviously be related to the nature of society we are looking for. Some of us want it to be basically an agrarian community of self-sufficient villages. Others would like to aim for a modern industrial society. One must face these questions and also consider not only what is desirable but also feasible."

Prof. Gadgil said that the follow-up action should be spearheaded by a group of voluntary activists. He went ahead to suggest that the more than 150 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) who associated themselves with the March could form a consortium of Voluntary Agencies for Sustainable Development of Western Ghats. He felt that the constituents of such a consortium would be heterogenous. Its membership could

range from institutions like the World Wide Fund for nature and Bombay Natural History Society to firmly rural-based agencies. It could also involve like-minded professional agencies and popular science movements, as well as co-operative societies of tribals and artisans.

He also called for the involvement and support of the Union and State Governments.

"Finally, we would have to consider whether we want an involvement of the industry and the armed forces. Regardless of what some of us may feel, both are here to stay and have an overwhelming impact on the environment and the society of the Western Ghats. It might be important to persuade these to behave in such a fashion so that they have a positive impact," he added

Dr. Gadgil suggested a package.

This would emphasise the very high traditions of nature conservation while pursuing the objective of conservation of natural diversity. A network of sacred groves, ponds and sacred trees and animals has served to protect much of the plant and animal life of the hills over the centuries. Field studies showed that the sacred groves perhaps once covered as much as 5 per cent of the land surface throughout this tract. Sacred trees, especially those belonging to genus *Ficus*, such as Banyan, Peepal were recognised by ecologists as keystone resources. This network needed to be effectively revived not only to serve to conserve natural diversity but by its decentralised nature, also make it accessible to all people.

The Western Ghats, he said, had a wealth of genetic resources of cultivated plants and animals. To take just one example, there are thousands of varieties of mangoes both on cultivated land and in the wild. "We must work out programmes of in situ conservation of these. This would require both surveys and much more important, development of management systems. Again local people would have to be rewarded for maintaining these resources," he added.

He called for a massive network of nurseries based in schools and colleges, as well as with local people. The species concerned should preferably be multipurpose indigenous plants. Not only fuel needs but also fodder, organic manure and small timber resources should be considered, he said, adding that various species of bamboos might be particularly appropriate. "Fortunately the technology of developing bamboo seedlings has made substantial progress in recent years. The nurseries programmes needs to be supported by related programmes of seed collection and technical inputs on how to grow the seedlings," he added.

Each school and college in the Western Ghats tract should start a school

or a college forest. Such a programme has already been started very successfully in Karnataka, he pointed out.

He said there were extensive barren lands in the hands of individual farmers in many parts of the Western Ghats. "It could be most desirable to work with them towards revegetating them. In this context bamboos may be a particularly appropriate choice. The bamboo shoots are highly nutritious and the bamboos themselves have many uses for the rural population and the artisans. At the same time bamboos could become the basis of small scale industries such as agarbatti (joss sticks). Finally, bamboos are excellent raw material for paper and polyfibre. If the industry is willing to pay a proper price, there is no reason why they should not be involved in generation of the bamboos resources," he added.

The village populations depend heavily on the revenue from protected forest lands to meet their requirements of fuel, small timber and leaf manure. Unfortunately these are amongst the most poorly managed and degraded lands in the Western Ghats and need to be planted up. More than that however, institutions need to be evolved involving local people for proper management of such lands, according to Prof. Gadgil.

Free range grazing by large numbers of buffaloes, cattle and goats as practised today was incompatible with the aims of revegetation. Therefore work on development of fodder resources, genetic upgrading of livestock and their stall feeding was a must, he said, adding that at the same time, work on the development of organic manure resources should also be taken up.

He pointed out that soil and water resources of the Western Ghats are being managed very poorly. "Revegetation and control of grazing would go a long way towards their better management. In addition however, we need to develop other technologies for soil and water conservation. We also need to revive management systems such as those of communal desilting of village tanks," he said.

