

Kalpavriksh

Environmental Action Group

Annual Report

1997 – 1999

Kalpavriksh – Delhi

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Dear Members and Friends,

This is an annual report of activities carried out by Kalpavriksh (KV) for the period 1997 to 1999. It combines these two years, as an annual report could not be produced last year.

This year's Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) will be on September 18th in Delhi, at Sardar Patel Vidyalaya (pl. call Pradeep Malhotra 4624197 or Bansuri Taneja 4694354 for details). **The Pune KV unit will have its AGBM on September 12th at J.E. Farm.** The broad agenda for this year's meeting (at both Delhi and Pune) will be:

- 1) Appointment of the Chartered Accountant for 1999-2000
- 2) Election of Core Group Members
- 3) Review of Activities over the last year
- 4) Planning for the year ahead
- 5) Discussion on other relevant issues

One of the significant happenings to report on is the genesis of an informal KV unit in Pune and its work. We will also be focussing on the need to review and redefine the identity and objectives of KV. Within that context, the possibility of an institutional model for KV and a look at our funding policy will be attempted.

This is also the year that we are twenty years old! Using this opportunity to have a 3 day retreat of KV people, a series of lectures or other activities, and to compile an edition of impressions of KV by members and close associates, has been suggested by several people. We will be discussing this in detail further on.

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ACTIVITIES DURING 1997-99

DELHI

A major portion of the work in Delhi involved administration and liaison with the Pune group. Pradeep Malhotra, Farhad Vania, Jaishree Suryanarayanan, Swati Shresth and others handled this. Other work involved:

▪ Beej Bachao Andolan - Tehri Garhwal

KV's involvement in Jardhar, with the Beej Bachao Andolan, continues in various forms. As part of a separate study, Jaishree and Pradeep are finalising an assessment of the efforts of the Van Suraksha Samiti and Pani Panchayat there. A detailed case study on this is likely to be published soon. Pradeep has explored the possibility of a project on alternative technologies for solar drying and oil production, in association with Development Alternatives (DA) and other groups; however, that is currently on hold. KV members attended the Sanskriti Award function in Delhi, in which BBA was honoured (members may recall that KV had also won this award in the late 1980s).

▪ Intervention in the WWF Case

An ongoing case filed by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) -India in the Supreme Court, has created a serious situation for several million people and threatened many protected areas (PAs). The Court has ordered all state governments to complete the procedures for settling people's rights inside PAs. In the absence of any guidelines on this, district collectors and forest officers are interpreting this in various ways which are raising fears that either people will be deprived of resources essential for their survival, and/or substantial areas of PAs will be knocked off to avoid the headache of going through the settlement process. Already we have heard of such proposals from many states. Also, in some instances, this is being used as an excuse to denotify or dereserve parts of PAs to make way for industrial or developmental activities (e.g. a hydel project in Great Himalayan National Park in Himachal Pradesh, of which 1060 ha. was deleted recently). Kalpavriksh helped to coordinate a legal intervention in the case, filed by about a dozen groups working with affected communities. Unfortunately, the Court was not in a mood to listen to new arguments, and rejected the intervention. Other means of redressal are being

considered now. Farhad, Sanjay Upadhyay, and Ashish Kothari have been involved.

▪ Booklet on Butterflies of Delhi

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad, has approved funding for the publication of the long-delayed 'Simple Guide to Butterflies of Delhi and Surrounds', as per a proposal submitted by Ashish. This booklet was prepared by Dr. Peter Smetacek for KV, and was gathering dust for want of funding. The book can go to press shortly...*however, we need one or more volunteers in Delhi to coordinate the publication.*

▪ Simple Guide on Wild Life Act

Sanjay has prepared the draft of a simple guide to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, which can be used by conservationists, or social activists working with local communities. The draft is being reviewed by several people before being finalised. KV intends to publish it if funds are available.

