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Madhav Gadgil on NBR

Dec 1991

Conservation initiatives begin with 1950s or so. In 1950s, the old regime changed, and till that time the interest had been on hunting by the elite and to that extent a large number of hunting preserves of Maharajas persisted through the British regime and these have been set up the NWLA or the Peryamedu WLA, and probably there must have been Eastern Malayas and other parts such associations where British planters and men in large numbers game associations which also maintained the wildlife.

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I guess there were many other areas where wildlife was preserved, which were under subsistance hunting and hunting pressure was not all that large

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to have lead to depletion of wildlife. Because in Maharastra, the peasants claim that traditionally they have been hunting - only that the game has become scarce within their living memory. And there they trace the depletion of hunting to the construction of a series of dams in the W. Ghats. They claimed that when Koyna reservoir was built, the wild game in Pune dt. north

and that, along with the availability of Jeeps might have meant that there was much larger scale hunting and depletion of wildlife.

And when this happened in the 1950s, then a new kind of conservation came in which was not based on hunting, but maintenance of wild animal population, still definitely the focus was larger wild mammals like elephants, gaur, deer etc

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and maybe birds as in Bharatpur which was originally a hunting preserve. Then in 1950s a proposal came to convert it into a WLS.

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Why did this shift happen? Hunting could not continue because in the changed atmosphere, maintenance of hunting as a monopoly of the aristocracy was difficult. I am told, that in Orissa, the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj apperently had a magnificent hunting preserve, which was later on converted to a Project Tiger reserve. So

So they say that between the initiation of the Project Tiger Preserve and independence, for several years, the local people invaded with glee hunted there, and they now felt no more under pressure of restraint by Maharaja authority or state authority. I am sure there was a

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very considerable loosening of the state authority with British gone and Maharaja states being abolished. So probably this kind to maintenance of monopoly over forests by the aristocracy was gone. Then, if popular pressure for the issuance of crop protection guns, that I would imagine that that

opened up much more efficient way of hunting to larger numbers of people. And Jeeps and so on and ~~so on~~ probably with the starting of a whole range of so called developmental projects, roads in the more remote areas, mining and so on must have also meant access of wildlife by a large numbers of people suddenly increased probably as a qualitative fashion. And this meant that the rate decrease in the wildlife population must have stepped up remarkably. No doubt during the British times also, there were continual depletion. Sheshadri's book - Twilight of Indian Wildlife, that documents the depletion right through the British times. So, it has continued. But probably around 1950s,

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there had been a qualitative change and the pace of this decimation of wildlife dramatically increased.

The response of this was, a ~~eshemal~~ eschemal of large scale hunting by the aristocracy and becoming interested in simply conserving these animals for recreational value, for viewing and photography rather than hunting. And I think this was what led to the: with the initiative of organizations like BNHS, establishment of the Indian Board for Wildlife. And it had initially largely

aristocrats; the Maharaja of Mysore, I believe was the first president. And & many of them were avid hunters and perhaps good naturalists also. And now, with people ~~with~~ like Salim Ali with whome the natural history interest was more predominant,

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but he had also been a very avid hunter. He has hunted rhinoceros, tiger, and had all sorts of interests. So to these people saw that a new kind of regime had to be introduced if enjoyment of wildlife by the aristocracy was to be continued. And that new regime was a regime that emphasized conservation. And it emphasizes establishment of nature reserves and these nature reserves were relatively large sanctuaries, and national parks, and they were primarily

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such as cheetal and sambhar, and crocodiles and tiger and panther, or duck and egrets and storks and so on. So conspicuous, flag-ship animals. And they also ignored traditional conservation practices. Certainly for a long time would have never mentioned things like sacred-groves and protecting of heronries and so on... planting by local people/- although they were kind of aware... Ranganthittoo kind sanctuary had a local protection, a Vedanthangal. They got converted into sanctuaries. They were (IWB) were aware of it, but they never thought it was of any significance. If you read BNHS's journals... or the magazine of the association called Wildlife Association, called Cheetal... it is published from Dehra Dun. It has stopped being published because I used to be a

Rhinoceros

life member. It was called the Wildlife Preservation Society of India.

You will see that JBNHS had a series of reports on the status of Indian Wildlife. And all of these really show the emergence of this approach. You will see in the 30s and 40s, papers in JBNHS is primarily talking about hunting and in the 50s and 60s on conservation. The same people become connected as conservationists. I am sure if one reads carefully though these pages you can see the shift.