Prof. Gadgil said that a whole range of developmental activity was being taken up on the Western Ghats without due regard for the environmental and social consequences. Fortunately, it was now mandatory that an environmental and social cost benefit analysis had been carried out for many of these projects. Unfortunately, such analyses were rarely carried out properly for want of competent people to do so. This was an important challenge which our colleges and universities must take up. We must work with them to persuade them to do so.

He called for a decentralised network for monitoring of environmental

parameters such as rates of soil erosion, deforestation, spread of weeds like eupatorium and chemical pollution throughout the Western Ghats tract. Local educational institutions would have to be motivated to take up this task. The Government Education Department would also have to be persuaded to make these activities an integral part of the academic programme, Prof. Gadgil said.

He felt that rehabilitation of the large number of people displaced by various developmental projects on the Western Ghats was a major task. Very little serious thinking had been done on this issue and these people have invariably ended up further impoverished and the projects have become a major cause of environmental degradation, he added. "We must turn this around and employ the displaced persons as a means towards eco-forestation. A massive programme along these lines should be organised and could easily attract adequate government funding. What is needed is new imaginative ways of rehabilitating them," he said.

KERALA DISAGREES ON FOLLOW-UP PROGRAMME

The Kerala marchers did not agree on the follow-up programme proposed by Dr. Madhav Gadgil in the conference.

In their critique they said that in the environmental goals and social goals that Dr. Gadgil outlined, there was a general agreement but they dissented on the resource utilisation for industry and on the desirability of major irrigation projects.

At the same time protecting the gene pool and enhancing production through genetic upgradation were also unreconcilable, they said.

The critique stated "Our aim is, or rather ought to be, to create a community of self-sufficient villages, self-sufficient both agriculturally and industrially. Dr. Gadgil seems to visualise a dichotomy of conflict of interests between agricultural and modern industrial societies, and puts forth his advice that one must consider "not only what is desirable but also what is feasible." Here one should point out that the main concern of conservationists should be what is desirable both ecologically and socially."

They said that many of the much hailed "achievements" said to be bestowed upon society in the name of progress had proved to be undesirable or irrelevant, in spite of the fact that they had been made possible by destroying the entire resource base of our country and by creating ecological havoc. These had been undertaken on the context of "feasibility". Many big hydro-electric projects had failed miserably in achieving their proclaimed objectives. They had, on the contrary, denuded rich tropical forests,

destroyed the environment, devastated perennial basis of soil, air and water and resulted in the massive uprootment of tribal and rural populations creating a large number of refugees within the country, the dissenting note added.

They said, "Definitely planners, sociologists and ecologists should have in mind only what is desirable for the majority of the population and not for the microscopic minority of the urban elite. Dr. Gadgil sets great store on feasibility and one cannot but point out that even at the conceptual level it would mean further degeneration of the environment and further impoverishment of the masses."

Another point of disagreement was Dr. Gadgil's proposal "to seek the involvement of the Central and State government efforts." The Kerala delegation asked in the note, "Does he seriously believe that Wimco Match Industries, West-Coast Paper Mills, Harihar Polyfibres, Western India Plywoods, Gwalior Rayon and other similar paper, pulp or plywoods industries can be trusted with the responsibility of taking care of our environment, especially the eco-development of the ghats?"

This was wishful thinking, they say, adding that it was divorced from stark realities, as experience had shown.

"More dangerous," they said, "is the proposition to include the armed forces in afforestation efforts. Ultimately the S.W.G.M. is going to be the legitimatising mechanism even for the repressive apparatus of the state."