▪ Greening Delhi's Roads and Educational Institutions

Ajay Mahajan and Prabhakar Rao are in the process of discussions with Municipal Council of Delhi (MCD) / Public Works Department (PWD) officials, about the possibility of KV taking on the responsibility of two roads for greening. One possibility is the Nizamuddin Bridge road. This would be in collaboration with the Forest Department (FD). They would also consider extending an earlier programme, conducted under Youth Reach, for greening educational institutions. Zakir Hussain and Hindu Colleges would be taken up, also with FD help.

PUNE

1997 witnessed the "migration" of several KV members to Pune: Ashish, Sunita Rao, Neema, and Pankaj. Other KV members like Anchal were already settled there. Some amount of ongoing work thus got carried over to Pune. Gradually a small group of people coalesced around this work, involvement in local issues increased, and the need to work within a structured context was felt. Since Ashish and Neema already had an independent (non-KV) project going, there was office space available. After several KV meetings in Delhi and Pune it was decided that it would be worth having a unit of KV in Pune. There would be no membership, the group would be a small, tightly knit one, the ideology and philosophy would be the same, and it would decide its future year by year. Subsequently a bank account was opened (Punjab National Bank, Deccan Gymkhana a/c no. 780) and an accountant and chartered accountant (P.B. Sukhatme and Associates and M.M. Joshi and Co. respectively) fixed up. Decisions involving logistics, changes in the rules and regulations specifying the functioning of KV units, and long-term planning will be sorted out in the coming year.

There are currently 15 different projects, sub-projects, and involvements (voluntary and paid) focussed on Joint Protected Areas Management, Biodiversity Convention, Andaman & Nicobar Islands Environment Education Programme, local Pune-based issues, and others. Please see a detailed description below.

We also have a small reference library mostly consisting of Ashish's personal collection and documents from his/Neema's independent project. There are currently 16 'members' of KV-Pune.

▪ Protected Area (PA) Update

KV continues to produce the *PA Update* (earlier called *JPAM Update*). This newsletter, started in 1994 after a workshop on joint protected area management (JPAM) at the Indian Institute of Public Administration, is now in its 22nd issue, and is being produced as part of KV's commitments to the Conservation and Livelihoods Network. It goes out to over 500 organisations and people, including Forest Department officials, activists, researchers, community members. It is also available on a few websites now. Ashish, Pankaj, Neeraj, Roshni Kutty, and Anuprita Patel from Pune have been involved in its production. Farhad Vania and Vishal Thakre earlier helped from Delhi. Funding for the production of 6 issues in 1998-99 came from WWF-India. However, funds are now badly needed to continue, and any contribution/ideas for fund-raising are welcome.

▪ PA Booklet

Roshni is well into the preparation of a booklet on India's protected areas. This publication will include factual information on PAs (name, size, district, date of notification), relevant contact addresses (official and NGO), a detailed bibliography, and short notes on major issues. Funds for printing the publication have been sought from MoEF.

▪ Mining in Protected Areas

Neeraj has started field investigations into mining in protected areas (PAs), the first one being in the Son Ghariyal Sanctuary, M.P., followed by one in the PAs of Goa. He and Pankaj have built up a list of PAs across India affected by mining (totaling 40 so far). Ashish and Pankaj analysed a recent move by the Ministry of Mines and Steel to dilute environmental regulations on mining, sent a protest note to concerned agencies, and highlighted it in the press. A standard format for investigation of mining in/around PAs has been prepared and widely circulated. It is hoped that with some more information, a national campaign can be launched on mining, which is fast turning out to be the single most important threat to wildlife habitats in India.

▪ Other PA Related Work

- ❖ Pankaj, Ashish, and Neeraj responded to alerts related to protected areas, such as the running over of elephants by speeding trains, in Rajaji National Park, Uttar Pradesh; killing of blackbuck by Bollywood filmstars in Rajasthan; mining in Kudremukh National Park, Karnataka; and others.
- ❖ Neeraj and Neema joined a multi-NGO investigation team to look into a recent event of villagers being beaten up while trying to protect forests under Joint Forest Management in Buldhana district of Maharashtra, some of which are now within the recently-declared Gnyanganga Sanctuary.
- ❖ Neeraj conducted, with members of the local NGO Satya Shodh, an investigation into threats adjacent to the Koyna Sanctuary, Maharashtra.
- ❖ A detailed comment was sent to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, on its scheme for relocation of people from PAs, a scheme that in its present form is rather ill-conceived.