The approach was to set up large reserves from which local people are to be excluded, and their animals are to be excluded. This was very clearly and rather exclusively the approach

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And particularly in other regions - Bandipur was the old Maharajas hunting preserve, Nagarhole was the place where they used to carry out Khedda operations for the capture of elephants, Mudumalai was the hunting block of the Nilgiri planters and Wayanad was not. It was more of an area highly malarial, tribal, maybe there might have been some hunting but not of the same scale as that of Mudumalai. So these sanctuaries were established in the 50s.

Thus is the pattern in the whole of India. Hunting preserves became sanctuaries. Sariska, Ranthambhor, Bharatpur, etc. I think a very large ~~percentage~~ number of hunting preserves must have formed the nucleus of the wildlife sanctuaries/national parks. There

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must have been others added like Tebbadi sanctuary must have been related to the Peermade planters association. Then there were others which perhaps did not have much hunting involved. They must have come very late, like the Nandadevi & Valley of flowers. I do not think anybody but perhaps nomadic shepherds would have used it. There were such things added. But mainly it was the hunting pressure. And because of this there was very little thought of preserving plants. It was definitely oriented towards the animals which had earlier been focus of hunting.

Now, I must mention that the world-wide loss

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Fund, apart from organizations like BNHS began to play a role. Thus WWF was founded in Europe and again in Europe in a sense through similar motivations - while the British lost control over large areas in Africa, which had the Serengeti and other areas where there had been hunting and there had been regulations at their whims so to say the Masais as all others. Now, no longer could they ensure the maintenance of wildlife because they lost Imperial control, so and thus lost direct control. So, I think, WWF came into being in Europe largely again with European princes and other aristocracy and a few scientists like Julian Huxley being involved in its establishment. Now, thus WWF began to establish branches in many parts of the

country. And, again in the 50's & 60's.

Indian Board for wildlife. I do not know

03/44 when the govt. came into the picture. It began

through private initiatives, but that was part of the

official machinary. WWF has all along

remained a non-governmental organization and

so has BNHS. But Indian

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Board for Wildlife certainly ~~Indian~~ today is an officially

constituted body. But when, and what

time it became a part of of Govt. functioning. That

one has to examine.

So WWF established a branch in Bombay.

And they prepared a project called Project Tiger

to save the Tiger from the brink of extinction,

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and, a European WWF expat surveyed the tiger population of India and made suggestions about setting up a Project Tiger, and the WWF offered the Govt of India, certain

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amount of international money. Now, I think there was a tension also that the forest departments had by this time begun to also get into the act and establish their wildlife wing and offences with these wildlife sanctuaries and national parks established, the forest officers had to be posted there as wildlife wardens. Throughout, the tension has been that these posts have not been particularly prized posts. People have not wanted to be in the wildlife department.

But they are part of the F.D. Generally the wildlife warden would also be administering a territorial division. So there were conflicts between the wildlife warden and the territorial forest officer, both belonging to the forest service. But the F.D saw the Wildlife Preservation as an opportunity of getting more postings and so on. So they were interested in furthering this. So when the Project Tiger proposal came, the government, the F.D. people wanted to make this their own proposal. And the WWF kept claiming that this was their idea. That a Project Tiger Authority or whatever was set up with the Govt of India, and in a way paralleling the Indian Board for Wildlife was the Steering Committee for Project Tiger, with

quite a few members in common. And a number of Project Tiger reserves were delineated throughout the country and Bandipur became one of them. Now, ~~was~~ it was talked about that the Tiger as a top carnivore — when we manage the habitat for the preservation of Tiger it would lead to the preservation of habitat as a whole.

When the central govt. was giving funds for Project Tiger, it began to insist on large core areas. For instance in the Mudumalai sanctuary there was a proposal that it should be made a project Tiger area, but that would have meant stopping felling from certain parts of Mudumalai and so on which the Tamilnadu authorities were not willing to accept.

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So, it was never included in the Project Togen. Whereas, Bandipur there was acceptance of stopping felling from a fairly large core area. And infact, I know that later there was grumblings by forest people ~~but many people~~ saying that there was too much timber allowed to over mature and go waste in the project area and so on.

Mudumalai did not become Project Togen. Nagarhole meanwhile had become a national park which also meant that there was to be a core area and such not exploitation and so on. So Karnataka side these were implemented. Although in Nagarhole N.P. the teak plantations were being harvested

Now, in these areas other things were happening. Under the Project Togo for instance the approach suggested the removal of local people, cattle and so on. And there shifting out of settlements. This was going on in the 60s. If this kind of shifting of settlements for conservation had happened before this, I am not aware of. Then in UP for instance a number of tribal hamlets were shifted out of Project Togo areas. Over years these built up into problems and over the last few years, there were serious problems.

