

PRAKRUTI

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1991-1992

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT WORK:-

The emphasis of rural development programme is to help the weaker sections to attain benefits of government scheme. In order to create awareness among people we have helped to organise and seek justice and benefits of government programmes. The community organisers are working in interior hills areas assisting people in their struggle. They also help them in removal of social evils like dowry and untouchability. In 25 cases destitute people were enabled to secure old age person from government. Similarly the children of weaker section were helped to get scholarships. The interior villages do not have road link. The organisation is helping them to get financial support to build the roads.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The degradation of natural resources in this district has caused enormous problems for common people. In order to tackle this problem our organisation has launched a programme to create environmental awareness among common people.

The world environment day (June 5, 1991) was celebrated in rural village with assistance from Department of Environment and Ecology, Government of Karnataka. The programme exposed the people to threat of destruction of forests, pollution offer and decreasing water availability. It was also stressed to adopt alternate sources of energy to reduce pressure on natural forests.

In on special attempt to widen the activities related to ecological issues the organisation conducted six workshops on "FOREST AND PEOPLE" in Uttara Kannada, Bijapur, Raichur and Dharwad districts. The department of Environment & Ecology, Government of Karnataka, provided financial support towards this programme.

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FOREST PROTECTION

As a result of our environmental work various grassroots level groups have formed organizations to stop forest destruction. This year such organizations were formed in 4 places who spontaneously stopped lopping of 'Dalchini' tree, they sought our support in this organising work.

We motivated 700 villagers to participate in a programme to reduce felling of trees for green manure. Instead we persuaded them to collect dry leaves, because of which tree survives. In 15 villages we have helped in regeneration of greenery on barren land. Creating forests of indigenous species.

ALTERNATE ENERGY SOURCES :

Fuel efficient 'Chullas' or stoves for 50 families were installed in villages, especially for weaker sections. This has helped the families through reduction of smoke and decreasing the need for fuelwood.

We are also propagating Gobargas plant as a source of energy in rural areas.

We are propagating Solar energy devices in rural areas to expose the people to this non conventional energy source. The Karnataka State Council for Science and Technology, Bangalore has given us six Photovoltaic panels to install photovoltaic lighting systems in interior villages.

SAVE BEES CAMPAIGN

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ECOLOGICAL AGRICULTURE

The high costs of chemical based agriculture has caused financial as well as health problems for farmers. The soil and water is polluted. In order to educate farmers about dangers of chemical agriculture we launched a programme to contact farmers and to create awareness. Five workshops on this issues were organized during the year. In this process the organization has realized that the farmers are developing an alternative ecological agriculture. In this ecological agriculture the emphasis is on organic input natural pesticides and cultivating from indigenous seeds that are suitable to a particular region.

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Prakruti and Green Ray Foundation, Goa collaborated together to launch Save Dudhsagar Campaign. Dudhsagar is an excellent water-falls on the border of Goa and Karnataka. The Karnataka government is planning to divert the water of dudhsagar to Kali dam. This will destroyed the forests and the water-fall at Dudhsagar. In order to create awareness a two day camp was organised in the forests near Dudhsagar falls in which people from Goa and Karnataka participated.

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Catchment area awareness campaign : with the financial assistance from Department of ecology and environment, Government of Karnataka we launched awareness campaign to protect the catchment areas of major rivers in western ghats.

SHARAVATI CATCHMENT :

Sharavati rivers is one of the important river in Karnataka. It is the main source of power generation in the state. The hydro electric dam at Linganamakki across Sharavati provides power to the sate. In recent years the deforestation and change in land use in the catchment area of Sharavati has led to siltation of the hydel dam. This reduces the water storage capacity of the hydel dam, decreasing the capacity to generate power. This is a serious set back for the development of the

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After creating awareness with farmers it became clear that the catchment is getting destroyed at two fronts.

- A. By encroachment of forest land.
- B. By monoculture plantations of acacia.

In villages like Marathi (Near Nagodi) extensive catchment forests are clearfelled, burned and the (Keralite) encroachers grow lemon grass. This is dangerous to the soil as all the top soil is washed off during rainy season, depositing as silt in the river bed.

Similarly the planting of monoculture acacia by Mysore Paper Mills in the catchment of sharavati is destroying the diversity of the region. People say that these acacia plantations can not retain the water. According to them the indigenous trees play very crucial role in maintaining the regular source of water in the streams. These plantation have also taken the grazing land from villagers. This has affected the availability of fodder in the region.

CONCLUSION : The programme create awareness in the catchment area was successful as people have realised the importance of catchment forests to their well being. There is an urgent need to reach larger number of people to create awareness..

II. TUNGABHADRA CATCHMENT :

A workshop to create awareness in catchment area of Tunga was held on 9th March 1993 at Agumbe. Farmers, students teachers took part in the programme.

Agumbe is known as Cheerapunji of the south. This receives heavy rainfall and it is the catchment area of Tungabhadra river. The catchment forests are getting destroyed due to logging activities by the government. The beekeeping and yield of honey is an indication of the health of catchment forests. However, in recent years the yield of honey has decreased considerably. The destruction of forests plywood companies has led to destruction of cane and bamboo. This has adversely affected the forest dwellers, as they do not get these resources to make bamboo, cane items.

The catchment area near Agumbe is still intact and it is only through peoples initiative it can be saved. The nature club, formed in Agumbe is working towards creating awareness among the people and tourists in Agumbe. There is need to support such local groups so that people are involved in tree planting activities.

III. KAVERI CATCHMENT :

Kaveri is one of the main river in south India. In order to create awareness among the people in the catchment area of Kaveri programme was held in Bhagamandala on 10th March, 1993. The Field Publicity Office Government of India, Mangalore unit took part in this programme. Hundreds of people in Bhagamandala took part in this programme.

As part of the catchment area awareness programme we visited talacavery, Napolku and Kakkabbe. The hill slopes have been planted with acacia. Vast tracts of the hills was burning due to fire. The recent government order to allow people to fell trees in 'redeem land' has led to total

destruction of catchment forests of Kaveri. It is essential to enact some legislation so as to restrict felling of trees in the catchment areas. The situation in Kaveri catchment is becoming very tense as coffee plantation owners are eager to earn revenue through sale of trees on their land. This will destroy the Kaveri river and it will also harm the coffee yield, as the change of climate will reduce coffee yield.

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Kali, the river emerging from Western ghats on Goa – Karnataka border is another major source of power for the state. In order to create awareness among people in the catchment areas of Kali, a programme was held on 20th and 21st March 1993. The programmes were held at diggi and gund (both in Joida taluka, Uttara Kannada district).

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Introduction of exotic European honey bees into Western ghats is going to damage indigenous honey-bees. We supported a campaign to save indigenous honeybees. We are lobbying with Karnataka Government not to introduce these exotic bees. We are contacting international experts

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ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES :

Our organisation is attempting to create environmental awareness among people in the rural areas of the district. In order to achieve this objective we have conducted workshop and slide shows.

Workshops : In order to create awareness about ecology it is essential to learn from nature. In the natural surrounding people learn and understand the potential of natural resources. We have conducted four workshops for village people in sheegehalli, Mattighatta, Doddanahalli and Yana. Eighty participants have participated in this two day workshop. Local hospitality and peoples support has helped us to conduct the workshops. Following issues were discussed in the workshop: Introduction of participants; Natural resources; Destruction of these resources and reasons for destruction; Peoples movement to protect and manage natural resources; Alternate energy resources and harmonious development policies. These workshops attracted attention of ordinary people and we have successfully sown the seeds of conservation of natural resources.

