RECENT THREATS
TO
THE RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL PARK IN
NAGARAHOLE KARNATAKA, INDIA:

TAJ GROUP OF HOTELS
AND OTHERS

Equations
EQUITABLE
TOURISM
OPTIONS
PREFACE

Karnataka is located in the west-central part of peninsular India, forming the country’s eighth largest state. Rajiv Gandhi National Park, a protected wildlife habitat in Nagarhole is situated in the districts of Mysore and Kodagu in Karnataka. This Park is a part of the Nilgiri biosphere, a contiguous zone stretching into the Western Ghats and protected for its biodiversity. Covered chiefly by moist and dry deciduous forests, it harbours many endangered species like four horned antelope, sloth bear, wild Boar, giant squirrel, elephants. There are 52 Adivasi (indigenous peoples) settlements inside the park. As per the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, their presence is treated as illegal but these people have existed in this eco-system for centuries and it is their culture and conservation values that have contributed to the preservation of bio-diversity and wildlife in this park. The Government of Karnataka has been attempting eviction of these settlements in the name of “conservation”. On the other hand, they have invited so called “eco-tourism” ventures into the park thereby endangering conservation and the cultural ethos of the Adivasis living there even though they claim otherwise. The World Bank also plans to include Nagarhole in a massive Eco Development Project, which is being resisted by the indigenous peoples and social action groups in the area as it is a mega institutional project that will displace them and ultimately turn Nagarhole into a biodiversity prospecting nightmare, in the guise of conservation.

The internationally known and erstwhile member of Green Hoteliers, the Taj Group of Hotels (through a subsidiary called Gateway Hotels and Gateway Resorts) is proposing to set up a so called ecotourist resort in this National Park called the “Gateway Tuskar Lodge”. Construction is only halfway though they claim that they are only renovating preexisting structures put up by the forest department. This “renovation” has seen the installation of huge generators in a pristine area, clearing of ground vegetation for “landscaping” and preparations for a car park. There is an ongoing struggle against the same by the local inhabitants and environmentalists. A case was filed against this resort by the Adivasis on environmental grounds as there is no law protecting their native title over this land. The decision was overwhelmingly in favour of the indigenous peoples and the environment. The Taj group of hotels have gone on appeal in the Division Bench of the High Court in Karnataka. The battle is on.
INDEX

CONTENTS

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Tourism and Karnataka</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Background of the Park</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Profile of the Adivasis in and around the Park</td>
<td>3-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Process of Displacement</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Restrictions on Adivasis in the National Park</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. World Bank Eco- Development Project</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Taj Resort in Murkal, Nagarhole - A Struggle of the Adivasis</td>
<td>7-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Contact addresses</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Maps</td>
<td>14-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10- Newspaper Clippings</td>
<td>16-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TOURISM AND KARNATAKA

Karnataka has a rich heritage of flora and fauna, including the magnificent biodiversity of the Western Ghats, identified as one of the world's 12 hotspots at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. Till as late as the early seventies, not much attention was paid to any aspect of this wealth, but the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 served to focus more attention on Wildlife conservation and there was some activity nation-wide to encompass floral/fauna areas into sanctuaries and National Parks. Today Karnataka has 5 National Parks (NPs), Rajiv Gandhi National Park in Mysore and Kodagu districts, Bannerghatta National Park outside Bangalore, Bandipur National Park in Mysore district, Kudremukh National Park in Chikmangalur district and Anshi National Park in Uttara Kanara district. It also had 15 wildlife and 3 bird sanctuaries. Though all fall under the purview of the Wildlife Act, National Parks have central government protection whereas sanctuaries can get denotified by the state government.

However, all protection, whether central or state has not prevented a spate of problems around Karnataka's Protected Areas (PAs), varying from threats by granite and iron ore mining, thermal power plants or by resentment of wildlife authorities by local communities living in and around PAs. And amidst this complex web of issues there is now also another factor being added, that of wildlife tourism that is fast emerging as a profitable business venture.

The issue, now hanging fire, highlights the third and currently most sensitive form of wildlife tourism in Karnataka, catering to the urban moneyed section and to foreign visitors, which is emerging as a business venture. There are a number of small concerns in this field, but the largest is a quasi-governmental organisation called Jungle Lodges and Resorts Ltd, operating presently from four locations, shortly due to open up another lodge in the Bhadra sanctuary. Originally taken over by the state government from a private company that had run into losses, Jungle Lodges took till 1994 to clear debts solely from their sales turnover which rose from Rs. 1,936,000 in 1987 to Rs. 17,212,000 in 1995.

Though Jungle Lodges runs a fairly well-managed venture, there are no studies done in Karnataka on the impact of eco-tourism of this nature both on the Parks and on the communities on their peripheries, with the current legal tangle amply demonstrating the latter as an issue needing attention. The former however, that is the impact to wildlife ecology, is yet to be dwelt upon. Eco-tourism the world over is a controversial concept, with conservationists still trying to form a balanced definition of what the whole idea entails.

Wildlife tourism and its related tussles in Karnataka is also heading towards the 'wildlife' in wildlife tourism to the backbenches. This form of wildlife tourism is epitomised in the example of the Taj Resort that was proposed in Murukal, Nagarahole National Park.
BACKGROUND OF THE PARK

The State of Karnataka has 19 lakh scheduled tribe population as per the 1991 census. 75% live in the Western Ghats mainly the Jenukurubas, Bettakurubas, yeravas, soligas and paniyars recorded as having been living in the region from the 7th century A.D as per the Madras Census Report, 1891.

Nagarhole National Park is located in the Kodagu and Mysore Districts of Karnataka State. Nagarhole Sanctuary was constituted on 2nd July, 1955 with an area of 57155 hectares. The Govt. of Karnataka declared 130 sq. kms. as Nagarhole Game Sanctuary in 1972. The process of reclassifying, the sanctuary into a National Park commenced vide notification of 16th March, 1983 on April 1st, 1983 and increased in its extent to 643.39 sq. kms. including 7 ranges i.e. Kakanakotte, Metikoppa, Veeranahosahalli, Kalaholla, Nagarhole, Mathigod and Murkal dated 8th December, 1983. It has a core area of 192 sq. kms. with a buffer of 451.39 sq. kms. out of which 110 sq. kms. are demarcated as the tourism zone with an as yet unspecified area as restoration zone proposed to be brought within the Park. It was renamed as Rajiv Gandhi National Park on 13th May 1992. The area has been extensively logged and substituted by plantations, primarily teak covering 90 sq. kms. and rosewood which together cover about 15% of the area. It is rich in animal life and is famous for elephants. To the south east it borders the Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary of Tamil Nadu and the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary of Kerala in the south west. To the west it is separated from the Brahmagiri Wildlife Sanctuary by coffee plantations. Nagarhole is part of the 4500 sq. kms. Nilgiri biosphere reserve.