The Wynaad area which had been malarial. Some malaria was brought under control in the 50s large scale migration came into that area, and large scale clearings happened, like the Pulpalli settlement, where large forest areas were cleared. There was

also the complication that large areas of Wayanad
Wynaad areas were part of the Nilambur
Kovilakkam, so it was private forests. And so
the Kerala portion of it was taken over by the
Govt. under the so-called Vested Forest Act. There
was large scale nationalisation of private forests
But integrated again in that interval it is also
said that there was tremendous felling of
forests because the Govt. was going to take it-
over, and the ~~cost~~ erstwhile owners
wanted to cash it and so on. But also, after
Vested forests being no longer controlled by these
powerful families, there was a lot of encroachment
and there was no authority to restrict it.
These things were happing in the Wynaad. And
in Wynaad, a lot of settlements came and
most of the Nayaks, were natural swamps

areas that were brought under paddy and so on. So there happened in the late 50s, through the 60s and early 70s. There was large scale migration into Nilgiris.

The Wildlife Preservation perspective was to prolong and keeping out these people as much as possible.

So now, the Nagarhole, Bandipur, Mudumalai, Wynaad complex was certainly a very promising wildlife conservation area, and again, private conservation lobby, particularly the BNHS and others had been proposing that this should be managed in an integrated fashion by Kerala, Tamilnadu, Karnataka, so as to in the long range keep this area preserved.

And several times proposals have been discussed. I think in the early 60s also. You should talk to Mr Bhoja Shetty retired CEO of Tamilnadu. He would be able to tell you that there were proposals again and again in the 60s, and the chief secretary of the 3 states exchanged some letters etc. But there was no progress, because each state Govt. authorities wanted that there should be no dilution of their authority over their area. And there was no motivation for working with people from other states. They did not see anything to be gained. And there is also the tremendous question of hierarchy and so on if there is any coordination. So there was no

progress essentially. And then the WWF Bangalore branch was opened in the early 1970s, and the WWF South Indian regional office organized some discussions including one in Kudremalai sanctuary where again this Jawaharlal Nehru National Park proposal was discussed at some length. At that time, we had started some research programme at Bandipur Tiger Reserve again with a grant from WWF. I was involved in that, and I had gone for this discussion, and after that discussion, I thought it would be an interesting project to actually document the Jawaharlal Nehru National Park proposal which was . . . I do not think there was any detailed documentation of the locality. Vegetation & wildlife and so on.

This meeting was in 1975 probably so. I do not recall any details. By and large there was a feeling that these states were not very interested in cooperation. It was clear that this was one of the last relatively large contiguous tract rich in wildlife and if all of that was to be put together on a long term basis, and as a national park. given much greater protection than you know as wildlife sanctuaries, then making this large NP I certainly thought quiet useful from conservation viewpoint.

Then, there was other things coming up. A reservoir was being built ~~around~~ Kabini ~~and~~ on Kabini. And that did destroy quiet a bit of Nagarhole National Park

either under submersion and certain migration routes were affected and for the rehabilitation of peoples whose lands had submerged another large chunk of the forest was earmarked and was deafelled and given out for cultivation. So it was breaking up of what was continuity in a sense. The feeling was that if all of this was put together at this stage, and as a national park instead of just a wildlife sanctuary. The national park, the idea was there should be essentially no workings and commercial exploitation.

So with the help of Satish Chandran, Vijayan, Nagakumaran Nair, Prasad, & me spent about 3 months surveying this whole area

and we prepared this paper in JBNHS, Ecological Reconnoissance of the proposed Jamalpur National Park. This would have been 1976 or so.

Here, I also began to be interested in conserving bio-diversity as a whole kind of issue. In part this was related to the fact that UNESCO had the Man & Biosphere Programme which was initiated in late 50s. This programme was focussing on investigating the biological productivity of all the major biomes throughout the world. Along with these investigations of productivity it had a section on conservation. And this conservation section had published some interesting series of ideas and I had

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read these and when its in the end of 60s the IBP, the International Brological Programme came to an end, the Man and Biosphere Programme MAB decided to initiate another programe called Biosphere Reserves Programme. The Biosphere Reserves programme was different from the traditional conservation programmes because of its explicit interest in the entire diversity of creatures and interest in all kinds of biomes, habitat types etc. Because of their earlier interest in large mammals in India also, the wildlife sanchuaries and NPs primarily occoured in the moist deciduous forest types with some what open canopy.

