

July - September 2006

Green Voice

Quarterly Newsletter

CMS ENVVIS

Newsletter on
Environment & Media



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CMS ENVIS Centre on Media and environment



CMS *Environment*

CMS ENVIS CENTRE

The CMS ENVIS Centre is a premiere centre designated by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, to facilitate information dissemination and further the cause of environmental awareness and sensitization. Since its inception, it has come a long way to establish itself as a key resource center, coordinating body and platform for information dissemination on environmental communication, strategies and media related activities.

Today, the Centre reaches out to a large number of people through its various activities. The ENVIS quarterly newsletter, *Green Voice* the gateway of information on environment and media -- is received by more than 1,000 readers, while its daily e-newsletter, *Green Media* (on environmental issues in print media) has a circulation of over 3,000. From time to time, the Centre also undertakes focused studies of 'green space' in print and electronic media, and issues coverage analysis on different contemporary issues. The *Clemenseau* is one such highly acclaimed publication.

CMS ENVIS also collates for its readers impressive databases of more than 12000 'green' news from national and regional dailies, 800 advertising agencies and 2000 audio-visual programmes, thereby facilitating easy access to prominent and relevant media information. The Centre has been an active and dynamic channel for reaching out to people through different communication tools such as newsletters, publications, research studies, case studies and websites, and has striven to build public consensus on and a network for environment conservation.

www.cmsindia.org/cmservis

In Black & White

Signage with message of conservation

Correspondent: Anasuya Menon

The boards will be helpful for children visiting the zoo Coimbatore: Did you know that the male Horn Bill during the breeding season has to feed not only itself, but also the entire family? You could probably find out why and more about this on a casual stroll in the Coimbatore Zoo.

Some of the zoo's new entrants, the peacock, parakeets, and Horn Bills have got spanking new interpretive boards, with a little more than just basic information about the birds.

Unlike the conventional signage boards, these would also describe the animal's or bird's relationship with the environment and what one could do to conserve it. "Most of the visitors to the zoo do not even have a clear knowledge of the animals' name and their habitats, let alone understand its relationship with the environment," says N.Ramjee, Scientist - In - Charge, Centre for Environment Education, the organisation that has developed the boards for the zoo.

"Each animal contributes to sustain the ecological balance. The boards will be particularly helpful for children visiting the zoo to learn more about rare species of birds and animals," he added.

"Interpretive boards have been provided for all animals in the zoo, which has information on the habitat and eating habits. The new boards will be more educative," said S. Thirukumaran, Zoo Director. The boards have been sponsored by the Rotary Club of Coimbatore North, as a part of their Silver Jubilee Year celebrations. N. Prakasam, president, Rotary Coimbatore North, said that through supporting the zoo's effort to promote nature education among its visitors, the message of the need for conservation of wildlife could be taken across to the larger public. The Club would handover the boards to the Zoo Director on August 27.

Source: The Hindu, Friday, August 25, 2006.

Green campaign begins

Correspondent: Girish Sharma

Even as Madhya Pradesh Government officials are engaged in the afforestation scheme, Hariyali Mahotsav, their apathy towards implementation of the National Afforestation and Eco-development Board (NAEB) scheme has come to light in the State. A total of one lakh 10-foot high plants await transfer in Raisen district for the past two years. As the Raisen plants wait to be shifted, the Government has launched its own State-wide scheme to plant over 7.75 crore saplings. Directives in this regard have already been issued to Divisional Commissioners and District Collectors.

Under the Central NAEB scheme launched in 2003-04, NGO Prabhav Shikshan Sanstha was given the contract to provide one lakh saplings at the rate of Rs 1.10 each to enhance the green cover in the State. The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) inspected the plants and found them healthy, with survival expectancy between 95 and 100 per cent. However, two years have gone by since then, and the plants grown by Prabhav Shikshan Sanstha are yet to be handed over to the Forest Department.

Sanstha secretary Sunil Kumar Tiwari told The Pioneer the plants at various nurseries could not be handed over to the State due to the adamant attitude of Madhya Pradesh State Electricity Boards (MPSEB).

He alleged that before the consignment could be delivered, MPSEB officials objected, saying the Sanstha should pay according to the commercial rate for power consumed. "The officials demanded underhand money to settle the case, but I refused because the work of NGO is non-profitable," he added.

"Meanwhile, the rates of plants were increased to Rs 10 each and thus senior officials including Superintending Engineer MK Gupta, earlier in-charge of rural areas, refused to accept the consignment," he informed.

Tiwari says the plants are lying "unused" near Chidiya Tol village and that "if the plants are not planted in the current season, they would be of no use".

When contacted, Gupta said over the telephone dubbed the case as "old" and that he does not have much knowledge about it. Instead, he suggested SE

(Rural) PK Mishra should be contacted on the vexed issue. Even present Raisen Divisional Engineer DP Ahirwar said stated the case is too old and pleaded he was shifted to the district only three months ago.

As for Mishra, although he assured he would look into the matter, the newly posted Rural Circle Superintending Engineer has written to Prabhav Shikshan Sanstha seeking information on "how it works". What seems to have prompted Mishra's letter is the fact that on June 27, 2005, his predecessor, MK Gupta, wrote to AIG (Forest) BV Umadevi in Delhi regarding the Santha alleging it has been charged with power theft and that it's consignment of plants should not be accepted.

