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*With you in Pursuit of Sustainable
Management of Finite Water Resources*

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Point for discussion this month **Role of Eco-sensitivity in human life**

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Eternal Words

It is horrifying that we have to fight our own government to save the environment.

~Ansel Adams

Modern society will find no solution to the ecological problem unless it takes a serious look at its lifestyle

- Pope John Paul II

If we once, and for so long, lived in balance with nature and each other, we should be able to do so again

- John Zerzan

The highest function of ecology is the understanding of consequences

- Frank Herbert

Dear Readers,

India as a nation is finding a tough task to cope with developmental processes while addressing the conservation of environmental resources. From Jammu-Kashmir to Kanyakumari and Saurashtra to Manipur, everywhere it seems that ecological warfare is at its peak. On administrative-political system's front, there are no enough indications that learnings are being converted into policies. Instead of having umbrella policy, can the local policies be developed and then national policy emerged by taking only time-tested principles and actions adopted by the public at large.

Eco-sensitivity issue is directly related to the livelihood of the local people. They should not face the brunt of displacement caused by the fall-out of national policy, regulations, rules and action plans. Government is already dealing with the issues of dams and displacement of people-ecosystem-biodiversity. Nobody has calculated the loss due to delaying of rehabilitation.

Secondly, National Green Tribunal, Supreme Court and High Courts have given decisions in recent past such as punishing the polluters hugely are welcomed. But it should not be restricted just to collection of fines by authorized government department but to use that money to restore the waters (rivers, lakes or ground-waters), and soils-lands polluted by those industries.

That needs very scientific understanding of ecosystem process and ecological equilibrium. Sterilite is just one industry which is fined, but there are many industries to look into their own STPs and ETPs and to understand the responsibility of maintaining quality and integrity of their immediate external environment, whether mandatory or voluntary it is immaterial.

Top management of industry must sense the responsibility at large for the well-being of the surrounding population and environmental systems. The same is true for local-regional-state-national politico-administrative system to make restoration of the water and land happen in shortest possible time using ecosystem approach for improved Human Development Index.

Thank you,

Chief Editor

Eco-sensitivity: for livelihood or market?

Sandeep Joshi

First of all, livelihood needs to be defined. Livelihood is the essence of maintaining life sustained through activities using assets. Livelihood is the same in the forested areas, agricultural regions and urban sprawls. There is not much difference between activities in any of this lifestyles but the 'market' creates the disparity on the basis of ornamentalism & glamour following neo-classical economy forgetting ecology! Economy encashes ecological resources for prosperity of few grandeurs. Ecology of commons becomes saleable commodity which generates taxable revenues for government. Tax, revenue, advantages & yields (TRAY) are the major principles of market economy while livelihood economy is very simple to give enough water & food for morning & evening meals with modest shelter to protect from winds rains & sunrays. Sensitivity word is lost in the uproar of Market.

Single or double storied high ceiling low energy houses are lost to glass-walled low ceiling high energy skyscrapers!

Seasonal, non perennial, perennial native species are being replaced by exotic, ornamental species or sometimes by lookalike plastic moulded plants, which cannot 'synthesize' anything. May be in near future, photosynthetic plastic leaves starts generating food so that there will be no garden waste at all! In the race of development, market and economy are driving out ecological resources from life. Now time has come to rewrite the reforms of developments in ecological vocabulary. Ecological equilibrium of matter and energy exchange is attained by biotic factors through various nodes- internodes of resources reservoirs.

"Eco-sensitive" has become buzzword-bizword once again when Dr. K. Kasturirangan submitted Western Ghats report to Environment Minister. Earlier Dr. Madhav Gadgil committees report was unacceptable to state governments along the Western Ghats. On this backdrop National Environment Policy 2006 ratified by Indian parliament in 2006 should be revisited for its axiom- livelihood should come through conservation & not by exploitation. There is need to understand the interwoven livelihood pattern and conservation of nature for the development of population of eco-sensitive zones suggested by Dr. Madhav Gadgil & Dr. Kasturirangan. Science and engineering is useful only when they assist in long term sustainability and prosperity of local populations.

Tagging or no tags of eco-sensitive zones do not serve the purpose for the locals and do not reduce the disparity faced due to integrations, misinterpretation of rules and regulation by government officer and others. Is it possible to develop nay

harmonious model of addressing development-environment actionable needs (DEAN) through going to the roots of livability in the Western Ghats? Is it possible to develop policy with well informed and participating population with institutions by employing affordable and adaptable techniques with uninterrupted finance? Of course, administrative delays and political disparities & animosities should be kept away from the process.

Western Ghat is facing emerging issues of competitive uses of water and land by various sectors of development. Therefore based on these two very scientific reports, a master plan, of suitable development integrated with socio-cultural harmony considering the mitigation of the population with ready 'consoling solution' for restoring any unrest in population or in the environmental process, is required. This of approach will formulate a set adaptable region -specific standard operating procedures (SOPs) not only for local governance but also for state and national government. This is an opportunity to set a long term experiment (say of next 100 years) for socio cultural-environmental evolution as the economic development of the region progresses.

There is need to set yardsticks for habitat changes, water use and quality, financial growth, social harmony, conservation of resources with continuous monitoring of pollution dispersion in surface and subsurface waters heat islands, dispersal of air pollutants contamination in rains, biodiversity changes. Integration of this scientific knowledge & information with developmental processes will definitely lead to better healthy habitat for industrial, agricultural, and residential population growth. It should be collective efforts for common goals by all government politico-administrative systems, business & industrial units & sects of citizens.