The Biosphere Reserve programme stressed

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the need to look at other kinds of habitats, biological communities etc. It also began to talk about; as the title MAB also indicate; and showed interest in human use of biological productivity. It also was talking about the need to look at man-nature interactions. And see that Biosphere reserves would also become compatable with development programmes and so on. These were additional elements. And I had become interested in these, in part reading through biological literature produced by the Biosphere programme on these.

In the early 70s, 1971 & so, the DST with the GOI had established a body called

the personal committee on Environmental Planning and Coordination, at the instance of Mr. Pitamber Pant, who was the member of the planning commission earlier. He was with the perspective planning division working on these input - output models of the economy. But he had become interested in conservation issues. So in 1971 when he was no longer in the Planning Commission. He had a close relation with Delhi. He persuaded the govt. authorities that we must begin to take conservation concerns, environmental concerns, into account in the planning process. So, they established

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a committee called the National Committee on Environmental Planning & Coordination. I believe Dr. Pant must have been the first chairman. The Secretariat of this committee was located in DST. And following Dr. Pant, I think he expired in 1972-73-74 or so, Dr. B.T. Pal took over. He had perhaps just retired as the director General of ICAR. He was a plant geneticist. He had interests particularly in Plant Genetic Resources, but also in biological diversity issues because of his background as a geneticist. This NCEPC with him, probably began to take up.....

He also initiated a programme trying to identify biosphere reserves within India. Particularly D.S.K. Jain of BSI, took an initiative and they identified a first list of biosphere Reserves. It did not include the Nilgiris

Area. This list, I am sure we could retrieve if one looks at the documents of NCEPC in Delhi.

So, I was not a member of either the NCEPC or of the particular committee which along with SK Jain identified these reserves. But, I knew these people and they showed me this list and so I made a suggestion that Nilgiris and this whole area, New Amarambalam, Silent Valley, Upper Nilgiri Plateau, Slopes above Pollachi etc would be a very appropriate Biosphere Reserve. I persuaded Pal and others to consider this as a possibility. I had a notion of this whole area and thought it would make an ideal biosphere reserve. And this suggestion was accepted and this was included as one of the potential sites.

Now, the secretarit of this Commission in the DST wanted to consider concrete action, and wanted a concrete project document to be prepared. So we prepared this document. There was some suggestions to discuss it with the BSI because of SK Jain; but the way the BSI functions it was not possible for them on their own to prepare the document. But there were also some very ... suggestions thrown ~~back~~ up. For instance I know that there was a suggestion that the entire state of Orissa should be constituted a Biosphere Reserve. I think this suggestion came from BHU who had a very distinguished ecologist Ram Dev Mishra, founder of the Plant Ecology

Productivity Studies School of BHU. He was involved in a number of International Biological Programme Projects of Grassland Productivity, in Varanasi, and some deciduous forests productivity, and so on. So he was involved in this Biosphere Reserve, and he proposed that the entire state of Orissa should be made a Biosphere Reserve. So, these proposals were floating around. The DST wanted to get some concrete proposal. They asked me whether I would serve as a consultant to prepare a proposal. That must have been in 1979. In 1979, the NCERT has also constituted in memory of Pitamba Pant — * Pitamba Pant Fellowships, so I was ~~give~~ the second to be given at 1979 - 1981. And, this

project which I had given was man-nature interactions in the Western Ghats. So I was in touch with them, and they asked me to prepare this document. And, at the same time other things were being done. There was a move to set up a different Dept. of Environment, and there was a Committee to go into the framework within which that department would be set up. That was around 1980 or so. So, a number of new initiatives were thought off and Biosphere Reserve Programmes was one of the new initiatives to be pursued.

With the help of a number of colleagues, including Satish and Rauf Ali, Prasad, Vijayakumaran Nair, we now managed the whole area; the

Jawahar National Park, New Amarambalam, Silent Valley and Sogur etc. and the Project Document was prepared. I was keen that the project document should begin to spell out a rationale, instead of ~~sayon~~ arbitrarily saying this should be a Biosphere Reserve, the rationale as to why this ~~should~~ choice should be made. So part of the document is devoted to discussing why this may be a good choice. Secondly, of course I was very much interested in furthering this perspective that you should think of the overall biodiversity and not just of wildlife so to say. So that was also part of the project document. And the third, which I was of course also part of the action certain in the international biosphere Reserve

Programme, the need to bring in development with conservation. Bring in local people into conservation, and to set up authorities for integrated management of these areas. And, of course continually people have been telling me, and probably rightly that this was never going to work; especially with the three states; it was also never going to work with so many different departments involved to coordinate their activities. But anyway. I said, I have been told in any case to prepare this document, with this perspective that the 3 states should be involved. That there should be an integrated ...., including amongst a other things insitu conservation of traditional cultivars or crops and so on.