- ❖ A format has been prepared, for anyone who wants to carry out investigations into the settlement of rights of people in PAs.
- ❖ An alert has been issued, and information requested from dozens of people, regarding the spate of denotifications which is threatening to gobble up many of India's PAs. Pankaj and Ashish are putting together a detailed national picture on this.
- ❖ Pankaj visited Himachal Pradesh in June '99 to investigate denotifications of PAs that is being carried out there under the earlier discussed Settlements of Rights Process.

▪ **Underlying Causes of Deforestation**

Pankaj and Ashish coordinated three case studies on the Underlying Causes of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in India, as part of a global effort at identifying such causes and influencing the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The IFF is a body of governments, which is attempting to reach some consensus on international measures for the conservation and sustainable use of forests. NGOs have been critical of such processes in that they do not seriously go into the root factors for deforestation (such as consumption patterns of wood products, global trade, inequalities in society, unsustainable development processes, etc.). In an IFF meeting last year, NGOs such as the Netherlands Committee for IUCN suggested a study on such processes, which was officially accepted. KV coordinated the study in India: Pankaj did one on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands; Mohanbhai Hirabai Hiralal of Vrukshamitra on the forests of Village Mendha Lekha in the Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra; and Pandurang Hegde of Parisar Samrakshana Kendra on the Uttara Kannada forests of Karnataka. These case studies were presented at Asian and global workshops in early 1999, and then fed into the IFF process. If funds are available, KV intends to publish these studies, and perhaps conduct a workshop for people from these three regions to get together.

▪ **Biodiversity of the Amba Valley**

Vivek Gour-Broome started work in late 1998, on a 5-year KV project assessing the biodiversity of the Amba Valley (a forested area between Pune and Mumbai). The project was requested and has been sponsored by the NGO Rural Communes, as part of its watershed programme there. The major aim is to

do a baseline survey of key biodiversity elements and local community relationship with them, assess the impacts of the watershed activities, and recommend appropriate measures that can enhance biodiversity values as part of RC's project. An interpretation centre may also be developed as part of this project. RC has also sought KV's help in preparing Community/People's Biodiversity Registers for a couple of villages here, for which funding has been sought from the Tribal Research and Development Institute, Pune.

▪ **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**

Onge Case:

Colin Gonsalves of the India Centre for Human Rights and Law, Mumbai, has filed a case on Kalpavriksh's behalf, regarding the plight of the Onge tribe in Little Andaman Island and the destructive logging going on there. Pankaj had carried out a 5-month survey of logging in Andaman and Nicobar Islands earlier this year, on behalf of KV, one result of which is this case. The Society for Andaman and Nicobar Ecology (SANE), and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), are co-petitioners in the case.

Already there have been two hearings in the case and the next one is coming up soon in the middle of September. There is an urgent need for funds to meet all the expenses that we are incurring to keep the case going. All are requested to contribute and help in the fund raising effort. For more details please contact Pankaj.

Environment Education:

The Hindi translation of "Treasured Islands: A Teachers Manual for Environment Education in A&N Islands", is ready. Final details of proof-reading, layout work etc. are going on. The publication should be out by October 1999. The project is being sponsored by the Ministry of Human Resource Development under their Environmental Orientation to School Education (EOSE) scheme. Teachers' Workshops and children's nature camps are being planned in the A&N Islands for January 2000. Sunita is coordinating this, and others involved are Pankaj, Vivek, Ashish, and Rustam Vania (Bobby). In the meanwhile, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Environment Team (ANET) funded the reprint of the English version of Treasured Islands which is available (with colour plates this time!) at the Pune office. A poster on the islands will also be ready shortly - Sunita, Rustam, and Pankaj worked on putting it together.