On April 29, 2006, Additional PCCF RN Saxena wrote to the CMD of MPSEB to provide a no-objection certificate (NoC) to the Sansthan so that its plants could be received. Later, Additional PCCF once again sought a NoC from the NGO on July 10, mentioning that MPSEB would be responsible for any loss incurred by the Government of India. However, the NoC is still waited.

Energy Minister Kailash Vijayvargiya has expressed his ignorance about the case and stated that he would have find out.

Source: The Pioneer, Thursday, August 24, 2006.

Environment film fest opens

Correspondent: Staff Reporter

Chandigarh, August 23
Veneration for ecological conservation had been amply enshrined in our old epics, emphasising the importance of trees for a healthy environment. We must follow the same today, opined chief guest Romila Dubey, Principal Secretary to Government of Punjab. She was saying this at the inauguration of the Chandigarh CMS Vatavaran Festival at the Tagore Theatre here today.

She said no government or organisation could address the issue of environmental conservation alone without the support of the general public and the ongoing awareness festival would certainly generate awakening.

The festival opened with the screening of Sanjay Barnela's documentary film "Hunting Down Waters". The Punjab State Council for Science and Technology

and Environment and Non-Conventional Energy had teamed up with the Centre for Media Studies and Chandigarh Administration to organise the three-day festival from August 23 at the Tagore Theatre.

Apart from general interaction and a photographs exhibition, there would be a special screening of films on environment for over 4,000 students from local schools and 1,200 from colleges in the morning and for the general public in the evenings, P.N. Vasanti, Director CMS, said. Dr N.S. Tiwana, Executive Director, PSCST, lauded the contribution of certain NGO's in this regard.

Mr Ishwar Singh, Director Environment Department, stressed that necessary awakening for saving the environment and measures for pollution control in the city was of paramount importance.

A photo exhibition capturing wildlife and nature by Jeesu Jaskiran, Charan Kamal, R.S. Kwatra , Navteaj Singh and Parbhat Bhatti is an added attraction.

Source: The Tribune, Thursday, August 24, 2006.

Environmental contest for youth

Correspondent: Staff Reporter

CHENNAI: Here is a chance for youth to turn envoys of the environment.

Students have to compose an article on environmental protection for an opportunity to represent India in an all-expense-paid study tour to Germany from November 5 to 10.

The Bayer Group has announced its 'Bayer Young Environmental Envoy Programme 2006' aimed at students doing BE/ME in chemical / civil / environmental engineering and those pursuing environmental-related degree courses.

The last date for entries is September 15. To be eligible, the entrant's passport should be valid up to at least July 2007. The last date for entries is September 15. To be eligible, the entrant's passport should be valid up to at least July 2007.

For details, logon to www.bayeryoungenvoy.com.

Source: The Hindu, Sunday, August 20, 2006.

Green Film Bazaar

With Green Film Bazaar we present exclusive films on a wide range of issues, talking about everything from air to water! Now is the chance to build your own collection of films on environment and wildlife and also submit your film for sale with us. Film bazaar is available online through out the year and filmmakers may add their films to the list or purchase films at www.cmsvatavaran.org. Please contact priya@cmsindia.org for more information.

The Ridley's Last Stand

Shekar Dattatri
English / 45 mins / VCD-Rs. 300



The Ridley's Last Stand is a poignant look at the lives and times of the olive ridley and provides new insights into the natural history and conservation of these mysterious creatures. It also presents a strong case that, in saving the ridley, we can save the livelihood of tens of thousands of artisanal fishermen and their families. The conservation of the ridley will directly lead to the conservation of all marine resources.

Neemi - paani se doodh ki kahani

Vinay Rai and Meenakshi Rai
English & Hindi/23 mins / VCD -Rs 500

Neemi is the story of a village where people's movement changed this barren village's destiny by reviving traditional methods of water harvesting. Today the people of this village are self-reliant. Neemi has been selected as a model village by UNDP to be replicated by poor and developing countries, which are in dire need of cost effective methods for growth and sustainability. The film focuses on the efforts of Magsaysay award winner Rajender Singh.

River Taming Mantras

Sanjay Barnela and Vasant Saberwal
Hindi and English/ 30 mins/ 2004/ VCD - Rs. 450/



Large parts of Eastern India are subject to annual flooding. Over the last 50 years, Government has built 14,000 kilometers of embankments in an attempt to tame the rivers of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and Orissa. Despite this, loss due to flooding and area now vulnerable to flooding have only increased. Presently, 16 per cent of Bihar is permanently waterlogged, a direct consequence of embankments.

River Taming Mantras explores the technical, economic and political rationales that underlie the adoption of such flood control measures. The film argues that taming these rivers are unlikely to succeed as they have enormous power because of their slit load. And vast amount of money spent on building and maintenance of embankments provides endless opportunities for siphoning the funds. Flood relief seems to be a cow everyone wants to milk. Ultimately, it is the poor people who suffer -migrating to other states, towns and cities in search of food and shelter.

Aamakaar (The Turtle People)

Sunil Shanbag
Malayalam/ English/ 76 mins/ 2002/ VCD- Rs. 200 /
DVD- Rs. 350



Aamakaar tells the story of preservation. The people of a village in North Kerala fight to preserve their village and their livelihoods, threatened by sand mining on their estuary. For the last ten years they have been conserving Olive Ridley Turtles that come to their

beach to nest. They see the preservation of a species on the verge of extinction as an extension of their fight against the destruction of their estuary, their village and their lives. The film follows the rhythm of work in the village, to unfold this struggle for existence of a species and the people.