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So, I took all of that into the document. & the administrative machinary and so on, I had long discussions, particularly with some more genuinely enthusiastic forest officers like Yellappa Reddy on what kind of a machinary might be necessary. He had his own ideas. I discussed with many others also. So, I suggested a rather elaborate machinary for intigrating programmes of development of all the different .... departments and conservation areas. So, all of that was put into that project document. That was submitted in 1980. The response from the offecial machinary was varied. First meeting which was called to discuss this document as I recall, had very violent opposition. ~~that~~ by

by the agriculture people from Tamilnadu saying that this is a backward looking idea, that what they would like to do and must do is chemicalise and introduce hybrid and high yielding varieties in every bit of farmland in India. So they were critical. The forest department was itself not very enthusiastic, but had no serious objections. There were questions about who should be the nodal department. The PD all the time kept saying that this would be their programme. Then at this time also I remember there was a lot of discussion as to whether a seperate legislation was called for - for setting up biosphere reserves. And, again there were problems here. That Mr N D Jayal who was quiet conservation minded.

He was a Jt. Secretary then, first in the DST incharge of environment division, and in 1981, when the Dept. of Environment was set up, he became a Jt. Secretary in the Dept. of Environment. And he was a great believer in Foreign Experts. So, he was also what they call a regional councillor of IUCN. So, he all the time believed in calling IUCN experts. Then, there were other people who were unhappy with having foreign advisors. Mr Jayal has invited some legal experts from the Govt. of Belgium to prepare a legislation of Biosphere Reserves in India. And they had prepared also a set of recommendations. Internally, I think people did not want to look at that, in

part because they did not want to look at anything foreign experts had prepared and perhaps also they thought this was not very well written. I do not know. I do not know the details, because I had not thought too much about the legislation aspects. We were talking back and forth and finally when I prepared the document, my conclusion was from all discussions that perhaps the legislation will come later, but if the plan had to be initiated then the existing wildlife Act had sufficient teeth to take further this programme of the core areas were declared national parks, the other areas as wildlife sanctuary and so on. It was more a question of administering, rather than of legislation.

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And I was told by others that Project Tiger for instance was administered as a special programme and many people felt it was a very successful programme. That there was no special legislation for Project Tiger, it fit into the bounds of the Indian Wildlife Preservation Act. So there were others who said that why do we need seperate legislation? It is more a question of administration of the programme and not of legislation. For National Park, the legislation is a part of the Indian Wildlife Act or some related Act. So, that was used for Project Tiger along with whatever other Wildlife Sanctuary legislation

(2) Owen, 1980 ✓

(3) Pick, 1986 ✓

(4) Kettlewell, 1973. ✓

(5) Brakefield, 1987 ✓

(6) Peter Marler (1955) ✓

(7) Halliday & Slater, 1983 ✓

(8) Salim Ali, 1979 ✓

(9) Ryan et al. 1982 ✓

(10) Cade, 1981 ✓

(11) Regnier & Wilson. 1970 ✓

(12) Alcock, 1984 ✓

13 Trivers, 1985 ✓

(14) Fischer, ~~1935~~ 1930. ✓ ~~1958~~

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that was applicable and so I was told ~~for~~ that for Biosphere Reserve also, the same can serve, and ~~this~~ perhaps that is also probably correct. We could see that some seperate legislation was necessary. This was discussed again and again for the last 10 years and no seperate legislation has been prepared.

Meanwhile, of course in the Dept. of Environment itself there has been a interesting ~~dep~~ development with respect to this programe as a whole. Because the Dept. of Environ. initially was seperate from the Forest department which was part of Agriculture. The Forestors remained with the Agriculture Ministry. Later on there was a agitation by forestors. They wanted to get out of agriculture ministry

because they felt they would become much more powerful if they were in the Environment of Forestry Dept. because the environment people would be rather weak, and the Agriculture beauracracy is huge. So, they were obviously going to be in a more powerful position with the Environment Ministry. So, they agitated for in 1984-85 and it became Ministry of Environment and Forest. So now the question about the Biosphere Reserve Progcomme was, should be Environment people in the Ministry or the Forest Dept people within the Ministry have the programme. This tussel has been going on for 6 years. Since so far the Environment division in the Ministry has been controlling it, but the Foresters are contronting

to lay a claim on it. So, the initial discussions there was this opposition from Tamilnadu people and not very much from others. And

