

Environmental Manifesto

Preamble Environment protection is not merely planting trees or protecting the tiger. It involves conscious decisions and choices on the part of every citizen about human activities and the economy prevalent today. Environmental protection can only be meaningfully achieved if all of us accept that man's efforts and economy are parts of the larger economy of nature and ecosystems needs are more important than consumer sovereignty. We must first allocate resources for the maintenance of the quality nature's services and then consider resource allocation for human needs.

This manifesto is an outcome of the deliberations held at Paryavaran Parishad held at Pune on 18 and 19th April 09. It is prepared by nature lovers, environmentalists and environmental NGOs from all over Maharashtra. Let us start with agriculture and water sources development which form the basis of all development projects.

Water Sources and Agriculture

We want to clearly state that all of us are completely against the river linking project and privatization of water as these will basically harm the environment and livelihoods of millions. We would like to stress the importance of river ecology and the natural flow regime of all surface flows. For this, all the natural cover types should be retained and enhanced from the source region to the sea. Order of Priorities for water use: nature's services, drinking water, domestic needs, agriculture and livestock, industry and recycling.

For watershed development programs we would like to stress the importance of ecological interventions which strengthen present engineering measures and help sustainability of productivity in general. Besides development of agriculture, we wish to stress the importance of grassland development, energy plantations and maintenance of wilderness areas for medicinal plants and biodiversity (Gene bank for raw material development). We wish to support all programs for the development of indigenous domesticated biodiversity, cultivars and domesticated animals. For ground water recharge, it is necessary to develop guidelines in consultation with stakeholders and Gramasabha for the sustainable use of ground water. Use of existing tube wells and addition to this number should be controlled by Gramasabha in consultation with the latest available scientific knowhow.

We want to stress progressive development of all natural forms of agriculture and progressive elimination of all forms of broad spectrum chemical insecticides, pesticides, growth hormones, chemical fertilizers and heavy agro machinery.

All measures for recycling of agricultural waste in situ will be supported and encouraged. We will support development of self assessment of quality of all produce of organic agriculture. All virtual export of water and soil needs to be banned.

We will strongly support maintenance of wilderness and difficult areas to support pest control, pollination and yield improvement of agriculture.

Subsidy should be provided to natural agriculture which will encourage creation of new employment opportunities.

The process of importing agricultural produce will be transparent, especially during bad years. In urban areas all agricultural experiments to grow food should be encouraged.

The present allocation of funds for development of large irrigation projects and watershed projects should move from current 80:20 to 50:50.

For rehabilitating water logged and saline lands, only organic farming efforts will be supported. Care will be taken to ensure that agricultural soil will not be disturbed by pollution from point sources such as pollution by sewage water.

Present system of irrigation water pricing is unacceptable. Water pricing must depend on location of field from the water source and the current practice of crop pattern.

The policies to promote all genetically modified (GM) seeds and food will be opposed for reasons well known. GM crops must be labeled.

Development of crop pattern must be based on local needs and microclimatic cultivars. This will be the overall responsibility of Gramasabha & other grass-roots organizations in consultation with appropriate agencies.

Agricultural universities must emphasize training and education in natural methods of agriculture. Internship for agro graduates to help Gramasabha (like rural internship for doctors).

We advocate that the cultivation of sugarcane and other cash crops need to be looked at afresh from a perspective of food security and environmental impact. Actively promote water use efficiency for all cash crops.