Colours of the Earth

Krishnendu Bos

English/28 mins/2002/DVD- Rs.1000

Kavitha, is a 25 year old dalit woman who makes films. Her subjects though are the women of her society who have challenged the stronghold of caste, and acute poverty to create a world of their own. They have cultivated 2,500 acres of fallow lands and created over 3 million extra meals for themselves.

The film travels to the villages of these women in district Medak, Andhra Pradesh in an effort to understand how the change happened. When the work began 18 years ago, the main aim for the women was to control their own lives. With the help of a local NGO called Deccan Development Society the women began to till the fallows in the area. The older women had knowledge of the many varieties of seeds, which would grow on these hard rocky lands and together they worked the land.

Their efforts though have gone far beyond just tilling their land. What is truly commendable is their Alternative Public Distribution System. It's a system, which ensures subsidised food grains at village level grain banks for the people. This system is completely de-centralised and managed entirely by women. The film is a personal narrative of the filmmaker held together by her special friend and guide Kavitha.

Words on Water

Sanjay Kak

English/85 mins/2002/VCD- Rs. 450/ DVD- Rs. 700

A boat carrying the cargo of defiance begins an urgent journey through the Narmada Valley. For more than 15 years, people of the valley have resisted a series of massive dams on their river, and in their struggle, have exposed the deceptive heart of India's development politics. 'Words on Water' is about the sustained non-violent resistance, that almost joyous defiance, which empowers the people as they struggle for their rights, yet saves them from the ultimate humiliation of violence.

Talk Over

Environment Journalism in India is still in its nascent stage even though environment is one of the most pressing challenges in present times. Atul Deulgaonkar, an eminent Pune based freelance journalist whose stories on issues like water conflicts and



drought have contributed immensely to get environment to center stage, expresses his concern about the same in conversation with CMS Environment Team.

Was environment journalism a natural calling for you?

Yes. I was actively involved in Peoples` Science Movement that brought to surface basic questions like what is purpose of science? What is meaning of development? I belong to drought prone area of Marathwada. So I started writing about mismanagement of drought. Naturally inclined towards some better models that could defeat the drought. Meanwhile reading regularly about environment and development. Thought this is the crux. Environment management is real politics. Kept on writing about it.

Why did you prefer to be a freelance journalist?

I am a mechanical engineer and have consultancy in Non Destructive Testing and Vibration Analysis. It gives me freedom to spare time for writing. Full time journalists cannot devote time as per their own agenda.

You have written quite a lot on water problems and associated conflicts? What about the envisioned conflict resolution?

Water conflicts (any conflict for that matter) are socio-economic-political so very complex. Decentralized water management can solve many problems. Unless enough water is available one cannot think of resolving conflicts. For inter state conflicts we will have to manage the river basin and not on geo-political manner.

There is a lot being written about environment concerns. Why do you think there's this immense disconnect between the information available and the level of public response?

'The home and the nation behaves in the similar manner,' said Lenin. Focal point of all of our activities is economical. Environment, health comes later. Sanitation is still not at all a priority. Who bothers about quality of drinking water? So it is responsibility of media and society to make environment everybody's business. We will have to connect them by providing proper information. This has been proved in all environment movement.

Do you also see a possible disconnect between the regional and national press as a reason?

Your observation is perfect, it is disconnect in between the regional and national press. It is one of the reasons and not the only. Regional press is not taken seriously by our policy makers where as national press is superficial land, insensitive.

Then what should be done to make environment everyone's business and not just the agenda of roundtable conferences?

Regular interactions on various issues, in between the regional and national press should be arranged. Generally regional press lack in resources, contacts. Many regional journalists are sensitive, down to earth but they do not have enough exposure so unable to give proper perspective. E.g. Coverage of pollution of a river would be different on BBC and that in a regional newspaper. Strengthening of regional press and utilizing their information would be a method to connect. Efforts should be made to offer more dignity, credibility and respect to regional journalists who show some potential of good journalism.

What kind of problems do you encounter being a freelance environment journalist?

You are always an outsider. So not sure about space. Many national journals have a policy of giving little space to free-lancers. Editor (or desk person) sits on story for as many days as he can. Then you have to follow it up. Now days it is more and more depressing if you wish to grab space for story in national press. You are always at the mercy.

Do you feel there is often more pressure on environment journalists to accommodate with respect to space and coverage vis-a-vis other news?

Indeed. It is clear when you look at their selection and the kind of preferences.

India so far has been lacking an organized environment lobby. How have forums like 'forum for environment journalists' been helpful?

Forum for environment journalist is definitely very helpful. Such a platform can bring together politicians, bureaucrats, scientists and activist together. Both regional and national level journalists get all dimensions. So journalism becomes more in depth. It initiates public debate. Editors cannot afford to take lightly such an event.

In this situation will, environment reporting find a space of its own?

Environment reporting will have to create its own space. Rather in coming years it will have play crucial role. We are all bombarded by misinformation. Corporate mafia, politicians, beaurocrats who have all the power, are sowing improper information. Synthesis in between Environment and development (they are thought of thesis and anti- thesis) is the need of the hour. Environment reporting brings awareness of this paradigm shift.