The Nagarhole National Park resembles the Deccan Peninsula biogeographic zone in topography, vegetation and animal life. Larger carnivores include tiger, leopard and wild dog. Larger ungulates include gaur, sambar and chital. Four horned antelope are found in the drier parts. Numerous bodies of water support a rich assortment of birds such as the lesser whistling teal, adjutant stork, osprey, shahin falcon and spoonbill. Marsh crocodiles are also important. Most of these animals are considered endangered under the schedules in the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. The most important biodiversity value is the large predator/prey system. The biodiversity pressures in the Park include losing crop and livestock production, man/animal conflicts, timber and grazing, poaching and smuggling and increasing tourism.
PROFILE OF THE ADIVASIS IN AND AROUND THE PARK

A total of about 32000 adivasis reside in and around the National Park, spread over three taluks of Virajpet (Kodagu District), H.D.Kote and Hunsur taluks (Mysore District). The number of haadis (hamlets) are 138 of which 58 are in the National Park. Of the 58 in the Park, 33 are in the Virajpet Taluk, 22 in H.D Kote, 3 in Hunsur. Resident tribes are the Jenukurubas, Bettakurubas, Yeravas, Soligas and sub cases of the Yeravas i.e the Panjeri Yeravas and the Pani - Yeravas. The brief description of the tribes is as follows:

a) Jenu Kurubas: The dominant tribe in the area, the Jenukurubas are primarily a hunter/gatherer tribe who earn their name from the fact that they are expert gatherers of wild honey. Jenu in their language means “honey”.

b) Betta Kurubas: They are also a food gatherer society. The Bettakuruba people specialise in crafting bamboo utensils.

c) Yeravas: Also a food gathering tribe their speciality is fishing. The Yeravas also practise sustenance agriculture. The pani yeravas and the panjeri yeravas are sub tribes of the larger yerava community.

d) Soligas: The Soligas too are food gatherers who have also diversified into marginal agriculture and herding goats.

After their traditional rights of access to the forest and its resources were severely curtailed subsequent to the declaration of the National Park, the adivasis have lost their independent livelihood and have been forced to delve into the monetised environment. In the process they had been absorbed as cheap and exploitable daily wage labour in the nearby coffee estates. Some of them are employed by the Forest Department for the upkeep of the Park. However this employment is seasonal. Many of the families who had been forced off their forest homes have sought to cultivate degraded, unferile and often unirrigated forest lands on the outskirts of the Park.
PROCESS OF DISPLACEMENT

In the early 1970s, 18 adivasi haadis (adivasi colonies) were ousted to make way for the Kabini River Project. None of these oustees have received compensation of any kind. The Taraka dam constructed in the early 1970s again displaced, without compensation two adivasi haadis. Some were accommodated in tin sheds in nearby non forest areas. The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 provided for the extinguishing of all rights of local inhabitants in National Parks in effect prohibiting habitation itself with the resultant evacuation. 32000 adivasis lived in and around the National Park and ever since the area was declared a National Park they have been shunted around like a herd of cattle, with less dignity. The National Park itself has been expanding its area over a period of time. Initially the core area was around 181 sq.km out of the total 571.55 sq.km in 1983 when the area was declared a National Park. The adivasis in a good number of these haadis were thrown out of their area and forced to live in the periphery. However in a subsequent notification in 1988 the area was expanded to 643.39 sq.km and the adivasis once again found themselves in the National Park.

However by then they had been uprooted from their original habitats doing great damage to their social and cultural life. They were deprived of their source of livelihood and totally prohibited from having any kind of dependence on the forest for their livelihood and cultural base. As a result of this, though they continued to live in the National Park they were pushed to a state where they would have to go to far off places to eke out their livelihoods. Majority of these adivasis today are making a living going to plantations outside the National Park. As a result of this cultural destabilisation and deprival of sources of livelihood they have been greatly impoverished, both economically and culturally.

The government has made a million promises and taken them for a ride trying desperately to get them to join mainstream. This so they can reach the elevated status of a “coolie” for a feudal lord at a nearby plantation or collect pension from a government job. Organised resistance to various human rights violations emerged in the later part of 1980s with the emergence of Budakattu Krishikara Sangha - an organisation of Adivasis in the belt. Armed with the draconian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the government and forest department could evict summarily half the population residing in the area during the 1970s and 1980s. With the prospects of the World Bank’s Eco-development Project, pressures to force them to abandon their habitats was stepped up. But organised resistance has made this difficult.
RESTRICTIONS ON ADIVASIS IN THE NATIONAL PARK

As a result of the declaration of the area as a National Park and the high handed actions of the Government in terms of attempting resettlement without understanding the sensitivities or specificities of the issue, the Adivasis have been the losers. The following restrictions illustrate the process by which their sustenance and cultural base has been eroded and attempts to squeeze them out of the Park have been made:

• No cultivation of any kind: their traditional method is unique in the sense that no trees are cleared; polyculture is practised; no ploughing or sowing is done and no inputs such as pesticides or inorganic fertilizers are used. In some cases, especially for the paddy crop, the adivasis utilize naturally occurring low lying swamps which are a unique and critical habitat (haadlus), providing ungulates with water and forage during summers. No concept of crop raiding by wild herbivores exist because the adivasis believe in sharing the crops with the other denizens of their homeland. They understand that they are a part of the larger food chain. In fact, the Jenukurbas, leave some honey behind for the bear after gathering what they require, indicating a larger conservation ethic.

• Livestock and dogs are not allowed to be kept by the adivasis even though in the neighboring lands on the periphery of the NP in the Odiya community (Agricultural), the same is permitted. This theory has been propagated on the basis that domestic animals will contribute to the spread of contagious diseases.

• No hunting is allowed: Even Ritual hunting. Jenu Kurb men ritual men hunt a species of wild boar (Kurra Panni) belonging to the species of wild pig family and offered to their wives during pregnancy; Without this offering the offspring cannot assert its adivasi identity.

• No renovation of houses is allowed — not even simple repairs and putting tiles on the roof of their houses. This, while a 3 star hotel has been allowed to come up in the name of ecotourism, in the guise of renovation.

• No digging of borewells while the hotel group has dug 3 borewells in the very same National Park.

• A total ban on collection of minor forest produce like tubers, mushrooms and other wild vegetables and fruit which are the staple food of the Adivasi community and linked with their rituals and practices. For the Jenukurbas, honey collection is the very basis of their cultural base and this impacts directly on that.

• No entry to their sacred sites and burial grounds: The adivasis believe in Devaru (force of creation) and Hettaya (spirits of their ancestors). For them the forest is not a clump of trees or a measure of economic wealth but a sustenance base and more essentially a “cosmos”. Their concept of time is not linear but cyclical. Their sacred sites are important, not in a traditional religious sense but because the sacred sites embody the wisdom of their ancestors from whom they gain advice.