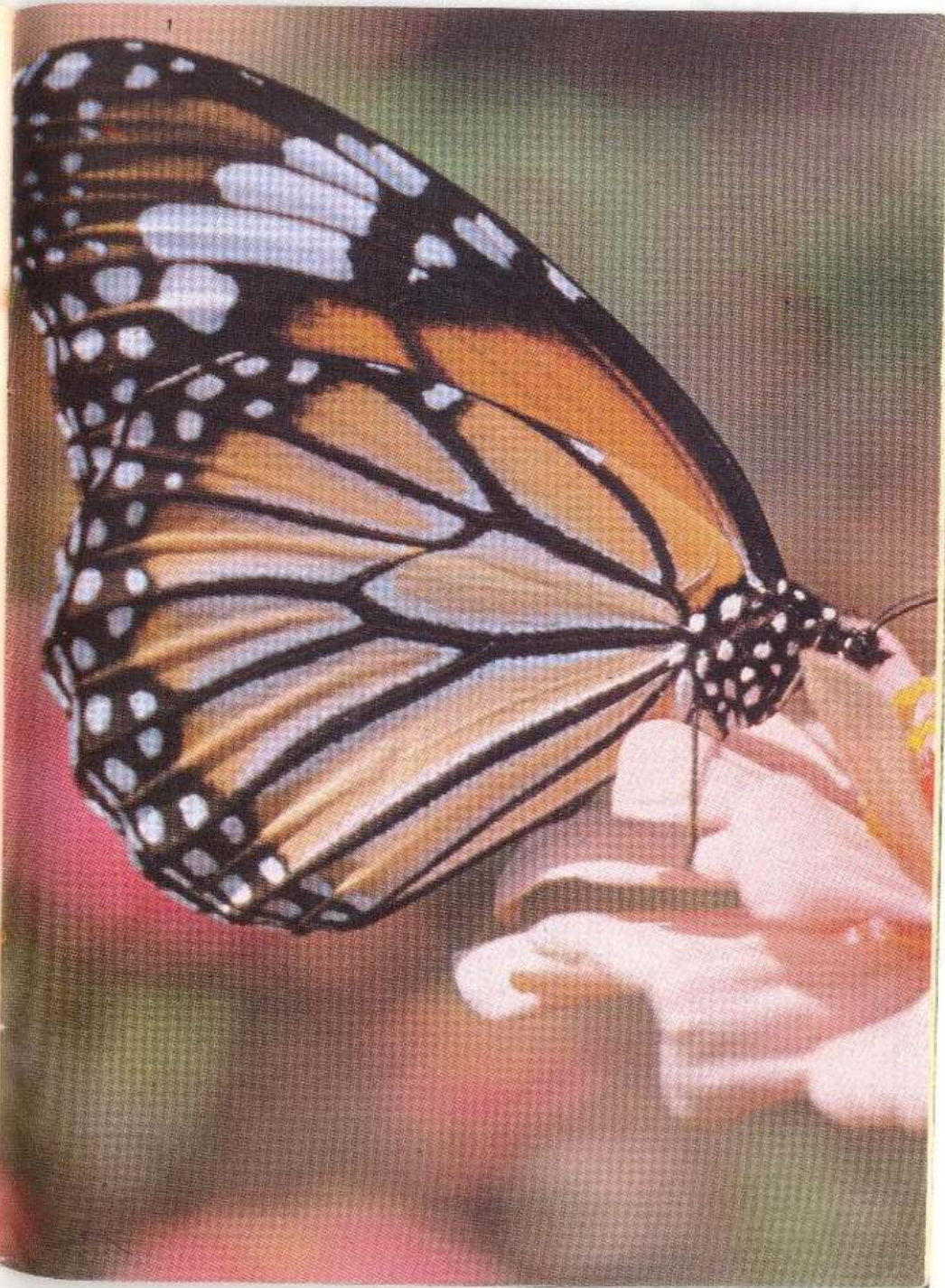
Turning to the question of sacred groves, the critique stated that Dr. Gadgil had overlooked the pitfalls in the approach towards preservation of the forests of the Western Ghats by involving a network of sacred groves.