Atul Chandrakant Deulgaonkar is a freelance journalist who has written extensively both in English and Marathi on matters of ecological concern. His articles have featured in such publications as Frontline, Down to Earth, Loksatta, Maharashtra Times, Sakal, Lokmat and others. His books in Marathi include a study of the cost effective and environmentally friendly architecture of Laurie Baker, which won two awards in 1997. His articles dwell on food security, agricultural issues, alternative developmental models, the suicides of farmers and the environmental aspects of disasters like the Bhopal gas tragedy and Kutch earthquake. But if there is any one subject that engages him, it is water, its scarcity, depletion and conservation. He is a Trustee and Executive Council member of the Forum of Environmental Journalists of India.

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Facets

Anand Patwardhan is one of India's most distinguished, filmmakers. He has been active in the field since nearly three decades and relentlessly pursued diverse and controversial issues that are at the crux of social and political life in India. As a filmmaker, he has won over 20 international awards from festivals in India, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Germany, France, the UK and the United States. He has also won, in India, the National Award and the Filmfare Award on more than one occasion.



Patwardhan received a B.A. in English Literature from Bombay University in 1970 and earned a Master's in Communications from McGill University in 1982. He has received no formal filmmaking training but has been a committed and tireless activist since his days as a student, having participated in the anti-Vietnam War movement; volunteering in Caesar Chavez United Farm Worker's Union; working in Kishore Bharati, a rural development and education project in central India; participating in the Bihar anti-corruption movement in 1974-75; and joining in the civil liberties and democratic rights movement during and after the 1975-77 Emergency. Since then, he has been active in an astonishing array of movements, including those for housing rights of the urban poor, communal harmony and the environment. He has also been involved in lobby groups against the Narmada Dam, unjust and unsustainable development, and nuclear testing in South Asia.

His films have been instrumental in bringing environment concerns to forefront, getting them to public debate. For instance in 1995 came his *Narmada Diary* (co-directed with Simantini Dhuru) taking up the debate on Sardar Sarovar Project and the efforts of the Narmada Bachao Andolan to make the economic, social, cultural, indeed moral costs of development, to which state planners are usually indifferent. In *Fishing in the Sea of Greed* he documents the response of one fishing community in India to the "rape and run" industrial-scale fishing that has begun to dominate their livelihood and decimate their environment. In yet another film *War and Peace*

he talks about the adverse effects of nuclear radiation on human health. *In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy War, We are not monkeys, Bombay-our city* are some of the hugely acclaimed films by him. Largely, Patwardhan's films have been surrounded by controversies and faced frequent battles on censorship issue yet undaunted remain the spirit and the passionate commitment through which he gives an expression to his convictions.

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Environmental Information System ENVIS, India

Realizing the importance of environmental information and its dissemination, the Government of India, in December 1982, established an Environmental Information System (ENVIS) as a plan programme. The focus of ENVIS since inception has been on providing environmental information to decision-makers, policy planners, scientists, engineers and research workers all over the country.



Since environment is a broad-ranging, multi-disciplinary subject, a comprehensive information system on environment would necessarily involve effective participation of the institutions/organizations in the country that are actively engaged in work relating to different areas of environment. ENVIS has, therefore, devoted itself to networking with such institutions/organizations. A large number of nodes, known as ENVIS Centres, have been established in the network to cover the broad subject areas of environment, under a Focal Point in the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The Focal Point as well as the ENVIS Centres has been assigned various responsibilities to achieve the long-term and short-term objectives. For this purpose, various services have also been introduced by the Focal Point.

ENVIS, due to its comprehensive network, has been designed as the National Focal Point (NFP) for INFOTERRA, a global environmental information network of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In order to strengthen the information activities of the NFP, ENVIS was designated as the Regional Service Centre (RSC) of INFOTERRA in 1985 for the South Asia Sub-Region countries.

Www.envis.nic.in

NGO VIGNETTES

The Deccan Development Society

The Deccan Development Society (DDS), founded in 1983, is a two-decade old grassroots organization working in about 75 villages with women's Sanghams (voluntary village level associations of the poor) in Medak District of Andhra Pradesh. The 5000 women members of the Society represent the poorest of the poor in their village communities. Most of them are dalits.



The earliest objective of DDS was to combine ecological and employment parameters to regenerate the livelihoods of the people in the area. It was also transfer of people-oriented technology. Gradually it has evolved into a programme, which has three guiding principles: gender justice, environmental-soundness and people's knowledge. A host of continuing dialogues, debates, educational and training programmes facilitated by the Society with the people tries to translate this vision into a reality.

Alongside this ideological role the Society is also trying to reverse the historical process of degradation of the environment and people's livelihood system in this region through a string of land-related activities like permaculture, community grain fund, community green fund, community gene fund and collective cultivation through land lease etc. These activities, alongside taking on the role of earthcare are also resulting in human care by giving the women a new-found dignity and profile in their village communities.

The Deccan Development society is projecting a working model for the people oriented participative development in the areas of food security, ecological agriculture, and alternate education.