• A ban on their traditional music and dance forms: Instruments like the Pongi (a flute like instrument) and Anchali (wire instrument) are not allowed to be played. Kollatum, a dance form is not similarly allowed. This, even while the Government allows noisy construction to carry on nearby.
WORLD BANK ECO-DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

India signed the Biodiversity Convention at Rio in 1992. As part of this, a Global Environmental Facility (GEF) was set up. India’s biological resources are considered “economically” important both globally and internationally by the World Bank. As one of the oldest and largest agricultural societies, India has an impressive diversity of crop species and varieties. Natural ecosystems strongly influence natural resource development, provide new commercial products and also affect water resource management not only for agriculture but also for industrial and municipal development.

This “economic” importance attached to these natural resources has prompted the World Bank to do the following. The World Bank aided Rs.294.9 crore ($ 67 million) Ecodevelopment project in seven “protected areas” i.e. sanctuaries and National Parks from all over India is likely to take off in January 1997 after having been approved by the International Development Association (IDA) and the GEF financing on September 5th, 1996. The project is slated to meet the expenses for project preparation, improved protected area management, village ecodevelopment, education and awareness, impact monitoring and research, overall project management and preparation of future biodiversity projects. The project was drawn up by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA) in November, 1993 and the agreement was signed on July 28th, 1996. The seven sites are located in West Bengal (Buxa Tiger Reserve), Gujarat (Gir National Park), Bihar (Palamau Tiger Reserve), Madhya Pradesh (Pench Tiger Reserve), Kerala (Periyar Tiger Reserve), Rajasthan (Ranthambore Tiger Reserve) and Karnataka (Nagarhole/Rajiv Gandhi National Park).

In Nagarhole, the total population of the project area was estimated to be 72,652, of which 6888 are Adivasis who along with 5 non adivasi families live inside the Park while the rest live in a 5 km radius in 96 revenue villages. The Forest Department had prepared a proposal to relocate 6145 i.e. all the people living inside the Park according to their estimates which was approved. However, this could not be carried out for a number of reasons primarily the simmering resistance to the relocation plan itself from the people and the non-release of funds by the Centre. The World Bank has insisted that no “involuntary resettlement” will take place as per their directives and that any such process would be after consultation and participation of the adivasis. However, no consensus has been arrived at as yet. The World Bank’s project has, on the other hand, antagonised the adivasi populations who see them as a threat. There may be no “involuntary settlement” in the World Bank’s eyes but the reality is that as long as the adivasis are not given a stake in protecting their homeland and no plans are made to keep them in the forest, they will be “squeezed out” as there are no viable options.
TAJ RESORT IN MURKAL, NAGARAHOLE
A STRUGGLE OF THE ADIVASIS

The proposed Taj Resort at Murkal in Nagarhole is attempting to cash in on the novelty of "luxury wildlife tourism" by building a three star resort in a National Park. In their brochure, the hotel group states: "presenting India's finest wildlife lodge located in India's first biosphere reserve ..... The Getaway Tusker Lodge, set inside the Nagarhole National Park offers various kinds of accommodation beautifully designed and equipped with modern facilities like individual sit outs and attached bathrooms. There are 36 Deluxe rooms, 6 terrace suites, 9 cottage suites and 4 standard rooms. For dining the Lodge has a dining room that extends out onto the deck and serves Indian and International cuisine. "The other facilities that are to be offered are a lounge cum library, a lobby bar open all day for drinks and snacks, shop selling ecofriendly handicrafts, apparel and souvenirs. The Taj Group states "the serene setting of the lodge amidst nature also makes it an excellent location for strategy meetings and small reflective conferences. The Lodge has a large conference room... Audio visual equipment including a slide projector, overhead projector, photocopier, fax facilities, TV, video and other state of the art equipment is available". (a real back to basics experience). Refer to Box 1 for more details of the project and claims made Taj.

**Box 1: Taj and Nagarhole: A few thoughts**

Taj group of hotels got the project in Murkal after lobbying with the Government and withdrawal from the proposal by Oberois. US $235 is the proposed tariff of the single occupancy which excludes food and drinks and other expenses in the resort which is so called "eco-friendly" for foreign tourists. They started saying that it is fully their "responsibility to preserve" nature and forests in the Murkal site as if the people who have been living in that area for the time immemorial have no rights in the area at all. It never occurred to Taj that this self-proclaimed guardianship was totally uninvited.

What is the need for Taj to take all the trouble in the world to run a resort in the jungle and propose to send the laundry to Hunsur and solid waste to the Tibetan colony? They should have located the project in Hunsur itself (if the local citizens would allow them to). The true nature lover would not stay right in the midst of the forest to enjoy nature. This clearly shows that Taj wants to exploit nature for their business and pleasure. Getting the business at the cost of the host environment and people who are in fact, the part of the environment causes trouble at different levels.

Above all these things, it was the Government who decided to get into an agreement with the Taj for earning few lakhs by bombarding the local community. From 1985 onwards, this place in Nagarhole has been part of a feeding frenzy for greedy politicians and bureaucrats. This is resulting in unparliamentable negligence towards the ecological sensitivity, carrying capacity, culture and social conditions of the place.

After giving false information that Taj would be only "renovating" the existing Murkal complex (the entire complex itself is the output of calculated moves on the part of the bureaucrats), the protest started from the Adivasis with the support of local voluntary organisations and concerned groups in Bangalore.
After the writ petition, the judgement was given in favour of the Adivasis. The judgement in fact was the victory of the entire Adivasis existence and a terrible blow for the Taj. As far as all are concerned, they can go on appeal till the apex court but the last laugh will be heard from the adivasis at Nagerhole.

Their claims of being ecofriendly using the standard R’s: reuse, recycle, reduce have not been convincing. Refer to Box 2 for more details.

**BOX 2 : PR Note from Good Relations (India) Ltd. and Taj’s release titled Eco Friendly Resort: Getaway Tusker Lodge, Morkal, Nagarhole - Behind the Lies**

"No swimming pools, so less amount of water is consumed"

In another release, the Taj officials claim that there will be no swimming pool but a small spa (mineral water spring found near the resort) will be in the premises. This implies that the water source available near the construction will be used for this purpose. This watering hole is the only natural water source in the Park and the proposed resort is in the middle of the elephant corridor that leads to the same. The Hotel group has already dug three borewells thus making them the biggest contributors to the depletion of ground water in the area.

From the brochure of the “Getaway Tusker Lodge”, it is evident that they are using the land in front of the open-air dining restaurant for the purpose of building a small lotus pond.

**Ecologically very friendly pattern landscaping with only native species of plants being used.**

The Hotel Group is in the process of clearing ground vegetation in a natural forest and making way for so-called landscaping. It would be infinitely more sensitive if they had left this area alone to naturally regenerate without cement structures taking the place of the natural landscape.