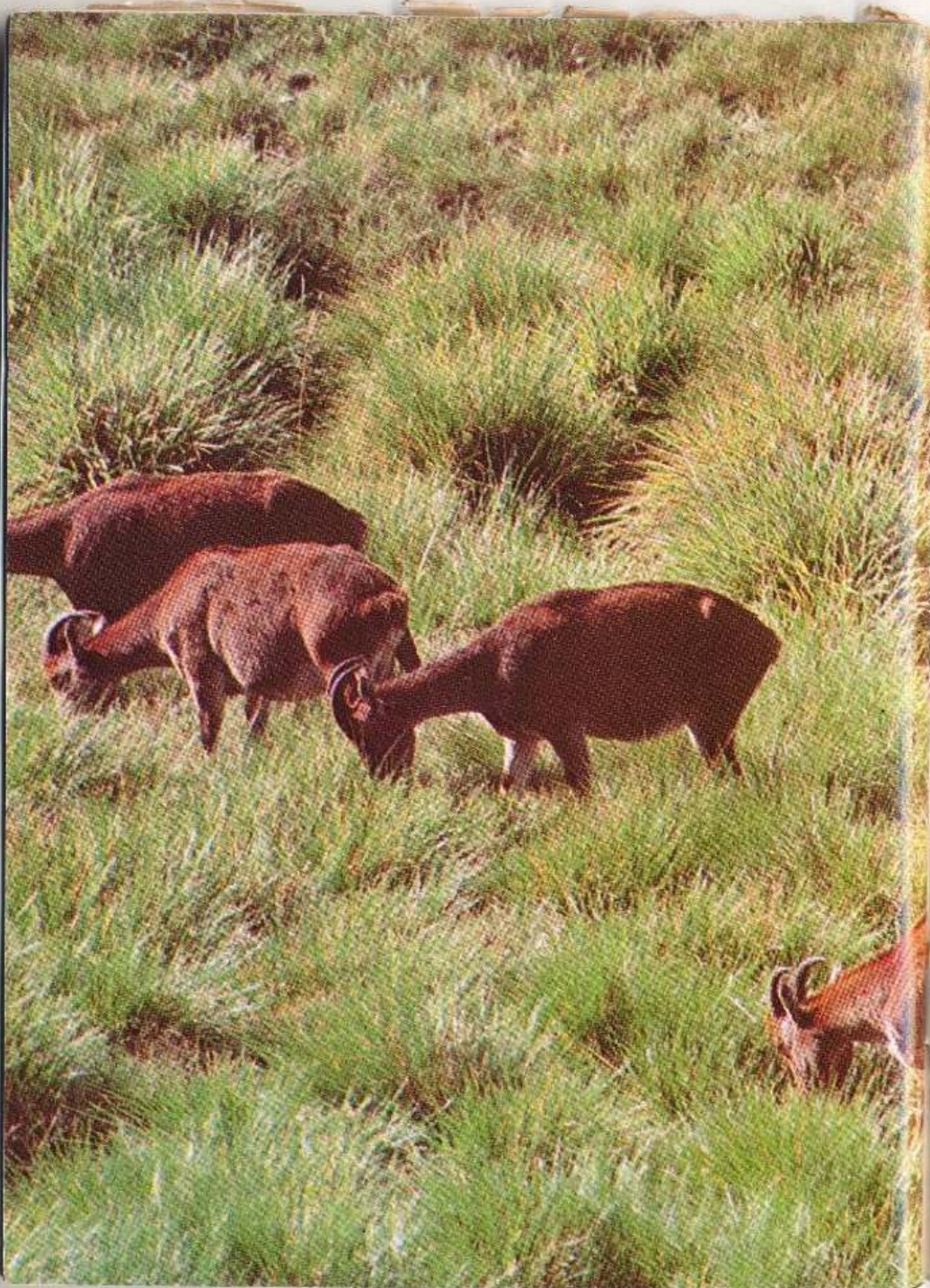
"Conservation is to be done not by appealing to the religious sense of the masses but by promoting their ecological consciousness in a rational way. It is not simply the question of what idiom we choose. One may be able to conserve the devarayas, etc., by appealing to faith, but that will be the wrong way to do a right thing," they said.

The Kerala marchers were also critical of the proposal for cultivation of bamboos for industry in the region. There was no reason why they should be involved in the regeneration of bamboo resources, they said. Their experience was that bamboo shoots destroyed forests. Growing bamboos and eucalyptus was tantamount to destroying the forests, they said.

THE FUTURE ORGANISATION

Even as the Save The Western Ghats March reached its half-way stage,





the need for setting up an umbrella organisation to take up follow-up work was felt, following tremendous enthusiasm among the hill peoples.

