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## MUNIFICENT NEEM

Reports that the ubiquitous neem has great potentialities for quickening economic development in a variety of ways will not come as a surprise to those who have some knowledge of how this versatile tree has entered the economic life of the people in the countryside. Folk medicine and cosmetics have

long used neem leaves, bark, twigs and seed in countless numbers of ways and their curative and prophylactic qualities are well-tried and proven. The report that neem has its uses in increasing the efficiency of fertilisers by prolonging their operative duration adds another dimension to its economics.

The neem cake, a by-product of neem oil extracted from the seed, can, according to tentative conclusions reached by agricultural scientists, inhibit rapid nitrification of urea and thus save about 20 per cent of the quantity of the fertiliser that now does not feed the plant. With fertiliser shortage playing havoc with the country's agricultural hopes, this finding has an important and immediate relevance to the economy. Availability of the neem seeds being very widespread, the scope for the production of neem cake is enormous. It has also been reported that neem cake has also proved its worth in increasing milk yields by promoting early maturity of milch cattle. It has also a role in combatting pests.

These too are valuable uses. Such versatility of an abundant native tree requires systematic study and practical application. The quantity of neem oil produced at the moment is derisory compared to its potentiality and when it is realised that apart from its medicinal possibilities it yields a valuable non-edible oil in soap-making, one gets a measure of what the country is losing by the absence of systematic research in the exploitation of this particular economic endowment. All this is the result of a rather distorted view of what ought to be the areas of R & D effort in the country. The lowly neem does not seem to the scientific establishment in the country as an exciting

Hindustan Times  
Sep. 9, 1974

## Deforestation a big threat to human life

From RAZIA ISMAIL  
Express News Service

BUCHAREST, Aug 17.

Wanton deforestation of the Indian subcontinent and the flood menace that naturally follows in its wake has been denounced as one of the three major manmade natural calamities that threaten the planet's capacity to support life.

The American agronomist, Mr Lester Brown, has pinpointed this factor along with overfishing of oceanic resources and progressive expansion of the South Saharan desert fringes as mounting dangers to human survival in face of population growth and demands for food and other essential commodities.

Mr Brown was one of the speakers raising population and resources policy issues on the eve of World Population Conference here.

Warning that the ecological balance of vast regions was being upset of available resources, the agronomist said the 1973 floods in Pakistan and the present terrible floods in India and Bangladesh could be directly traced to the uncontrolled felling of trees for fuel. Unchecked and entirely avoidable erosion was becoming serious menace to land resources resulting in not only loss of crops but huge losses due to regular flood damage.

The situation in India had steadily worsened over the last 20 years, Mr Brown said because of the rising demand for fuel wood. He did not refer directly to cutting of forests to make way for farm cultivation but said the vicious chain of deforestation, erosion and flooding was jeopardising the entire food producing potential of the subcontinent.

Ind. Express 18.8.74. pp 4

Indian Express

Aug. 18, 1974 P No. 4

## OUR VANISHING FORESTS

**M**R. G. S. RANGANATHAN rightly draws attention to the need for a more vigorous forest policy (January 9). Unfortunately, while exhortations are made for the preservation of forests, simultaneously depletion and release of forest land for agriculture and other purposes continue.

Mr. C. Subramaniam, Union Minister for Planning, issued a strongly worded note to the States in August on the vital need to conserve and augment the country's forest wealth. But State governments give such a low priority to forest protection and preservation of trees, generally, that the chief conservators are powerless to arrest the decline. In Bihar, for example, the government has released nearly 30,000 acres of forest land in recent years, and there is still a mounting pressure for the release of more land.

What can be achieved by vigorous action in the field of forestry is demonstrated by Israel. In the 30 years preceding the birth of the State of Israel, 3,000 hectares had been reforested. From 1948 to 1969, the area had increased more than tenfold, and today the area of man-made forest is 44,500 hectares out of a total forest area of 80,000 hectares.

ZAFAR FUTEHALLY  
Bombay

# Our Vanishing Forests

**F**ORESTRY, which is the conservation and controlled use of the forest, has been practised for nearly a thousand years in Europe and the beneficial effects of forest cover have been known and are part of the tradition and culture of the people there.

Forests influence climate, hold the soil, conserve moisture and prevent or minimise floods. It is also known that forests, vegetation and plankton, by photo-synthesis, provide the earth's supply of oxygen and control the quantity of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

With the enormous increase in industrial activity in the past few years, a sharp rise has been noticed in the percentage of carbon dioxide. A drastic increase of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere could affect the radiation from the sun which may result in the melting of the polar ice caps. If this should happen, the consequent rise of the ocean level would inundate most coastal cities in the world. Scientists are very worried, therefore, that the denudation of forests and the pollution of rivers leading to the destruction of plankton in the oceans may seriously affect human existence.

Sound principles of land use, arising from long experience backed by much experimental work, require a minimum one-third of the area of land to be under forest. In the U.S.A., France, Germany and the U.S.S.R., it is more than this. In Japan it is as high as 68%.

India's Fourth Five-Year Plan states the objectives, targets and outlays for forests. There appear to be three main objectives: a) to increase the productivity of forests, b) to link forest development with various forest-based industries, and c) to develop forests as a support to the rural economy.

The Plan report states that forests occupy 23% of the land area of India. This is much less than the minimum recommended and it is doubtful if we have even this much left; certainly not in the Indo-Gangetic plain or south of it.

