



ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS: A Report on tour of U.P., Orissa, West Bengal, Bihar, A.P., Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

Sympathisers of Chipko movement and friends of nature from different parts of the country have been inviting me to their places. Due to my preoccupation in Himalaya and specially in Kashmir-Kohima Chipko foot-march for last two years, I could not respond to their invitations. It was only during this monsoon that I could get a chance to visit U.P., Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa A.P., Tamilnadu, and Karnataka from July 24th. to August 17th. During this trip I could meet different environmental activist groups University students, scientists, foresters and government leaders. Besides local problems, which were posing a threat to the environment, we could discuss national problems like deforestation, spread of weeds like parthenium and mass plantation of eucalyptus specially on agricultural lands.

Parthenium Havoc

My first meeting was with the scientists at I.D.P.L. Virbhadra Both- the management of I.D.P.L. and the young scientists- expresse their anxiety over the spread t of Parthenium in that locality. This weed came to India along with American wheat. It was first sighted at Poona in Maharashtra and within the last two decades it has spread through the length and breadth of our country. I could see it growing all along the road side in many places right up to Bangalore, where it has covered all the pastures.

Parthenium hystrophorous L., according to the scientists of Virbhadra, tops the seven most dangerous weeds of the world and belongs to the family of composites. It is commonly known as carrot grass, chetak chandini etc., as its leaves resemble carrot leaves. It is a herbaceen annual plant having white small flower-heads. A single plant of the weed bears 624 million pollen grains per plant on an average.