Slide Shows : Another medium through which we reach a large number of people in the interior regions is through lecture and slide shows. This helps us to create environmental awareness among children, youth and the community. We arranged 15 slide shows in the rural schools. We have also conducted 25 programmes in the villages for creation of awareness on ecology. After the slide show we held discussions with villagers on the environment problem effecting them.

Western Ghates : Western ghates is one of the most important ecosystems in Uttara Kannada. The stability of western ghat depends on the rational utilisation of the available forest resources. We conducted a study on the fragile ecosystem of western ghats to study how people have successfully regenerated the denuded land. The outcome of the study shows that there are available knowledge and skills with villagers to regenerate the denuded forest areas. This is done with a minimum input of costs. Prakruti is trying to bring out a booklet on 'Peoples Afforestation' techniques.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES : We are working in ten villages of Sirsi and Siddapur talukas to achieve all around development of the villages. In every village we have helped people to organise themselves under "Village Development Communities". These people organisation are the focal point in bringing development to the rural areas. Some of the issues taken up by these organisations are: Construction of approach road to

the village, setting up of a primary school, veterinary health, agricultural development and adult education.

ALTERNATE ENERGY :

Our organisation is actively involved in propagation of alternate energy resources in the rural areas. This year we have conducted two courses to build Astra ole or Smokeless Chulhas. We train village youths in construction of fuel efficient chulhas so that they can install and do the necessary follow up activities. This is our medium to propagate fuel efficient stoves. This reduces consumption of fuelwood, leading to reduction of pressure on forests.

We also motivate people to install gobar units. Our efforts to install community gobar gas units has not succeeded because people that the distribution of the end product (gas) is a problem.

We have established Solar Photo Voltac system in four villages. The Solar panels were provided by Karnataka State Council for science and Technology. For other accessories like battery and lighting system Tata Trust, Bombay has kindly given financial Assistance. All the units are performing well in the remote hill regions of western ghats, where electricity has no possibilities to reach.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION:

Western ghat has the rich biodiversity in plant and animal resources. In order to create awareness among the community, we held a very innovative workshop on Biodiversity for artists. About thirty artists from all over the state (Karnataka) took part the creative workshop. They spend six days in the villages. For first three days they learnt about biodiversity by visiting the forests, villages and the tribal community. They painted pictures on biodiversity of western ghats. This paintings were exhibited in the villages for general public. This was a great experiences for both organisers and the participants. The most important aspect of this workshop is that the local people contributed in cash and kind to hold this workshop.

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MARCH 1994

PRAKRUTI

ANNUAL REPORT 1993-1994

Prakruti is a voluntary organisation registered under Societies Registration Act. It is working among the interior hill regions of Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka. This is the brief report of the activities carried on during April 1993 to March 1994.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES :

Our organisation is attempting to create environmental awareness among people in the rural areas of the district. In order to achieve this objective we have conducted workshop and slide shows.

Workshops: In order to create awareness about ecology it is essential to learn from nature. In the natural surrounding people learn and understand the potential of natural resources. We have conducted four workshops for village people in Sheegehalli, Mattighatta, Doddanahalli and Yana. Eighty participants have participated in this two day workshop. Local hospitality and peoples support has helped us to conduct the workshops. Following issues were discussed in the workshop: Introduction of participants; Natural resources; Destruction of these resources and reasons for destruction; Peoples movement to protect and manage natural resources; Alternate energy resources and harmonious development policies. These workshops attracted attention of ordinary people and we have successfully sown the seeds of conservation of natural resources.

Slide Shows : Another medium through which we reach a large number of people in the interior regions is through lecture and slide shows. This helps us to create environmental awareness among children, youth and the community. We arranged 15 slide shows in the rural schools. We have also conducted 25 programmes in the villages for creation of awareness on ecology. After the slide show we held discussions with villagers on the environment problem effecting them.

Western Ghates : Western ghates is one of the most important ecosystems in Uttara Kannada. The stability of western ghat depends on the rational utilisation of the available forest resources. We conducted a study on the fragile ecosystem of western ghats to study how people have successfully regenerated the denuded land. The outcome of the study shows that there are available knowledge and skills with villagers to regenerate the denuded forest areas. This is done with a minimum input of costs. Prakruti is trying to bring out a booklet on 'Peoples Afforestation' techniques.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES : We are working in ten villages of Sirsi and Siddapur talukas to achieve all around development of the villages. In every village we have helped people to organise themselves under "Village Development Communities". These people organisation are the focal point in bringing development to the rural areas. Some of the issues taken up by these organisations are: Construction of approach road to

the village, setting up of a primary school, veterinary health, agricultural development and adult education.

ANNUAL REPORT 1993-1994

ALTERNATE ENERGY :

Our organisation is actively involved in propagation of alternate energy resources in the rural areas. This year we have conducted two courses to build Astra ole or Smokeless Chulhas. We train village youths in construction of fuel efficient chulhas so that they can install and do the necessary follow up activities. This is our medium to propagate fuel efficient stoves. This reduces consumption of fuelwood, leading to reduction of pressure on forests.

We also motivate people to install gobar units. Our efforts to install community gobar gas units has not succeeded because people that the distribution of the end product (gas) is a problem.

We have established Solar Photo Voltac system in four villages. The Solar panels were provided by Karnataka State Council for science and Technology. For other accessories like battery and lighting system Tata Trust, Bombay has kindly given financial Assistance. All the units are performing well in the remote hill regions of western ghats, where electricity has no possibilities to reach.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION:

Western ghat has the rich biodiversity in plant and animal resources. In order to create awareness among the community, we held a very innovative workshop on Biodiversity for artists. About thirty artists from all over the state (Karnataka) took part the creative workshop. They spend six days in the villages. For first three days they learnt about biodiversity by visiting the forests, villages and the tribal community. They painted pictures on biodiversity of western ghats. This paintings were exhibited in the villages for general public. This was a great experiences for both organisers and the participants. The most important aspect of this workshop is that the local people contributed in cash and kind to hold this workshop.

PRAKRUTI
HULEMALGI BROS, CHOWKIMATH
SIRSI (DT. UTTARA KANNADA)
KARNATAKA 581401, INDIA

MARCH 1994

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1994-1995

PRAKRUTI

As an organisation involved in environmental awareness and rural development activities, the following activities were conducted during the year.

I. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES

The organisation continued its efforts to create environmental awareness in various regions. The main emphasis was to inculcate the people in rural areas about environmental issues. The slide show and lectures were conducted in 25 villages of Uttara Kannada district. The villagers from various pressures. The governments programmes of joint forest management was explained in people.

II. NATURE CAMP FOR CHILDREN

A four day children camp on environment was organised in October 1994. The main objective was to inculcate the feelings on environment. The camp was organised in midst of the forests. This helped children to live close to nature and to observe the changes in nature. Bird warching, wildlife education and the importance of forests was the main topics. This was a practical camp in which children became the observers and participants in Nature Camp. About 25 children from various regions of Uttara Kannada district look part in this camp.

III. SAVE HONEY BEES CAMPAIGH

The spread of thai Sack Brood Virus (TSBV) has destroyed the backbone of beekeeping in Uttara Kannada district. Thousands of bee colonies have been destroyed due to the spread of this disease. Our organisaion intensified save Honey Bees Campaign. Pradruti contacted the state Government to take immediate action. The state government in its response to the memorandum has initiated programmes to study the possibilities of breeding local indegenious bee colonies. Prakruti also contacted many other scientists in the field of beekeeping and sought their help in tackling the disease. We are also keeping touch with the beekeepers in the district to see how they can be helped in this period of crisis.