In evaluating forests, the Plan report states that forestry logging contributes only 1.2% of the net domestic product. The average production/annum/hectare is 0.53 cu. metres, compared to 2 cu. metres which is the world average. The aim is to increase production by planting fast-growing species of trees.

On irrigation and flood control, the Plan report refers to the following work having been done: a) construction of 6,900 km. of new embankments, b) construction of 9,200 km. of drainage channels, c) 178 town protection schemes, and d) raising 4,587 villages above the flood level.

The outlay in the previous Plan was Rs. 133 crores for flood control, drainage, water-logging and anti-sea erosion; Rs. 50 crores is to be spent on continuing schemes. In the soil conservation programme in 13 river valley catchment areas up to 1968-69, 7,100 sq. km. has been "treated" at a cost of Rs. 23 crores. It is proposed to start work on eight new projects covering 5,000 sq. km. in the agricultural sector. This will cost Rs. 27 crores.

What is this "treatment"? If afforestation is included, how was it done? What species of trees, etc. grown? Wait this after a proper study of the soil and other conditions? Why is there such little publicity on this vitally important and interesting work? Why is it not mentioned in the section on forests in the Plan report?

Statistics are valuable provided they are dependable. The method of collecting data must be examined carefully to ensure their correctness. The statement, for example, that forests occupy 23% of the land area of India is suspect because the evidence appears to be to the contrary. This figure could be from

30 or 40-year-old forest records. The land may still be classified under the forest department but a large portion of it is now either cultivated, semi-desert or desert. Are up-to-date maps showing forest areas available? They should be for control purposes. An easy way of checking existing maps could be through aerial photographs, perhaps even from the earth satellites.

The objectives outlined in the Plan indicate that the most valuable roles played by the forest have been overlooked. The true functions of forests are: 1. they produce oxygen and reduce carbon dioxide; 2. they prevent soil erosion, protect headwaters of rivers and prevent or minimise floods; 3. they have a beneficial effect on climate by attracting rain; 4. they provide timber; 5. they provide habitat for wildlife; and 6. they provide areas for recreation.

Forests recede before the onslaught of the mounting population who are permitted to occupy forest land for cultivation and who help themselves to timber and firewood from the forest. Rules are difficult to enforce because politicians need the votes of the people and find it much easier to permit the clearing of a forest than to sell to the people the idea that forests represent the country's wealth; that they sustain the fertility and productivity of adjacent land by protecting it from erosion and by conserving moisture.

The removal of forests can lead to the creation of deserts. A large proportion of the deserts in the world are man-made. All this is part of history and is knowledge which should be used for the benefit of the people.

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Ours Vanishing Forests  
(contd.)

As things are today in India, it is inevitable that the remaining forests will come under even greater pressure. They provide a source of cheap fuel to the poor who form the preponderant majority. But villages are being electrified and if the government should make subsidised electric power available for cooking, this would provide an alternative to firewood and save the forest to perform its vitally beneficent role. Cow dung, too, which is being used as fuel, would then return to the land to enrich it as it should.

Forests are the habitat of wild animals. People are beginning to reckon wildlife as part of their valuable heritage. The East African countries (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania) currently earn annually close to Rs. 100 crores of foreign exchange (this is double the amount that India earns through tourism) from their wildlife sanctuaries.

Forests in all developed countries are considered important assets for the recreation they provide to people who wish to contemplate the beauty of nature. Even in a poor country like India such recreational facilities must be given due importance. The educational value, too, must not be ignored. India needs more biologists, zoologists, botanists, environmental scientists, and forests are their training ground.

Experiments conducted on the water run-off from land with vegetation and without indicate that ten times as much soil is washed away when there is no vegetation to hold the top soil. It does not take many monsoons to remove the top soil and with it the fertility of land that is laid bare. When the soil has all been washed away no amount of fertilizer will make the land productive. Politicians cannot win votes by the offer of waste land.

The public and the government must be made aware of the need for urgent action to stop the thoughtless destruction of forests. Furthermore, afforestation programmes must be spelt out in detail and must be implemented only after they have been intelligently discussed. Organisations like the Bombay Natural History Society should co-ordinate the efforts of similar societies and offer their services to the government to draw up a well-considered plan for the proper development of India's forest resources.

**G. S. Ranganathan**

## Letters :

## Save trees for prosperity

Sir,—There was heartening news (The Hindustan Times, August 19) about the brave women of Chamoli, Garhwal, who in a heroic manner prevented the felling and cutting away of the trees. Hats off to them. These people are better informed about the value of forests and the danger of unscrupulous and unplanned felling. It is a pity that we have still not realised the benefits we derive from the forests. The prevention of soil erosion along hillsides is only one aspect. There are hundreds and thousands of economical and ecological uses for trees. Trees are the lungs that enable us to breathe. It has been rightly said, "when a tree is felled the country dies a little."

It is time we became conscious of our forest wealth. We can solve hundreds of problems from food, fuel, floods, drought to an energy crisis, only if we realise the importance of plant life particularly of the forests on the hills. The catastrophe we are about to face could be prevented, to some extent, by such a consciousness.—Yours etc.,

S. P. KANWAL

DAV College,  
Amritsar, August 21.

### II

Sir,—I went through your editorial "Flood and drought together" (The Hindustan Times, August 13) with great interest.

You have very correctly diagnosed the causes of floods and drought and offered suggestions to lessen their frequency. In only one sentence "Drought and floods are basically two sides of the same coin—," you have spelt out the whole philosophy of conservation. Droughts or floods will continue to haunt India if the coin of anti-

conservation measures continues to be tossed by its ignorant masses to harvest short-term and ill-conceived benefits.