Meanwhile, controversy has come up about this Silent Valley. And Silent Valley was a part of the core area of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserves as proposed in the Biosphere Reserve Document. So in the early 1980s, there was a centre-state committee chaired by Prof MGK Menon who was either Secy. DST & he was member Planning Commission & both. Because he was first, Secy DST when M.S. Swaminathan was member Planning Commission in charge of Sienc, Technology, Environment and Agriculture; then Menon shifted to Planning Commission after Swaminathan left to go to Philipinnes. Anyway Menon was mutually acceeepted both for centre and

experimental procedure for testing this hypothesis. During the

Kerala as chairman of this joint committee. I was a member and 3 other scientist members, then 4 nominees of the Govt of Kerala which included some scientists and some technocrats. So, there was considerable debate on what should happen with Silent Valley and again ~~oppo~~ on a question of documenting the conservation value of Silent Valley and other options and so on. So, I prepared for the committee the scientific document on the conservation value of Silent Valley sort of ~~do~~ beyond the NBR project document some additional data collection as well as thinking about the issues involved. And finally, as you know the committee recommended to stay the project. So Silent Valley remained a part of the NBR. And all the time, there was this

controversy, that the Kerala EB deliberately destroyed a good chunk of forest in their frustration and so on. And ofcourse, we had included Attappadi area also in the Biosphere Reserve.

Through the controversy of the Silent Valley Project, the Biosphere Reserve Project did not progress further. Then MGK Menon, 1984 as I recall was with the planning commission. And as member planning commission, he took up interest in again looking at the Biosphere Reserve programme. So Planning commission also

has its environment division. And some officers were moved in from DST to the environment division; particularly one lady called Manju Sharma. She was quiet active. She had the option of continuing in DST or going to Dept. of Environment. She preferred to stay in DST, and when Prof. Menon moved to planning commission, she moved also to planning commission's Science, Technology and Environment Division. She had been involved earlier in getting this project document prepared. So in the Planning Commission she decided to pursue it and they set apart some

funds for implementing the Biosphere Reserve Programme in the 1981-85 plan. They set apart considerable amount of money. But there was no proper .... In the meanwhile other project documents had been prepared By 1984, there was probably a project document on Nandhapha, one on Nandadevi, Dehert Biosphere Reserve, Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, ... etc. So there were these documents and not implementation. So in 1984 Menon again called for a meeting of authorities. I guess he invited the Chief Secretaries of the 3 States who came with the chief conservators and others, their aides, and he invited me once again to discuss the project and he was very

forceful in saying that there is money, and centre has all this ..... why is it not progressing. And actually throughout, there has been this question of being involved in the international programme and bringing in international money, but we have never so far never taken any international money for Biosphere Reserve. For Project Tiger some very small amount of international money from WWF was accepted, but I think it was also not any large amount. But for Biosphere Reserves, as far as I know no international funds have so far been accepted. So it was Government

funds through the 6th Plan. And Menon said that we must go ahead, the officials said we must look in detail, on the ground at the zones; which is the core zone and the manipulation zones and ..... in particular I remember that Tamilnadu people pointed out the problems of supply of cattle to tanning industry and so on. So it was decided that now a map should be prepared by demarcated on 1:50,000 survey of India topo sheets the actual limits of the zones with field work to delimit them. This must be 1984-1985. So a committee

was set up with the chief conservators of the 3 states, and I guess I was the chairmen or convener or whatever of preparing these maps for all these zones. So, Subumar did the field work for that place of Talamalai plateau that he was familiar with, and did the maps. And John Joseph who was at that time the Conservator in head quarters, later he become the Chief Conservator. He was one of the officers who had shown serious interest, and if you are going to pursue these things further, you should talk to John Joseph. He took a lot of interest in getting the maps detailed. And from the Kerala side, there was Dr. CTS Nair who was at KFRI, although he is a IFS. man.

CTS Nair in Kerala, John Joseph in Tamilnadu, Sukumar, etc did the maps. The demarcation of zones was essentially involving the Forest Department. As I said even in 1974 meeting, there was this same problem with the Agriculture people. But Menon and other persuaded. The '84 meeting was with the IAS people, of Forest Secretary, the Chief Secretary, ... — so it was the IAS Beauracracy that was amenable to the discussion. But the foresters did all the mapping and it was clear that it was going to be sort of their programme. Meanwhile, side by side other things have been happening. For instance in 1983, there was this PL 480 money

and American Grant, was interested in using this money. So they have been persuading the GOI to do various things. One of the ~~big~~ things that was being done, and continued to be done was this - Indo-US subcommission of S&T. So there were a series of binational programmes, and it was suggested that we host in CES a meeting on conservation of bio-diversity. A number of American scientists and national park beaureacrats came, and we had a discussion meeting in Bangalore followed by a trip to Mudumalai, and the group stayed at Abhayaranyam; and NBR was considered as a case study for this group discussion; and there

was interest on the American side for access to scientific investigation in the Nilgiris using PL 480.