IV. FOREST WORKSHOP

In order to create awareness about Forest Protection a 2 day workshop was help at Dodnalli village in Sirsi taluk Uttara Kannada district. The main objective of the workshop was to initiate actions on the joint forest management of forest resources. People who were involved managing the forest resources were invited as resource persons. At the end of the two day workshop an action plan was repared to implement the idea of Joint Forest Management in Sirsi taluka.

V. STUDIES:

Prakruti initiated a study on the MFP (Minor Forest Produce) available in the district. This study to be carried on for next six months (from March) will focus on the available minor forest produce, how it is harvested and the marketing issues involved in selling the product.

VI. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The organisation is working ten villages of Sirsi taluka to help poorest people in securing the benefits of government programmes. We helped to construct a road at dodnalli village. 15 people were helped to get IRDP loans. 20 Gobar gas units and astra Chullahs were built during the year.

VII. ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES

The organisation is actively involved in propagating alternate energy sources like Solar, gobargas and fuel efficient cook-stoves (Chullas). Infact Sirsi taluka is one of those regions in India that has highest number of biogas plants in the country. This source of energy from cowdung has obviously two advantages; it provides fuel for cooking by reducing the pressure on forests and secondly it provides a good input for preparing compost manure. This he helped a great deal in reduction of consumption of fuelwood in the village.

We have installed 50 'Chullas' in the villages and conducted x2 one day workshops for youth to impart practical training in building, construction of fuel efficient chullas.

Another important area in alternate energy sources is propagation and installation of Solar lighting system (Photo Voltaic system). We have installed three such units of solar lighting in remote hill regions, where electricity has not reached. They are working very well even in the heavy rainy season. However, they are very expensive and due to the help of Karnataka State Council for Sciences and Technology Bangalore (who gave the Solar Panels) and with financial assistance from Tata Trust (Bombay) we were able to implement this project. We are grateful to these agencies for their assistance.

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MARCH 1995

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1994-1995

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ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

Our organisation is involved in creation of environmental awareness among various strata of people including villagers, women and children. At present the emphasis is on four basic issues:

- Conservation of natural forest resources
- Regeneration of natural, indigenous trees
- Propagation of alternate energy resources like gohar gas, fuel efficient stoves and dryers.
- Organic Farming/Ecological Agriculture.

We have developed a methodology for communicating these message to different kinds of people. We follow the following methods of communication:

- Lectures
- Slide shows
- Discussions
- Field visits (to forest areas to learn the importance of natural forests)

The slide shows and lectures differ depending on the audience/clintes. During 1995-1996 we conducted National Environmental Awareness Campaign in Dodnahalli and Hoskoppa villages of Sirsi taluka. This was supported by Deccan Development Society (Regional Resource centre, Hyderabad). As part of this NEAC project we developed a series of posters on nature conservation. In addition to this we conducted following programmes:

Slide Shows + lectures – 25 places in Uttara Kannada
Awareness for children 18 places

There is a great demand to start Nature Camps for education of children and youths on environment aspects. Due to limited funds we are not in a position to meet this demand.

NON TIMBER FOREST PRODUCE

The district of Uttara Kannada has enormous capacity for harvesting NTFP. This year we collaborated with the state Forest Department to evolve a sustainable harvesting policy for NTFP the major item being UPPAGE (*Garcinia cambogia*). Due to high cash income the harvesting the trees by lopping and removal of unripe fruits has posed a threat of destruction of the Uppage trees. While auctioning this NTFP we pressurised the state forest department to include a clause to stop lopping of Uppage trees and not to bring unripe fruits. There was spontaneous action by many villagers who caught people who were lopping the trees.

This was our initiation into the issue of NTFP. It has brought out following issues into forefront:

- I. Over exploitation of NTFP leading to destruction of the resource base on which poorest forest dwellers depend for cash income.
- II. Processing of NTFP
- III. The exploitative mechanism of NTFP collectors and the marketing chain.
- IV. The need to organise Forest dwellers who are collecting NTFP.

Our organisation is planning to conduct an in depth study of NTFP available in Uttara Kannada. This study will be useful to evolve a strategy for future programmes on this issue.

DRIER TO REDUCE FUELWOOD CONSUMPTION

In order to process Uppage fruit (*Garcinia cambogia*) about 10 qtls of fuelwood is needed to prepare or dry one quintal of Uppage. To reduce the fuelwood consumption Prakruti – in collaboration with Forest department attempted to construct one prototype drier for Uppage. This is just the prototype and we are in the process of learning.

SAVE HONEY BEES CAMPAIGN

Our organisation launched Save Honey Bees Campaign (SHBC) to conserve the indigenous honey bees. We succeeded in convincing the state government to stop introduction of exotic, *A. mellifera* honey bees (of Italian origin) in the state of Karnataka and western ghats. However this success was short lived. After the spread of Thai Sack Brood Virus (TSBV) the state government and Central government is pushing exotic honey bees as a solution to treat TSBV. The experience at least in many areas where exotic honey bees introduced shows that it has failed miserably. In spite of this policy makers are pushing propagation of exotic bees. Under these circumstances SHBC is putting in efforts to document these failures with the assistance of scientists (honey bee scientists) and authenticate our claim. We are demanding the government to give importance to indigenous *A. indica* honey bees.

Fortunately the local *A. Indica* honey bees are gradually coming back after the devastation of the colonies due to attack of TSBV. This is a good sign. We are planning to embark on a state level study of honey bees in Karnataka. This macro study should bring out facts to strengthen SHBC.

CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

Our organisation is of the belief that in order to conserve the biodiversity, it is essential to conserve the natural ecosystems. We have identified sensitive ecozones in western ghats to study the diverse farming systems. As part of this we are conducting research on the traditional farming systems and its linkages to ecological agriculture. Over the years we have gathered data on the farming systems in the tropical region of western ghats.

PRAKRUTI

MARCH 31, 1996

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PRAKRUTI

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1997-1998

Prakruti is a voluntary Organisation registered under Societies Registration Act. The office is based in Sirsi town in Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka, India. The Organisation is involved in environmental activities in the tropical forest regions of Western Ghats in South India. This is the brief report of the activities of our Organisation carried out during 1997 to March 1998.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES:

Creation of environmental awareness is one of the main objectives of our Organisation. This objective is implemented through field level Nature camps and slide shows.

Nature Camps:

Three day nature camp was held in Mathighatta region of Western Ghats. About 35 participants mainly youth from different parts of the state took part in this workshop. The nature camp involved following issues.

- Forest Conservation
- Bird watching
- Medicinal plants and its use
- Biodiversity conservation
- Folk dance drama and ecology

These issues were addressed by resource person. The participants were taken on a trek along the forests of Western Ghats to learn first hand experience of the issues. The nature camp was organised amidst of Western Ghats. The participants contributed their resources and the villagers took active part in organising the event.

The nature camp is a means to develop young people as leaders of future environment movement with an ultimate goal of increased environment awareness.

SLIDE SHOWS AND LECTURE:

Prakruti has developed a series of slide shows and posters on the issue of destruction of Western Ghats. This year 28 such slide shows and lecture programmes were organised in different parts of Uttara Kannada district. In addition to ordinary people, students and village youth are the main audience of these programmes. The main objective being creation of environmental awareness among the people.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION:

The Western Ghats represent one of the rich biodiversity regions in the world. Conserving this biodiversity is one of the main aim of Our Organisation. We are attempting to document the existing biodiversity in Western Ghats.