For prosperity conservation consciousness has to be created among the users of land, scientists and planners. All the rest pertaining to planning and implementation can then hopefully be achieved.—Yours etc., Y. AGNIHOTRI  
H. N. 1084, Sector 15-B,  
Chandigarh, August 19.

*Hindustan Times*

*Aug 29, 1974, P. No. 5.*

*Vol. 21 No. 22 P. 5  
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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 24 1974

## Soil conservation steps sought for Gobindsagar

From S. S. Banyal Hindustan Times Correspondent

CHANDIGARH, Sept. 23—While urging the Central Government to take up soil conservation programmes on a war footing in the Gobindsagar lake catchment area, the Bhakra Management Board has contested the Himachal Government's claim that the beneficiary States of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan should bear the entire cost of the measures to be undertaken by the Himachal Pradesh Government.

In a letter to the then Union Minister for Power and Irrigation, Dr K. L. Rao, last year, Himachal Chief Minister Y. S. Parmar demanded that at least, Rs 70 lakhs should be allotted to Himachal

Pradesh for the soil conservation programme in the Sutlej catchment area and Rs 50 lakhs for similar measures in the Beas catchment area.

He had emphasised that since the Himachal Government was not to be benefited from these measures, the cost should either be met by the Union Government or by the three beneficiary States.

Although the Union Government has not yet taken any decision on Dr Parmar's request, Bhakra Management Board authorities have expressed dissatisfaction on the work, so far, done by the Himachal Pradesh Government to arrest soil erosion in the catchment area. During the last 14 years, there has been brisk construction activity in the catchment area. With the result that the Gobindsagar lake has become greatly vulnerable to silting.

A spokesman of the BMB told this correspondent today it would be wrong to suggest that Gobindsagar lake's life had been reduced by 250 years due to silting. This must be a guess work by the "arm-chair experts". As a matter of fact, the rate of silting had not been very alarming. Between 1959 and 1973, the rate of silting had been 27,250 cubic feet per year on an average. Although the silting had been higher during the initial years between 1959 and 1965, the quantum of silt had gone down to 23,970 cubic feet by 1973.

Hindustan Times

Sep 24, 1974 P.M. 4

Jokesh Garg BSc (H) Part III

# Silent Valley is saved

By Gautam Shiveshwarkar

NEW DELHI: The Silent Valley Hydel project, which would have irretrievably damaged the ecology of this rare virgin forest, has now been banned by a direct order of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

Better controversy followed the recommendation to dam the Kunthipuzha river so as to bring power to Kerala. Environmentalists fought tooth and nail to save the forest and finally won, giving the Silent Valley a new lease of life.

In order to consider the issues involved, the Centre and Kerala constituted a joint committee to assess the "ecological aspects of the Silent Valley" in August 1980 under the chairmanship of Prof. M. G. K. Menon, Member, Planning Commission under the aegis of the Department of Environment. The report was published in Dec., 1982.

The committee pointed out that much of this Valley remained to be explored scientifically and there were "information gaps with regard to ecological regimes in the Western Ghats, inventories of natural habitats, distribution patterns and endemicity of the species".

The report stated the valley plateau, because of its isolation from human settlements and interference, has maintained its pristine naturalness. In the submergible forest area of 500 hectares, about 80 per cent of the trees have been cleared after

the hydel project was initially cleared.

Encroachments and felling along the fringes in recent years have affected the continuity of the forests. A few cardamom estates have come up in the area which have in parts of the plateau destroyed the climatic vegetation, replacing it with fire-maintained, secondary grass lands.

The rivers in the valley flow gently and the typical stairs-step-like edge effect along the shoreline provides micro-habitats for the fauna".

A unique feature of the tropical rain forest is the high level of organic productivity and biomass which help to maintain high levels of specie diversity. The committee, the report said, referred to the Silent Valley as "an unique example of ancient tropical flora and fauna essential for understanding the origin and evolution of the Indian-Malaysian-Australian flora ... the entire valley at all levels from its floor to its highest point is an invaluable whole".

Some scientists reported that the valley contains several unique, endemic, rare and endangered species. Others denied this. The committee noted that such unique specimens may be found in other areas, but this does not rule out its the importance of the silent valley.

It stressed that the submergible areas' riparian (riverine) habitat is an important constituent of the forest eco-system.

It pointed out five main factors

which affect the eco-system:

i) Area effect; ii) Distance effect; iii) Viability of species depends on the total area of suitable habitat; iv) Minimal population is vital for specie survival and v) Having a large tract of tropical forest, it is unlikely the destruction of a small portion of the forest would result in any significant loss of life-forms. Yet the opposite effect is also possible i.e., if this destroyed portion contains some unique habitat or is vital to the 'maintenance of the integrity of the whole'.

Even the ecological niches and "source-food-webs" responsible for their sustenance need to be probed.

**Impact of hydel project:**

The ecological profile will have to be taken into account while considering the hydel project, and an obvious impact will be through the submergence of 500 hectares of the valley forest involving the lowest reaches of the eco-system 'resulting in reduction of habitat size and species diversity'.

The reservoir will have great impact on the ecology throughout

Continued on page 19

## Silent valley is saved

Continued from page 17

the plateau. However some members of the committee stated that this will be confined to one corner and it was pointed out the reservoir will be located at the south-western corner.

There were many differing view points among the members, who by and large were of the opinion that the hydel project would affect the ecological system of the valley. Those opposing this point of view stated the hydel project was imperative for Kerala, and belittled the importance of the Valley's micro-habitat's destruction because of the project.