▪ **Lakshadweep Islands**

KV's involvement with Lakshadweep also continues. The Administration should hopefully support phase II of the environment educational (EE) work going on there. The second series of teachers' workshops were conducted there in October 1998 with the help of the manual in Malayalam, "Nammuda Dweep Lakshadweep" which KV had prepared for the islands. Sunita and Anitha S. (from Trivandrum, also working on the project) attended a 10 day training workshop there (in September 1998) on community monitoring of coral reefs, which promises to be of great help in islands related work. The workshop was organised by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) whose regional representative is based in Sri Lanka and is trying to build a network amongst South Asian countries.

▪ **Global Ecology Programme - January 1999**

Sunita coordinated a 2 week programme in Pune and Uttara Kannada (Karnataka) for 30 American students, as part of an effort called the Global Ecology Programme where they travel through 6 countries over 9 months (like a travelling classroom). The activities and lectures were around the theme of "Sustainability and Self- Reliance". Neema, Vivek, Pankaj, Yashodhara Kundaji, Sushruti Santhanam, Ashish, Anuprita, Roshni, and Neeraj were also involved.

The programme is to be conducted this year also, again in Uttara Kannada, with the help of local villagers and NGOs.

▪ **NTFP Collection in Adilabad**

Sushruti has started a study of non-timber forest produce (NTFP) collection and use (specifically of natural dyes) in the forests of Adilabad district, Andhra Pradesh. This one year KV project is being funded by the Society for the Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD). Sushruti is closely working with Dastkar Andhra, Hyderabad on this. A preliminary report based on the first field work has been prepared.

• **Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act –1996**

The Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act –1996 is a revolutionary new legislation which provides tribal communities in Scheduled areas with substantial powers to manage their own resources including their natural resources among other things.

Neeraj, Shantha, Ashish, Neema and Pankaj are working on a project related to PESA that is in collaboration with Lokayan, Delhi. The work involves looking at PESA in comparison to the existing laws and acts like the Wildlife Protection

Act (WLPA)- 1972, the Forest Conservation Act (FCA) – 1980, the National Forest Policy – 1988, and the Joint Forest Management Resolution among others. It also involves comparing the acts that the various states have enacted as mandated by the central PESA.

▪ **Local Alerts and Activities**

Tree Felling in University of Pune

KV along with students of the University, successfully brought to notice of the local press and the University authorities the felling of trees in the Alice Park area of the University. Following this a meeting was called by the office of the Vice-Chancellor which was attended by KV. Ideas were proposed for taking up some activities in the University, but this has not been followed up in full measure.

Spraying of Round-Up Weedicide

KV responded to a report on a decision by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), and the Khadki Cantonment Board (KCB) to aerially spray 20km of the Mulla-Mutha River with Round-Up, a weedicide to control water hyacinth. The active ingredient in the weedicide (produced by the multinational Monsanto) is glyphosphate (an organophosphate), which is a known toxin. Anuprita and Roshni met with the health officers of PMC and PCMC, did some research on the alternatives to controlling hyacinth, and then sent protest notes to these agencies and to the press. Finally, the authorities decided against the use of Round-up. The issue of alternative ways of tackling the water hyacinth problem, needs to be worked on; apparently biological control in the past has not worked, and manual control requires constant vigil and inter-agency coordination which has so far been lacking.

Anti-Plastics Campaign

Shantha, Anchal, and Anuprita are involved with several other NGOs/individuals in initiating a campaign against the use of plastic bags for shopping in Pune, and in promoting viable alternatives. They are proposing a major anti-plastics drive, by using the innovative path of dramatically increasing the availability of cloth bags. One proposal is to get one million cloth bags made by the end of this year (the figure was to link up to the new millenium...but there is of course controversy about whether the millenium indeed begins on January 1, 2000, or January 1, 2001!). Meera Shirhatti who has recently joined KV

as a volunteer on a weekly basis will also be involved.

Pune Bird Book

Anchal is well into the draft of the Pune version of KV's 'What's That Bird', (originally prepared for Delhi) having contacted most of the knowledgeable birders in Pune and obtained available information. A proposal to fund the printing of the book is being submitted to the Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad.