NTFP STUDY

The State government of Karnataka earns a revenue of Rs.100 crores from sale of timber harvested from Western Ghats. However, the removal of timber leads to destruction of biodiversity and it has negative ecological consequences. In contrast to this destructive logging approach to earn revenue from forest, there exists a sustainable way of living from forests. The harvesting of Non Timber forest Produce (NTFP) is gaining importance in recent years. This provides cash income to the poorest forest dwellers as well as generates employment opportunities for people.

In order to understand the role of NTFP in eking out a sustainable livelihood option our Organisation is conducting two indepth studies on NTFP in Western Ghats.

STUDY OF NTFP IN TROPICAL FORESTS OF WESTERN GHATS:

The tropical forest regions of Western Ghats supports large number of forest dwellers who are dependent on collecting NTFP. What is collected? What species are commercialised? What is the labour input? How much they earn? What about marketing of NTFP? What is happening to the NTFP resource base? These are the basic questions that needs to be addressed in order to chart out a specific course of policy decisions on NTFP's. In order to understand these basic issues two year study of NTFP launched by our Organisation. We have selected 14 clusters in six districts that from the part of Western Ghats.

FOREST DWELLERS AND THERE DEPENDENCY ON NTFP:

There are numerous forest dwelling communities who are dependent on NTFP collection. What is the nature of their dependency? How much they collect and what is their earning? What is the role of gender? To understand these factors we have initiated another study involving 150 families in five eco zones of Uttara Kannada district. These ecozones are:

- The Coastal hills of Kuntagani in ankola taluka.
- The Crestline belt of Bandal Ghat in Sirsi Taluka.
- The Crestline belt of Magod in Yellapur Taluka
- The Anshi National park in Joida Taluka
- The edge of Western ghats in Malgi, Mundgod taluka.

We are conducting a two year study to of 150 families trying to understand the role of NTFP in household consumption and to arrive at the dependency factor on NTFP by forest dwelling communities.

FORESTRY:

The Karnataka Forest Department is implementing Western Ghat Forestry Project funded in Uttara Kannada. Prakruti has co-ordinated efforts to network the Orgainsations involved in this project and those who are implementing Joint Forest Management (JFM). With support from FEVORD (Federation of voluntary Organisation for Rural Development, Uttara Kannada) We have hosted a series of meetings of NGO's involved in this items.

Prakruti has taken an ideological stand that it will not be an implementing agency (like implementing JFM) in villages, but it shall perform its role as watchdog. This is specifically linking the broader issues of JFM to overall forestry policy and its macro impact on the people and ecology. Thus, we are performing a different role in comparision to other NGOs who are implementing the government Programme.

SAVE HONEY BEES CAMPAIGN:

In Western ghats the diversity of Honey Bees is threatened due to the introduction of exotic Apis melifera spicies. A systamatic campaign was launched to save the indegenious honey bees in Western Ghats. In order to assess the relevance of exotic honey bees, our Organisation conducted an indepth study of the status of beekeeping in Western Ghats. We also conducted indepth studies of the relevance exotic honey bees in the tropical forest regions of Western ghats.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY RESOURCES:

To reduce the pressure of people on forest resources one of the ways is to develop energy resources like gobar Gas (Biogas), solar energy and fuel efficient chullas.

These resources are becoming popular in Western Ghats and people are keen on installing biogas plants. The solar photo voltaic systems are still costly and beyond the reach of ordinary people. There is growing interest among people on fuel efficient stores for agri processing as well as household use. We are motivating people to adopt alternate energy resources.

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Hulemalgi Building
Chowkimath road,
SIRSI,
KARNATAKA

March 1998

PRAKRUTI

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1998-99

Prakruti is a voluntary organisation working on environmental issues in Western Ghats from 1992. For the past seven years, we have been engaged in carrying out different activities conducted during April 1998 to March 1999.

ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES:

SLIDE SHOWS AND LECTURES

We organised slide shows and lectures on ecological destruction of Western Ghats in 21 Schools and 52 villages. These are aimed of creating environmental awareness among students and common people.

WORKSHOP FOR ENVIRONMENT JOURNALISTS:

Prakruti, in collaboration with Neernahalli High School, Parisara Sanmrakshana Kendra and Samudaya vigyana kendra organised a three day workshop for environment journalists. This was held in Decmeber 1998 at Neernahalli village in Sirsi taluka.

The main objective were as follows:

1. Workshop for journalists
2. Exposure to issues/field sites
3. Enhanced skills for writing on environmental issues
4. To sustain the campaign in media through coverage of articles on environment.
5. To develop a strong base for environmental reporting in the media.
6. To motivate journalists to cover mining and other topics
7. Create awareness on environmental issues among journalists

About 35 journalists took part in the workshop. Most of them are writing in popular news magazines in Kannada (Sudha, Taranga, Karmaveera, Kannada Prabha, Samyukta Karnataka and Udayavani neswpapers).

OUTCOME AND FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

- It was decided to establish an informal network of environment journalists.
- An effort to be made to publish a booklet every year containing effective articles on environmental issues.
- To arrange for a follow up meeting to review as well as to exchange our experiences.

BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

The natural forests of Western Ghats represent one of the highest biodiversity areas in the world. Gradually through the implementation of government policies, these natural forest are converted into monoculture plantations. This policy interventions result in decrease of biodiversity and especially destruction of the resource base of NTFP (Non Timber Forest Produce) on which the poorest forest dweller is dependent for survival.

STUDY OF NTFP IN TROPICAL FORESTS OF WESTERN GHATS:

We have been able to complete the study in 10 clusters of Western Ghats. The following information is collected from different clusters.

- The forest dwelling communities who are engaged in NTFP collection
- Their dependency on NTFP for survival
- Comparative data on total family income to income from NTFP
- The status of tropical forests and its capacity to produce NTFP
- Marketing of NTFP
- Legal issues related to NTFP and state level policy on NTFPs
- Role of women in NTFP management and processing

The above issues provide an in-depth understanding of NTFPs in tropical forest ecosystem. It is an achievement because there is not database or information on these issues for Western Ghats region.

JOINT FOREST MANAGEMENT:

The implementation of JFM (Joint Forest Management) under WGFP has had limited impact on the people. The formation of VFCs (Village Forest Committees) is a good policy. However, in practice these VFCs do not have any power to decide on the issue of forests. They neither have the control over forest resources nor do they have the decision making power about forestry operations. To give more power to VFC, Prakruti has organised network meetings at the district level. It has organised meetings of forest officials and NGOs. Similarly members of PRARKUTI have attended several meetings organised by KFD.

The government is extending JFM to other regions in Western ghats without assessing the impact of VFC in Uttara Kannada. Our emphasis was to learn from the ongoing Project (WGFP) and to incorporate these lessons in the second phase of the WGFP.

SAVE HONEY BEES CAMPAIGN

Prakruti has effectively used the opportunity of All India Bee Festival organised at Dharwad in August 1998. It raised the issue of the dangers involved in introduction of exotic bees tropical forest regions of Western Ghats. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution to give priority towards indigenous bees.

The spread of Tahi sack eood virus to honey bees, especially *Apis indica* has destroyed beekeeping in Western Ghats. Gradually the virus resistant strains of local bees are emerging from the natural forests. We need to encourage a breeding programme to develop disease resistant strains of honey bee colonies in Western Ghats.

ALTERNATE ENERGY:

There is increasing demand for fuelwood for processing agricultural as well as forest produce. To reduce consumption of fuelwood we have motivated 20 farmers to install driers. These driers are efficient as they consume less fuelwood and are smokeless.

We are creating awareness among farmers to install this fuel saving drier to reduce the consumption of fuelwood.

Our experience with Solar energy has been good in the initial years. But they need constant maintenance of battery and associated equipment gets worn out affecting the efficiency of the system.