The project's first stage is estimated to cost Rs 58 crore with an energy potential of 522 MU per year. The investment comes to Rs 1.1 per kiloWatt-hour and the cost per kWh to 12.1 paise only, thus making it highly attractive.

The members of the Committee were: Prof. M. G. K. Menon Chairman of the Committee, Member, Planning Commission; Prof. A. Abraham; Dr T. N. Ananthakrishnan; Dr Madhav Gadgil; Dr H. K. Jain; Mr N. Chandrasekharan Nair; Mr K. Thiruvikraman Nair; Dr K. Raghavan Nambiar; Prof. A. K. Sharma and Mr Dilip K. Biswas (Department of Environment) who was the secretary of the Committee.

Project  
5 B

Question: Comment upon the statement, "In times to the natural ecosystems (Natural Biotic Communities) would be available only in the national parks and the Wild-life areas."

Man is cutting down the valuable forest wealth of the world for his small needs, without realizing the great hidden loss by his action. The poor people cut them down because that will be an easy way to live. The so called educated people cut them down to cultivate crops or make roads or to get timber. These are surely beneficial but they don't think of the loss caused by this. Many animals like Lion, Elephants are driven away by this. Many animals which cannot live without forest have become extinct. The trees are also lost. Rains will decrease; Floods will increase. All these will not stop unless man stops destroying forest wealth. Now a days persons are realizing this. So they are leaving large forest grounds and hunting and chopping wood is banished there. There are national parks; By this man is trying to preserve the forest wealth.

A secondary school students' answer to the question set in the Central Board of Higher Secondary Education, Delhi, 1970.

## मंदिर का 'जीर्णोद्धार' किस लिए ?

बदरीपुरी 10,350 फुट की ऊँचाई पर नर-नारायण पर्वतों की गोद में अलकनंदा के तट पर बसी हुई है। बदरीनाथ की प्राचीनता इसी से सिद्ध है कि उस का वर्णन सभी पुराणों में मिलता है। यह पवित्र भूमि आदि काल से ही साधु-महात्माओं द्वारा सैवित एवं पूजित रही है। इस प्राचीन मंदिर को तोड़ कर उस के स्थान पर बिरला मंदिर बनाने का कार्य अब चल रहा है। बिरला परिवार मंदिर, उस के मुख्य द्वार तथा उस से संबंधित मुख्य इमारतों को गिरवा कर बिरला मंदिरों की शैली में इन सब का पुनर्निर्माण करेगा। 'जीर्णोद्धार' के नाम पर किये जा रहे इस रद्दोबदल का औचित्य क्या है? एक और महत्वपूर्ण प्रश्न यह कि क्या एक राष्ट्रीय धाम के पुनर्निर्माण का निर्णय बदरीभूमि और गढ़वाल ही नहीं, समस्त श्रद्धालु भारतीय जनता की सहमति या सर्वसम्मति से लिया गया है या केवल एक धनाढ्य परिवार की धार्मिक-आकांक्षा-महत्वाकांक्षा का ही परिणाम है? गढ़वाल की जनता और वहाँ के समाजसेवी आज इन प्रश्नों का उत्तर चाहते हैं, उद्देलित हैं और इसीलिए एक और मंदिर के पुनर्निर्माण कार्य को बकायदा उत्सव का रूप देने की तैयारी चल रही है, तो दूसरी ओर इस के विरोध में आंदोलन चलाने की भी तैयारी चल रही है। बहुत मुमकिन है कि निकट भविष्य में ही बदरीधाम एक बड़े आंदोलन का केंद्र बन जाये।

कहना न होगा कि प्राचीन मंदिर के लोप-विनाश के परिणामस्वरूप इस पुण्य स्थल की ऐतिहासिक और वास्तुकला संबंधी उपलब्धियाँ लुप्त हो जायेंगी। प्राचीन मंदिर वैष्णव शैली में बना हुआ है एवं उस का सिंहद्वार उत्तराखंड की कलाकृति का उत्कृष्टतम प्रतीक है। इस की ऊँचाई 45 फुट है। कहते हैं कि इस मंदिर की मरम्मत 15वीं शताब्दी में गढ़वाल नरेश ने करवायी थी। तब उन की राजधानी श्रीनगर

में थी। सिंहद्वार के बारे में यह किंवदंती है कि उस का निर्माण गढ़वाल के महानतम शिल्पी मोलाराम द्वारा किया गया था। मंदिर सफेद पत्थरों से बनाया गया था। उस की कोई बुनियाद नहीं रखी गयी थी फिर भी शताब्दियों तक इमारत क्षतिग्रस्त नहीं हुई। इंजीनियरों और कारीगरों के लिए यह एक आश्चर्य का विषय है। चार माह तक बर्फ से ढके रहने के कारण मंदिर अपनी स्वच्छता, निर्मलता एवं नवीनता को बनाये रखता है। केदारनाथ तथा गोपेश्वर के मंदिर इस मंदिर से ऊँचाई में दुगुने हैं। इस राष्ट्रीय धाम के मंदिर को अधिक ऊँचा न बनाने का कारण क्या है? कहते हैं कि बदरीनाथ की वर्तमान मूर्ति वही प्राचीन मूर्ति है, जिस को नारद पूजते थे। बौद्ध काल में इस मूर्ति को अलकनंदा में फेंक दिया गया था। आदि गुरु शंकराचार्य ने इस मूर्ति को नारदकुंड से निकाल कर तप्तकुंड के पास गढ़कुटी की गुफा में स्थापित किया। बाद में टिहरी नरेश ने मंदिर का निर्माण करवा कर मूर्ति की पुनर्प्रतिष्ठा की थी। बहुत संभव है अतीत की इन स्मृतियों को असुण्ण रखने के लिए ही मंदिर के मूल स्वरूप को दीर्घकाल तक सुरक्षित रखा गया।