We support conservation of existing Devrais (Sacred Groves) and creation of new Devrais as part of temple complexes in villages. Urban Issues and healthAll efforts to create regional development authority will be supported and it will be seen that regional planning will be connected to the development of hinterland and will be based on principles of sustainable and ecologically consistent development. The growth of urban areas will be linked to the carrying capacity and resource potential of the hinterland. Development of employment opportunities will be balanced between rural areas and small and medium sized towns so that indiscriminate growth of metropolitan areas will be automatically restricted. All efforts directed towards minimizing transport will be encouraged. Sustainable transport policies which emphasize public and Non Motorize Transport (NMT) and restrictive policies on private auto transport will be encouraged. All natural and built heritage including rivers, streams and open spaces in urban areas will be protected and strictly be treated no development areas. No privatization of natural resources including water sources, urban recreational areas. Principle of Block pricing will be adopted for all public utilities. Urban based waste will be managed in situ. This will be consumer responsibility. This is to be achieved by segregation of waste in biodegradable, recyclable, hazardous and biomedical categories. We support cultivation of clean habits among citizens. Extended Producer responsibility principle will be enforced. (Polluter pays principle and complete product life cycle responsibility). We will continue to encourage segregation of waste in appropriate categories. Energy and Natural Resource Management 1. Focus on sustainability of natural resources & energy: Information on availability of resources to be generated through survey, transparent system for information sharing regarding availability of natural resources, Energy Planning based on - demand has to be within availability, Promoting sustainable energy generation, gradually shifting from non-renewable to renewable energy sources, for sustainable and renewable energy dependence on the natural, photosynthesis based energy conversion processes, promote energy plantations, using resources in most natural form – avoid conversions 2. Plan for supply of energy services: In energy planning focus on what energy services (e.g., lighting) is required, identify the most environmentally benign solution, and plan accordingly. 3. Integrated resource planning for energy and resources (e.g., Energy efficiency should be increased and demand side management) 4. Assign acceptable levels of carbon footprint to individuals and businesses and provide incentives for consumption within quota, and penalties/taxes for over consumption: Assign energy quota: A minimum amount of energy required for a reasonable quality of life can be accessed at a subsidized rate, any consumption more than that to be priced at the actual realistic price (inclusive of environmental cost). Similar system for all natural resources, high taxes for luxury items, high rate of interest for home loans (e.g., linked with number of homes already owned). 5. Promote decentralization of energy and natural resource generation as well as management: Local self government bodies should decide local energy and natural resource generation and management policy, local production, consumption and recycling and waste management to be promoted – plan for self sufficient villages/clusters. Resource users’ association, systematic program for capacity building at the local level. 6. Preventing misuse/non use of natural resources (e.g., keeping land fallow, uncontrolled use of water, etc.): Requisition of unused building because buildings represent ‘locked’ in natural resources 7. Setting up energy efficiency and resource use and management standards and criteria (certifications) at all levels for products and services. (e.g., on lines of eco-housing criteria). Laws for products and use of natural resources (e.g., ban on use of CFCs, etc.), recycling of resources in phased out products to be the responsibility of manufacturers (EPR), Incentives to use of resources for environment friendly activities 8. Rights of non humans with respect to use of natural resources: acknowledging the rights, and putting in place legal measures 9. Restoration of natural resources should be incorporated in as policy: Initiating models of Eco-restoration (e.g., Nirmal Ganga Abhiyan, A movement for ecological restoration of streams), extension activity for beneficiaries, preparing a nationwide program. R&D for resource management. Promote agriculture of economically important forest products: to help preserve natural biodiversity. This is to be linked with farming practices while establishing ecologically sensible land use patterns and livelihoods which should be based on local ecosystems and land classes (e.g., infrastructure development not on agricultural land). Link existing schemes such as EGS with restoration activities 10. Wide spread, professionally designed publicity campaigns for promoting sustainable life style: To link ‘status’ with sustainability (addressing the issue of people’s aspirations) 11. Environmental rating and profiling of candidates appearing for election: Environmental outlook of candidate to be used as a parameter while selecting candidates (by parties) as well as while endorsing or voting for candidates (by environmentally conscious voters or organizations) 12. Encourage generation of electricity at local township level Human and wildlife conservation It is necessary to enhance the knowledge about interrelations between humans and wildlife all over the country. We emphasize use of available institution framework for capacity building of political leaders, legislators and bureaucrats. In addition, for general awareness it is necessary to have appropriate institutions at various levels. It is necessary to properly demarcate the current protected areas. In demarcating non government land, it is necessary to see that movement of wildlife will not be restricted. Comprehensive database of land records based on specific land use will be maintained in public domain for traceability and transparency. Ecological assessment of natural resources and biodiversity (both terrestrial and aquatic systems) on forest and surrounding land will be undertaken and mechanisms put in place to monitor changes. Educational institutes, NGOS & research institutions will be involved for assessment. Processes and techniques such as biodiversity register will be taken advantage of. This assessment data will be put in public domain. Number of visitors to forests and ecologically sensitive areas will be restricted based on the carrying capacity of the area. Visitors will include government as well as non government visitors. Any development will abide by the ecological sensitivity criteria provided by Ministry of Environment & Forest (MoEF) and amended from time to time. Regional planning process will follow ecological sensitivity criteria in preparation of regional and development plans (RP, DP). The guidelines, procedures and processes recommended by the government of India in the matter of creating and maintaining inviolate areas, critical wildlife habitats, corridors and buffer zones need to be strictly followed. Henceforth no non-native species (flora as well as fauna) will be used for afforestation and ecosystem restoration projects. Native species must be encouraged. Non native species in forest areas