• **Miscellaneous**

1. Kaustubh Moghe carried out a rapid survey of the potential impacts of a **coke oven plant** planned near Supa Lake, close to Dandeli Sanctuary (Karnataka), and prepared a report. This was following an alert sent by the novelist Manohar Malgaonkar who lives in the area. The study revealed that the potential impacts would be negative to the area's environment (especially to Supa Lake). Kaustubh's report is at the Pune office. Local groups in Belgaum and Dharwad have now taken up the issue.
2. **Mahadayi Valley:** The Belgaum Nature Lovers' Club was in touch with KV on how to go about the survey and protection of the area, from destructive activities such as timber theft, a proposed dam, and others. Kaustubh had originally been helping in this.
3. **KV Website:** A Pune-based group, RANWA has set up a site for NGOs in Pune <www.ecopune.com>, on which KV now has some space. This can be accessed at www.ecopune.com. Information on KV is also available on the website on development and environment that has been set up by the British Council Library <www.indev.org>
4. **Bi-weekly organic produce market:** We now have a little *mandi* in our parking lot on Mondays and Thursdays (10 - 11 AM) where we sell organically grown fruits, vegetables, cereals, and pulses to about 30 families in the neighbourhood. Produce is got from Chordia Farm and J.E. Farm. A visit to Chordia Farm was organised over one weekend. Slide shows and other activities are being planned for the group - all related to natural farming, home composting and waste management, and health. Yashodara and Sunita would also like to begin an informal seed exchange network - if anyone has ideas or seeds (preferably indigenous, open-pollinated ones) please get in touch with either of them at the KV Pune office.
5. KV got back into the **Narmada movement** with participation in the Rally for the Valley, June

1999, and some press articles on the issue by Ashish .

New Generation!

Neema Pathak and Vivek Gour-Broome had a baby girl on August 22nd, 1999. They have called her Aaranya (daughter of the forest!) and she's doing well on J.E. Farm, 25 km from Pune where Vivek and Neema stay. Earlier, in May 1999, Geetanjali Singhal and Solly Benjamin had a baby boy in Bangalore.

DELHI-PUNE

▪ **Biodiversity Convention/Policy/Action Plan**

Ashish and Anuradha R.V. have carried on work related to biodiversity policy, including the Convention on Biological Diversity. This includes providing inputs to the proposed biodiversity legislation being drafted by the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Ashish attended a meeting on this convened by the Minister Suresh Prabhu in Delhi, and subsequently was part of a group to redraft the law. The proposed Biodiversity Bill would have gone to parliament earlier this year were it not for the fall of the government. It now awaits a green signal from the new government. Ashish is also on an expert group to recommend measures to protect the intellectual property rights of tribal and other local communities, set up by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Anuradha on behalf of KV, and Biswajit Dhar of the Regional Information Service for Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (RIS), prepared a detailed study on how current and proposed patent and other intellectual property rights systems will have an impact on biodiversity and people in India, and what steps the country should be taking to protect its interests. This study was sponsored by the IUCN - The World Conservation Union, and was the focal point of discussions at an International Workshop on Biodiversity and Intellectual Property Rights, organised in late January 1999 by RIS and KV. The Workshop resulted in a detailed statement urging governments and non-governmental agencies to take various steps to protect the biodiversity and intellectual rights of local communities and countries like India. The statement is available from Ashish at request.

Ashish has also continued his involvement with the Biodiversity Convention forums, including participating in the Fourth Conference of Parties, at Bratislava, Slovakia, in May 1998.

▪ UPOV/WTO Protest

KV joined a group of national and international NGOs in protesting against attempts by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and industrial countries to push their monopolistic regimes of intellectual property rights (IPRs) on countries like India. In particular, patent-like IPRs are being imposed for plant varieties (new crops, etc.), through the International Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV). This could hit farmers and consumers very badly. Other groups with which KV issued a press statement and note of protest, on the occasion of a meeting of UPOV and WTO in Bangkok, included Action Aid (India), BioThai, Alternative Agriculture Network, and Forum of the Poor (all Thailand), Third World Network (Malaysia), Philippine Greens and MASIPAG (both from the Philippines), GRAIN International, and Pesticides Action Network (Indonesia).