**The local tribe is one of the honey gatherers. So Taj is examining apiary facilities for tribals.**

It is clear from this statement that they have absolutely no idea about the difference between honey gathering and bee keeping. There has been absolutely no dialogue between the adivasis and the Hotel group though the Headliners have stopped at "nothing" to get the project moving.

**The generator set is an alternative to the KEB's power supply, will be closed insulated and covered with vegetation to control noise.**

The reduction of noise seems to be for the benefit of their guests, not out of concern for wildlife or the pristine surroundings. If they had such concern they would not bring in huge generators or more importantly build a resort in the first place. What do they mean by vegetation covering the DG set? Is it not possible that the vibration and drone of the DG set can cause havoc among the sensitive plant and animal life in the forest?

**Waste water will be treated, linen and laundry will be taken to the nearby Hunsur town for cleaning, garbage will be made into compost for farm use by the nearby farm and so on, newspapers to be sold in Hunsur.**

If they are moving all their ancillary services to the town they would have been better advised to have situated there in the first place. The solid waste being transported daily to the nearby Tibetan Colony and being used for compost is heart rendering, but who is going to guarantee this?

The PR Note also says that Taj will work in close contact with the local tribals and Forest Department to help in their development as well. But in the same note they say that they will be using the tiles which are made in Tamil Nadu, thus exposing their use of indigenous material and blending into the natural surroundings.
Warning: The National Park is fragile and sensitive to external threats, especially those selling "ecotourism". The deep worry that the indigenous people and the social action groups hold is that these ecofriendly statements in their PR notes are merely statements of intent. The guests who will stay there just want quality service and value for money and a "novel experience in the "wilderness" (we can ignore the "savages" in the background and the very real social and political ecology of the Park). They don't really care about the environment, which is why they visit unspoilt, remote areas making them less remote and less unspoilt. Besides there is no way to screen the visitors to gauge their concern. But with tariffs at $235 a day, we would not give them the benefit of the doubt. The forest department just want their payoffs and exclusive suites in the resort, to entertain overweight bureaucrats and failed politicians. The businessmen want the conference halls to strike merger and acquisition deals in a true "jungle setting" (they should feel right at home). Taj wants money, money and more money. Indigenous peoples and social action groups suspect that this hobility and concern for the environment is purely profit oriented. The hotel group will have to ensure that the "natural" look and feel of the place is maintained. This may or may not reinforce "conservation" objectives or values. Who will assess whether they are ecofriendly? Who will monitor their actions? At least with the government, questions can be raised but with the private sector, it is next to impossible. The hotel mafia does not extend its "hospitality" credo that far.

Why locate oneself in a pristine ecosystem and then practice the "R" commandments? Technological innovations only postpone environmental destruction. It does not stop it from happening or reverse the process. So called wildlife enthusiasts should know better than to expect to stay in luxury comfort in sensitive ecosystems. But the protests did not come from the wildlife or naturalists. Probably too busy recording the process of extinction and floating "conservation theories" at an international seminar.

The protests came from Kenchanna, Subramani, Ningamma, Siddaraju and other adivasi friends for whom Nagarhole is not a forest or a National Park but is their "homeland". The NGOs working there have contributed to their empowerment and the next stage is here. At a recent press conference on January 21st, 1997 the adivasis stated emphatically that "neither the NGO's or the government can tell us how to live". This is done in conjunction with gratitude to the NGOs who helped them overcome their fear of the "white shirts and pants" and helped them to be aware of their rights.

The adivasi groups filed a petition (Nagarahole Budakatu Hakku Shapana Samithi vs State of Karnataka W.P. No 31222/96) against the Taj resort. The petition was discussed with them and done with their knowledge and consent. When the government and Taj tried to question this, the adivasis collected up to three thousand signatures and this was produced before the court establishing their stance on the issue. The arguments that were presented before the Court were thrashed out in Nagarhole with the people. Different groups of adivasis came from fields for the hearings, hung around the Court and made their presence felt. Taj's battery were three representatives who came because it was their job to do so. The adivasis came because this issue was part of their struggle to reclaim their homeland and protect it from commercial interests who make false claims about "conserving" the area. The judgement respected this movement, these feelings. The case may have been won on "environmental grounds" but the spirit
was “adivasi”. Nobody can ever claim that it was anything but “an adivasi victory”.

The outline of the judgement of Justice Bharukha in the above case is as follows:

**Technical Grounds**

- The Respondents, i.e., the Government and Tai claimed that the petitioners had no locus standi. This was rejected by the court. The petitioners had also produced signatures of almost 3000 adivasis from three taluks around Nagarhole stating that this was done with their knowledge and consent.
- On the ground of “malafides”, the Court held that it was not proved.
- The respondents also contended that there was a delay or laches in protesting against the issue and filing the petition but this was wholly rejected.

**The Main Grounds on which the final order was passed**

- Under the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, there is a complete bar on accrual of rights after an area has been declared as a “National Park”. As per its protected status there is no question of rights, in, on or over the land in a National Park, being vested in any party.
- The Forest Conservation Act, 1980 requires that Central Government permission be obtained before “an interest is created in private party by lease or otherwise.” In this case it was held that the provision was mandatory and had been violated. The term “assignment” would cover instances of leases, licenses, easement rights.
- The Court has held that “forest land”, be it denuded, degraded would still be “forest land” and this is in consonance with Supreme Court verdicts on the issue.

**Final Order**

- The property must revert back to the State Government and possession must be handed over as the lease is illegal and void.
- All construction must cease immediately as per the Godavaraman Case in the Supreme Court.
- Costs to the tune of Rs. 10000 must be awarded to the petitioners.

“This is a historic judgement”, says J.P. Raja, an Adivasi leader.

He says “We feel that the government cheated us but judiciary stood by us. We pleaded with the government to cancel the lease and not to let Tai come inside the forest. We opposed commercial interests coming to the forests. But the government was always with them. Our forefathers had been guarding the forests and they passed it on to us. For us, this judgement is a real boost to revive our traditional role as forest guardians. We hails this landmark judgement and hope this would set a precedent in the case of other national parks and policies of state governments. We went to the court with the clear understanding of what forest conservation should be and the time has come to acknowledge the role of Adivasis in managing their habitats. We see this judgement as protecting our rights over the
forests, our rights to conserve the forests and our right to pass on this heritage to the
generations to come.

From the judgement, it is evident that the people in the forest area can really protect the
forest and its resources more than any other agencies. We emphasize that the government
should see to it that the external forces will not enter the forest area in the guise of
conservation”.