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MARCH 1999

PRAKRUTI ANNUAL REPORT 2001- 2002

Prakruti is a voluntary organisation based in *Sirsi* , *Uttara Kannada* district , Karnataka. The organisation is working on environmental and developmental issues in the tropical forest regions of Western Ghats. The main objective of the work is to involve sustainable strategies for developing the region in collaboration with local people without damaging the natural resources.

The organisation conducted the following activities during the period from April 2001 to March 2002

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

The main focus of the work is to create awareness among the local people to conserve the tropical forests. While generation of awareness is a ongoing work in villages , special campaigns are launched during specific instances where direct action is required to halt the process of destruction of tropical forests.

The organization held awareness programs in 32 villages . The programme includes slide shows and lectures on environmental issues. This is the main technique though which we establish links with grassroots organisations

National Environment Awareness Campaign :

As part of the Central Governments National Environmental Awareness Campaign (NEAC) we organised programmers for children in *Hukkali* village in *Uttara Kannada* district. Three day camp was held in the village in collaboration with *Spandana* (NGO) and local Village Panchayat of Nilkund. This was successful in creating environment awareness among children. The activities included trekking in natural forests, learning the links with forest ecology, slide shows on wildlife, nature games and exhibition of posters on environment issues.

As part of NEAC a campaign was launched for waste management in varies parts of *Sirsi* town. The organisation created pressure on local government to ban the plastics in shops. The plastic waste is one of the biggest problems of waste disposal in small towns and urban areas. The local government has put ban use of plastics bellow 20 micro grams. Though this is not a long term solution, we still need stronger action ,banning all plastics. We also created awareness about the alternatives to plastics.

CONSERVATION OF TROPICAL FOREST:

Prakruti is involved in conservation of tropical forests in Western Ghats. The emphasis is on organising local villages to take direct action in conservation of natural forests. As part of long standing campaign through *Appiko* (*Chipko*) movement and intensive lobbying with state government. There is shift in the logging policy in natural forests. The government has imposed a ban on felling of green trees in natural forests of Western Ghats. Only dry, dead and fallen trees are extracted from natural forests. Though this shift has contributed towards conservation of tropical forests, it is essential to keep watch on the policy and how it is implemented on the ground. We have organised *logging watch* groups in various forest regions to keep track of violation of the green felling. Many times in the guise of removing dead and dry trees, green trees are felled. We identify such cases and bring it to the notice of forest department.

We have successfully created awareness on the issue of felling of green trees in press as well as among the forest authorities. The higher authorities provide necessary support in our effort of logging watch.

CAMPAIGN TO SAVE TROPICAL FOREST:

We have mobilised campaign against building of two hydro electric dams in the district. The first was at *Mavalangi* village on Kali river in Dandeli. The second dam was supposed to built at *Tatti Halla* on *Bedthi* river. Intensive campaign and lobbying, research was done on the issue. Its location and impact on tropical forests was highlighted in public hearing of this project. Exposure of unscientific nature of the environment impact assessment of both the projects have led to shelving of the project and conservation of tropical forests. It was a joint effort in campaigning with other local NGOs in the region. Similarly our organisation has created awareness about the destruction of tropical forests due to construction of 400 KV power line across the natural forests from Kaiga (nuclear power plant) to Narendra (on edge of Western Ghats). An intensive lobbying and advocacy work has forced the government to look at the alternate routes for evacuation of power, resulting in reduction tree felling.

SUSTANIUABLE HARVESTING OF BAMBOO:

Bamboo is one of the poor man's timber, supporting lives to 5000 artisan families and thousands of farmers. The bamboo flowers in interval 30-40 years. After the flowering the bamboo die naturally. As there is gap of 10 years. The regeneration is slow and is hindered by various forciers. In order to discuss the issue of bamboo flowering and its regeneration a work shop was organised in collaboration with forest department. forest affects, scientists and environmental activist as well as common people were involved in evolving a sustainable harvesting strategy for bamboo resources in Western Ghats. For the first time in history, common people and forest officials joined hands to conserve bamboo resources. This was widely covered by the local media.

FOOD FROM FOREST:

In continuation with our research on wild food, we collected details of over 70 spices of wild food. These are collected by various communities to be used as food or food supplement. The research was conducted with the help of the school students and elderly people especially women who prepare the food as well as they posses the in depth knowledge these spices. The knowledge about the wild food resources was shared with school children. School contest on wild food was organised in 22 schools.

In order to disseminate the knowledge wild food various communication tools were used. The posters on wild food was one of such tools. These posters bring out the importance of wild food as a source of nutrition and how the traditional knowledge base is gradually getting eroded due to the onslaught of modern life style. This project has been supporting research on wild food as well as to initiate actions to conserve the traditional knowledge. An attempt is also being made to publish a booklet in local language on wild food.

SAVE HONEY BEES CAMPAIGN

The threat to indigenous honey bees has increased not only from the virus disease (*Thai sack brood virus*) but through government action of propagation of exotic honey bees (*Apis mellipera*) in Western Ghats. The state government organised a series of workshops in Western Ghats to propagate exotic bees.

We have conducted extensive field studies that revealed the failure of rearing exotic honey bees in Western Ghats. Repeated introduction has met with failures. Ignoring this fact, the state government is forcing exotic bees on people. We challenged this propagation by organising bee keepers in Western Ghats. We used local press to create awareness about the failure of exotic honey bees.

As part of Save Honey Bees Campaign we organised honey festivals in 5 villages. Through these festivals we motivated children and youth to take active interest in bee keeping. This is also an opportunity to involve civil society and officials to conserve indigenous honey bees.

NETWORKING:

We have taken up programs to establish network of NGOs in Western Ghats. As part of this effort we organised one day work shop for NGOs to provide information about the government funding opportunities by CAPART (Council for Appropriate Peoples Action and Rural Technology) the main objective was to use the government agencies like CAPART for conservation of biodiversity of Western Ghats. 71 organisations participated in this work shop.

ALTERNATE ENERGY RESOURCES

The organisation provided necessary links to establish solar for (photovoltaic) lighting system in remote regions of the district. We also helped to create awareness on fuel efficient smokeless chullas and bio-gas plants.

We thank the funding agencies, Global Green Grants Fund, USA, Rain Forest Information Center, Australia, IDRC (International Development Research Center, Canada) Netherlands, Committee for IUCN Holland, Global Ecology, USA, The Ministry of Environmental and Forests, Delhi, and CAPART for supporting our work.

March 31, 2002

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PRAKRUTI
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2005- 2006

Prakruti is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered in 1991. It is based in *Sirsi*, a small town in Western Ghat region in south India. The main objective of *Prakruti* is to work towards evolving an ecologically sound and sustainable development strategy in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats. The following activities were undertaken during the period April 2005 to March 2006. The audited accounts and balance sheet is available on written request. We thank numerous organisations and villagers who have provided support and guidance to successfully carry forward the work on environmental issues. We also thank funding organisations for providing financial support to conduct numerous activities of our organisation.

I. CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS

A study has been carried out to identify the types of wetland in Kali valley and to assess the situation. Types of wetlands and species present in it and causes for their destruction were studied. Several meetings, workshops with various authorities have been conducted for the conservation and management of wetlands. Awareness campaign was launched for sustainable use of wetlands through local community participation.