The society has been also effectively utilizing media towards this cause. Especially engaging women in media initiatives has been a constant endeavour with the organization. Some of the innovative media initiatives of DDS are - DDS Media Women at International Association of Women in Radio & Television (IAWRT), DDS Community FM Radio Station, Video by Women: An Alternative to Literacy

and Community Media Trust. In these paths breaking exercise not only the Dalit women of Andhra Pradesh have been trained in wielding the video camera or radio station but also have been handed over the ownership of this tool to voice their opinions and grievances.



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Centre for Media studies

CMS is an independent professional forum engaged in research, policy advocacy, advisory services and programme evaluation. CMS endeavors for accountability, responsiveness and transparency in policy making in public systems and services.



Over two decades, CMS has emerged as an interdisciplinary professional body with a wide range of concerns and capability in areas of communication studies, social research, social development, environment, public opinion research, training and performance appraisal. CMS is well known for its survey methodologies and field research, both qualitative and quantitative, including large-scale national studies.

CMS operates through specialized teams of professionals with multidimensional expertise. These teams include **CMS Environment**, **CMS Social**, **CMS Communication**, **CMS Academy** and **CMS Polls**. CMS has set up a **Transparency Studies Unit** and also brings out the *Transparency Review* periodical. The **CMS Academy** is well known for its workshops, seminars, training and orientation programmes for senior functionaries, decision-makers and those in the voluntary sector. The **CMS Media Lab** specializes in tracking news media, while the **CMS ENVIS Centre**, has been active in the field of environment and media. The **CMS VATAVARAN** film festival, initiated in 2001, is yet another well-known endeavour by this Centre.

Over the years, CMS has taken initiatives towards evolving a Citizens' Charter, social auditing, capacity building, transparency in public utilities, electoral reforms, information equity, good governance and campaign strategies. Its recent focus includes tracking RTI operations in the country. CMS initiatives with regard to regulatory frameworks, including for the environment, social sector and media, have also been well received.

www.cmsindia.org

VIEW POINT

Inadequate news coverage of environmental/wildlife issues Subir Ghosh

This is a subject so oft-debated in our circles that it is beginning to lose its significance. The basic factors responsible for the virtual non-existence of environmental/wildlife issues in the news media are the same today as they were some years back. Recycling the same issues again would do nothing more than fill up space for Green Voice.



It is time to take things further, to develop a strategy, and work on not towards it.

The fight for news-space is not a battle, it is a game. It is a ruthless mind game. What we keep forgetting is that it is not we who set the rules for this game. We indulge in too much rhetoric and create ballyhoo about ethics and all that. Who cares? Trust me on this one no one does; for if they did, things would have been different. If we are to play this game, then we have to do so by the rules that are not to our advantage.

It is true that the media today is a whopping big business. But it is not market compulsions alone that decide what news ought to be carried where and when. The other side of this market-driven coin is one we discern as populism. It is also populist myopia that today drives news in the media. It is the darker side of democracy at play people get to see and hear the news that the majority wants to.

Face it we live in a world that is more escapist than ever. People suffer from the ostrich syndrome and hence turning a blind eye to a problem is the best way they think will solve it. Don't believe me? Fair enough, hand around a newspaper and see for yourself how many people even go beyond the headlines of the "negative" stories, and how many hungrily devour the seamier ones.

Facts are facts, and numbers don't lie. Demagogues take recourse to numbers to make their lies appear as

the truth. Now, for some numbers. A survey, a year or so back, found that 61 per cent of Indians yearn for news about entertainment, 56 per cent sports, and 55 per cent current affairs. Environmental and so-called developmental stories did not even figure in the list. They didn't because to people they don't matter.

It is very easy to censure, say, television channels for the unadulterated trash that they broadcast 24/7. Oh, those callous, lucre-driven ones will do anything for their TRPs, is the general refrain. What critics conveniently forget to acknowledge is that these channels get their high ratings because people indeed see these programmes/clips. Be it about the game that 11 flannelled fools play, or those macabre crime programmes.

And, journalism is no more a noble profession it is just a profession. Today, journalists are mass produced by universities, colleges, and countless dubious "institutes". Visit some of these and find out for yourself how many of these young ones are driven by passion, and how many by glamour and other vested prevarications.

These are not very encouraging thoughts, you would agree. But giving up hope would be the easiest thing to do under adverse circumstances.

One must not forget the lone rangers the minuscule number of journalists in many newspapers and channels who pursue environment as a beat, not out of coercion but zeal. They plough a lonely furrow in their respective establishments. There do exist a few e-mail networks for such journalists, but most of these have outlived their utility. Exchanging links and stories are not the same as trying to do something.

Environmental organisations and professionals too must put in some more effort in media relations. Many are hopelessly under-staffed to even think about disseminating information. There are others who have not requisite skills and dole out info as if they are doing a favour to the press. And there are few who are interested more in securing media mileage for their executive directors than what they actually do in the field.

If we, as a concerned and alarmed lot, are still talking about this, it means our efforts of the past have failed miserably. It is time to junk the policies, theories and

strategies that have only wasted time, money and energy. There are many things that can be done, and discussing them threadbare would be beyond the scope of this write-up.

There is one that I want to broach an information clearinghouse. The International Freedom of Expression eXchange (IFEX) (www.ifex.org) is a classic case in point. IFEX is decentralised and helps coordinate the work of its members, reducing overlap among their activities and making them more effective in their shared objectives.