What happened in court was just a side show. The real struggle was in
Nagarhole. The protest has been building up for the last couple of months. On
December 23, the Taj Group resumed construction using State Police Forces.
The adivasis protested against this and were arrested for it. The number of
protesters grew everyday. Women children outran the police who were due for
their yearly exercise drill. They sang and shouted slogans, foregoing a coolie
wage, protecting their homeland from Taj’s luxury canteen. This culminated in a
bandh on December 29th where all roads leading to the National Park were
blocked. Forest range officers were stopped from going home for lunch by young
adivasi children. It was the first time that a bandh was called in a National Park.
Subramani stated “We were able to give the animals in the forest a day of rest and for the
first time we felt free in our homeland”. Taj tried to buy off the adivasis offering
electricity lines and various community development programmes but they were
effectively told to get lost. They attempted to pass off the movement as “NGO
instigated” but for anyone who has been there this is untrue. The adivasis have
done it themselves for themselves, with a little help from their friends. A
wonderful incident is when the arrests began on Dec 23rd, a tiny adivasi boy
wanted to get arrested on the first day. When he got arrested, he burst into tears.
The next day during the meeting in front of the concrete structures, he got up
and said to the 500 adivasis sitting there that “the next morning the whole lot of them
should shit all around the place”. The adivasis have shown that they are not going to
take it lying down. When the Forest Minister landed up he was roundly abused
and told to take the tiles and leave the National Park.

The victory is all theirs. The centre has recently passed a law recognising “adivasi
panchayats and self governance” (The Constitutional Provisions relating to Panchayats
(Part IX of the Constitution) Extension to the Scheduled Areas Bill 1996). The law was
passed on 24 December 1996. This law apart from recognising adivasi self
governance deals with the issue of land alienation and prevents the same if it
contradicts and is not in consonance with the cultural base and traditions of
Adivasi communities. The law also recognises customary rights over natural
resources. The World Bank eco-development projects and eco-tourist
opportunist like the Taj group violate the spirit of this Act as it directly
threatens their rights over natural resources and preserving their cultural identity,
thradditions and their homeland.

Adivasis of Nagarhole have started working on getting this operationalised and
simultaneously their peoples’ plan for protection of their culture and the
environment of their homeland is underway. The adivasis are reclaiming their
homeland, reclaiming their jammals (community commons), reviving their
cultural identity, planning regeneration using their traditional wisdom and
restoring the area to what it was in the time of their ancestors. Far from
alienating the wildlife, recently J.P.Raju said "If the city people liked the animals the way we did there would be no need to have projects to protect them." He later states "The forest laws applied in our homeland have suffocated us. We don't belong to a consumptive culture. Greediness has destroyed the forests, not us. That is why we are needed now".

Taj has gone on appeal in the division bench of the High Court, but the adivasis are ready to go all the way to the Supreme Court if there are any adverse orders against them. If all does not go well in the Court the people’s court will do the rest and their customary law will prevail. An attempt will be made to use the new central law, if the case does proceed further. On the Ecodevelopment Plan of the World Bank Siddaraju states "We don’t want your ecodevelopment plan. We don’t want your crores. We want our forests to develop ourselves. We have our forest produce. We have our jammus. What is your civilization?"

The World Bank would be wise to leave Nagarhole alone because the adivasis have dealt with one Indian multinational and there is enough momentum to take even the World Bank on. If they insist on staying on they better be ready for one hell of a fight. The buck has to stop somewhere and it has stopped at Nagarhole. The adivasis of Nagarhole reiterate and clarify once and for all "WE HAVE DECLARED NAGARHOLE NATIONAL PARK AS OUR HOMELAND". This has been reinforced on 26 January 1997 with a pledge taken by the Adivasis of Nagarhole to make this a reality.
CONTACT ADDRESSES

Roy David
CORD (Coorg Organization for Rural Development)
119/1 4th Block
Kushalnagar Post, North Kodagu 571234,
Karnataka, India.
Phone: +91 08276 74487
Fax: +91 08276 74091

Sreekanth
DEED
HD Kote Road
Hunsur, Mysore District
Karnataka, INDIA
Phone: +91 08222 52127

Nanjundaiah
FEDINA -VIKASA
General Hospital Layout
HB Samaj Road
HD Kote, Mysore District
Karnataka, INDIA
Phone: +91 08228 32304

M G Ramesh
EQUATIONS
198, II Cross, Church Road
New Thippasandra
Bangalore - 560075, INDIA
Phone: +91 080 528 2313 & +91 080 529 2905
Fax: +91 080 528 2313
email: ramesh@equations.ilban.ernet.in

Susan Mathews
Advocate
Public Interest Legal Support And Research Centre (PH.LSARC)
67/3C, 4th Cross, Lavelle Road
Bangalore - 560 001, INDIA

Nityanand Jayaraman
Independent Journalist - Environment & Development
218, 6th Cross, 6th Main Road, Rajarajeshwari Nagar
Bangalore - 560 039, INDIA
Phone & Fax: +91 080 860 1033
email: nj@ilban.ernet.in
Adivasis declare self-rule

By Kamal Gopinath

MYSORE, Jan. 26: A makeshift pandal made of thin poles with a roosting of leaves, the sun blazing and adivasis dancing to haunting beats. This was the scene at the Nagarathole adivasi ‘hadi’ inside the Nagarathole National Park on Sunday afternoon when the adivasis, fresh from their recent victory over the powerful Tat Group, celebrated Republic Day for the first time ever in adivasi history.

But it was not just dancing and singing at the adivasi ‘hadi’ in and around the National Park on the day. It was a very important day for these forest dwellers. On Sunday they declared ‘adivasi self-rule’ in all the hamlets as per the recommendations of the Bhargi Committee which was accepted by the President of India and approved by Parliament on December 24, 1996. This act of the President heralded the beginning of tribal self rule in all the adivasi colonies around the country and is a precursor to Mahatma Gandhi’s concept of ‘Gram Swaraj’, Bhargi Committee Implementation Forum Convener J. T. Rajappa explains.

The adivasis living in and around the Nagarathole National Park gathered at five different hamlets – Nagarathole, Vedavanadu, Dasanapura, Doddahour and Yuvakapadi – to celebrate the ‘hadi ganarajyotsava.’ They declared all the hamlets as those governed by the laws of tribal self-rule. While ‘yajamans’ or traditional chieftains of 16 hamlets gathered at Nagarathole, chieftains from 23 hamlets gathered at Dasanapura hamlet in the fringe of the National Park.

All the tribal ‘yajamans’ took a pledge declaring ‘self rule’ even as other tribal leaders addressed the 5,000-strong adivasi crowd. “We, the ‘yajamans’ of all the tribal ‘hadi’ declare Jan 26 each year shall henceforth be observed as ‘hadi ganarajyotsava’. Our hamlet is our ancestral land. Our ancestral land is our country. We will rule our country. We hereby pledge that from today we shall be the rulers of our land. We also declare our hamlets as those under adivasi self-rule and hereby establish Gram Sabhas in each hamlet. We shall protect our traditional homeland, the forests and all the living things in it,” read the pledge.