बिरला परिवार द्वारा बनाये जा रहे मंदिर का ढाँचा मुख्य द्वार के प्रांगण में लगे पट्ट से दिखाई देता है। यद्यपि मंदिर का निर्माण कार्य 1976 तक पूरा करने का अनुमान है, किंतु मंदिर बनाने के श्रेय का अभी से जोरजोर से प्रचार किया जा रहा है। इस प्रचार के आवरण में यह तथ्य गुम हो सकता है कि मंदिर की प्राचीनता, विशिष्टता को समाप्त कर बदरीनाथ के इतिहास में अब बिरलाकाल आरंभ हो रहा है। प्रांगण में लगे पट्ट और उस के मजबूत की छायांकित प्रतिकृति नीचे दी गयी है।

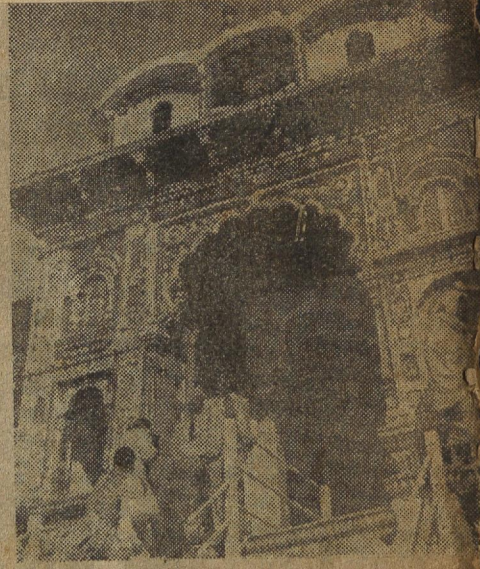
इस भड़कीले पट्ट की ओर हर यात्री का ध्यान चला जाता है। मंदिर के निर्माण पर

लगभग 70 लाख रु. की लागत आंकी गयी है। बदरीनाथ मंदिर समिति के अध्यक्ष इस वर्ष मंदिर के पट्ट खुलने से एक दिन पूर्व बदरीनाथ पहुँच गये थे और अभी भी वहाँ हैं। अध्यक्ष जी से पूछा गया कि अगर मंदिर का रूपांतरण आवश्यक था तो क्या यह कार्य मंदिर समिति के तत्वावधान में नहीं हो सकता था? क्या मंदिर के रूपांतरण के लिए सभी श्रद्धालु यात्रियों के चंदे के साथ बिरला की पूंजी भी सम्मिलित नहीं की जा सकती थी? बिरला परिवार ने स्वयं को 'देवनाप्रिय अशोक' की उपाधि से विभूषित किया है—क्या इस से एक राष्ट्रीय धाम के गौरव को आघात नहीं पहुँचेगा? क्या कन्याकुमारी से कामरूप और कश्मीर तक के करोड़ों श्रद्धालु धार्मिकों की भावना को ठेस नहीं पहुँचेगी? क्या मंदिर समिति ने धार्मिक नेताओं, पुरातत्त्वविदों, इतिहासकारों, वास्तुविशेषज्ञों एवं इंजीनियरों आदि की भी राय ली थी?

जात हुआ कि पहले बिरला परिवार चाहता था कि पुनर्निर्माण कार्य मंदिर समिति स्वयं करवाये, किंतु समिति ने अपनी असमर्थता प्रकट कर बिरला परिवार को ही इस की अनुमति दे दी। इस सिलसिले में बिरलाओं से लिखापट्टी पहले की समिति के कार्यकाल में ही हो चुकी थी। तब शायद इस पक्ष पर विचार करना आवश्यक नहीं समझा गया कि मंदिर से परंपरागत संबंध रखने वाले लोग, गढ़वाल की जनता और श्रद्धालु यात्री बदरीवन में स्थित बदरीनाथ के मंदिर का एक धनाढ्य परिवार द्वारा रूपांतरण का विरोध भी कर सकते हैं। प्रत्यक्ष विरोध निस्संदेह बहुत देर में सुखर हो रहा है। बिरलाओं द्वारा मंदिर का निर्माण दो वर्ष पहले आरंभ हो चुका है। मंदिर के गर्भगृह के बाहर से सीमेंट की दीवार खड़ी कर दी गयी है तथा अग्रभाग और सभामंडप तोड़ दिये गये हैं। ये ध्वस्त खंड सफेद पत्थरों से निर्मित उत्कृष्ट प्राचीन और ऐतिहासिक धरोहर थे। बदरीनाथ मंदिर बार-बार हिमपात और हिमखंडों से टकराने के बावजूद क्षतिग्रस्त नहीं हुआ जब कि आसपास के भवनों को भारी क्षति पहुँचती रही। वर्तमान मंदिर को तोड़ने का एक कारण यह बताया जाता है कि यात्रियों को मूर्ति के दर्शन करने में असुविधा होती है। यदि यह बात सही है, तो जिस गर्भगृह में मूर्ति स्थापित है, उसे भीतर से न तोड़ कर बाहर से उस पर बिरला मंदिर का आवरण क्यों चढ़ाया जा रहा है? यह आवरण 11 फुट तक ऊँचा उठ चुका है। गर्भगृह को भीतर से न तोड़ने के निर्णय के पीछे संभवतः दैवीय शक्ति के प्रकोप का भय है। मंदिर के एक पुराने सेवक से पूछा गया कि क्या वह इस परिवर्तन से खुश है? उन का दो टूक उत्तर था कि यह मंदिर प्रबंध समिति की अकर्मण्यता का द्योतक है, जो इस सदियों पुराने धाम की ऐतिहासिकता को नष्ट करवा रही है।