Then from our own initiative we said we should work out a scientific programme for NBR. A series of discussion meetings were held with a number of people including the BSI, ZSI, KFRI, CWRDM, TNAU, etc. about the possibilities of a research programme involving various groups. Certainly there was this kind of scientific interest on the part of the scientific community, as a location for, and a source of additional funds.

Now, the zones were demarcated and there were further meetings and all the 3 states agreed on these zones. So, in some sense it

would appear that the programme was said to go. The document was prepared in 1984-85. Maybe, because Menon said it was so controversial, the agricultural zones were left out, and the NBR Zones only included forest areas and degraded areas. Infact all the years I have been campaigning for in-situ ~~conse~~ preservation of genetic diversity of agricultural crops; and in all possible opportunities I have been also trying to push the line without any success. So maybe that was why it got left out of actual demarcation.

W 12/18

Around 1985 or so, Mr Seshan ~~bego~~ became Secretary, Dept. of Environment, and

he was ..... suspicious of everybody, deeply desirous of humiliating everybody else. He had meetings, and his standard procedure at each of these meetings was to shout at people and know beat them, and he was of course extremely articulate and extremely skilled at shouting at people and humiliating them. I remember there were meetings at which these officers from the state govt. would come, and he would shout at them, and say do you think the Ministry of Environment & Forests is a milch cow ~~which~~ which you are milking dry. He was like a Vedic rishi. He used to say ॐ ॐ, but

would ~~not~~ never say what he expects. So, this went on. I participated in a number of meetings at which the state Govt. people came up with proposals; and ofcourse the issue is very clear, that the state government's interest in all this is to get central Govt. funds; and ofcourse they asked for various things, and all of it may not be very justified, but Mr. Sechan would shout them down. He would ask people to suggest, and it was impossible to suggest anything, because whatever you would suggest, he would skilfully punch some holes in it, and then he would not tell you what he wanted; This he was

very well known for. He would make vague remarks about what he wanted, and wait for you to come up with something and attack it very vehemently. So this went on for some time. Then, there was also this fused with MGK Menon and TN Seshan. MGK Menon would say - what the hell, this programme the planning commission has given so much money for Biosphere Reserve programme and they are not submitting any proposals and utilizing it.

In any case, in 1986, finally a meeting was called in Udhagamandalam. Late 86 I think because I remember in 86, the UNESCO MAB,

had constituted an international scientific advisory board for Biosphere Reserves, and I was a member of them. And we had a meeting in Sept '86 in Bolivia on world Biosphere Reserves, and that time I felt very embarassed because there was no Biosphere Reserve in India. So, shortly thereafter Dec 1986, a meeting was called in Udhagamandalam at Tamilnagam, at which a number of people came including some people from US dept. of Agriculture. They were very keen on the programme starting, and their using PL 480 money; and a Russian also, and a few other people. There was

confusion too at this meeting; and some ministers were involved, on whether or not the NBR was officially inaugurated at this meeting was a matter of some debate. Anyway, around that time, whether at that meeting or not, the NBR rescue programme was supposed to have been officially launched. And, then was constituted a coordination committee or governing council. I think the Chief Secretaries were also involved. There was the question of preparation of action plans, to spend the money, and Dr C.T.S Nair of KFRI was fairly idealistic. He was I think

seriously interested in integrating conservation and development. And he prepared some plans which should be available. You should look for them.

Of all the states those who had prepared plans with this perspective. The Karnataka Govt. has been ..... There was also this question of the Project Tiger people vis-a-vis the NBR. and perhaps it added to their lack of interest. Anyway there was Project Tiger, and central money was already coming to it. Will this actually increase the money or cut out funds? Tamilnadu, off and on, the

Forest Secretary would come, who would think that this is something worthwhile doing. There were couple of meetings I did attend in Madras chaired by perhaps the Secretary Forests and Environment. And they had invited all the other Dept. heads, and there was an attempt to talk to them to see whether an inter departmental integrated programme can be prepared. In Kerala and Tamilnadu, some attempts were made along these lines, but they have not gone very far. And there should be some material available about these. Certainly CTS Nair's KFRI plan would

be available. You should also talk of one Mr. Vijayaraghavan who was for some time forest secretary, vigilance commissioner, an IAS man who was seriously interested in the Biosphere work. He too had perhaps, as many people complain, an excessive faith in bureaucracy.