The adivasis who gathered at five important locations, began the celebrations hoisting the National Flag – for the first time ever – and lit the Adivasi jyothi. They also decided to plant a sacred tree in each tribal colony on Saturday as a symbol of their declaration of ‘self rule’. It was also decided to take one tree from each of the five taluks which nurture adivasi populations in Mysore and Kodagu districts in Karnataka to Raj Ghat in New Delhi on October 2 during the National Advadi Conference. “These trees will be planted at Raj Ghat as a symbol of the establishment of tribal sovereignty,” said Nagarathole Advasi Rights Restoration Forum Convener Jenukuruba L. Subramani.
Accept the verdict

The Karnataka High Court's order quashing the lease agreement entered into between the State Government and a hotel group owned by a big business house on the construction of a holiday resort in the Nagarahole National Park should serve as an eye opener to the authorities. The decision now needs to be reconsidered in the light of the judicial order. The Government had remained unresponsive all along to the vehement protests by tribal groups and environmentalists against the danger posed to the tribals' lifestyle and livelihood and their apprehensions about the degradation of the sylvan and serene atmosphere arising from the incursion into the area by visitors to the resort.

The judicial disapproval of the measure should prompt those in office to discard the present location for the project and take measures to conserve the flora and fauna in the park, covering an area of 643.39 square kilometres, and help the aboriginals to live in peace and in harmony with nature. Although it might amount to stating the obvious, it is in the fitness of things to go on record that the impugned project is least conducive either to fostering the afforestation policy of the Government or its social welfare measures pertaining to the tribal people. The State Government will be well advised to select some other location, at a reasonably safe distance from the sanctuary, for such a project by ascertaining that the new location selected would pose no such threat either to the tribals or to the world-famous games park.
**Taj Group hotel lease in Nagarhole struck down**

**Legal Correspondent**

BANGALORE: The Karnataka High Court on Monday termed the lease of forest land in the Nagarhole National Park to the Taj Group of Hotels for construction of a resort as illegal and struck it down.

Mr Justice G.C. Bharika delivered judgement allowing a writ petition filed by the 'Nagarhole Budakkam Hakku Stapana Samiti' and others challenging the lease granted by the state government on June 25, 1994, for a period of 18 years in favour of a private hotelier. The court directed the respondent company to stop all construction activities.

The main grievance of the petitioner was that the impugned lease was in violation of the provisions of the Forest Act, Prohibition of Leases of Forest Land, Wildlife Act and other laws.

It was also hazardous and destructive of the valuable flora and fauna of the forest and would cause ecological imbalance. The life of the tribals in the area would also be subjected to danger.

The respondent company argued that the impugned lease held was beyond the purview of the Forest Act, and the construction of the resorts would not in any manner affect the environment and the lives of animals and the tribes. It would promote the tourism industry.

The counsel of the petitioners was also questioned by the company.

Discussing in detail the scope and meaning of the relevant provisions of the several laws, the court struck down the impugned lease observing that no state could assign by way of lease or otherwise any forest land or portion thereof to a person other than a governmental instrumentality except with the prior permission of the central government.

Project Manager E. Kumar said: The Group will wait for the advice of its lawyers on whether it should go on appeal.
Adivasis enforce bandh in Nagarahole

By Kamal Gopinath
NAGARAHOLE, Dec 29: About 200 adivasis from 102 adivasi colonies observed a ‘total Nagarahole Bandh’ at the Nagarahole National Park today. The bandh was peaceful.

The adivasis are protesting against the Taj Group of Hotels, for resuming construction of a three star resort at Mukai inside the national park, and are demanding self-rule.

This is the first time in the history of the country that adivasis are observing a bandh in a national park. This is also the first time in the State that such a resists is being constructed inside a national park.

The trials blocked all the six roads leading to the park, which affected trips between Veerapandeshwari (the main entrance to the park) and Nagarahole, HD Kote and Murali, HD Kote and Manandrade, Kunta and Nagarahole, Badale and Nagarahole, and Haruru and Pholakkoppi.

They observed a drama at Ramanakatte, Udupi, Madikeri, Veerapandeshwari, Gaddaboot, Nanachi, Karmad and Anechukur around the park.

The adavasis did not allow any Government or private vehicles, including those of the Forest Department, inside the park. Only the police, ambulances, and the fire brigade were permitted entry.

At Nanachi gate, the Virajapura police arrested seven persons, present inside the park.

At Gaddaboot, about 30 adivasis blocked one road and prevented Nagarahole Range Forest Officer Prashant from entering the park.

Tension prevailed between the adivasis and the public at Anechukur gate, at the fringe of the forest, disrupting traffic.

The trials observed a bandh here from 6 to 11 a.m., while at other places the bandh was observed from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Long queues of vehicles were seen at the Veerapandeshwari and Udhlgate.

The trials shouted slogans and sang folk songs against the high court.

Many NGOs, activists from the Nagarahole Adivasi Rights Restoration Forum (NARR), Budakadota Karpikara Sangha, and Mr B. J. Patil and Mr Manjunath from the Tungabhadr Parivara Samithi also took part in the dharna, expressing their solidarity with the trials.

HUNGER STRIKE: The adivasis have threatened a relay hunger strike from tomorrow in front of the Deputy Commissioner’s office at Madikeri (Kodagu district).

They also plan to stop the construction of new roads to the park.

They will continue their 10 day long dharna at Mukai.

The dharna entered the third day today...
Tribals gear up for Nagarahole bandh today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MYSORE, Dec 28: The tribals protesting the construction of Taj resorts in Nagarahole forests in the past one week, had a day’s respite as no arrests were made on Saturday. Since they began their agitation, 205 tribals, including 35 children, have been arrested.

Nonetheless, the construction of Taj resorts at Murkai has continued unhindered, under police protection.

The tribal organisations have given a call for Nagarahole bandh on Sunday. This will be the first ever bandh of a national park in the State, according to a spokesperson of the organisations.

All roads leading to the Nagarahole national park will be closed. The highways at Ane Chaukur, Mananduradi, Kaktuk, Katta, and Baile Veenana Hosaballi, will be blocked. Traffic on these routes leading to Kerala, Kodagu and Mangalore, he said.

The 643-sq km area of Nagarahole national park will be declared an ‘Adivasi Jamma’ after the bandh. There are 58 haddis with 9,000 tribals inside the national park and 90 haddis with around 2,4000 tribals in the surrounding areas.

The ‘Adivasi Jamma’ will be a virtual ‘declaration of independence’ in the area by the indigenous inhabitants. The tribals reportedly intend to display boards that read ‘Nagarahole Jamma’.

The spokesman said the tribals who had been agitating since Aug 15 were now looking forward to the second independence day.

SUPPORT: Mr Basavaraj, BJP legislator from Veerapat, has reportedly extended support to the protesters.

National and State-level organisations like the People’s Union for Civil Liberties and Jana Vikar Andolana have condemned the Government for allowing precious forest area to non-forest and commercial activities. They also criticised the arrest of the 205 tribals.