महात्म्य : बदरीनाथ के पट्ट इस वर्ष समय से 29 दिन पूर्व दर्शनायियों के लिए खोले गये हैं। जात इतिहास में यह पहला अवसर है, जब मंदिर के पट्ट इतने दिन पहले खोले गये। पिछले वर्ष तक 5 मई से 15 मई के बीच की अवधि में पट्ट खोले जाते थे। महाकुंभ पर्व (हरिद्वार) के यात्रियों को अधिक दिन प्रतीक्षा न करनी पड़े इसीलिए अधिकारियों द्वारा 20 अप्रैल को ही पट्ट खोलने का निर्णय लिया गया। रास्ते में कई स्थानों पर हिमनद पार कर 50 हजार से अधिक यात्री बदरीनाथ के दर्शन कर चके हैं। एक वह समय था, जब इस धाम का दर्शन दुर्लभ माना जाता था। ऋषिकेप से ही यात्रियों को पैदल यात्रा करनी पड़ती थी। रास्ते की दुर्गमता और प्राकृतिक प्रकोपों को सहन करते हुए यात्रियों को प्राणांत का भी जोखिम झेलना पड़ता था। उन दिनों बदरीनाथ के लिए प्रस्थान का अर्थ परिवार से अंतिम विदाई भी माना जाता था इसीलिए बदरीभूमि तपोभूमि ही नहीं, वैकुण्ठधाम के नाम से भी पुकारी जाती है। 5 वर्ष पहले बदरीनाथ तक मोटर मार्ग बन जाने के कारण यह अग्रगण्य धाम सब के लिए सुगम हो गया है। अब प्रति वर्ष लाखों यात्री बदरीनाथ पहुँचते हैं। आधुनिक सुविधाएँ जुटाने के लिए बदरीनाथ मंदिर समिति के अलावा परमार्थ निकेतन, गीता मंदिर, भजनाश्रम आदि न्यासों ने भी यहाँ अपने भवन बनाये हैं। आधुनिक सुविधाओं से परिपूर्ण 'देवलोक' होटल यहाँ धनाढ्यों को भी आकर्षित कर रहा है।

बदरीनाथ भारत का एक महान् धार्मिक केंद्र ही नहीं, राष्ट्रीय एकता का प्रतीक भी है। शंकराचार्य की व्यवस्था के अनुसार आज भी दक्षिण भारत के नंबूदरी जाति के ब्राह्मण यहाँ पूजा करते हैं तथा सहायक पुजारी का काम डिमरी लोग करते हैं। नंबूदरी ब्राह्मणों को यहाँ रावल भी कहा जाता है। पहले रावल की नियुक्ति और उन का अभिषेक तावणकोर के राजा एवं टिहरी नरेश करते थे। मंदिर के परंपरागत प्रबंध के बारे में यह जानकारी मिलती है कि पहले माणा (उत्तराखंड का सीमांत क्षेत्र) के माच्छा, पांडुकेशर के दुरियाल, डिमरी तथा देवप्रयागी मंडों के द्वारा मंदिर की व्यवस्था की जाती थी। बदरीनाथ के भोग से ले कर रास्ता बनाने तक तमाम उत्तर-दायित्व इन्हीं को सौंपा गया था। बदरीनाथ के चढ़ावे के संदर्भ में 'फापर की पोली, उन की चोली' (सीमांतवासियों का खाद्य और उन का बना हुआ वस्त्र) कहावत अभी भी प्रचलित है। जिन लोगों का मंदिर से परंपरागत संबंध था, उन्हें मंदिर की देखरेख और धार्मिक उत्तरदायित्व के बदले में कुछ विशिष्ट अधिकार दिये गये थे। रावलों का कार्य केवल धार्मिक अनुष्ठान तक ही सीमित था। 1899 के लगभग तत्कालीन सरकार ने धार्मिक अनुष्ठानों के अलावा मंदिर के प्रबंध का कार्य



मंदिर का सिंहद्वार: अस्तित्व का संकट भी रावलों को ही सौंप दिया था। रावल 'बोलादा-बदरीनाथ' (बदरीनाथ के प्रतिनिधि) कहलाते थे।

मर्यादा के अनुसार कुछ रावल ब्राह्मचारी नहीं रह सके, उन की निरंकुशता धन और धर्म की समुचित रक्षा नहीं कर सकी अतः 1939 में अंतरिम सरकार के शासनकाल में 'बदरीनाथ मंदिर कानून' बना, जिस के अंतर्गत रावल को केवल पूजा का भार सौंपा गया। मंदिर के प्रबंध के लिए 12 व्यक्तियों की एक समिति बनायी गयी। राज्य सरकार इस समिति के अध्यक्ष की मनोनीत करती है, मुख्यगण विधानसभा, विधान परिषद्, जिला परिषद् तथा टिहरी के राजा द्वारा मनोनीत किये जाते हैं। श्री वासुदेव नंबूदरी के कार्यकाल में मंदिर की व्यवस्था पर सरकार का दखल शुरू हुआ। स्वर्गीय गोविंदवल्लभ पंत ने श्री वासुदेव नंबूदरी को लखनऊ बुला कर कहा कि जनता का आग्रह है कि मंदिर के प्रबंध के लिए समिति बनायी जाये। जब रावल जी ने

मंदिर: क्या यह जीर्ण है ? (चित्र भारतीय पुरातत्व विभाग के तालाब से)



उपश्रीरक्षेयुष्ट श्री बदरीनाथ जिर्णोद्धार समिति  
श्री बदरीनाथ मन्दिर जो...