One of the key elements of IFEX that can be emulated is its vibrant Action Alert Network (AAN). Member organisations report free expression abuses in their geographic region or area of expertise to the Clearing House which, in turn, circulates this information to other members and interested organisations all over the world. It also provides updates on developments in ongoing cases and circulates important freedom of expression press releases. Action Alerts are the mainstay of IFEX's work for the simple reason that it has seen coordinated letter-writing campaigns help unlock prison doors, lift publication bans and even save lives. The point is it works.

I also know what will not work yet another embassy-funded portal, or yet another non-governmental organisation.

Can blogs and so-called citizen journalism work? To a certain extent, yes. The clear-thinking and committed ones do work, but unfortunately remain in the alternative realm. Right here, right now we are concerned about the monolithic, big, bad mainstream media. Moreover, blogs add to the media clutter and citizen journalism is a Web 2.0 hype that is too shamelessly populist to deliver the goods.

There is another thing that will not work anymore, for times have changed if we keep talking from ivory towers, no one will buy what we say. Take it, or leave it. If we have to survive, we have to fight for it. Darwinism rules.

Subir Ghosh is Editor, Newswatch India (www.newswatch.in). Ghosh has been in journalism and publishing for the last 15 years. He started out with the Press Trust of India in Kolkata, before moving on to The Telegraph. All through his career he has worked both as a

desk hand and a roving correspondent, as and when give an assignment. He has also handled publications for organisations like the Wildlife Trust of India and the Centre for Science and Environment. Ghosh specialises in Northeast affairs and has a book on the region published by Macmillan. He is also an Advisory Council Member of the Centre for Northeast Studies and Policy Research (C-NES).

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Green Films Directory

Films on environment and wildlife are not only relevant as works of art, but are also important as historical and scientific documentation and as instruments for bringing about change. This is the philosophy behind this *Green Films Directory*.



This Directory is the first-ever comprehensive compilation of Indian audio-visual resources on environment and wildlife. A virtual treasure-trove of 'green' films, it is designed to satisfy the information requirements of academicians, civil society groups, government organizations, environmentalists, researchers, media professionals, conservationists, activists, filmmakers, public and private sector organizations, educational institutions, teachers and students.

Thematically classified, the Directory provides details of documentaries, public service messages, animation films and feature presentations, along with contact details of the filmmakers and concerned organizations. The 2,200 entries in the Directory have been categorized into 12 segments -- arranged alphabetically -- according to the availability of the films. These categories are Biodiversity and Forestry, Business and Industry, Eco-tourism, Energy, Environmental Education, Farming, Pesticides and Soils, Livelihood, Pollution, Global Warming and Ozone, Solid Waste Management, Water and Wildlife. Subject-wise and title-wise indexes have been included to facilitate search for required information.

Order your own copy of Green Films Directory at webmaster@cmsindia.org

MEDIA ANALYSIS

Private TV Channels not sensitive to Environmental concerns

Chandra Prabha
(Deputy Director, CMS Media Lab)

Media plays a critical role in shaping the future of a nation as it informs, educates and sensitises people on various issues day-after-day. This helps lay the blueprint of a country's growth path. It is this immense role and responsibility that empowers media. For media and the people this function is of paramount significance.

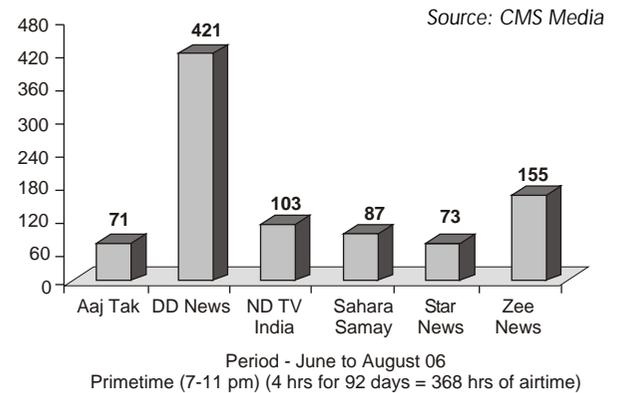
It is thus expected that media will report and raise all issues of national concern. However, if one sees environmental reporting in the rapidly growing cable television medium, which also has an enormous impact and influence, there is a huge vacuum in understanding, addressing and sensitising people about these issues. Falling forest cover, dwindling biodiversity, growing despair in the rural areas from the reversal in agriculture production, drinking water crisis both in rural and urban areas, severely polluted and toxin-laden rivers, lakes and air, The list of our country's environmental woes is long. India is beset by environmental crisis. If the country is to abate the crisis, mass media needs to play a critical role through awareness raising. Extensive exploitation and years of neglect of our environment have impacted life in every sphere; alas, media doesn't have its ear to the ground

The Centre for Media Studies, in its analysis of popular Hindi news channels, found that Doordarshan National gave 1.9 per cent of its prime air time (7 to 11 pm) to environmental reporting. From June 1 to August 31 prime time news was analysed in this study. In quantitative terms, the channel gave 7 hrs and 10 mins out of 368 hrs of air time to environmental issues. This, however, is the most positive data available from among Hindi news channels in the CMS study. The channels included in the study are Aaj Tak, Zee News, NDTV India, Sahara Samay, Star News, besides Doordarshan National.