Madikkeri Superintendent of Police Basavarao Rao has visited the site and met the 125 tribals who staged a sit-in on Saturday.

Mr Ashok Kumar Chowdry, additional private secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest, has responded to an appeal sent by the tribals asking them of keen examination into the issue.

The tribals’ forum in their appeal had stated that there had been a violation of the lease conditions laid down by the Government when the existing buildings of the site were let to Taj.

“Nagarahole is our motherland and intruders will be forced to quit,” said the tribals.

PLEA FOR POWER: Mr E. Maruthi Rao Pawar, M.L.A., has appealed to the Karnataka Electricity Board to restore electricity to St Philomena’s Cathedral immediately.
Nagarhole tribals urge CM to stop construction

From Our Staff Reporter

A group of 26 individuals and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) from all over the country has urged the State Government to immediately order the Taj group to stop its reported construction of a hotel resort at Murtkal, which according to them, threatened the Nagarhole national park’s ecosystem and the health of the adivasi communities living in and around the park.

In a letter to the Chief Minister, Mr. J. H. Patel, the NGOs drew attention to the public interest petition filed by the Nagarhole adivasis and other environmentalists in the Karnataka High Court and alleged that the Taj group had taken advantage of the winter holidays of the Court, resuming construction of the disputed site in Murtkal. "Rather than protect the interests of the adivasis, the Government seems to have set the police on the adivasis at Taj’s behest," they maintained.

The NGOs expressed their solidarity to the State-wide “Total Nagarhole Ban” to be organised by the adivasis on December 29.

Meanwhile, in a press statement, the Taj...
Eco-tourism project at Nagarathahole Park

Trihals, Taj group on confrontationist path

By Kamal Godnath

MYSORE, Nov. 30. The ongoing agitation against the decision of the Karnataka Government to grant permission to the Taj group's eco-tourism project at the Nagarathahole National Park by handing over the controversial Mooradl guest house to the group reached a point of no return with the tribals and the Taj group adopting a path of confrontation today.

The decision of the tribals and NGOs involved in the agitation against the project, to move the State High Court appears to be the last straw for the Taj group. The group on Friday constituted a panel of officials to go to the agreement it had reached with the tribals in the presence of police and revenue authorities on October 26.

However, the efforts proved futile as some tried to prevail upon the authorities that the project and the agreement would do a world of good to their welfare.

"The group tried to approach the tribals and the NGOs, including us, with all sorts of compromising formulas, but they failed to convince everybody that their current tribal project was not prompted by business interests. The tribals made it clear that they did not want any eco-tourism project within the National Park," explained Raju David, head of the Coorg Development Organisation for Rural Development (CORD), one of the NGOs working among the Mooradl tribals.

Consequently, when their efforts failed in all the ways the group adopted a confrontationist approach on Friday by commencing the construction work at the Mooradl. Incidentally, the Kasuvarth Deputy Commissioner and Superintendent of Police had directed the group to stop the work till the matter was resolved, after Oct 26. However, this was a month ago and according to sources, the district administration has now pleaded helplessness following directions from the Government to allow the group to continue its work.

"Minister in charge of Kodagu district V. Narayana also appears to be undecided in getting the matter resolved," confided a close confidant of the minister to The Indian Express.

With all their efforts at securing explanation from the local Kutta police proving futile on Friday, a team of Nagarathahole Tribes Rights Action Committee (Nagarathahole Badukkati Jansan Arayana Hukum Simpram Samithi) reached the resorts on Saturday to confront the group's authorities and stop the construction activities.

HIGH DRAMA: High drama prevailed as the activists came up inside the Nagarathahole National Park on Saturday with the security officer of the resort, Mr. Singh, refusing to stop the construction work as the activity was against the agreement reached on Oct 26.

However, with Mr. Singh refusing to budge, the Samithi members issued a clear warning that they would stop the work immediately if he did not oblige. The sub-inspector of local Kutta police station, Sridhar, was nominated and the police officer made it clear that the police cannot interfere and allow the work to continue as the tribals are right in pointing out that the activity was against the agreement reached on Oct 26.

Further, he made it clear that he had not received any written instructions either from the DC or the SP. "I myself am here in the mounting when you people proved not to continue the work," he added.

Meanwhile, the Hakka Sh trusted members also put themselves and tribals led by Mr Siddaraju, Mr. K. Ramaiah and Mr. Gadurkar met 100 odd construction workers and requested them to stop the work.

The tribals stopped the last few hundred yards of sand on the Veerashaiva ballast path of the road to return after dumping the sand on the road. Instructions were also issued to the heavy vehicles not to come within a mile radius till a final decision was taken regarding the resumption of the road.

Later, the Samithi members met at the Mooradl Tribes officials and decided to prevent the construction workers from unloading the load of sand for their daily chores and had them move to the local police station. Further, it has been decided to put vigilance around all the villages that provide stone and sand to the contractors in the area of the resumption of the road.

In another significant development, the groups that contested the scarring "environmental activists" for all the protest against Taj at Mooradl, a total of the resorts during the summer season.
Tribals in the Nagarathal National Park have been protesting against implementation of the World Bank-sponsored Eco-Development Plan, which will push them out of their homeland. The ongoing construction of a forest resort in the park area by the Taj group of hotels has further fuelled the controversy.

P M VIJENDRA RAO considers the pros and cons of relocation of the tribes.

**Turmoil in tribal homeland**

While response is for conservation of ecosystems around the world, especially the one of the tiger reserve of Nagarathal, who have inhabited for several ages. While some argue that tribals are part of ecosystems and that any eco-development project should assist in maintaining that, others argue that tribals have lost their tribal characteristics due to the changes, and their life is the forest would only harm the environment.

Those who take the former position contend that, while tribals may not have been completely immune to changes from the so-called modern world, it is an insult to them to protest the forest, and that they face no danger whatsoever to the environment in fact they have a valid role to play in its conservation efforts. Some proponents of this position also point out that it is not the tribal, but developers and policymakers, who are frequent land in some forest areas and the so-called eco-development projects, particularly tourism projects, pose a threat to the tribals. It is in this context that one has to view the protests by tribals in Nagarathal against the eco-development project sponsored by the World Bank and the Nagarathal Reserve project that removed the away Tunkir Lodge, which has been handed over to the tribal group of hospice by the Karnataka Government.

The World Bank funded a 2 million Eco-Development Plan (ECP) meant for implementation in several national parks. An effort was made to integrate the ECP into the overall strategy of the government. The Nagarathal National Park, spread over an area of 62.28 sq km in both Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru districts, is one of the parks chosen for the ECP. Several tribal organizations were initially incensed by the plan. They wrote to Prime Minister, and Court Judge, Natural Resource Economist (Agriculture and Water Division, South Asia) World Bank, saying the EDP, though much good in paper, would not fetch any buyer. They thought the project would benefit the forest officials. There are 34 villages around the national park. Most of these are inhabited by tribal people, who are the majority of the landless population. There is an immense potential for these families to get the benefit of the EDP and will be richer and better off. The main problem of the tribal people is that the plan would be subverted to the government.