मन्दिर-संरक्षण-उपसंपर्क-उप-राष्ट्रिय-अध्यक्ष-धर्म-का-नवधर्क-से।  
उसी प्राचीनतम मन्दिर का नवीनतम रूप द्वितीय-  
श्री बदरीनाथ मन्दिर

बिरला परिवार द्वारा निर्मित हो रहा है।  
बिरला परिवार देवानाम प्रिय अशोक  
की मूर्ति मन्वन्तरी रक्षा एवं सनातन हिन्दू धर्म के संरक्षण में संलग्न है।  
श्री बदरीनाथ मन्दिर मन्वन्तरी रक्षा एवं सनातन हिन्दू धर्म के संरक्षण में संलग्न है।  
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मन्वन्तरी रक्षा एवं सनातन हिन्दू धर्म के संरक्षण में संलग्न है।  
श्री बदरीनाथ मन्दिर मन्वन्तरी रक्षा एवं सनातन हिन्दू धर्म के संरक्षण में संलग्न है।  
श्री बदरीनाथ मन्दिर मन्वन्तरी रक्षा एवं सनातन हिन्दू धर्म के संरक्षण में संलग्न है।

# बदरीनाथ मंदिर 'जीर्णोद्धार' योजना की जांच की मांग

विदित हुआ है कि उत्तराखंड में विख्यात प्राचीन बदरीनाथ मंदिर के जीर्णोद्धार के बारे में विवाद पैदा हो गया है और स्थानीय जनता ने मंदिर के मूल स्वरूप को बदलने के विरोध में 'मंदिर बचाओ' अभियान शुरू कर दिया है।

अब एक करोड़ रुपये की लागत पर इस मंदिर के 'जीर्णोद्धार' की योजना बनायी गयी है, लेकिन इस क्षेत्र की जनता की दलील है कि मंदिर का जीर्णोद्धार नहीं बल्कि उसके मूल स्वरूप को ही बदला जा रहा है और चाबूत मुख्य द्वार का भी यही हाल होगा। इस क्षेत्र के लोगों का कहना है कि मंदिर के प्राचीन रूप को यथापूर्व कायम रखा जाय और नया मंदिर उसके आसपास बनाया जा सकता है।

विदित हुआ है मंदिर समिति के अध्यक्ष की कथित जीर्णोद्धार योजना को कार्यान्वित करने के संबंध में समिति के कार्यकारी अधिकारी से,

# Plan to demolish Badrinath temple may mar peace

"The Times of India" News Service

LUCKNOW, June 29: The peace of the pilgrim city of Badrinath may soon be disturbed by slogan-shouting agitators of Chamoli district if the Birla-controlled Jayashree Trust does not abandon its plan to demolish the old shrine established by Adi Shankaracharya.

According to Mr. Chandī Prasad Bhatt, a Sarvodaya leader of Chamoli, an action committee has been formed in Badrinath to pressurise the Jayashree Trust into accepting its demand for preserving the architectural characteristics of the old temple which is believed to have been designed by Molaram, a famous Garhwal painter and sculptor.

Citizens of Badrinath have been shocked by the demolition by the Jayashree Trust of sabha mandap (entrance hall). They fear that the whole Badrinath complex, including singhdwar (the main gate) may soon be demolished.

Mr. Bhatt, who had come to Lucknow, to meet the Chief Minister, Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, and request him to save the old Badrinath temple, says that the trust's engineers have no business to damage the architectural beauty of the old temple.

Mr. Bhatt demands that the sabha mandap, demolished by the Jayashree Trust, be reconstructed. This can be done if experts of the Archaeological Survey of India are consulted.

The new temple is expected to be completed by 1976. Building operations have been going on for the last two years. No one objects to the Birlas renovating the temple, but the people of Chamoli district resent the attempt to create a new temple after pulling down the old shrine, which needs to be repaired and renovated and conserved.

Mr. Bhatt has warned the trust that the citizens of Badrinath will not tolerate the destruction of the old temple. They will launch a movement if the precise purity of the architecture of the old temple is tampered with.

# Badrinath renovation plan 'ignores' basic factors

"The Times of India" News Service

DEHRA DUN, October 1.

THE architectural design adopted by the Jaishree Trust for the renovation of the Badrinath Temple has nothing in common with the Uttarakhand tradition.

This point is made by the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Dr. M. N. Deshpande, in his report submitted to the government after an on-the-spot investigation.

He points out that if the trust is allowed to go ahead with the work it will involve the pulling down of the "Simha Dwara," Shankaracharya's "gaddi," "Bhog Mandi," the kirtan hall and perhaps the offices of the temple committee at the rear.

One of the four important shrines in the country consecrated by the Adi Shankaracharya in the eighth century, the Badrinath Temple is situated at an altitude of 3,084 metres in the Chamoli district of Uttarakhand.