II. CONSERVATION OF NON TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS THROUGH PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE USE

Cinnamomum zeylanicum and *Cinnamomum macrocarpum* are the important NTFP species in the Western Ghats. Leaves, bark and fruits are used as spices. Following destructive harvesting of the species a ban was imposed to harvest the leaves. This year the ban was lifted and harvesting has been started in unsustainable manner. We brought pressure on Forest Department to put condition and to collect only the leaves. Consultations with scientists, forest department senior officials, organising workshops and training camps, strengthening community organisations, VFCs and youth club and provide supervision for sustainable harvesting of the products. We involved media to give coverage and awareness on this issue. Study on regeneration of the species has been done.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Ten workshops were held in villages mainly to create awareness on environmental issues to youth. NTFPs, wild foods and details regarding medicinal plants were provided during the

workshop. issues relating to biodiversity, importance of the Western Ghats as one of the biodiversity hotspots, conservation efforts, local institutions working on biodiversity conservation and research organisations were the issues discussed in the workshop. Field demonstrations, competitions and nature walk were also organised. Traditional herbal medicine persons, Scientists, Village Forest Committee Members, Forest Department officials, Environmentalists and Community leaders participated in the workshop.

IV. DOMESTICATION OF *GARCINIA GUMMIGUTA* AND FRUIT PROCESSING

Garcinia gummigutta is an important NTFP species found in evergreen forests of the Western Ghats. Due to commercial demand for newly identified product Hydroxy Citric Acid, the price of the fruit rind has increased. Because of increased demand the unsustainable harvesting practices were set in. Huge quantity of fuel wood is required to dry the rind as the fruiting happens in monsoon. Domestication effort has been started on a small scale and the technical skills are lacking with the farmers. In order to reduce the fuel wood consumption fuel saving ovens and dryers shall be installed and tested on pilot basis. Identification of the superior types of the species and details of vegetative propagation methods shall be studied and mass multiplication of the species will be undertaken during coming year.

V. DOCUMENTATION OF STUDY IN THE WESTERN GHATS

We have started to study issues in the tropical forests of the Western Ghats. It includes collecting details on forest types, sacred groves, endemic species, policies, collecting reports and studies on forests. To understand major threats and main stream development in the Ghats. Response of local groups, formulation of strategies to address the present and future threats to tropical forests and finally to come up with a documentation.

VI. PUBLICATIONS

Booklet on logging has been published in local Kannada language. The detailed rules and regulations related to logging in the forest are provided. Enumerating details of species present in logged area and un-logged area comparison of species density were provided. Details of study conducted on impact assessment of logging in the tropical forests of the Western Ghats in Karnataka was provided. Case studies documenting where villagers with the help of Prakruti and other organisations have forced the Forest Department and loggers to practise sustainable logging.

After the walk along River Sharavati, a draft research report is ready for publication.

VII. Working with Village Forest Committees(VFCs), FDA (Forest Development Activities) and Women self help groups

Prakruti is involved in establishing new VFCs in several villages in the Western Ghats. Meetings and dialogues were held in various places to create awareness on the program and to empower the communities for the effective planning, implementation and management of several forestry projects. Sustainable harvesting of NTFPs, community management plans to monitor the harvesting of natural resources and avenues for marketing the NTFPs were discussed during these meetings and workshops. Women self help groups and local youth clubs are part of these activities. We have also organised state level seminar on Eastern Plains Forestry project.

VIII. Support to Appiko; the people's movement

We are supporting the people's movement to protect natural forests. We supported to fight against illegal tree felling and strengthening grassroots groups conserve the natural forest in various places. Prakruti has provided assistance in lobbying with concerned government authorities and various institutions at different levels.

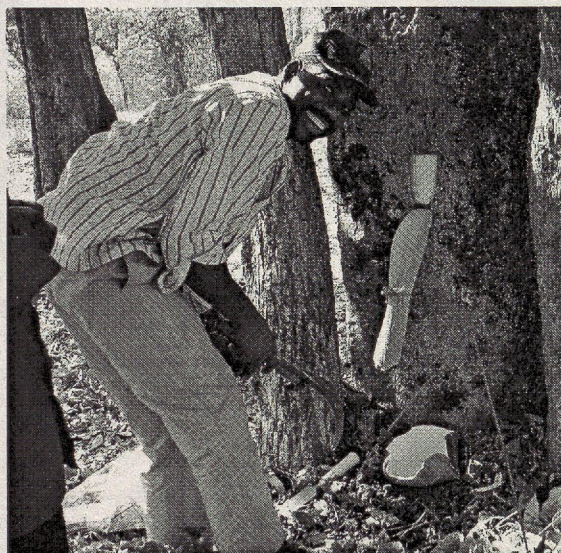


Figure 1: Demonstration on Sustainable harvesting of gums and resins

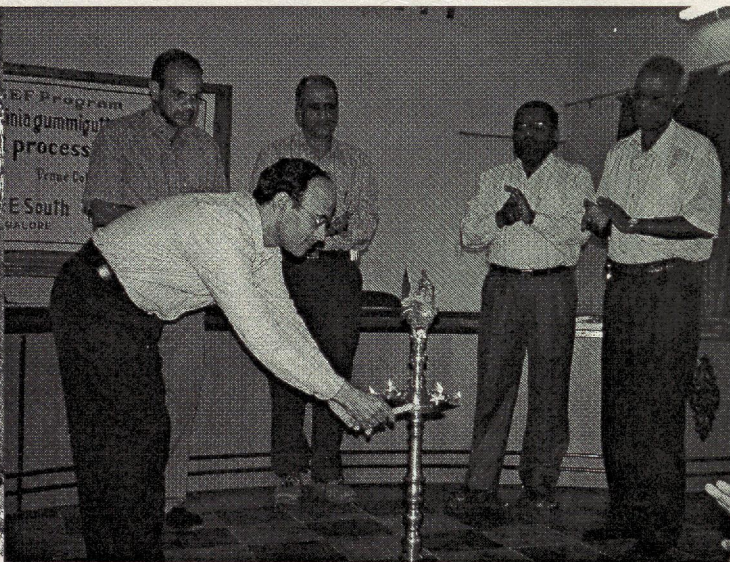


Figure2: Workshop on domestication of *Garcinia gummigutta* and fruit processing

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PRAKRUTI
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006- 2007

Prakruti is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered in 1991. It is based in *Sirsi*, a small town in Western Ghat region in south India. The main objective of *Prakruti* is to work towards evolving an ecologically sound and sustainable development strategy in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats. The following activities were undertaken during the period April 2006 to March 2007. The audited accounts and balance sheet is available on written request. We thank numerous organisations and villagers who have provided support and guidance to successfully carry forward the work on environmental issues. We also thank funding organisations for providing financial support to conduct activities of our organisation. Following are the major activities undertaken during the reporting period.

NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS (NTFPs):

The Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) is one of the major resources of tropical forest that provides livelihood opportunities for forest dwellers. NTFPs are being viewed as the backbone of generating cash income to rural people as well as contributing to household food, and nutritional security. Studies promoting use of NTFPs as means to improve livelihood of the indigenous people are being pursued globally. We are working with forest communities to enhance the resource as well as to establish sustainable harvesting practices. The following are the areas in which our organisation has worked:

I. Identification of superior types of *Garcinia gummigutta* and alternate fruit processing.

Garcinia gummigutta is an important NTFP species found in evergreen forests of the Western Ghats. To promote domestication of above species we have identified superior types within the species in entire Uttara Kannada district. In this process 200 trees were evaluated. Assessing variation in tree for the fruit yield, fruit trait and HCA (Hydroxy Citric Acid) content in *G. gummi-gutta*. Develop a multi trait ideo type for selection of fruits that aid in the development of cultivars. Assess the relationship between vegetative growth trait and fruit yield trait in *G. gummi-gutta* was done. 45 plus trees are identified out of 200 trees.