Under the prevailing circumstances, the people said, if the bank is really concerned about eco-development, the tribal people and the wildlife, the only way for the bank is to initiate a dialogue with the tribal people.

The World Bank, in its report, wrote back to say that the objective of the EDP was to conserve biodiversity in seven globally significant protected areas by increasing the collaboration between local people and forest managers. The report did not lay down the blueprint of tangible prescriptions, rather it is a set of agreed principles and practices that would be used for the project. A major element of the project is the extensive consultation and...
Turmoil in tribal homeland

Environmentalists argue that what is being attempted through the World Bank-sponsored project in Nagapattinam is the usurping of community property by the State, which will also eventually lose its control over it, to make it a global property.

Relocation plan

As per the proposals of the Forest Department, the evacuees of theDONE will be housed in the following places:

1. Thirumullaivoyal, near Chennai (300 families)
2. Thirumullaivoyal, near Coimbatore (200 families)
3. Thirumullaivoyal, near Madurai (100 families)

The new houses will be built in each of these places to accommodate the forest evacuees. The new houses will be provided with all necessary facilities such as water, electricity, and transportation facilities.

Cultural reality

According to some environmentalists, the project will lead to a significant loss of biodiversity, as the forests are home to a wide variety of flora and fauna. The project will also lead to the displacement of the tribal communities, who have lived in the forest for generations. This will lead to a loss of cultural heritage and a decrease in the quality of life for the tribal communities.
State

Tourism efforts in Kodagu worry greens

By Kamal Gopinath

MYSORE, Dec 22: Environmentalists in Karnataka are a worried lot with the State government planning to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

The investigation by the Palani Hills Conservation Council (PHCC) in Kodikanal shows that since in Kodikanal there is no underground sewage facilities, sewage and waste water will flow directly into the lake, thereby leading to rapid eutrophication. "In spite of this, the massive degradation is on in Kodai and as far as eco tourism damage in Kodagu is concerned, there is a threat to the district by eco tourism," Equations asserts.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.

"Most of the negative side effects can be categorised under the heading of land use conflict. Firstly, although hotels are technically residential properties, they displace people. Hotel development in the fragile areas has resulted in a considerable loss of amenity to remaining residents through traffic congestion and obstruction and increased noise from late night tourist activity. But the environmental problems created by tourism cannot easily be solved by 'simple conservation' measures,' it points out.

"Though the tourism industry is giving assurances that the entire tourism will be as much green as possible, this is seen just as a plot to convert the flora of Kodagu into cash. "The fact is that all these trends in tourism are headed in exactly the opposite direction. References are made to 'quality', but this quality is a financial gauge. Only the government is building National Parks."

"Threat to the wildlife is increasing. In the draft wildlife tourism guidelines for India, the policy tries to justify why tourism should be introduced in the wildlife by saying that 'since most of the wilderness remains can now be found largely in protected areas...'"

Around national parks, a breadth of 25 km length should not be alienated for the purpose of hotels, resorts and any other industry. But the government is violating this rule with the establishment of Taj resort inside the Nagarhole National Park. Once this resort gets established inside the National park, then a precedent will be set which will affect the ecological balance," Equations warns.
EQUATIONS

INDIAN TOURISM: CURRENT ISSUES
A Statement of Concern

As EQUATIONS enters its 13th year of experience and existence in critiquing tourism issues in India, it is challenged by several concerns on the horizon today, a scenario that is likely to persist and extend in both magnitude and implications as we approach the 21st century.

Towards a critique: some statements

In the context of neo-colonisation
- tourism has to be viewed in the context of a development model which has a political character;
- tourism development has taken place along with increased elitism, authoritarianism, militarism and various forms of State regression in different parts of the world; all of these are threats to the culture, economy and empowerment of communities;
- tourism development along with globalisation process threatens the sovereignty of a nation (in the broadest definition of nation);
- tourism epitomises a certain consumptive and luxurious lifestyle which is unsustainable by any means;
- tourism promotes net outflow of capital to global market economy especially to the so-called developed nations;
- tourism is based on the objectified view of the world where beaches, sanctuaries and so on are seen as objects of pleasure which require the security of the objects as well as opaque meaningful relationships between peoples and their environments.

Our Vision For Tourism

EQUATIONS seeks a world where wealth, resources and benefits are much more equitably distributed between North and South. Our vision of tourism fits within that framework. While there is no one transposable model which will work in all situations, we are working toward tourism which:

- brings economic benefits directly to all segments of the host community, particularly including women and indigenous peoples;
- is subject to local, democratic control, so that communities are making their own decisions about how tourism should be permitted and regulated;
- is integrated into other community activities, so that it is culturally appropriate and sensitive to the inequalities between hosts and guests;
- enriches both host (economically, developmentally and in terms of control and guests (culturally, re-creationally).

This is in contrast to many current tourism models, which are imposed from the North, require the extensive use of imports, are overly commercialised, and reinforce inequalities rather than challenges them.

EQUATIONS sees tourism not as a means to bring Southern communities into the Northern mainstream, but rather as one of the ways to work toward a more just world.

EQUATIONS

What We Do?

The Roles EQUATIONS plays include advocate, information resource, educator, watchdog, helping hand, publisher and producer of materials.

At the local level
- focus on a particular place or issue;
- documents the tourism movement itself;
- conduct surveys with local groups;
- produce backgrounders on particular situations;
- facilitate scientific research on environmental and related issues.

At the national level
- EQUATIONS identifies itself as an Indian group, not a global one;
- EQUATIONS' historical role is the pioneer who put tourism on the agenda of the national development debate;
- EQUATIONS provides research and publications, and is resource centre.

At the international level
- provides direct support for local action in South Asia;
- provides resources and information for local action elsewhere;
- develop trainings and seminars for groups worldwide;
- participate integrally in the new global tourism structure when it emerges.

Information Collection And Dissemination
- collaborate with local groups to collect, inform and disseminate information about parameters and standards.

Lobbying
- make the concerns and interests of local communities visible;
- empower them to lobby for themselves and training;
- offer workshops on fundamental tourism issues.

EQUATIONS also provides “how to” sessions on: participatory research, communications (including how to publish a newsletter and do audiovisual programs), options for strategy (including legal options).

Tailor each subject to the particular group’s situation and priorities.

Monitoring
- learn about hotels entering India, including their investments, corporate behaviour elsewhere, and structures;
- monitor tourism policy, and legislation which will affect tourism issues;
- network with others who can be “eyes and ears”.

EQUATIONS also follow global development that affect tourism and produce an annual audit showing how tourism in India is faring, from a critical perspective.

The EQUATIONS Team