After a while beyond 1988, 1989, when some of these discussions took place, two things were clearly happening. At the centre, the Secretaries were not very serious in pursuing them. At the centre, the forest and environment division itself was going on; and at the State level, it was evident that their interest was only trying to get at central funds. Then the last 3/4 years I have not seriously kept in touch

with what is going on.

We can ascertain if other depts other than the FD recieved only funds. Tamilnadu was preparing plans. But I do not know. Currently the person incharge of NBR in Dept. of Environment is Dilip Biswas. He was also the Secretary of Plant Valley committe. He should have the files that would tell you all this.

When the project document of NBR was prepared it had to be accepted by NCEPC. And with Pal being the chairman, he was more a genetic resources man, and not a wildlife man. So the biodiversity perspective was very acceptable. It was certainly the first time when there was talked about - bio-diversity. And also on

orchid sanctuary was set up around that time. The BSI was getting into the act with SK Jain as director BSI. He did push for plant sanctuaries and so on.

Development- Of you trace the conservation community. In 1977, the Janatha Govt. came into power and when Morarji Desai became the prime minister. So Salim Ali in a sense was throughout a major leader of the conservation community. And he had been earlier. His personal history included his staying in Dehra Dun, and Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi was there; and Jawaharlal Nehru was under arrest. This was under the British. 1930s or so. And Jawaharlal Nehru had an interest

in natural history, and Salim Ali was staying at Dehra Dun with his wife. The two became friends, and they used to watch birds. He had been (Salim Ali) instrumental in persuading Jawaharlal Nehru in the 1950s to take serious interest in conservation and continuing with Indira Gandhi. Now, the Nehru-Gandhi family, whatever they may say had no interest in non-elitist approach. Their approach was decidedly elitist.

So in 1977, when Morarji Desai became PM, Salim Ali went to meet him and talked about nature conservation

in such a triplet and comparing behaviours shown by wasps towards nestmates and behaviours shown towards non nestmates.

issues and Morarji Desai said, you are talking all these things but what about all the people who are staying there; and all this talk about conservation without thinking of rural people and tribal people will not work. And Salim Ali ~~was~~ wrote an editorial in Hornbill. I have refered to it it in some paper of mine. I had a quotation from it on a Report on Forest Policy which was chaired by Mr Dileep Mathai about 2 years. In this editorial he said - yes, the PM said these things to me and we have to think about it. I remember, to me also he was talking, saying this. If it is true, he did not dismiss what Morarji was saying

comparison was made by computing a tolerance index and such tolerance indices were then compared

and we never thought about these things at all, but we must think about it. Even world over this idea of involving man into conservation was only in the 1970s. Yes! the UNESCO &, MAB talked about it. That was late 1970s.

My impression is that the bureaucratic machinary is entirely self-serving and has no genuine interest in conservation nor in any sense in the local people benifitting from development; ~~not~~ nor interested in pursuing any integrated path of development. &, in hindsight it is obvious that nothing like the NBR programme can succede, till

the machinary with which conservation development programmes are implemented changes its character. Given the present day character of the implementation machinary, I do not see how anything could possibly have succeeded. I did not see it as clearly earlier.

Scientific Programme: The US-India-US programme proposal had nothing to do with development and conservation. It was only their individual research interest. Straight forward natural science kind of issue.

From the International Biological

Programme, Ecologists have been saying that Ecological Processes are at a time scale which means that unless you have long-term monitoring, you will not be able to make any useful statements about ecological changes. And in U.S. they persuaded the NSF to give for the first time in its history 30 year research grant for long-term monitoring sites. A departure from the usual procedure. The new Ecosphere-Biosphere, and Global warming and other controversies also, there is interest in having these long term sites. The 50 ha plot would be something of that

nature. If you want to see how the forest composition is changing, surely unless you do it with as much detail for several years, you will get no clear idea.

KIRI did some work on Man - Nature interactions. But on the whole the research programme has not taken off - in part... I had a very serious interest to see if multi institutional integrated programme can be initiated. Again as part of Mr Seshan's drive - he said we want to get more money and what in all this rubbish. We succeded to some extent to involve many, but it because of Mr Seshan etc. the whole progrome was jettisoned. So then

I gave up both these programmes. You should talk to Fr Saldhana, who had interacted much more with Mr Seshan. So no programe could come into existance. ~~And~~

Also, local groups have never been taken into the conservation NBR programme This never occured to be earlier, when we prepared the NBR document. It did not occur to me. Some of the scientific programmes, I do remember we did try to get some local village people involved. Some one from Ooty.

4/7/93

But all this was minimal.