Five ASTRA driers and ten fuel-efficient ovens were installed in the Village Forest Committee area and women Self Help Groups. In the traditional drying methods 22 kilograms of fuel wood is required to obtain one-kilogram fruit rind of *G.gummigutta*, however, in the installed driers only three kilograms of fuel wood required to obtain one kilogram of fruit rind. In the district we estimated 330 tons of fuel wood is required to dry the fruit rind in traditional ovens, which could be reduced to 50 tons with this processing technology saving 85% of fuel wood requirement.

II. Resource mapping of NTFP species and develop a base line data. Promote sustainable management.

To understand distribution, availability, harvest, process and marketing details inventory of priority NTFP has been done in Uttara Kannada district. Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems are used for resource mapping of these NTFP species and 180 families were interviewed to develop base line data.

Satellite images of two seasons were used to extract the forest boundaries in the Sirsi Forest Division and based on image characteristic inventory points are derived. Using GPS receiver these points were visited and species enumeration, regeneration study and biotic factors were recorded. These details are used to evolve interventions and management strategies of NTFPs.

III. Gums/resins and wild mango.

Promoting sustainable harvest of gums and resin species and wild mango varieties, identification of different types and superior quality trees was done. Crucial limitations with respect to harvest, process, market and policy were identified and mitigation measures to reduce these problems undertaken. 143 mango trees are evaluated and 25 different wild mango types used for culinary preparation and in making pickles were identified. These varieties shall be propagated.

IV. NTFP based Enterprise development and exposure visits to women groups. Participation in workshops and seminars.

To improve the livelihood of indigenous women product development for forest species was done. Value addition and alternate marketing to mats of wild date palm, resin from *Canarium strictum*, rock bee honey (*Apis dorsata*) was undertaken.

Sharing of knowledge/experience by visiting various places in Tamilnadu like Kotagiri, Ooty, Kodaikanal, Bangal padi, Amsapuram was organised for staff and women groups. These are the areas where enterprise development for various products were achieved successfully and nursery of more than 180 forest species is being established.

Staff participated in various workshops and seminars organised on Masangudi (Tamilnadu), Hyderabad (Andhrapradesh) and Bangalore (Karnataka).

V. Nursery and cultivation of forest species.

Nursery established for NTFP species. We have raised fifteen thousand seedlings of 25 species. Many of these species are ecologically threatened and requires immediate conservation. These seedlings shall be cultivated in Village Forest Committee area, community land and in farm forestry.

VI. Organising workshops/meetings and National Expert Meeting, field demonstrations for sustainable harvest of NTFP.

We have organised National Expert Meeting on Gender and NTFP, grass root level workshops and ten villages and several meetings in different parts of Uttara Kanna district. Field demonstrations on sustainable harvest of NTFPs especially of gums and resins organised in different villages.

a. National expert meeting :

Women are often important users and managers of NTFP resources in the tropics. Unfortunately, they are often ignored and excluded from decision-making. It is considered that community based NTFP management should attempt to understand which NTFPs are important to women and to involve them in decision making and to ensure they share benefit from the NTFPs. However, there is lack of knowledge on which are those NTFPs? Where are these resources present? How are they being harvested? What are the techniques adapted in assessing resources? What are the suitable methods of processing/semi-processing NTFPs? What are the market channels and economic considerations?

This national seminar was organised to create a platform for the experts to share experiences, knowledge and ideas on these seemingly far-related issues concerning NTFPs with the following theme areas:

- Resource assessment of NTFP, inventories and yields studies: Biometric principles, Application of GIS and RS for resource mapping.
- Resource management of NTFP: Participatory approaches and environment dimensions. Strategies for improving socio-economic benefits.
- Biological aspects of NTFP conservation and use.
- Domestication of NTFP species: participatory approaches and institutional considerations.
- Issues related to Gender and NTFP usage and management.

b. Village level workshop (ten)

Issues

- Provide platform for various stakeholders to discuss issues related to NTFP, forest resources and to evolve community management plan.
- To make the resource mapping, domestication of forest species, and enterprise development and other activities participatory with forest dwelling communities.
- Create awareness on sustainable harvest, value addition and alternate marketing.

c. Village meetings (twenty five)

Issues: Demonstration on sustainable harvesting, exchange knowledge on various issues related to forest resources, strengthening women groups to participate in management. Awareness creation

and involve local communities in establishing nurseries, identification of superior types and resource mapping of NTFP species.

VII. Publication “Paradise lost ... almost”, Proceedings of the work shop on Gender and NTFP and posters.

A book called “Paradise lost ... almost” is published after studying various development activities in the entire Western Ghats. The report is based on visiting several groups involved in conservation of Western Ghats and various institutions and Government Departments. Recording and analysing of peoples campaigns, status, reasons for success or failures, causes and effects were also addressed. Present and future threats, mitigation measures are discussed in this book. It is envisaged to help scale-up ongoing initiatives and to propel designing of fresh actions to save the Western Ghats.

A proceeding of the workshop titled “ Gender and NTFP, Linking Livelihood and Management” was published.

Photo 1: Group of villagers participating in resource mapping of NTFP in tropical forests of Western Ghats.



Photo 2: Installation of fuel-efficient driers in the village to dry fruits of *Garcinia gummigutta*.



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March 2007

PRAKRUTI

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2008-2009

Prakruti is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) registered in 1991. It is based in *Sirsi*, a small town in Western Ghat region in south India. The main objective of *Prakruti* is to work towards evolving an ecologically sound and sustainable development strategy in the tropical forest region of Western Ghats. The following activities were undertaken during the period April 2008 to March 2009. The audited accounts and balance sheet is available on written request. We thank numerous organisations and villagers who have provided support and guidance to successfully carry forward the work on issues of evolving sustainable development strategy in tropical forest region of Western Ghats. We also thank funding organisations for providing financial support to continue the activities of the organisation. Following are the major activities undertaken during the reporting period.

I. Western Ghats

The hill ranges of Western Ghats play dominant role in providing ecological security to peninsular India, especially the south Indian region of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Goa. Ignoring this premier role, the developmental activities of infrastructure building, power generating hydel and thermal power plants, nuclear power plants and mining are causing enormous damage to the natural resource base of Western Ghats, adversely affecting the foundation of livelihood of poorest people. Thus, the resource rich Western Ghats is being destroyed in the name of 'development'.

In order to address this conflicting situation in Western Ghats we have launched a Campaign to Save Western Ghats, with common people across the South Indian states.

Some of the Campaign Activities are:

- Publishing Staus Report PARIDISE LOSTALMOST on Western Ghats.
- Launching of this report in Delhi, Coimbatore, Kochi, Sirsi, Bangalore and Goa
- State level meetings on Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Goa.
- Launching of 'Sahyadri Day' or Western Ghats day on September 8th 2008.

- Publication of 'Sahyadri' Reflections.
- National consultation on Western Ghats in Goa on 8,9 & 10th February 2009.
- Launching of website: WWW.SAVEWESTERNGHATS.NET
- Advocacy and lobbying on the issues of Western Ghats at regional and national level.

These initiatives has built up a momentum on Western Ghats, giving a fresh impetus to the campaign. These activities has helped in bringing numerous groups of people, activits and organisations on a common platform to raise the issue of Western Ghats.

II. Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs)

The Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) is one of the major resources of tropical forest that provides livelihood opportunities for forest dwellers. NTFPs are being viewed as the backbone of generating cash income to rural people, as well as, contributing to household food and nutritional security. Studies promoting use of NTFPs as a means to improve livelihood of the indigenous people are being pursued globally. We are working with communities to enhance their livelihood opportunities and the natural resource, as well as, to establish sustainable harvesting practices. The following are the areas in which our organisation has worked with NTFPs:

- a. Policy Issues:** Forest dwellers dependency on NTFP for earning cash income is very high. However, at the policy level the resource harvesting does not give any access or usufruct rights to those who collect the forest produce. The tender cum auction of NTFPs by Governments, Forest Department has resulted in over exploitation of the resource. It has also led to destructive harvesting of the produce. For example the lopping of branches in case of cinnamon to harvest leaves has led to decrease in the availability as well as halting the process of regeneration and death of trees.

Alarmed by this over exploitation of cinnamon 'Prakruti' organised a campaign to bring policy changes, limiting the harvesting and demanding ban on extraction of cinnamon leaves for few years. The sustained campaign with forest officials and media has resulted in imposing ban on collection of cinnamon leaves from the natural forest region of Uttara Kannada district.

We also tried to bridge the gap between policy and practice regarding NTFPs. This involved discussions with forest officials. Writing to state government regarding deficiencies in policy. We also arranged for a common platform of different Stakeholders on NTFP, Forest Officials, NTFP collectors and contractors were brought on a single platform to discuss the issues and arrive at a solution.

- b. **Nurseries:** Prakruti has established NTFP oriented nurseries, to restock the decreasing availability of NTFP species in the wild (i.e. Cinnamon, Raldoop, etc). Prior to this initiative, no organisation, not even the Forest Department, has focused on replenishing the naturally available stock of NTFP species in the forests of Uttara Kannada District. The only concern of Forest Department was for the extraction and marketing of these species which was surpassing the resources' ability to regenerate. In order to maintain the collection of NTFPs as a sustainable livelihood option and to secure the biodiversity of the natural forests, we began establishing NTFP nurseries. The objectives of the nurseries are to propagate useful/rare NTFP species, experiment with less known species, work to improve collecting/planting techniques, and graft superior species. This is being done with the intention to distribute back to the NTFP collecting communities for semi-cultivation and replenishment of the wild stock. Ideally the current nurseries are just the foundation to a larger project of establishing the nurseries within the NTFP collecting communities themselves. Presently there are NTFP nurseries at the following locations: six in Karoor Village, seven in Shirsgaon, five in Kudragod, one in Halsinakatta, one in Sarguppa raised by SHG and Streeshakti (1000 plants each) with different NTFP varieties. One in Manajavalli (est. 2005) with up to 8,000 plants, one in Amchimane (est. 2007) with 25000 plants.
- c. **Workshops:** In order to share experience on NTFPs, we designed workshops based around the issue of NTFPs. The following are a brief description of workshops:
 - 1. Prakruti team member participated in policy workshop held in Simlipal, Baripada, Orissa. Conflict Between Tiger Reserve and NTFP collectors was the main issue.

2. **Policy workshop at SIRSI:** In collaboration with RCDC Orissa, we organised two day workshop at Sirsi & Shirsgoan. The issues dealt was the policies affecting the NTFP collectors, Contract system, unsustainable harvesting etc were discussed. VFC members, NTFP collectors, forest officials, contractors participated. Field visit to Shirsgoan was the highlight of the programme.
3. **NTFP workshop for children:** Six day workshop for NTFP collectors children at Shirsgoan was held in April 2008. The learning process of sustainable harvesting, processing, value addition etc were shown to children through elders. Honey extraction, Candle making, wild fruit documentation etc were highlights of the workshop.
4. **Exposure Visits:** A series of exposure visits for the NTFP collectors were organised to understand the issues related to NTFPs. The visits involved: exposure to nurseries, as well as, other farms where NTFP domestication is taking place. The objective of these visits is to offer practical information on how to create a NTFP nursery, exchange information on cultivation aspects and do hands-on demonstrations of techniques, especially grafting of NTFP species. It is an attempt to motivate the collectors to get interested in enhancing the resource base
5. **Training programmes:** Series of training programmes were held on weaving, banana rope making, use of local herbs with demonstration held at all the villages. Training in value addition has been conducted for all the group members at Ushira industries, Bengre Bhatkal, & at V.S. Sharma's place Gokarn on Kokam syrup preparation and wild date palm mat weaving.

III. Appropriate Technology

With concern for both the ecology of the Western Ghats and the socio-economic situation of the forest dwelling communities, we have initiated programmes to focus on the implementation of appropriate technology. These community-based and small-scale technologies have allowed for more efficiency, less usage of raw materials (like

fuelwood) and/or greater returns. These technologies have reduced the pressure on the forests.

Rind Dryers: To save precious wood, we established community dryers at different places where NTFP availability is high and processing is done. This processing unit helps in reducing the wood consumed and the quality of the product is enhanced. Thus it is of double benefit for the people and the ecology, especially the tropical forests.

IV. Value-addition and Marketing

Prakruti has taken up the following value-addition projects with the indigenous communities, especially with the women: 1) processing and packing honey, 2) making beeswax candles, 3) production of candles from *garcinia* butter, 4) mixing both beeswax and *Garcinia* butter to make candles, 5) mixing candles with powdered *Raldoop* to add aroma, 6) making nelli candy, 7) making packets (100 gm and 50gm) of *Garcinia* butter and *Raldoop*, and 8) weaving of date palm mats. 9) *Kokam* syrup preparation. These add value to products, and are sold for a higher price, helping forest dwellers to earn cash income. They do not sell their raw materials but add value at the source, enhancing the value of the produce and get economic return. The finished products were sold through the SHG marketing chain, through Ayurvedic manufacturing units or through the organisation itself. The market response to these products has been very good and all products manufactured by the women have been sold out.

V. Honey Bees

After successfully launching of the Save Honey Bees Campaign to conserve the indigenous honey bees *Apis cerana indica* in the Western Ghats, we have initiated programmes to motivate people into bee keeping especially among women and youths. The training programmes include homestead bee keeping with bee boxes and teaching them the management skills. We have also involved people from the forest dwelling tribes to enhance the quality of the honey from the wild, imparting better processing techniques.

- Honey festivals at Tygali & Golikai, Vanalli.

- Bee keeping training at Mashigadde, Malgi, Bengre.
- Bee box distribution in the villages.

VI. Home Garden & Seed Keepers' Collective

We are implementing a project to conserve the seed diversity of the region known as the *Malnad Home Garden & Seed Keepers' Collective*. It continues to be a modest effort to document and increase the diversity of species grown in the home gardens of Uttara Kannada district, Karnataka. This project is planned, implemented by Women.

Saving Seeds: Seed Collective

This is our special programme focusing on women. Home gardens provide food and nutritional security. This is very crucial for poor and marginalized households. We have initiated programme for formation of 'Malenadu Home Gardens' in 14 villages. About 108 women home gardens are part of this seed collective.

The major area of work by the Seed Collective is to build the capacities of village women in developing high quality vegetable seeds to establish homesteads. Training, Workshops, exposure visits are held at regular intervals to build their skills and help them to collect and propagate indigenous seeds.

Biodiversity Fair/Mela

We organise the Mela to create awareness about local seed varieties and landraces. The members put up exhibition of seeds collected and value added produce from villages. Discussion were held to establish decentralized seed banks. This Mela provides an opportunity to the members to exchange exsperieuoos and build networks on seed exchange for future.

Hand book on Home Gardens

Efforts are on to produce a Hand book on 'Malenadu Home Garden'. This is based on documentation of the numerous vegetable and fruit species grown in the home gardens. The work is in full swing and we aim to publish this hand book in future.

Workshops

We organised workshops for the members of the Seed Collective on the issue of seed quality and preservation. Training programmes were conducted on bee keeping and value addition to locally available fruits and other agricultural produce.

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March 2009

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