KV also endorsed a protest note signed, at latest count, by about 1000 groups across the world, regarding moves by some countries to considerably expand the scope of WTO to include forestry, services, investments and other sectors. If this happens, virtually nothing will be left to individual countries to decide for themselves, on the basis of their own cultural, environmental, and economic conditions. This move could also be a back-door way of bringing in the controversial Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which was a proposal to allow virtually free entry of multinational companies into countries regardless of domestic laws. The MAI in its original form had met with stiff resistance from southern countries and hundreds of NGOs.

▪ 3rd Consultation on Wildlife Conservation and People's Livelihood Rights

Over the last couple of years, Kalpavriksh with other groups has been organising a national dialogue on issues relating to wildlife conservation and the livelihood rights of people residing in conservation areas. These dialogues attempt to involve community-based groups, urban conservationists, forest officials and other civil servants, researchers, journalists, and others. The third in this series was held in Bhopal on 1-3 May, and was co-organised by Ekta Parishad.

Agenda items included commercial threats to wildlife habitats (especially mining), the ongoing settlement of people's rights in protected areas, relevant legal and policy changes, displacement from PAs, World Bank forestry projects, and networking.

The discussions were extremely wide-ranging and interesting, and more balanced than the

first two Consultations in that more wildlife researchers and officials took part. Participants issued a draft resolution with specific recommendations, a short press note, and two joint statements (one against mining in protected areas, and the other demanding appropriate action to reduce trains accidentally killing elephants on the railway line through Rajaji National Park, U.P.)

Several specific actions, such as studies of mining and settlement of rights in PAs, joint campaigns, information exchange, etc., were decided upon. The resolution is available with the Pune unit at request.

▪ Conservation and Livelihoods Network

KV had over the last 2-3 years proposed a collaborative effort at networking amongst groups which are working on conservation and/or issues of people's livelihoods in/around wildlife habitats (including protected areas). At the 3rd National Consultation (described above), this network was formally established, with an initial membership of about 20 organisations. It has been decided that KV (the Pune unit) will provide the coordinating role to start with. KV is already doing some networking (as described above), but proposes to do it in a much more systematic manner, through regular investigations, dialogues, information servicing, and other activities. A funding proposal has been given to the Ministry of Environment and Forests, WWF-India, Wildlife Institute of India, Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), and other agencies. In addition, KV is going to suggest that all constituents of this network pitch in with some funds (and other material support)...already Ekta Parishad of M.P. and Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS) of Rajasthan have contributed some funds, and some others who participated in the 3rd National Consultation have also committed as yet unspecified amounts. Pankaj Sekhsaria is pegging the coordination from Pune. With help from Ashish and Neeraj Vagholikar, he responds to urgent alerts, produces the PA Update newsletter (see below), organises dialogues between NGOs, community members, and forest officials, etc., all related to protected areas, conservation, and people. He also sends out *monthly mailers* on various events related to PAs, to a list of about 80 key officials, NGOs, conservationists, and activists.

Neema Pathak, Ashish, Farhad and Pratibha Pande attended a meeting on the protected areas of Maharashtra, in Nagpur, in early September 1998. Pankaj attended a meeting of villagers from several protected areas of western Maharashtra in Mumbai on 7 September 1998. Neeraj, Ashish and Shantha Bhushan attended a series of meetings in the last week of August, 1999 in different places in the Vidarbha region, and will be involved with processes

of participatory conservation in PAs like Melghat and Pench Tiger Reserve.

Others who would like to get involved are Seema Bhat (who has offered to handle the Delhi-level coordination), Swati, Jaishree, and Prabhakar. Krishnendu Bose is prepared to make a film on this issue (he is already going to do one specific to Madhya Pradesh) if funds are found.

▪ **Involvement in Official Wildlife Committees**

Pratibha is on a MoEF committee to rationalise the boundaries of protected areas in various parts of India, to make them more ecologically viable and to help avoid conflicts with local communities. Ashish is representing KV on a committee to review and update the 1983 National Wildlife Action Plan set up by the MoEF. Both the Committees were supposed to give in their reports by early 1999, but work is still underway as of September 1999.