Development -environment action plan (DEAP) can be initiated by analyzing & supporting the needs of basic livelihood of poorest of poor in the region and thus by improving his work, efficiency to contribute for widespread regional ecological and financial wealth. Of course, all other income groups are duty bound to remediate the impacts created by anthropogenic activities and restore the purity of water, air, land & biodiversity, may it be mining or engineering-chemical and industries or modern hi-tech residences.

Livelihood brings the sustenance of life and market leads to control, regulation of recourse, their processing & distribution as products to lead to prosperity. Livelihood and market have entirely different objectives. Livelihood stores or uses resources only for routine requirement and market becomes tunnel for transaction of huge centralized resources and products for maximization of profits. Market needs to understand and make provision for life at subsistence level, may it be

charity, social responsibility or mandatory contributions. But it is essential for restoring the disrupted ecosystems and demography.

So, the reports of Madhav Gadgil & Kasturirangan have brought the issues of life-sensitivity rather than eco-sensitivity. Western Ghats Environmental Governance goes beyond. The geographical and basin boundaries leading trans-state co-generation for regional and national growth while conserving the unique ecosystem of the mountains, hill-slopes and their buffer zones.

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Sterlite's copper smelter shuts on breaching of environment law

Sterlite Industries Ltd's copper plant in India, which produces about 30,000 tonnes a month of refined copper, nearly half of which is exported to China, was halted after local residents complained of emissions that resulted in breathing problems.

India's largest copper smelter will remain shut until at least May 16, when a court hearing will resume into complaints of emissions from the plant.

The Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) on 30th march ordered Sterlite to temporarily close the Tuticorin plant following complaints by locals of breathing problems.

It was said by officials with the pollution control board of Tamil Nadu that the smelter will not open before a hearing at the Chennai bench of National Green Tribunal, set up for the quick disposal of environmental cases in India.

The case was transferred to New Delhi from a south Indian branch of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), a fast-track environmental court, on April 29. NGT, had set up an expert committee to measure emissions and examine the working condition of machinery, among other things.

"The emissions from all the stacks were well within the permissible limit prescribed by the Central Pollution Control Board when the plant was in normal operation," said the report by P.S.T. Sai and Ligy Philip.

"In addition to this, the ambient SO₂ concentrations in all the 16 monitoring stations were within the permissible limit, when the plant was in normal operation."

The official said the Pollution Control Board has observed that the emission from the unit had "breached limits prescribed by the Board." Online instruments had registered the excess emissions. Officials had inspected the factory following complaints from the public on March 23.

"We have to see that no person or society would be adversely affected by environmental hazards," said Judge A.K. Patnaik, who delivered the court's judgment. The court said that levels of chromium, copper and lead were higher than stipulated in some of the groundwater samples collected from the area, while emission of sulphur dioxide was well within limits stipulated by TNPCB.

"Sterlite Industries would continue to work in close association with the State Government of Tamil Nadu and other regulatory bodies, towards maintaining highest standards of Health, Safety and Environment," it said in a statement.

The smelter in the coastal town of Tuticorin near the southern tip of India has long been the target of protesters and politicians who say it is a risk to the local fishing industry. Various cases have been filed against the company since it started operating the plant in 1996.

India's Supreme Court last month fined Sterlite \$18.4 million for polluting water, soil, and air around the plant and documented 15 years of abuses. Despite imposing the fine, the Supreme Court overruled an earlier order from the Madras High Court demanding the firm close the plant over longstanding environmental concerns. That disputed order was handed down before the gas leak forced the smelter's immediate closure.

It estimates up to 5,000 people were affected by the emissions. The future of the plant - which is seeking approval to double its capacity to 800,000 tonnes per year - now hinges on the decision of the National Green Tribunal.

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Five star Green building of PCNTDA

The of Pimpri-Chinchwad New Township Development Authority (PCNTDA) has received the five-star rating for newly constructed green building situated near Akurdi Railway station, Pune. The building received five-star rating and the PCNTDA will receive the award at a function in New Delhi soon.

Minimal need to use electricity for lighting purposes along with good ventilation is ensured through the peculiar feature of the new building. Solar panels installed at various points Generates Half of the power for lifts and air-conditioners though has a back-up power connection from Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited.

The building has another silent feature i.e. Ecotechnology based sewage treatment plant. Soil scape Filter technology is being used to treat the sewage. This technology is brainchild of Shrishti Eco-research Institute (SERI), Pune. The wastewater of the

Shrishti Eco-Research Institute, Pune

building is treated with Soil Scape Filter without electricity consumption and it is reused for the no consumptive uses gardening and flushing. This technology aiding boost to earn more rating from GRIHA as it is having lesser carbon footprint, along with energy and fresh water consumption reduction and green belt development.

The building also has provision for rainwater harvesting on the terrace which will be used for groundwater charging.

While inaugurating the building, the chief minister said that the state government will launch the green building concept at all government offices and will make it mandatory for housing projects later.



This demonstrative project if adapted by all other government buildings including, collectorate, MIDC, MSRDC, Assembly Hall, corporation buildings, government schools and colleges, it will be useful for the citizens of Pune Metro to follow the line and contribute to keep the rivers clean and un-contaminated.