Environmental reporting was rather found to be dismal on these channels. In the study period of three months, Zee News gave 2 hrs and 35 min of total coverage to

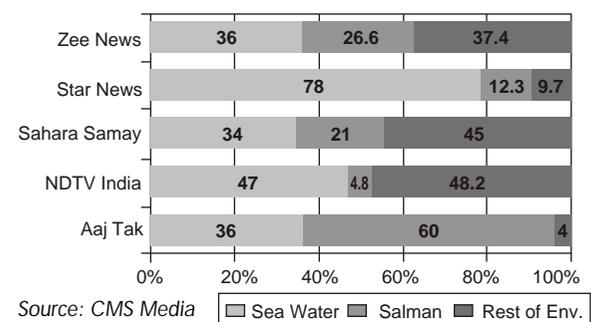
the subject, NDTV India 1hr and 43 min coverage, Sahara Samay gave 1 hr 27 min coverage, Star New 1hr:13 min coverage, and Aaj Tak, the market leader in Hindi belt, gave just about 1hr and 11 min of total environment coverage during the monitoring period. In percentage points air time given to environmental issues comes to 0.70 per cent for Zee News, 0.46% for NDTV India and 0.39% for Sahara Samay. It is noteworthy that Aaj Tak and Star News, with a combined viewership of 46% for Hindi News channels, gave just about 0.32% each of the total airtime to environmental issues.

Environment on News Channels (Figures in Minutes)



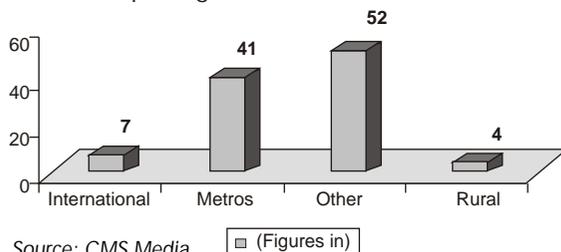
Poor air time allocation to environmental concerns is not the only inadequacy on these channels. The quality of programmes often leaves much to be desired. A bulk of environmental coverage on these channels is indicative of their preferences. Aaj Tak's 96.6% of environmental coverage was drawn from Jodhpur court's verdict in black buck poaching case against Salman Khan and reports on 'sea water turning sweet'. Coverage on these two issues in relation to total coverage on environment comprised 51.8% on NDTV India, 55% on Sahara Samay, 90.3% on Star News and 62.4% on Zee News. Surely, celebrities do make news. But community efforts in the upkeep of environment are far more important for people to

Issues in News



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The origin of environmental news on these channels also reflects the media disconnect with the environmental concern. As much as 93 per cent reporting is done from urban India which represents only 28 per cent of population and approximately 3.3 per cent of country's geographical area. Mere 4 per cent reporting on rural areas is clearly not representative of our environmental concerns. Even international reporting on environment, which is largely human interest stories of animals, is far greater than the reporting on rural areas.



However, in contrast to private news channels, the coverage on Doordarshan National had both vibrancy of variety in news issues/discussions and origin. During the period, the channel dwelt on significant environmental issues and debates. But, that too, by no measure, addresses environmental crises in the country. What is required of media is a determined approach to investigate and reflect our environmental reality in order to sensitise and awaken the people. This will set rolling a corrective collective initiative.

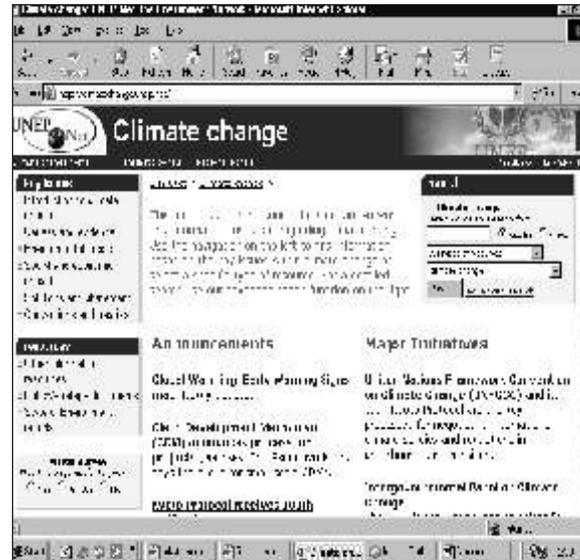
The period of study coincided with monsoon that flooded many areas in 16 of our states. It drew a total of 24 hrs of air time on all channels, including Doordarshan National. However, in the entire period there was no coverage on the possible causes of such flooding. In doing this, the media accepted floods as a natural process. Every year, the earth's fresh water replenishment that rains bring plays havoc with our crops and people. Every year a good part of our gains in GDP is lost due to environmental losses. In Assam alone floods cause a yearly damage of Rs 1000 crore and more. What's the country's cost of environmental damages?