The steadily increasing number of pilgrims prompted the temple committee to think of expanding the premises. The courtyard of the temple was also showing signs of sinking. Cracks had developed in the walls of the "Simha Dwara." But because of paucity of funds, the committee could not take up renovation work.

After Mr. G. D. Birla visited Badrinath in 1971, the Jaishree Trust expressed its willingness to renovate the temple. On February 25, 1971, the temple committee adopted a resolution entrusting the work to the trust without seeking to approve its plans prior to execution.

Within six months, architects of the trust dismantled parts of the temple complex and started constructing a shrine patterned after temples built by the Birlas in other parts of the country. The architects wanted to increase the temple's height from 8.5 metres to 20.3 metres in consonance with the Orissa design. This, according to Dr. Deshpande, will not harmonise with the historical and architectural traditions of Uttarakhand.

Controversy cropped up as the renovation work progressed. The discontent among the local people assumed the form of an agitation in April following the reopening of the shrine. When the controversy figured in the vidhan sabha, the Chief Minister, Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, announced the decision to appoint a high-powered inquiry committee.

The Chief Secretary ordered stoppage of renovation work on July 10 and asked the Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India to investigate the matter, Dr. Deshpande

submitted his report to the government on August 8.

Dr. Deshpande also points out in his report that the temple committee had left the work "almost entirely to the wishes of the Jaishree Trust. It does not appear to have fully comprehended the consequences of the renovation. If the present plan is given effect to, it will result in pulling down the "Simha Dwara" as the entrance portico cannot be accommodated within the available space and the side portico at the opening of the "Sabha Mandap" and the "Ardha Mandap" will have no room for people to move about.

The trust has not so far given details of the renovation plan. Its chairman told the inquiry committee set up by the state government: "We want to complete this work in a phased manner. The work may continue beyond 1976." He could not say how much money would be required. Of the Rs. 12 lakhs earmarked for the first phase, he pointed out, about that Rs. 10 lakhs had already been spent.

Geological experts say that the architects have not taken into account two basic factors before undertaking the massive construction work. They are doubtful whether the proposed 20.3-metre-high temple will be able to withstand high velocity winds and frequent avalanches which have damaged many buildings near the temple in recent years.

The platform on which the temple stands is being eroded by the Alaknanda. A six-metre cavity has developed on the river bank with the result that a portion of the temple premises has sunk.

The architects of the trust have also failed to take into account the weight-bearing capacity of the soil on which the foundation of the renovated temple is to stand. The trust evidently had not sought expert opinion on these points.

The trust's architects have already constructed a six-metre concrete wall covering the "Garbha Griha" on all sides and the gap between the old and the new temple has been filled with concrete.

One of the basic changes made by the trust is the conversion from the "tri-rath" to the "panch rath" style. If the structure put up by the trust is to be demolished, some experts feel, there is a danger of the existing Badrinath Temple giving way. For the present the half-built structure is being covered with tin sheets so that snowfall in the winter does not damage the shrine.

# बदरीनाथ मंदिर के संवंध में आत्मदाह करने की धमकी

बदरीनाथ, २६ जून (हिस्)  
बदरीनाथ मंदिर ऐतिहासिक होने के साथ-साथ उत्तराखंड की वास्तुकला का उत्कृष्ट नमूना भी है। इस के जीर्णोद्धार एवं नवीनीकरण योजना के अधीन प्राचीन वास्तुकला को समाप्त कर बिरला-शैली से मंदिर का निर्माण किया जाना जनता को कतई पसंद नहीं है।

मंदिर के सिंहद्वार के प्रांगण में लगाये गये 'देवाना प्रिय अशोक' वाले पट से भी जो बिरला परिवार को विभूषित करता नजर आता है, जनता में भारी असंतोष कभी भी फूट सकता है। यही कारण है कि उक्त भड़काले पट को हटा कर किसी तहखाने में रखे जाने की योजना है।

पाँवन्न शिलाएँ, जिन का पूजा-अर्चना बदरीनाथ के साथ-साथ हुई, अब यत्र-तत्र क्षत-विक्षत दृश्या में फँती टूटती जा सकती है तथा भज-दूरों और यात्रियों द्वारा चूल्हों के काम में लायी जा रही है।

जनता से मंदिर के वर्तमान अध्यक्ष के प्रति भी विशेष रोष व्याप्त है। जनता की एक आम सभा में सर्वोच्च कार्यकर्ता श्री चंडीप्रसाद भट्ट ने उस समय सनसनी पैदा कर दी जब उन्होंने बताया कि मंदिर समिति का अध्यक्ष भगवान बदरीनाथ की मूर्ति को 'काला पत्थर' कह कर अपमानित करता है।

चंपौली जिले की जनता ने उत्तर-प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री श्री बहुगुणा से तत्काल वर्तमान कमेटी को मंग करने तथा ऐतिहासिक प्राचीन मंदिर की सोडफोड़ को तत्काल रोकने का निवेदन किया है। आक्रोश में जनता बदरीनाथ मंदिर के रक्षार्थ कूच करने की योजना बना रही है।

श्री कृष्णानंद गिरि ने जिन्होंने बताया जाता है कि पृथक पर्वतीय राज्य की मांग के संबंध में लखनऊ विधानसभा में पत्र लिखे थे, हिंदू-स्थान समाचार के बदरीनाथ स्थित संवाददाता को सूचित किया है कि २९ अगस्त को वे लखनऊ में मुख्यमंत्री के निवास स्थान पर अनशन करेंगे और यदि फिर भी स्थिति बदलती नहीं तो वे बदरीनाथ प्रांगण में आत्मदाह कर लेंगे।

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