will be progressively removed. Appropriate institutions shall be used and created for research and management of marine & riverine ecosystems such as estuaries, coasts, wetlands, open waters and mangroves. We will not grant permission up to a distance of 12 nautical miles, over which legal India has jurisdiction under the dispensation of Exclusive Economic Zone for bottom trawling of marine resources. Considering the sensitivity of oceanic interface, no chemical project or construction of nuclear and thermal power stations will be carried out. We will restore the original provisions of CRZs – which provide for protection of coastal areas. Any dilution which negates the original purpose of the act will not be allowed. In all development projects precautionary principle will be applied since EIA and such other processes are subject to avoidance and manipulation. Budgetary allocation will be provided commensurate with the expectation of performance of duties (including training) for all conservation agencies including the forest department. Adequate funds will be provided to create and maintain wildlife corridors which will minimize the damage caused by wildlife to agriculture and human beings. Tourism in forests will be allowed only when it ensures sustainability of flora and fauna and benefits the local community. Feeding and other activities of livestock in protected areas will be replaced by development of grasslands and forage areas. For non timber forest produce, sustainable practices of use will be evolved. We will encourage local communities to satisfy their needs from non forest areas for which development incentives will be offered. Forest Development Corporation will be abolished. Education and Environmental Ethics Environmental Curriculum should be based on a holistic point of view. For this it is necessary that educational policy as such be based on holistic thinking. Education should not be restricted to formal education only. Informal education and knowledge gained through human transactions should also form a part of the educational system.

1. Decentralize curricula or syllabi. Develop locally relevant contenta. Core concept is universal, interpretation to be done locally. b. Create scope for documenting or disseminating local knowledge, skills, traditions, processes (Resource management system) 2. Respect Diversity within communities or amongst individuals.

a. Create scope for expression of different or in conventional thoughts, skills etc.b. Install / design evaluation processes that accommodate this diversity. 3. Approach or stand on Technology a. Encourage need based locally relevant/ logical/ intelligent technology. b. Discourage and highlight costliness of “unnecessary” technology. 4. Promote simple life style, quality of life, eco-smartness (Educational Gandhism through Buniyadi Talim) 5. Promote holistic thinking, interdisciplinary projects. 6. Create opportunities for new local knowledge and skills through personal experiences, field work, socially relevant projects. 7. Avoid contradictions across subjects, across levels. 8. Such an education will lead to local livelihood opportunities and “Self reliant” villages will be nurtured. 9. Environmental relations (Interdisciplinary approach) and issues to be considered at the stage of planning. 10. Redesign of curricula at all levels with a focus on environment and ecology. 11. Concept of ethics to be broadened to include harm to environment or ecosystem as moral failures. 12. New methods of teaching and evaluation to be developed for strengthening the link between value-attitude-habit levels. Arthavichar & Arthakranti Present economic system is incongruent with maintenance of the quality of the environment, wild flora and fauna. Present economic system focuses only on quantitative growth at the expense of quality of life. We accept the premise that human economy is part of nature’s economy. We also accept that ecosystem needs are more important than consumer sovereignty. We will support natural resource quantity and quality enhancement and an economy, based on use of local resources to satisfy local needs. We will promote an economy – which will favor decentralization of economic activities. We will adopt following measures to eradicate parallel governance based on parallel black economy. To strengthen the legal economy and effective governance, we will adopt the following measures: · Withdrawal of existing Taxation System completely (except Customs and Import duties) · Every Transaction routed through a bank will attract certain deduction (say 2%) in appropriate percentage as Transaction Tax i.e. Single point tax deducted at source. · This deduction is to be effected on receiving/credit accounts only a. This deducted amount will be credited to different Government levels like Central (say 0.7%), State (say 0.6%) and Local (say 0.35%) b. Transacting Bank will also have its share (say 0.35%) in this amount as the bank has a key role to perform · No tax on cash transactions · Compress the high denomination currency &nda maximum denomination of currency in circulation should be Rs. 50/- · Setting the appropriate limit on amount of legal cash transaction – say Rs. 2000/- (Today it is at Rs. 20,000/-) We will promote a cess to strengthen multilateral agencies and fight issues such as global warming and global terrorism. We will promote all efforts to create a global currency.