▪ **IPT Hearings**

Ashish, Pankaj, and Swati attended four public hearings on issues of water, forests, and land, in Alwar district, Rajasthan, from December 19-22, 1998. Organised by the *gram sabhas* and people of the area, Tarun Bharat Sangh, and the Indian People's Tribunal on Environment and Human Rights (IPT), the hearings were meant to draw attention to the conflicts over natural resources that are caused by governmental policy, private corporate interests, and commercial forces. Two of the hearings were in PAs, Sariska Tiger Reserve and Jamwa Ramgarh Sanctuary. Speakers highlighted the remarkable work that local NGOs and villagers have carried out in regenerating water sources, protecting forests, and striving towards village self-sufficiency. Justice G.S. Gupta, former Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu., presided over the hearings, and will be producing a report on them. More details can be obtained from Ashish or Pankaj at the Pune KV address.

FUTURE & PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

Apart from the ongoing activities, new ones proposed for the coming year are as follows.

▪ **National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan**

KV is one of the six groups short-listed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF), for being the nodal agency to prepare a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The NBSAP is a two-year project funded by UNDP. In a meeting with MoEF and UNDP officials, Ashish and Anuradha made a detailed presentation on how such

an action plan should be carried out, especially with the widespread involvement of grassroots organisations, schools and universities, and local

NGOs...rather than the usual style of giving fat consultancies to a few individuals. The idea is to make the whole thing a process rather than just the production of a document which will then gather dust. However, KV has also made it clear that it will not be able to handle the enormous administrative work that will be involved. MoEF is currently considering options for involving KV, and there is a good chance that we will be involved very substantially over the next two years.

▪ **Anti-Tiling Case and Delhi Ridge Walks**

Carrying on with KV's earlier campaign against the indiscriminate tiling of Delhi's sidewalks and road dividers, there is a proposal to file a public interest litigation on the issue. Discussions on this have been initiated with the NGO Forum on Delhi Ridge.

KV's very first activity (back in 1978-79!), regarding the protection of the Delhi Ridge Forest, is likely to be revived with some nature walks and birdwatching trips to parts of the Ridge, in collaboration with the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). School children will be taken on these.

▪ **Environmental Education in the Western Ghats**

For the last 3 years KV has been interacting with individuals and groups in and around Sirsi area in the Uttara Kannada district of Karnataka. There is a proposal now to formalise it and begin full time work in selected schools of Uttara Kannada district. This will start with a review of the learning needs of various kinds of schools situated in the distinct habitats there - coast, foothills, crestline (evergreen forests), and the dry deciduous and scrub area. A proposal has been written up and several government and non-government agencies are being approached. Persons involved are Sunita Rao, Nitin D. Rai, Vivek

Gour-Broome, Sujata Padmanabhan, and several local NGOs, individuals, and schools.

▪ **Directory of Community Conserved Areas**

KV members involved in their personal capacity in an ongoing project documenting community-based conservation efforts in India and neighbouring countries, are keen to carry on this work as a KV activity. Neema put forward the idea of building up a Directory of Community Conserved Areas, i.e. forest/wetland/grassland habitats which local people are conserving for various reasons. We feel that there are probably thousands of such initiatives, unknown to the general public, where considerable wildlife survives or is making a come-back. Apart from Neema, Ashish and Roshni from Pune, and Seema and Ajay from Delhi are likely to be involved. The Ministry of Environment & Forests has been approached for funds, contact has been established with several potential collaborators from across the country, and a questionnaire for gathering information has been formulated.

▪ **South Asia Study of Biodiversity and IPRs**

As a follow-up to the International Workshop on Biodiversity and Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) (reported on above), Ashish and Anuradha have submitted a proposal for a detailed assessment of IPR regimes and possible alternatives in the South Asian region. The main focus is on understanding current processes in each of the region's countries, recommending ways of learning from each other, and helping the countries in international negotiations. The proposal has been submitted to IUCN South Asia, which, if it approves, will route the funds through BNHS.