"We have been entrusted with the work of undertaking the follow-up work as far as possible in a decentralised manner and the basic areas seem to be afforestation, awareness building, active support to people's resistance to environmental degradation and bringing changes in government policies and legislations," marchers and environmentalists who participated in Save The Western Ghats Conference said.

They said that afforestation would involve a large number of the rural masses as they would be the ones who would look towards re-greening of the hill ranges for their daily needs of fuelwood, fodder, raw materials for handicrafts, timber for housing, fruits and manure. Such work would also mean restoration of the lost ecological balance of the Western Ghats.

On awareness building, stress was laid on traditional as well as print and electronic media. The target they said would be the rural poor from among the hill peoples themselves.

The marchers stressed on active support to participation in the people's resistance to environmental degradation such as deforestation and big dams.

A number of delegates also called for new initiatives to bring about major change in policies and legislation to make them people-oriented. For this they felt that activists, scientists and decision-makers would have to interact.

The structure suggested, included formation of a State co-ordinating committee elected from interested NGOs and activists.

The States were also to elect representatives to the Central Co-ordination Committee.

Scope was to be left in co-opting persons, both in the State and Central Co-ordinating Committees, persons who had contributed to the movement effectively, such as, journalists and scientists.

It was felt that State and Central Committees should confine themselves only to co-ordination work and not get themselves involved at the field level. These were in fact, to promote various NGOs and individuals in specific tasks. These committees were also not to become channelling agencies for funds to the NGOs.

It was also felt by the participants that the duration of the committees should be for a time-span of one or two years.

Since the work of the committees was one of co-ordination it was suggested that these committees should not be registered as NGOs.

As a beginning, the States and Central Co-ordination Committees were to be ad hoc committees in the beginning. Most participants felt that it

could be ad hoc till about the beginning of November 1988, preferably November 1st, the anniversary of the start of the March last year.

KERALA DISAGREES WITH THE MAINSTREAM

The Kerala contingent expressed its disagreement with the suggestions made by the other marchers.

The Kerala delegation said that it "wishes to stay aloof from any organisation of networking structures that is going to be formed as a follow-up of the March."

They said, "Our experiences during the March and our contact with various organisations and individuals that collaborated with the March make us feel that the time is not yet ripe for any form of organisation to develop, formal or informal, centralised or decentralised."

"A prerequisite for grouping on an organisational pattern is a minimum sense of clarity of perspective on the issues involved. While we are not arguing for any ideological hegemony, we do strongly feel that a central understanding and unity of purpose is essential. This we find is awfully lacking at the present," they added.

"At least a general agreement, on our attitude towards external, governmental and industrial finances for our activities, our approaches towards religious and communal organisations in our efforts to mention a few, is a must when we think of an organisation as a follow-up of the March. Experiences to date prove without doubt that this is awfully lacking," they said.

The Kerala marchers said, "We do not rule out the possibility of an understanding emerging through mutual give and take and exchange of ideas at a later stage. But to thrust an organisation on these divergent groups at this stage would mean unity at the expense of political and ideological questions. So also the formation of a collective, either formal or informal, makes us a part of activities in the name of environment that we are opposed to in principle either in content or mode; but our co-organisations do not see any harm with at present. It is in this context that we feel that an organisation of any nature should only be a later prerogative."

The Kerala delegation however, added that "working together on issues and the mutual exchange of ideas is possible and through it we can develop some amount of clarity and unity of purpose amongst us, which could be a springboard of launching a collective at a later stage if the need arises."

They averred, "We pledge to uphold the spirit of the Save The Western

Ghats March. We congratulate and thank all who have co-operated to make it a success. Whatever unity and achievement that might have resulted from this March shall be fostered and our continued interaction on the basis of specific issues of common concern shall go a long way in evolving a common platform for environmental activities in the country in the future."

The Central Organisation Committee debated on the issue—follow-up programme and the structure of the organisation after the March and the Conference were over—during the conference and the day after the final session was over.