OPEN WINDOWS

Theme: *Climate Change*

Climate change: UNEP.Net, the Environment Network

[Http://climatechange.unep.net](http://climatechange.unep.net)



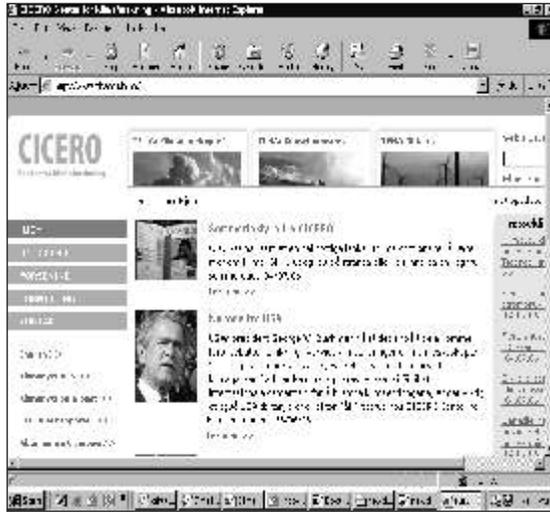
This portal is a central source for substantive work and information resources regarding climate change. It is an excellent space to get information regarding global environment changes, environment impacts and many such relevant resources.

Center for International Climate and Environmental Research, Oslo (CICERO)

<http://www.cicero.uio.no>

CICERO is an independent research center associated with the University of Oslo. CICERO's mandate is twofold: to both conduct research and provide information about issues of climate change. CICERO's three main areas of research are impacts of climate changes and climate policy, design of, implementation of, and compliance with climate policy instruments and integrated assessment, that is, the relationship between climate, other environmental issues and development

Its Publications include Cicerone, a bi-monthly climate magazine. It reports on new developments in climate and environmental research, the political



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Assessments of Impacts and Adaptations to Climate Change (AIACC)

[Http://www.aiaccproject.org](http://www.aiaccproject.org)

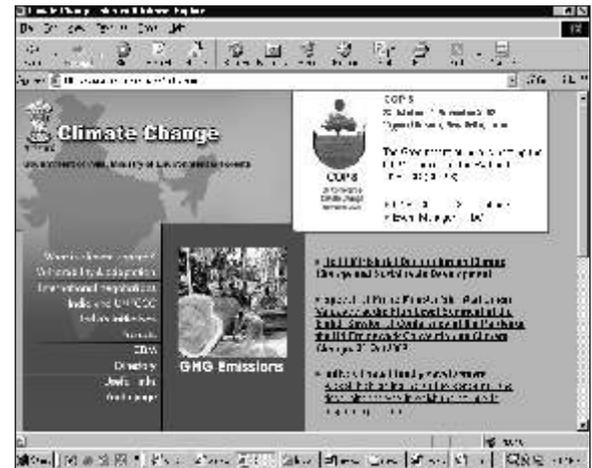


Assessments of Impacts and Adaptations to Climate Change (AIACC) is a global initiative developed in collaboration with the UNEP/WMO Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to advance scientific understanding of climate change vulnerabilities and adaptation options in developing countries. The AIACC funds collaborative research, training and technical support, and aims to enhance the scientific capacity of developing countries to assess climate change vulnerabilities and adaptations, and generate and communicate information useful for adaptation planning and action.

Assessments of Impacts and Adaptations to Climate Change (AIACC) is a global initiative developed in collaboration with the UNEP/WMO Inter-

What is climate change?

<http://www.envfornic.in/cc/what.htm>



This is the official website run by Government of India-Ministry of environment and forests. It gives detailed information on varied aspects of climate change. One can also find resources and links related to international negotiations and other such relevant official undertakings.

On Air

Born wild

English/ 22 mins

Producer: New Delhi Television (NDTV)

Born Wild is a series that takes a look at India's wildlife and wild spaces. The series focuses on conservation, protection, ecology, environment, people who are working to ensure a brighter and better future for India's wild ecology and of course the various communities who live in and around our forests and how it impacts on their lives. The series is directed by Swati Thyagrajan a Senior Special Correspondent with NDTV

Environment calendar

January

- 4 - Oil Conservation Week
- 14 - Pongal
- 15 - Oil conservation Fortnight
- 30 - National Cleanliness Day

February

- 2 - World Wetlands Day
- 21 - Science Day
- 28 - National Science Day

March

- 2-4 - World Sustainable days
- 21 - World Forestry day
- 22 - World Water Day
- 23 - World Meteorological Day

April

- 5 - National Maritime Day
- 7 - World Health Day
- 22 - World Earth Day
- 30 - No Tobacco Day

May

- 11 - International Migratory Day
- 22 - International Biodiversity Day
- 31 - World No Tobacco Day

June

- 5 - World Environment Day
- 8 - World Ocean Day
- 17 - World Day to combat Desertification

July

- 11 - World Population day
- 28 - World Nature Conservation Day

August

- 6 - Hiroshima Day

September

- 16 - International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer/ World Ozone Day
- 28 - Green Consumer Day

October

- 2-8 - Wild Life Week
- 11 - International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
- 4 - World Animal welfare Day
- 5 - World Habitat Day

November

- 6 - International Day for preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Arm Conflict

December

- 2 - Bhopal Tragedy day/ National Pollution Day
- 11 - International Mountain Day
- 14 - National Energy Conservation Day

Green Consumer Day-28 September

The problem of consumerism and its impact on the environment is an area of major concern in today's world. Awareness building on the importance of recycling-reusing-reducing should be taken up seriously. Green Consumer Day is an occasion to start afresh our efforts on more conscious levels and to be environment friendly in as much ways as possible. It is a day to mark our commitment towards a greener lifestyle.

*Those Interested in sending us articles, features or any other relevant information may contact us
webmaster@cmsindia.org*

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