• **Conflicts Over Natural Resources and Their Resolution**

This will be a joint Delhi / Pune project, on which KV will collaborate with Lokayan, Delhi and the Society for International Development (SID), Rome. The project involves identifying various kinds of conflicts that take place over natural resources and the mechanisms for their resolution. The work would include looking at policies, conducting field studies and investigations, and organising dialogues and workshops on the issue. In particular, KV could focus on conflicts relating to wildlife conservation and local communities, commercial and developmental threats to natural resources, and impacts of intellectual property rights systems on biodiversity and local communities.

• **Other tentative ideas**

1. Bansuri and Ashish may be involved with reviving some of KV's work on big dams and their alternatives, including an update of earlier assessments of their environmental impacts, and documentation of viable alternatives. This could be in collaboration with Himanshu Thakkar of the South Asia Network on Dams, River and People, and Narmada Bachao Andolan.
2. KV may be collaborating in some long-term work on fire ecology, in the forests of Mendha(Lekha), a village in Gadchiroli dist., Maharashtra, where Neema and Vivek have already been involved with assessing community-based conservation and self-rule initiatives by the villagers. The study proposal is from Sonali Saha, an Indian researcher in the U.S.

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

We need to revisit our Memorandum of Association, and Rules and Regulations. These were framed in the mid-1980s, and may need to be revised. In particular, the setting up of the Pune unit of KV has created a new situation, and some members feel that there may be a need to safeguard against the misuse of the open-ness and flexibility that the group has. In particular one has to focus on the objectives, identity, and functioning of the group. Thought also has to be

given to how the Delhi and Pune KV groups interact, and to what extent one is independent of the other in terms of everyday decisions, accounts etc.

Our policy on funding also has to be reviewed and decisions taken. A note prepared by Kulan Amin on the issue of foreign funding will be circulated at the AGBMs in Delhi and Pune.

20th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

The following has been planned/done to mark our 20th anniversary (to start in October 1999):

❖ Retreat away from Delhi/Pune

A get-together for fun and introspection is planned in late Nov.-early Dec. Candidate areas include Corbett Tiger Reserve, or somewhere between Delhi and Pune. All present and past KV members are being invited. If interested, please contact Ghazala Shahabuddin in Delhi *immediately* (Aptmt. 404, Building 8, East End Apts, Mayur Vihar Phase I, Delhi 110096; Email: ghazalafarzin@yahoo.com; Ph: 2711354), as arrangements have to be made. Costs will be reasonable, and will be borne by each person. Once you have confirmed, you may be asked to send an advance, to enable Ghazala and others to make bookings, etc.

Compilation of Writings on KV

Letters have been sent to KV members and collaborators to send in their impressions/experiences with KV over the last 2 decades. Amita Baviskar will edit the articles sent in by non-KV people, while Sunita will handle contributions by KV-ites. **All those who would like to write, please send in your pieces soon.**

KV History

Rahul Ram has started putting together a brief history of KV's 20 years. Anyone who wants to help him jog his memory, or reveal secrets regarding KV never before revealed, can. get in touch with him at: 194 DDA Flats, Mukherji Nagar, Delhi 110009; Tel: 7652773 (home); Email: baviskar@unv.ernet.in.

Coverage in Sanctuary/ Ecologist Asia Preliminary discussions have been held with Bittu Sahgal, editor of Sanctuary Asia and Ecologist Asia magazines, about covering KV activities. The focus would not be on KV per se, but rather on the diversity of issues it has grappled with. In a sense, this could be a microcosm of the environmental debate in the country today. This is still tentative.

Talks / Slide Shows

A series of talks/slide shows by grassroots organisations/communities that KV has been involved with, or by KV members themselves, is planned in Delhi and Pune. Devaji Tofa and Mohan Hirabai Hiralal, involved with forest conservation and tribal self-rule in Gadchiroli district, Maharashtra, may be the first ones with a presentation in Pune on November 14. Ram Guha has confirmed the possibility of giving a talk in Delhi in September or November..

**This Annual Report was prepared with inputs from
Sunita Rao, Ashish Kothari, Pankaj Sekhsaria, and Pradeep Malhotra**