In the final consensus decision taken at the Central Organisation Committee of the March, on February 4, 1988, after the conference was over, it was decided that a joint meeting of the Central Organising Committee and member of the new Central Co-ordination Committee to be held at Bangalore on April 2, 1988 to discuss further details on the structure of the Save The Western Ghats and chalk out a broad-based programme, both immediate and long-term.

Some of the delegates, elected their State Co-ordination Committee and their representatives to the Central Co-ordination Committee.

Delegates from various states debated at length over the future organisation and structure and decided to back the proposal for formation of the SAVE THE WESTERN GHATS MOVEMENT.

EVALUATION BY DELEGATES AND ENVIRONMENTALISTS

Marchers of the Save The Western Ghats March were among the most sensitive when they reviewed the unique even after the March was over and the conference ended.

By the evening of February 3 most marchers and delegates were on their way home. They were anxious that the new network created should have all states in them. "We have created so much hope among the hill people. We cannot let them down," they kept repeating.

On an earlier occasion during the March, both the Chairman of the National Advisory Board of the March, Dr. Kailash Malhotra and the Central Co-ordinator of the March, Kumar Kalanand Mani, had understood the situation and gave a clear indication that the work would not end with the March and a broadbased organisation to help in the follow-up programme would be set up.

"We are morally bound to channellise the aspirations of the hill peoples in rejuvenating the hill ranges on which they depend so much," they had

told the marchers at a number of places both in the north and south.

The March achieved international attention and many environmentalists from abroad spent time with the marchers and at the conference.

Among the first to get their experiences of the March were Greenpeace International's Ms. Rosalind Reeve and Mr. Athel Von Koettlitz.

Both had come to India on a holiday-cum-work trip. Ms. Reeve an expert on dolphins and whales with the Greenpeace Movement in Europe had plans to visit southern India in an effort to discover the situation regarding the marine mammal off the West Coast. Mr. Koettlitz, who works with the movement to prevent dumping of nuclear wastes in the seas was helping her.

At Mahableshwar in Maharashtra, they met the northern marchers and also held discussions with the leaders of the entire March.

They were impressed by the ability of the leadership to unite so many activists groups.

These British environmentalists, as well as leaders of the Swedish Environmental Society, Mr. Goran Eklof and Ms. Maud Johansson said such unity had not been possible in the West where, smaller though the number of organisations might be, they had not been able to come together on major environmental issues facing them.

Thanks to the efforts of these environmentalists and other visitors from abroad, the Save The Western Ghats March and the Conference thereafter received the attention of the International Press. The March also caught the attention of the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Like the evaluations by those in India, stress was laid by persons from abroad on the follow-up work. They made fervent appeals in continuation of the unity achieved for the March for the follow-up work.

In Asia itself, the continental environmental network, the Asia Pacific People's Environmental Network (APPEN) lent its support to the unique project and called on all such movements in the developing countries to reject developmental processes aping the West and formulation of strategies in which sustainable development would be the focal point and would reach the rural masses hitherto neglected.

THE JOINT MARCH FROM RAMNATHI TO PANAJI

The report of the Save The Western Ghats March and Conference would be incomplete without the mention of the Joint March of both the

northern and the southern marchers from the place of the conference, Ramnathi to Panaji on February 3, 1988.

Singing songs and shouting slogans in their respective languages—Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Konkani, Marathi, Hindi and English—along the 30 km route.

Like the experience of the two marches, so in Goa, the rural populace enthusiastically welcomed the marchers but the same warmth was lacking in urban areas.

In the end at the Azad Maidan, the symbol of Goa's freedom from the Portuguese, leaders of marchers from all states pledged that the work of rejuvenation of the Western Ghats had just begun and that follow-up action would be taken up immediately on returning home.

Cover photo: Ulhas Rane

Inside front cover: A tusker. A sizeable population of the Asian elephant survives in the Western Ghats. (Photo: T.N.A. Perumal)

Page No. 11 : The forests of Western Ghats are a vital watershed. All east-flowing rivers of peninsular India originate from the Western Ghats. (Photo: A.J.T. JohnSingh)

Page No. 12 : Perhaps the most valuable gift of the Western Ghats is sweet, fresh water. (Photo: Sanjay Gupta)

Page No. 37 : Thousands of species of insects thrive in the varied luxuriance of the Western Ghats. (Photo: Sunjoy Monga)

Page No. 38 : Nilgiri tahr—a wild goat found in some of the southern parts of the Western Ghats. (Photo: A.J.T. JohnSingh)

Inside back cover: Forests of Magod. The Western Ghats support a tremendous diversity of life. (Photo: Ulhas Rane)

SAVE THE WESTERN GHATS MARCH - ROLL OF HONOUR

States and Names from which the marchers came

West Bengal

Mr. Battini Mohan Reddy

Himachal Pradesh

Mr. Rajiv Ahel

Andhra Pradesh

Mr. Y. Divanjulu Naidu

Mr. G.N. Mohan Chandra

Uttar Pradesh

Mr. Arun Kumar Negi

Mr. Omprakash Bhatt

Delhi

Mr. S. Sharma

Dr. K. Sudhakar

Madhya Pradesh

Mr. Ramesh Billorey

Tamil Nadu

Mr. K. Venkatachalam

Mr. S.B. Janardhanaraja

Mr. D. Nallthambi

Mr. K. Punithan

Mr. S.T. Thirughanam

Mr. K. Armugam

Kerala

Mr. A. Mohan Kumar

Master Gautam

Ms. P.E. Usha

Mr. A. Shajujose

Mr. K.C. Sasidharan

Mr. C.D. Sunish

Mr. T.K. Jayakumar Chicklai

Mr. K.C. Santosh Kumar

Mr. P. Sethumadhavan

Mr. Mohamedali

Mr. C.S. Gopalan

Mr. N.C.K. Das

Mr. N. Swaminathan

Mr. P.M. Balakrishnan

Mr. Ramachandran

Mr. K.R. Suresh

Mr. T. Ramavarman

Mr. Civic Chandran

Mr. C.K. Abani

Karnataka

Mr. Dileep Ganesh Naik

Mr. R.K. Nagaraja

Mr. P.V. Patil

Mr. Chikappa Gadigappa Kshowrad

Mr. Nagraj Mahabaleshwar Dewate

Mr. N.P. Aswathanarayana

Mr. Satyanarayana Aroor

Mr. Shanker B. Hireraddi

Mr. S. Amarnath Jadan

Mr. H.S. Madhukeshava

Mr. Anant Hegde Ashisar

Mr. Ranjan Rao Yerdoor

Mr. M.K. Appachu Cherambane

Mr. Purandara D. Dharamsthala

Mr. A.M. Gangadhara

Ms. K.P. Jaya Theertha

Mr. K. Vijay Raghava

Mr. S. Dayananda Nayak

Mr. G. Narasimha Setty

Mr. M. Vageesh

Mr. C.M. Kamalu

Ms Laxmi S. Nehakunja

Ms G. Rajamma

Ms Ujwala Ganesh Bhat

Ms Narmada M. Hegde

Mr. K.N. Krishnamurty

Mr. Shubhalingam Jinakanu

Dr. Kusuma

Mr. C.R. Joglekar

Ms Yamuna

Mr. Balakrishna S. Dai

Mr. Mohan Shamrao

Mr. B.G. Prasad

Mr. Sujaiha B. Pani

Ms Priya Sahmsunder

Mr. B.M. Ramaswamy

Mr. Srikanth S. Reddy

Mr. Dileep Gangadhar Ashtekar

Maharashtra

Miss Sangeeta Digambar Sonawane

Ms Mangala Ramchandra Bhide

Mrs. Bababai Dalvi

Miss Madhavi Vijay Parulekar

Ms Jyoti Kelkar

Miss Jyoti Prabhakar Sawadkar

Miss Mrunal Dinkar Kulkarni

Mr. Ravindra B. Dhuru

Mr. R. Ashok Kumar

Mr. Shankerrao Patil

Mr. Arun N. Jadhav

Mr. Alankar Dukhande

Ms Kranti Suresh Sant

Mr. Suresh Vithal Sant

Mr. Ashok Yadav

Mr. Prakash Kedar

Mr. Dilip Anant Deshpande

Mr. Pankaj Sarkaria

Mr. Sudhakar Bhanudas Khomme

Mr. Ramesh D. Chouthi

Mrs. Sheela Prabhakar Malve

Mrs. Vasumati Ravindra Dhuru

Mr. P.D. Alwe

Miss Jyoti Govind Chaulkar

Ms. Shubha Ramchandra Bhide

Miss Ashvini Ramesh Deshpande

Mrs. Parubai Deoram More

Mrs. Sugandhabai Tupe

Mr. Shaligram Sanjay Moreshwar

Mr. Ramkrishna Rajarma Shinde

Mr. Gulab Baban Sakpal

Mr. Suryakant Janardan Lohar

Mr. Satish Arvind Potdar

Mr. Shivram Ganpat Sukhi

Mr. Chandrashekhar Sadashiv Tare

Mr. Rajendra Ramdas Chaudhari

Mr. Girish Bapusaheb Ugale

Ms Lalita Oza

Mr. P.M. Kalekar

Mr. Rajesh Ramesh Gadkari

Mr. Suresh Bhalchandra Deshpande

Mr. Girish Vidhyadhar Katre

Mr. Ajit Kashinath Padhye

Mr. C. K. Mujmale

Mr. Sanjay Karkare

Mr. Sanjay Pandurang Wagh

Miss Sunetra Uttam Limaye

Miss Ranjan N. Pathare

Mr. D.K. Madan

Mr. Sachin P. Singasane

Mr. Chandrashekhar Jaideo Awasthi

Mr. Ulhas Rane

Mr. Ajay Kulkarni

Mr. Mohan Rajaram Jandadee

Mr. Sachin Mahadeo Sarnobat

Mr. Mohan Dattatraya Mendhe

Mr. Ramesh Hanumant Kale

Mr. Satish Gopal Londhe

Mr. Purshottam Kulkarni

Mr. Anil P. Imaratey

Mr. Sunil Baburao Kulkarni

Mr. Dinanath Manohar

Mr. Nagesh Hatkar

Mr. Suryakant Balwant Patil

Mr. Nandan Balwant Patil

Mr. C. J. Kulkarni

Mr. Madhukar Bhalchandra Nisal
Mr. Arunprakash Neurgaonkar
Mr. Gulab Shanker Gujarmal
Mr. Vasant Ghule
Mr. Mohan Ramchandra Kanetkar
Mr. Bhasker Krishnaji Thorat
Mr. Sudhir Krishnarao Barve
Mr. Shrirang Sukhram Patil
Mr. Mukund Narayan Joshi
Mr. Kondiba Khandu Kedari
Mr. Ramchandra Lambodar Bhide
Mr. Shrikant Vinayak Varunjkar
Mr. Sunil Hambirrao Patil
Mr. Sashi Chitre
Mr. Jayant Deorukhkar
Mr. Mohan Bhalchandra Shete
Goa

Mr. Raju Talaunekar
Mr. Claude Alvares
Mr. Ramesh Gaus

Mr. Girish Bhat
Mr. F.N. Lad
Mr. Manohar Parab
Khola Sarpanch
Dr. J.B. Sardesai
Marchers from abroad
Swedish
Environmental
Society

Ms Maud Johansson
Mr. Goran Ekloff
United States
Mr. Arthur Bonner
West Germany
Green Peace
International
Ms Andrea Reddy
Ms Rosalind Reeve
Mr. Athel Von Koettlitz

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THE CENTRAL ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE MARCH

KUMAR KALANAND MANI

(Central Co-ordinator)

JAGDISH GODBOLE

(Regional Co-ordinator: North)

A. MOHAN KUMAR

(Regional Co-ordinator: South)

Committee Members

Claude Alvares
Dinanath Manohar
Archana Sadhle
Vijay Paranjpye
Jay Samant
Pandurang Hegde
Subramanya Hegde
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N. Baddusha

Ulhad Rane
Dinkar Gangal
Ajit Patil
Sudhakar Khomne
S.R. Hiremath
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